



South East Wales Unitarian News

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August 2013

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday & Sunday, 7th & 8th September – To celebrate European Heritage Open Doors / Drysau Agored and to mark its 266th anniversary Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefncoedycymer will be open to the public on Saturday (2-4pm) and Sunday (2.30-6pm). On Sunday there will be a service at 6pm led by Morgan Chambers with Guest Speaker Joe England.

Saturday 7th September, (am) – Open Day at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon

Sunday 8th September at 2pm – South East Wales Unitarian Society and South Wales District Association procession at St Fagans National History Museum to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Trinity Act. Followed by a service at Penrhiw Chapel, conducted by Rev Wyn Thomas.

Friday 13th September at 7.30pm – Yr Ymofynnydd Social Evening at Grannell Hotel, Llanwnnen. Arranged by the South Wales District Association; South East Wales Unitarians are welcome to attend.

Thursday September 19th at 7pm – Annual Lecture at Highland Place, Aberdare – 'Thomas Paine and Chartism' given by Huw Williams

Saturday 12th October at 6pm – Dinner at the Grannell Hotel, Llanwnnen for the visit of Bill Darlison, GA President. Arranged by the South Wales District Association; South East Wales Unitarians are welcome to attend.

Sunday 13th October at 11am – Bill Darlison, GA President's visit at Gellionnen

Sunday 1st December at 11am – District Christmas Service at Swansea

RESIGNATION

Dr Carwyn Tywyn has resigned from his post as Secretary of the Unitarian Welsh Department to take effect on Friday, 6th September. Carwyn is to take up the position of Specialist Development Officer for Wales with the charity Home-Start, who specialise in the field of young families in vulnerable situations. Carwyn writes, "I started the post in April 2011, and hope that the work which we have completed together has been of benefit to the Unitarian Faith in Wales. I do not leave the post lightly, and I will miss the company of many of you in my work."

We shall miss Carwyn and wish him well in his new career.

See 'From the Secretary's Desk – O Ddesg yr Ysgrifennydd' below.

ANNUAL DISTRICT RALLY

Early on Sunday 28th July, Unitarians from most District chapels left South East Wales by car heading for Lampeter to join the congregation at Capel Brondeifi for their 11am service conducted by Rev Goronwy Evans.

After the service they gathered in the chapel vestry to enjoy a sumptuous meal prepared by Brondeifi member Delyth Jones (of *Y Pantri*, Lampeter.)

An afternoon walk around Cae Hir Gardens at Cribyn (carefully dodging the showers) was the next item on the agenda – possibly in a hopeful attempt to burn off at least *some* of the large number of calories absorbed as a result of the tempting delicacies on offer during the excellent lunch.

District President Julie Nedin writes of the visit to Ceredigion in 'From the President' below.



Capel Brondeifi

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

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

The interview in this issue of South East Wales News is with Anne Jones, who is almost as well known as her husband Rev Eric Jones. For many years Anne has served the Unitarian movement in a number of different roles, as a member of the District Association, the Welsh Department, Highland Place Church Committee and as National President of Women's League and Treasurer of Highland Place League for more than forty years. On the first occasion I entered the schoolroom at Highland Place to attend a League meeting, a bit on the early side, it was only Anne and Marian Whippey who were there tidying up after a recent event. Although I was a stranger to them both, Anne's warm and friendly manner conveyed the sentiments of complete acceptance. When I asked about Unitarianism she showed me the church and instructed Eric, when he arrived at the end of the meeting, to give me some literature on Unitarianism. In so many ways Anne has been a blessing to the congregation at Highland Place.

Ella Lewis-Jones

I was born in West Bromwich in December 1942 and came back to Aberdare with my parents when I was three years of age due to the tragic death of my brother, David at the age of seven. I was fortunate enough to be befriended by Dorothy Hughes who took me to the Sunday School at Highland Place and, as they say "the rest is history". I was greatly influenced by the then Minister, The Rev Jacob Davies throughout my Sunday School days and was devastated when he left Highland Place in 1957.

I remember with affection the other Sunday School leaders - Tom Morse, Berry Price, M.R. Morgan, Marion Davies and recall very happy hours spent in their company on Sunday afternoons and rehearsing for many special events. I became a Sunday School teacher myself when I was 15 or 16 and started taking services soon afterwards. I feel very lucky to have had such a good grounding in the Unitarian Faith from people who lived it in their daily lives and I have tried to follow their example as my own life journey has unfolded.

I pursued my ambition to teach by gaining a Mathematics Degree at Swansea University and teaching at Quakers Yard and Aberdare Girls Grammar Schools until our boys arrived in 1971 and 1973. I loved being in the classroom and continued part time teaching for some years before comprehensive education came in and I returned to full time teaching once again. Those years were difficult, I remember, trying to manage all my responsibilities at home, church and school but I managed somehow until my retirement in 1992 through ill health.

My retirement years, since recovery, have given me a chance to pursue hobbies once again and enjoy my grandchildren, Dafydd, Mali, Menna, Math and Osian who are an undreamed of blessing and joy.

What is your earliest 'Unitarian' memory?

Singing a solo dressed up as a boy in short grey flannel trousers for a Christmas Play when I was about eight years of age.

What do you owe your parents?

So much, but mainly the support and security of a loving home life - a basis for what lay ahead and also the sense that the most important things in life cannot be bought or sold.

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

No question of that – being with my grandchildren and their parents.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Is there such a thing? We should try to make the most of the special moments in each day.

What is the trait you are most uncomfortable with, in yourself?

A lack of a sense of adventure. A tendency to stay at home instead of venturing out to meet people and explore places, has to be fought against daily.

I know that you love reading, which type of book appeals to you most and why?

I've always liked biographies and autobiographies and other books which introduce one to different ways of living e.g. historical novels. There is so much to learn from others.

Where do you go for inspiration and/or guidance in your life?

People and nature give me inspiration. The teachings of Jesus have been my guiding light.

What keeps you awake at night?

Not much these days I must admit as I mostly sleep well. Unfairness, injustice and cruelty, especially to children, have always worried me.

What are you most grateful for?

My happy childhood and marriage, a loving family and loyal friends.

What 'qualities' do you most admire in others?

Honesty, loyalty, inner strength.

Looking back what has defined the course of your life?

My marriage to a Unitarian Minister and the opportunities that has given me to try to make a difference.

What is the most valuable lesson life has taught you?

That life IS unfair but we do not need to add to the unfairness. The most important thing we can do is to be kind and loving – so many people are in need of a kind word or a loving gesture.

WORSHIP STUDIES AND ME

From the outset, in January 2011, and even before that, when I began taking services in South East Wales, I was aware that leading worship for others would 'test' me in more ways than one. I regard it, as a great privilege and I have found it to be quite unlike anything I had done previously, and without being over-dramatic, possibly the 'noblest' thing I would ever be called upon to do. I am aware that people come to church for a myriad of reasons, in a variety of spiritual states and with varying needs. With this in mind it seemed to me that, at the very least, I should be aiming to help them feel just a bit better, possibly provide a bit of comfort and for others, some small 'insight' which they could take away from the service to reflect upon in private. I recognised that I had a considerable responsibility to attempt the almost impossible task of providing 'something', however small, which might 'chime' with the everyday concerns of most people.

So there I was, in January 2011 preparing to do something really important for which I had had no specific training. Admittedly, in my seventh decade, I had clocked-up some edifying life and vocational experiences and an education which has been an invaluable resource upon which I continually draw. But, frankly, as someone who had never been an advocate of 'flying by the seat of my pants' I decided that I should avail myself of some training and development in leading worship.

There are three 'steps' to the Worship Studies Course. The 'Foundation' step in which, the practical elements, organisational and interpersonal skills which are a necessary part of leading a service are covered. The second, 'Intermediate' step, which I have recently completed, is much more theoretical. Assignments have to be completed on Biblical Studies, World Religions, Unitarian History and Unitarian Thought. All assignments have to be properly referenced and accord with acceptable academic standards. This step has proved to be much more work, both the Biblical Studies and World Religions made me think carefully about how to present the more well-known parts of the Bible and other religions in a way that enabled those attending worship, to see the relevance in their everyday lives. As to Unitarian History and Unitarian Thought, much of which was quite new to me coming from an Anglican background, I simply had to get down to quite a lot of reading. Also, as there is some 'contention', as you would expect with a 'liberal' religion, it was often only possible to reach 'tentative' conclusions as to the nature of Unitarianism.

I was 'in a different place' (both personally and as a leader of Worship) when I began the Worship Studies Course in May 2012 than I am today. I have 'learned' that everyone who leads Worship has to find their own way of putting together a service. I know that some people start with the address and work their service out around that. That method does not work for me. I usually start with the idea of a theme for the service, e.g. Love, and I start to collect material from any source (Newspapers, Radio, Books, Magazines etc, etc) which I think might be useful in a service and at some point, and here is the rub, when I think I have collected 'enough', I begin to write the service which I mostly start with the 'opening words', because this often sets the course of the service. I suspect that we all differ in our preparation routine, but it matters not, whatever works for you.

Thinking about our needs here in South East Wales

When I started, it would have been really helpful to have had some 'guidelines' to assist me in structuring a service. I had observed what others did and copied that, as my starting point. There are quite a number of us here who lead worship and I feel sure that it is not beyond us to develop some guidelines so that those 'starting-out' will have confidence that what they are doing will be acceptable. I also think that it is important that at least once a year, those of us who contribute to the Pulpit Plan have an opportunity for some further training and development which could be organised locally. There is always something to learn and everyone that leads worship has something to offer. As a starting point, why not share our views on what worship means to us?

Two years on, I remain firmly of the view, that the worship we offer in Unitarian churches, if we get it right, has untold potential. When one actually considers the matter, in most Unitarian Churches, worship is the only activity which specifically addresses the spiritual needs of the individual members of the congregation. Very recently, I read that our current National President, the Rev Bill Darlison, has suggested that worship should be transformative – a goal which is, without doubt, worth aspiring too.

Ella Lewis-Jones

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 17 MAY 2013

1. Welcome to new Executive Committee members

James Barry, Louise Rogers and Jacky Woodman were welcomed to their first meeting of the Executive Committee. Louise agreed to be the member who only serves a two-year term which is required to restore the 50/50 split of four members standing down every two years. She can, of course, stand again for a further four year term commencing in 2015.

2. New Strap-line

A proposal for a new Unitarian strap-line for use locally and nationally in publicity, which was proposed by the Visibility Strategy Group (VSG), was agreed – “Nurturing Faith, Embracing Life, Celebrating Difference”.

The VSG have been asked to launch the new strap-line in September 2013 with a review in 2015.

3. Executive Committee Links

Name	Committee	District
Robert Ince	Nightingale Centre	Sheffield, Yorkshire
Jacky Woodman		NELUM, East Midlands
James Barry		Western, LDPA
John Clifford	Welsh Department	SE Wales, S Wales
Louise Rogers		Manchester, East Cheshire
Alison Thursfield		Midlands, Merseyside
Joan Cook		Northern, Scotland
Martin Whitell		Southern, Eastern

4. 2020 Congregational Development Programme

A very productive workshop for potential 2020 applicants was held at New Meeting, Birmingham on 4 May 2013. Six participants shared and built upon their ideas for potential 2020 projects. The workshop, which was led by Claire MacDonald and Rev Andy Pakula with support from Sue Cooper and Rev Martin Whitell, offered both room to work on vision and on hard detailed information needed for moving forward. There are a number of potential applications in preparation and the Leadership Team will be doing more work to identify and support potential applicants. The £100,000 target for supporting first applications has been reached. Publicity material, a website and a video have been produced by enthusiastic and skilled volunteers who are to be thanked.

5. Annual Meetings – looking backward and forward

All the feedback about the 2013 Annual Meetings, via email, letters and items in congregational newsletters, is generally positive. The organisation of the meetings went well, apart from a few technical issues, and people left with a positive spirit having had an enjoyable event.

Arrangements are well in hand for 2014 at Whittlebury Hall with the Keynote Speaker and Anniversary preacher all booked. The Anniversary service will be held on the first day (Sunday). An event "celebrating community" will be held on the Monday evening. Robin Ince, a comedian, will be the entertainment on Tuesday night at the social event. The price will be similar to 2013; yet with a much higher quality hotel venue.

The Executive Committee agreed to give further consideration to the issues raised in the keynote address by Rev Dr Terasa Cooley on the impact of social change and the new social media on congregational life. How membership is measured will also be reviewed recognising the inadequacies of the current quota number as a measure of denominational "health". The John Rely Beard Lecture had raised many issues concerned with bullying, which could and did take place in different situations, and the principle of the GA issuing guidance and information was agreed.

6. Partnerships with UUA Congregations

Do you want to develop a partnership between your congregation and a congregation in the United States and Canada? The Executive Committee has agreed to support partnership arrangements in conjunction with the long-established Unitarian Universalist Partnership Council. Partnerships can bring many benefits for both partners; celebrating historic connections and sharing ideas with easy communication and occasional visits. We are assured that there are many small UU churches who, in size and tone, match with many British congregations. Look out for further information.

7. Strategy Groups

Some highlights from the work of the strategy groups:

Local Leadership Strategy Group

- Successful safeguarding training events
- Training workshops at the Annual Meetings

- GA website pages on congregational “resources, support and training” updated.
- have agreed to develop a five year plan

Ministry Strategy Group

- ministerial competencies document out for consultation
- considering training issues
- discussions with Sustentation Fund on financially sustainable ministries

Visibility Strategy Group

- Media training building skills and increasing knowledge
- Workshop at Annual Meetings
- Unitarian Strap-line developed

8. Appointments

The following appointments were approved and we offer our congratulations to:

Ministry Strategy Group – Richard Gaines, chair of Cirencester Unitarian Fellowship.

2020 Leadership Team – Claire MacDonald, member of St Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York

GA Roll of Ministers – Rev Tom McCready was added to the Roll of Ministers with Full Status

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 12 & 13 JULY 2013

1. National Youth Programme

Sue Talbot, Vanessa Rothwell and Rev John Harley gave a presentation on the National Youth Programme, which was being developed with new outreach initiatives such as roadshows and Youth Sunday. They highlighted current issues that were affecting the long-term sustainability of the Programme including legislation, attendance, changing expectations, facilities, volunteering and increased costs. Several ideas were explored and there was a shared commitment to the importance of work with children and youth people for the future of the Unitarian Movement.

2. Categories on Ministry

The Ministry Strategy Group has been aware for some time that the current categories of ministry are complex and not understood by many in the denomination. Therefore they are seeking to clarify and simplify terms.

As the first stage the Executive Committee have accepted the recommendation of the Ministry Strategy Group that the category of "Lay Pastor" becomes "Associate Minister" – recognising that a Lay Pastor/Associate Minister is someone who has been through denominational selection and extensive training, but less extensive than full ministerial training.

This change would be implemented in time for the publication of the 2014/2015 directory.

3. Safeguarding

As a result of the annual review of the Risk Register the significant progress in relation to safeguarding risks was welcomed. Much had been done, including the revised GA policy for congregations and the awareness training. In 2013/14 more training was planned, DBS (formerly CRB) checks for lay-persons-in-charge would be pursued and an audit of congregational compliance with the new policy would take place.

4. 2020 Congregational Development Programme

Andy Phillips, a member of the 2020 Leadership Team, gave a detailed presentation on the application and evaluation process that will be used to determine whether a project will be supported and receive funds from the 2020 programme. It was clear that there is a robust and fair process being put in place although some issues were raised about the metrics to be used and possible use of qualitative information in the process.

5. National Attendance and Membership Survey, November 2013

At the Annual Meetings there was discussion about the inadequacies of the current use of quota membership numbers as an indication of the overall "health" of the Unitarian Movement. A proposal for an attendance and membership survey in November 2013 was approved which is designed to assist in identifying the current numbers of members and attenders and age profile along with activities. The last statistical survey was carried out in 2002. Further information will be circulated in the Autumn.

6. Funding Development

The longer-term financial problems facing the General Assembly were acknowledged with several sources of funding under pressure. It was agreed that strategic thinking around fund-raising needed to take place and a financial development group was established led by Robert Ince, the Honorary Treasurer. Volunteers are being sought for two places and anyone interested in serving, with the necessary background and experience, should contact the Chief Officer.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK – O DDESG YR YSGRIFENNYDD

It is with regret that I am writing my final report for the SEWUS newsletter in my capacity of Welsh Department Secretary. Recently, I was offered the post of 'Specialist Development Worker for Wales' with Home-Start UK, which supports young families in vulnerable circumstances. After a great deal of thought, I decided to accept the position at Home-Start and resign my Unitarian position.

I do not leave the position lightly, and there is a sense of sadness upon leaving. It has been a privilege to work for the Unitarians in a leadership capacity. As a faith, we have a unique place in the history and culture of Wales, and I have been proud to represent the Unitarians within Welsh public life. At the recent National Eisteddfod in Denbigh, one Christian minister remarked that as a result of our efforts over the last two years, the Unitarians are now regarded by other denominations as part of the "mainstream" of religious life in Wales. If this observation is true, then I am glad to have played my part in that change of perception.

There are perhaps two factors which were weighing on my mind as I resigned my position. First, the arrival of baby Gwyn last year has made working at weekends more difficult than before. Recently, it has been proposed in the Welsh Department and in SEWUS District that officers may seek to co-operate more closely with congregations across Wales. I think this is a positive step, but in my view it would inevitably increase the amount of weekend working at a time when I am seeking to reduce (or at least not increase) that particular aspect of my work.

A second factor is perhaps a feeling that I had reached the end of a phase in terms of developing our congregations. The series of evening workshops which I facilitated in Ceredigion, on governance and leadership, seemed to have reached a natural conclusion. In other specific congregations, such as Wick, Swansea, Graig, Nottage, Bangor and Brondeifi, where I have been involved in discussions of various kinds, it seems to me that the next steps for the future are now firmly in the hands of the congregations themselves. Quite rightly, there is a limit to how much influence the Welsh Department can exert from the outside. As I was weighing up the situation in my mind, a truly rare and exceptional job opportunity arose with Home-Start UK. I feel in my new position that I will be able to deliver some tangible results on behalf of vulnerable families across Wales.

I would like to thank you all for the support and advice that I have had from you at SEWUS during my period in the post. In particular, I am grateful to Rev Eric and Anne Jones for their friendship and guidance. In times of adversity, I was well-served by Eric's shrewd observation that, "wherever there are people, there are problems." This is a saying that we would all do well to heed! I have already passed this piece of advice on to Heledd, my 5-year-old daughter, and I will no doubt continue to refer back to Eric's words in my future career!

Gyda ddiolch yn fawr iawn i chi gyd am eich cefnogaeth. With many thanks to you all for your support.

Carwyn Tywyn

Ysgrifennydd y Gyfadran Gymreig / Welsh Department Secretary

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The value of our connection to the wider Unitarian family was evident to me at the SEWUS District rally in July when we visited Brondeifi Chapel in Lampeter.

Prior to this I was quite ignorant about 'Smotyn Du', the 'Black Spot', in Ceredigion. This area between Llandysul, Lampeter and Aberaeron was named as such by Methodists who were frustrated by the strength of Unitarians there. Seventeenth Century dissenters rejected the theology of the Trinity and the first Unitarian chapels in the area were built leading to the thirteen in place today.

We received the warmest of welcomes from Reverend Goronwy Evans and the congregation. In his service Goronwy led us on a virtual tour of the chapel sites and history, including stories of the area. I was pleased to be able to thank him on behalf of the District and talk about the value of *connections* and this chance to celebrate in a larger Unitarian family.

My thanks to Keith for making the arrangements for



SEWUS President Julie Nedin

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

the rally, Delyth and team from Lampeter for a gorgeous lunch, and all of you who came for your company. I loved the visit to the gardens at Cae Hir in the afternoon too.

We will have another opportunity to join together at St Fagans on Sunday 8th September on a day with activities already planned for children but now, by suggestion from the Welsh Department and with St Fagans' permission, we adults from both SEWUS and South Wales District will process in the grounds to commemorate the 200th anniversary of The Trinity Act.

This celebration of our freedom to believe and worship as we wish will be an important and rare opportunity for us to witness in a public place. We are not evangelical by nature, sometimes holding back with a natural concern not to be seen to impose our beliefs on others, but there are people 'out there' we need to reach and offer a lifeline as a place of spiritual exploration and inclusive support that is uniquely ours to provide.

Please support the event at St Fagans, let's make connections!

Julie Nedin

(More Rally photographs on back page)

ABERDARE

Congratulations to Nathan Jones, our former organist, for gaining his BSc Degree at Swansea University. Nathan has maintained his contact with Highland Place by occasionally playing for us when needed. Members have also attended concerts in Swansea to support his choir.

Although Anne and Alun Watts have not enjoyed the best of health of late, their spirits have been lifted by their son Gareth having been appointed Head of the Internal Audit Department at the Senedd. They are also extremely proud that their granddaughter, Lauren, has been accepted for a Chemistry Summer School course in Oxford.

Sandra Hughes has had a successful hip replacement and is being looked after by her sisters, Dorothy and Barbara in Aberdare. Christine Roberts, after a considerable delay, is now very close to her second hip replacement. We look forward to seeing her free of pain. However, extreme pain has never robbed her of her wonderful smile and sense of humour.

Congratulations to Hannah and Jonathon on their wedding at Highland Place on 3rd August. Hannah is the daughter of Merrilee and the granddaughter of Hazel.

Congratulations also to Tony Foster on having been installed as our District Vice President. When not conducting future devotions and meetings, Tony will be knocking in nails and putting up shelves!!!

Women's League

Since the last issue our League has acquired two new members. One via a friend and the other via the weekly coffee morning. Both have since become members of Highland Place Church.

We have had a variety of speakers.

John Harrold of Newport told us about his scheme (entitled "Operation Holocaust") for taking tablets and vitamins to Jerusalem. There was also a talk by a member of St John's Ambulance on their very varied work.

Christine Davies demonstrated her expertise in creating pieces of art from a variety of materials. Some of the materials were quite new to us and some very unexpected. A very interesting talk.

However, the pièce de résistance was our own Anne Watts's talk on local history. Anne delivers a fund of information with humour and makes what she imparts of great interest to everyone.



Delyth Jones and Rev Eric Jones Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones



A feature at Cae Hir Gardens Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

We have enjoyed music, storytelling and debates and plenty of tea, coffee, biscuits and cake. Our closing tea and "Give us a Clue" was great fun. We are now all off to join Afternoon Tea Eaters Anonymous!

NB: Our garden party and auction takes place at 2.00pm on Saturday, 24th August.

Dilys Evans

Highland Place Uni'Club

July saw us celebrating our second anniversary and our second newsletter has been printed and distributed to parents and our congregation. Newsletters will also be delivered around Foundry Town, which will hopefully lead to more members joining Uni'Club.

Some things we've been up to since our last report

Margaret Barr Children's Village

The children have made, decorated and written on their own cards for the children of the Margaret Barr Orphanage in Shillong, Northern India. The children have also donated £5 to the India Fund.

At Easter, Angela Jones brought the children a Simnel cake, which she had baked herself and brought the marzipan for them to make the 'Disciples' for the top (leaving out poor old Judas) – this was also shared amongst the congregation: it was delicious!

For Easter, the children had an Easter Egg Hunt. The children made and decorated paper baskets, and went on a hunt in the church, where Joan had hidden lots of mini eggs.

Church Garden

Some of the children have been busy with Joan, sowing seeds and planting up containers and a hanging basket for the church garden with outstanding success.

World Earth Day

We talked about pollution and helping to save our planet. Some of us pledged not to waste water, by doing simple things such as turning the tap off when we clean our teeth. To save electricity by switching lights off. We also made a mock petition to the 'decision makers' who are able to help save the planet. We read a story called Lottie's letter, we also did some recycling crafts. Following on from this session, we are going on a Recycling Safari at Bryn Pica Recycling Centre on 31st July. News of this in the next newsletter.

Father's Day

The Uni'Club children made cards and badges for their fathers on Father's Day

Our thanks go to

Hazel Jones for the £20 donation to buy seeds, compost and containers for the children to plant the church garden. Barbara Hughes for the hanging basket. Eileen Wilk for wool, small sewing machine and sewing kit, pattern books, etc plus foam floor games i.e. giant dominoes, hop scotch and noughts and crosses. Margaret Slocombe for a beading kit and trinkets and Rachel for a box of drinks for the children.

Our Annual Outing is on 22nd August and we will be visiting Cantref Farm, Brecon. Our thanks go to Joan for securing a grant of £200 specifically for this purpose, which will pay for the minibus and entrance fee and an ice-cream. This means there is no cost to the parents and the children need only bring a packed lunch. Well done Joan.

Best wishes to everyone,

Joy Foster (Highland Place Children's Co-ordinator)

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

On the 23rd of June members from Highland Place, Aberdare and Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefn Coed travelled down to join the Cardiff congregation in a multi-faith service with a Jewish Speaker, Colin Heyman and Muslim Speaker, Dr. Hassan. This service was led by the Reverend Eric Jones and attracted over 50 people. Reverend Eric Jones outlined the message of Universal Unitarianism, that we may not think alike but we can love alike, that set a wise foundation for the service. Colin Heyman, on behalf of the Cardiff Reform Synagogue, spoke on the ever relevant theme of 'who is my neighbour?' Dr Hassan gave us a window on the teachings of Islam. There was a stimulating question and answer session afterwards. This service illustrated how religions have more in common than that which separates us.

A joint Unitarian and Buddhist service is to be planned in the foreseeable future and is felt to have potential to draw people in. The joint working approach is one way to raise the Unitarian profile to a wider audience.

On Sunday 19th May, Lis Dyson Jones led the 12 Steps to a Compassionate Life Circle service where we explored the subject of 'How little we know'. As well as giving us an opportunity to discuss and reflect on our self-awareness the chapter set us three exercises to cover the steps of the chapter. The first exercise asked us to think about an experience that touches us personally and that lifts us momentarily out of ourselves. We are asked to enjoy this experience and then try to explain it to somebody and to note how difficult it is to put this into words. Other valuable steps cover becoming more sensitive to over-confident assertions of certainty in ourselves and other people and to become aware of the mystery of different people that we encounter during the day. The next chapter is on 'How we should speak to one another.'

On the 28th of July Cardiff members travelled to Brondeifi for the District Rally. There we shared in a sacred communion service led by Reverend Goronwy Evans who emphasised the importance of sharing during the service. We then enjoyed a buffet lunch in the vestry.

On the 8th of September before the Reverend Wyn Thomas leads the Service at Penrhiw Chapel there will be a procession through the Museum Grounds to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Trinity Act. Our church banners will be on display as we walk through the museum grounds. Unitarians will travel from South Wales district to join us for the occasion, after which we will enjoy refreshments at St Fagan's Community Hall.

September will be a busy month for Cardiff Unitarians. In addition to meeting at St Fagans there will also be a Naming ceremony, the 12 Steps Programme continuing, and we look forward to travelling to Aberdare on the 29th of September for a 3-church harvest service at Highland Place Church.

The SEWUS Executive committee met on the 17th of July in Swansea. Gwynn Pritchard and Dewi Owen attended this meeting. Dewi Owen agreed to bring up the subject of attracting and keeping young people in our congregations at the next District Away Day. The Development Officer recently met members of the interfaith forum of South Cardiff so that Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd will be able to participate in the Multi-faith week beginning on November 18th.

Our congratulations go out to James Boyce who was awarded a first class Degree from Cardiff University. We wish him well in his future career. We also extend our congratulations to our Chairman Gwynn and his family for his new grandson, Jack Llywelyn.

We also send our best wishes to Margaret Evans who is convalescing in Park House Court Nursing Home, Narberth Road, Tenby SA70 8TJ. Best Wishes go out to Olwen, Lynne's sister for improved health and to all members who have been unwell recently.

Our current charity is 'Life for African Mothers' which is a charity based at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff. This was founded by Cardiff neo-natal nurse, Angela Gorman who had heard about the appalling rates of maternal mortality in Africa. The charity provides low cost but highly effective and life-saving treatments to prevent neonatal deaths in Nigeria, Somaliland, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda and Rwanda.

Dewi Owen, Cardiff Development Officer

CEFNCOED

Women's League

July started off really well. The new carpet arrived (Very nice indeed!) and a few of us got the kitchen spic and span. So we are now settled-in in what was the ground floor flat. Those who come to take a service, as well as other visitors, enjoy having a cup of tea in our new surroundings.

We had two visits in July from a speaker from Age Concern. The first occasion was to deliver a talk informing us about all the help that is available to us. We all enjoyed the lady's second visit, it was 'fun-time.' We did armchair exercises. We were even able to take home the two red balls we used so we could exercise at home.

Ann, Gwynfa and I very much enjoyed the trip to Lampeter. The food was excellent – I told the lady who prepared the lunch (she has a café called Y Pantri in the town) that we should run a trip just to enjoy a meal at the café. If we were still running our Chapel Trips it would most certainly be on our list!

Vera Tomsett

In our thoughts

We send our sincere sympathy to Thelma Davies on the death of her husband Meirion. Rev Eric Jones will officiate at Meirion's funeral on 20 August, with a service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd followed by cremation at Llwydcoed Crematorium.

Graveyard Grass

Huw Griffiths (son of Phil) has come to our aid once again in the annual battle to thwart nature's attempt to turn the graveyard into a no-go area. We are grateful to Huw and trust he will be available in a few weeks time for the inevitable repeat exercise.

Interfaith Service at Cardiff

On Sunday 23 June we travelled to the Friends Meeting House, Cardiff in a small convoy of cars in order to attend an Interfaith Service organised by Cardiff Unitarians. The service was interesting and informative, and we much enjoyed the refreshments provided by our hosts.

Visit by Dr Carwyn Tywyn

Dr Carwyn Tywyn was a welcome visitor to Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on Sunday 21 July when he and Ken together presented the service. We were pleased to meet Carwyn and much enjoyed his address.

District Rally

Despite heavy showers, those members who were able to make the journey to Lampeter on Sunday 28 July enjoyed their visit to Capel Brondeifi and to Cae Hir Gardens at Cribyn. A particular highlight of the trip for all was the excellent standard of the lunch provided in the chapel vestry.

Chief Scientific Adviser

We are very pleased to hear that Professor Julie Williams is to become the new Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales. In her childhood years during the early 'sixties Julie attended Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Sunday School, as did her sister Suzanne.

Visitors

Fans of the television programme 'Who do you think you are?' would have enjoyed an interesting hour, or so, at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on Thursday 15th August. Five visitors from Ystradgynlais (3 cousins, plus the wives of two) were searching for information on their family history. The cousins succeeded in finding the grave of their great-grandparents Thomas and Margaret Davies who moved to Ynysmeudwy in 1912, but are buried here. Now they hope chapel members can help trace any descendants of the family members who remained in this area.

European Heritage

As part of a European Heritage event, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd will be open to the public on the second weekend in September. We will also celebrate the chapel's 266th anniversary and are pleased that Joe England, historian, author, broadcaster and Chairman of the Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Forum has kindly agreed to speak at our evening service on Sunday, 8th September.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

On June the 9th, Julianne Morgan conducted a Flower Communion Service for us. She does this each year, and it is much enjoyed by those present. We each take a small bunch of flowers and go home with a different bunch, and often more than one. Jennifer Evans always has a lovely sample of the flowers in her garden and, despite a long winter, this year was no different. Jennifer is one of those lovely people who is always there, always ready to lend a hand, and always ready to contribute to a congregation service. Jennifer and her husband Tudor have been regular attenders with us for many years, sadly Tudor is not as mobile as he was, so he saves his visits for special occasions these days, but Jennifer is always there and we are so grateful for her loyalty and support.

Eileen Howarth has come to Nottage from the Swansea congregation. She no longer drives in the dark, so instead of Swansea, we are blessed with her company during the fine weather. She is a most enthusiastic member of the congregation, and such lovely company.

Our "sick list" is growing! As well as Alastair, who is progressing slowly, Rose has been housebound with shingles after her hospital stay because of her fall. Gwladys has had another fall, but thankfully did not need hospital treatment. Eileen is recovering from a chest infection which struck while she was on holiday, and Jean badly sprained her ankle which left her immobile for several weeks! Get well soon all of you!

We are holding another Macmillan coffee morning in the Schoolroom on Friday October 4th and on Sunday October 6th Julianne is conducting our Harvest Service, you are all most welcome to join us for both events.

Avril Protheroe

SWANSEA

We are pleased to hear that Swansea correspondent, Pam Taylor is now home after spending a number of weeks as a patient at Singleton Hospital.

Pam's condition is gradually improving and we trust it will not be too long before 'normal service' is resumed and we will again enjoy her news and observations of the Swansea scene and beyond.

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

There is a lot to talk about since the last newsletter. Many thanks to Sarah Boyce and Ken Morgan who, when they come to take service always say, "It's good to be here." and our reaction is, "Welcome, thank you for coming, it is so good to have you."

Hywel and Caradog Jones are home from university. Hywel has completed his course and emerged with first class honours. Caradog has done his first year, packed up his harp and pocketed his tin whistle and mouth organ. Youngest of the three, Aneurin, entered a music writing competition, for the Cambridge Festival no less, and came out a winner; the prize was a pair of tickets for the festival and performance time on stage. Aneurin's competition recordings were made in Gellionnen Chapel. It is likely that he will be interviewed for *Heno* (S4C) and our local Welsh language newspaper *Llais* has already reported his success. We're all so proud that you would think we'd entered the competition ourselves.

Forthcoming special services are always cause for a chapel cleanup. We decorated the chapel with garden flowers and rhododendrons collected from the mountain, then Val Evans arrived with armfuls of roses. She and Anthony Jones were to be married at the chapel by Rev Eric Jones. The building looked beautiful. It rained a great deal on the day of the wedding but for the arrival and departure of the wedding party the rain held off! Thank you Eric for conducting a beautiful celebration of marriage and thank you Lawrence Bowen for providing outstanding music. To Val and Ant, good wishes and God bless.

We have benefitted from the vigorous help of the Neath Team, a small group of young people who do outdoor tidy-ups of public places. This group did a wonderful job of work on the graveyard and on the spot they made three rustic benches, one of which is set beside the gate. We all met together when the job was done to share a thank you lunch. It was with great pleasure that we met the Neath Team helpers and we hope to see them again in time to come.

We are soon to be decorated within and without – this due to the impressive persistence of Clive Evans and Gareth Evans who were let down on a number of occasions by people who said they would do the job then changed their minds. Things are looking good.

Jane Carpenter has painted the banner leading on to our approach road and it now bears the words CROESO WELCOME. It looks good!

Marian Littlepage

When Clive Evans approached me at one of our Chapel meetings, asking if I would take on the roll of Appointed Person for the Trebanos chapels through the resignation of Lewis Rees, I immediately said yes. As part of the newly formed team at Gellionnen our aim was to bring the chapel back up to as good a condition as we could afford; then market the chapel to try and increase our congregation. As the weeks went by and we were approached by a couple who wanted to hold their marriage service at Gellionnen, I started to get cold feet and wondered what I had let myself in for. The Couple had both been married before and both marriages had been dissolved. It was obvious they did not know where to start, so the team helped them by discussing Unitarianism and so giving them ideas of music and hymns and discussed with them what type of ceremony they would like. The next step was to ring Rev Eric Jones to see if he would conduct the marriage service. He agreed and it was left then for the couple to discuss with Eric the form the wedding service would take.

The day of the wedding dawned with me being as nervous as the Bride herself in case I did something wrong. The team had decorated the chapel a few days before and filled it with flowers, the bride brought vases of roses and the chapel looked second to none. The heavy rain had ceased and the guests started to arrive. The Bride arrived and handed over the traditional coin to Eric before crossing the gate onto chapel premises. The wedding service was informal, simple and personal. Eric Jones is to be congratulated for making it so Special. Also with Lawrence Bowen playing our newly acquired keyboard with music he had carefully chosen, everything was perfect. Thank you Lawrence. The registers were signed without a hitch, the last hymn sung, and everyone left the chapel for the formality of photographs.

We hope to see Anthony and Valerie in the near future with their wedding photographs. We are also hoping that word will get around that a Unitarian Wedding at Gellionnen is the perfect start to married life.

Sandra Beynon

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Visit to Capel Brondeifi

28th July 2013

Photographs: Keith Lewis-Jones



Parchedig Goronwy Evans



Diana Bianchi



Dilys Evans



Gwynfa Bowen, Ann Lewis, Vera Tomsett



Foreground: Dewi Owen, Win John, Pat Simpson, Marjorie Collins, Sheila & Simon Cousins. Standing: Gareth Evans, Elin Jones. Background: Ella Lewis-Jones; Joy & Tony Foster

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the *South East Wales Unitarian News* is **Saturday 26 October 2013**.

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