



## South East Wales Unitarian News

[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk) [www.ukunitarians.org.uk/sewus/](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/sewus/)



August 2017

### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September** – ‘Open Doors’ Heritage Event at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefncoed. Sat 2–4pm; Sun 2:30–5pm with a service at 6pm celebrating the 270<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the chapel’s founding.

**Sunday 10 September** – Sunday School Festival at Capel Penrhiw, Sain Ffagan.

**Sunday 8 October** – Service at Highland Place Aberdare at 4pm. Wales’s First Minister Carwyn Jones will give the address.

**Thursday 12 October** – 7pm at Highland Place, Aberdare: Lecture on ‘*Aneurin Bevan and the NHS*’ by Nick Thomas, MP for Torfaen.

**Saturday 21 October** – Copy deadline for the next issue of the District News

**Sunday 29 October** – District Service at Nottage Chapel at 11am. GA President, Rev Charles VanDenBroeder will conduct the service.

### DISTRICT RALLY

On Sunday 2 July, on a marvellously sunny morning, our coach made its way through the SE Wales valleys, along a well-planned route familiar from last year’s Rally. Starting at Taff’s Well, passengers were picked up at Cefncoed and Hirwaun. Then, with the final pick-up having been made at Llangyfelach, we headed off along the M4 towards Cross Hands.

Our journey then took us through places whose names many of us vaguely recognised but had not previously visited. We were fortunate in having Rev Eric Jones who, as our travel guide, had something interesting to say about each of them.

Our first stopping place was the village of Llangyndeyrn in the Gwendraeth Valley of Carmarthenshire where, during 1960–1964, residents organised a successful campaign against Swansea Corporation plans to build a dam to create a reservoir. As we entered the village there were crowds in the street. The question arose in our minds, ‘*How did they know we were coming? Is this, too, a protest?*’ It turned out to be a tractor festival! We disembarked and walked the short distance to Bethel Baptist Chapel, where we were joined by Ceredigion Unitarian minister Rev Cen Llwyd and Unitarian Welsh Department Secretary, Melda Grantham. On entering the chapel we were given a warm welcome by the chapel Secretary.



Bethel Baptist Chapel Llangyndeyrn Photo: Richard Law



Photo: Rory Castle-Jones

In a well-researched talk, Rev Cen Llwyd told us that, although Bethel is now a Baptist chapel, at one stage in its history the congregation had been Unitarian in its beliefs. This is affirmed by a wall inscription on the exterior of the chapel, which states that the first Unitarian minister was Rev William Thomas. William Thomas died in 1813, aged 46; after a while, his congregation died out.

Leaving Llangyndeyrn, we moved on to the National Botanic Garden of Wales at Llanarthne. Some had a picnic lunch while others availed themselves of the café facilities. Having been provided with a map showing the layout of the NBG we spent the rest of the afternoon roaming free, wandering wherever our fancy took us amidst all the many attractions on the quite extensive site. Those in our party with a mobility problem offered up a silent prayer of thanks for the 'God sent' buggies – on call to transport them to and from the more far-flung areas of the garden.

Our thanks to the Rev Eric Jones and Lis Dyson-Jones for arranging the Rally, and to Rev Cen Llwyd for his participation.

## FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Almost three months have passed since I was installed as District President. This was an occasion which I will cherish for the rest of my life. It was great to see so many people present at the ceremony. Thanks to all members of the Congregation at Cefn for letting me hold the event at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd. Thanks also for the wonderful lunch which was laid on for us and for the lovely gift which was presented to me to mark the occasion. Diolch i bawb am eich cefnogaeth.

Browsing through past issues of the SEWUS Newsletter a few weeks ago, I was amazed at the fact that although we Unitarians are a small community here in South East Wales, we are a gregarious lot, with involving ourselves in a variety of activities which help to keep the flame of Unitarianism alive. The latest initiative, which I am very keen to support, comes from the Congregation at Gellionnen.. 'The Gellionnen Pub Club' (held monthly) has met twice so far, and according to Rory Castle-Jones they are starting to get a name for themselves in the local area. Good luck to them. Perhaps we could arrange a bus trip to join them before the dark nights set in. Any takers?

Due to personal circumstances over the past two months my duties as president have to date been quite minimal. Two months ago I attended a 'Question and Answer Session on Islam' at a local Mosque. This proved to be a very interesting experience. After a short introduction to Islam, a lively discussion took place and the 50 or so guests who attended were made very welcome. It was the end of the festival of Ramadan and so we all received a copy of the Quran and a gift of a peach and dates. At the end of the evening we were all invited to join their congregation for a meal. I hope that I will have the opportunity to visit them in the near future.

Sadly, I was unable to attend the District Rally this year but I have had a good report from those who went. Thanks, in particular, to Lis Dyson-Jones and Eric for organising such a successful and enjoyable event.

I hope that my next report for SEWUS News will be a little more productive. In the meantime, I hope you will all enjoy the rest of the Summer. Let's hope that the weather improves. Indeed, for myself, I hope the weather will be dry and warm *this Saturday* (August 12) as I have promised to accompany my granddaughter Hannah to a music festival. As she informed me a while ago..."OMG Mamgu; TOM ODELL (*Scream Scream*) is appearing." I have been told by Hannah that I am to wave a placard when he appears on stage. I have asked her if I also have to scream and faint!!!! To put me in the frame of mind I shall take ear-plugs, and a bottle of wine (maybe 2 bottles) for medicinal purposes of course.

HWYL FOR NOW GYFEILLION.

*Diana Bianchi*

## GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 14 JULY 2017

### 1. Training and Education Development (TED) Project

The Executive approved a proposal to take forward the training and education project from October 2017 building upon the significant progress over the last year. The following recommendations were accepted:

1. Work with stakeholders, including the Ministry Strategy Group, in developing the Ministerial training pilot programme to begin in September 2018.
2. Continue the work of the TED Project from 1 October 2017 for the financial year 2017-18 to further develop the Framework for Lifelong Learning encompassing ministerial learning and development.
3. Set up a Foundation CIO, independent of the General Assembly, and do the preparatory work required for the Foundation ultimately taking responsibility for all Unitarian Learning and Development.
4. Allocate Next Steps funding for the costs of this development work.

A CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a new form of charity status. A detailed proposal for the governance of this development work will be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee in September 2017.

## **2. Identity**

A paper was received from Robert Ince as a follow-up to the discussion at the May EC meeting. It was acknowledged that the identity guidelines would be helpful in initiating conversations within the wider Unitarian and Free Christian community and that there would undoubtedly be a creative tension which reflected our diversity. This was positive and EC links would be seeking to involve Districts in discussions on how we saw ourselves and then how this is reflected in the way we present ourselves to the outside world.

It was agreed that professional expertise would be required if the work was to be embedded within the community and a draft job description and person specification for a temporary staff position has been requested for the September Executive Committee meeting.

## **3. 2020 Congregational Growth Project – Derby Unity**

A progress report was received from the Leadership Team of the 2020 Congregational Growth Project on Derby Unity, a initiative supported by the East Midlands District. Over the first 16 months attendance has risen to between 16-22 and a core group of 8 has formed. The learning to date has been shared at the Annual Meetings. It was recognised that to roll-out the 2020 Congregational Growth Project to other locations, which was an integral part of the original aspiration and now a “Next Steps” priority, required additional capacity and finance and this would be considered at a future EC meeting.

## **4. Grants**

The Executive Committee awarded the following grants:

- £1000 to support the forthcoming Unitarian Theology Conference at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds by funding “Faith and Freedom” journal to publish the papers that are presented. This would be a contribution to the “Next Step” priority of encouraging more Unitarian thought and writing.
- £990 to the Findhorn Unitarian Network to provide three bursaries for people in leadership roles in Unitarian societies and districts to attend the Findhorn Unitarian Experience Week in January 2018. It was also agreed that the deposit of £2856 would be paid by the General Assembly to assist with cash flow and to be repaid in December 2017. This would support the “Next Steps” priorities of encouraging collaboration with other bodies and providing enhanced training opportunities.

## **5. EC Links**

The EC links to Districts were agreed:

Marion Baker – East Cheshire and Sheffield  
Philip Colfox – Western and Southern  
Sheena McKinnon – Manchester and Yorkshire  
Lynne Readett – North East Lancashire and Merseyside  
Christina Smith – East Midlands and London and South East  
Matthew Smith – Midlands and Eastern  
Rob Whiteman – Northern and Scotland

It was acknowledged that the resignation of Gwynn Pritchard left a gap on the EC and as a link to the two Welsh Districts. As an interim measure, until the vacancy was filled, the Chief Officer will work with the Welsh Department Secretary to ensure two-way communication is maintained.

## **FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITARIAN WELSH DEPARTMENT**

The summer months are flying past and I’m delighted to see that the Unitarians are making the most of it – despite the weather. Since the last edition of the newsletter many of the congregations in both Districts have held well attended events, with a few more yet to come.

Despite finding myself in the middle of hundreds of tractors with no way of getting out, the SEWUS Rally at Llangyndeyrn eventually proved to be a very enjoyable day. The history of the chapel and its first Unitarian minister was fascinating and it was great to see that the present congregation valued it enough to uncover the plaque on the side of the building. The afternoon spent at the National Botanic Garden was also a lovely opportunity to catch up with some friends that I hadn’t seen for a while. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the day.

The following Sunday was spent walking the lanes of Ceredigion, but sadly without any friends from SEWUS this year. However, a substantial amount will have been raised for Calonnau Cymru an organisation that provides defibrillators for rural villages and communities.

The Sunday School Festival will be held this year at Sain Ffagan on September 10<sup>th</sup>. A coach will be arranged from Ceredigion and the children and young people, assisted by the Rev Wyn Thomas will be holding a service at Capel Penrhiw at 12.00 o’clock. This is an opportunity for young people from both

Districts to come together and make friends whilst enjoying themselves. If you know of any young people who would like to take part in the service, then please do let me know so that everyone can be included. I will have some parking passes—so again, if you are able to come, please let me know in good time so that I can post them out to you. I do hope that many of you will make the effort to attend this event – it's always good for both Districts to come together.

There are over 4,500 churches and chapels in Wales and Sacred Wales is giving people the opportunity to vote for their Favourite Place of Worship at the moment. The exciting news for us Unitarians is – not only is there a Unitarian chapel on the short list of 50, but that it is currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> place!! Yr Hen Gapel Llwynrhydowen is ahead of three cathedrals and has a realistic chance of winning the competition. The closing date for voting is the 31<sup>st</sup> August and we need everyone to vote. It's very simple and really only does take a minute. Go to [www.sacredwales.org.uk](http://www.sacredwales.org.uk) There will be photos of each of the churches/chapels on the short list in alphabetical order. Yr Hen Gapel is the last one. Click on the photo and a purple bar will appear inviting you to vote for it. Once you've clicked on this your vote will be counted. You may vote once on each device that you have – so get voting! This is not simply a vote for one specific chapel – it's a vote for Unitarianism and an opportunity to bring ourselves to the attention of a wider audience. Please ask your family and friends to vote too.

I hope that you enjoy the rest of the summer and that I'll see you at Sain Ffagan in September.

*Melda Grantham*

## **THOUGHT FOR NOW**

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

To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.

*Reba McEntire, (singer)*

## **ABERDARE**

### **Women's League**

We have had a busy and highly enjoyable period. At this time, Mrs Celia Evans, Mrs Dorothy Jones and Mrs Anna Williams are unwell and we wish them a speedy recovery. Mrs Margaret Slocombe has injured her foot and we hope it will mend soon.

On 31 May, we were treated to a spell-binding talk, 'Cynon Valley Hall of Fame' by Mrs Jennifer George. The topic of her talk was the life of Mr George Hall, who was related to her. I believe that every child in the valleys should hear it! George Hall came from a mining background and had to become a miner, at 12 years of age, to help his widowed mother and in spite of indifferent health, rose from being a trades union official to Chair of Mountain Ash Urban District Council.

In 1922, he was returned as Labour member for the Aberdare division of the Merthyr Borough and retained his seat with large majorities (twice unopposed). He was appointed to several government posts and eventually was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in October 1946, the year in which he was elevated to the peerage. He was the first miner to become a peer.

This brilliant and inspirational man reveals the wealth of talent within our midst, if only opportunities are made available to the children of the valleys and grasped. Here was a 'child' of the Valleys, of whom we can all be truly proud.

We have enjoyed trips, including a trip to Ebbw Vale Festival Park where members perused goods on sale and enjoyed a delicious meal! Unfortunately, our District rally trip had to be cancelled as events overtook us.

The branch in Aberdare can recommend a thoroughly delightful film entitled 'The Quartet' starring such stars as Maggie Smith and Albert Finney – poignant and funny!

On 18 June, our Women's League Sunday Service took place and it was dedicated to the victims of the appalling terrorist attacks in London and Manchester and the victims of the horrendous fire at Grenfell Towers in London. Nearly all members were able to participate in the service with its theme of 'Love and Hope.'

We have enjoyed a quiz and on another occasion, played a tape, which had belonged to the late Mrs Marian Whippey, comprising entertaining writings, which was enjoyed by all.

On July 12, we indulged in Trugareddau with diverse items, which stirred memorable experiences and happy memories. Items included a bible bestowed by Highland Place in 1932, a Wesleyan Sunday School

attendance card, with strict rules, pertaining to the same era and amusing and entertaining writings in the late Dorothy Hughes's book entitled, 'Lost in Translation.' It was a thoroughly delightful and insightful exercise.

Finally, members had a delicious end-of-year meal at The New Inn, Rhigos, which had been arranged by Mrs Christine Roberts. It was a highly pleasurable occasion, in which we delighted in the fellowship and companionship of our branch, while thinking of absent friends.

We now look forward to meeting again on September 13 to plan the autumn programme. Hope you will all enjoy the summer break!

Best Wishes

*Anne Watts*

### Highland Place Meditation Group



At Tŷ Newydd

Photo: Joy Foster



At Tŷ Newydd

Photo: Joy Foster

We are now on our summer break, even Gurus need a holiday, well this one does anyway! To celebrate our last meeting for the summer, we met to share a meal at Tŷ Newydd Country Hotel, Penderyn. It was a very pleasant occasion indeed.

Our 'Meditation & Guided Visualisation' sessions begin again on Monday September 4<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm. We look forward to a full and varied programme for the rest of the year!

*Joy Foster.*

On 25<sup>th</sup> June members of Highland Place joined with Cardiff and Cefncoed Unitarians for a Group service at the Friends Meeting House in Cardiff. Our Cardiff members gave an inspiring service. We thank them for their welcome and the lovely refreshments provided after the service.

Eight members of Highland Place joined with members across the District for this year's Rally to the chapel at Llangyndeyrn and the National Botanic Garden. It was a beautiful day and another successful and enjoyable rally. We send our thanks to Rev Cen Llwyd for not only giving an excellent talk but also for preparing some detailed notes for us. Also thank you to Eric and Lis for the arrangements. We are already looking forward to next year's rally!

We continue to have alternative Services at Highland Place, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July we held our Annual Flower Communion and All Present Service. Rev Eric Jones took the service and it was very well attended.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> July, we had a very different service. We assembled in the schoolroom where Rev Eric Jones lit our chalice and read a prayer then it was 'lights out' and we all settled down for a viewing of the DVD of the Opening Ceremony at this year's GA. It was well received, with plenty of home-made popcorn supplied by Joy.

Our members continue to give generously to the Merthyr Cynon Food Bank. Joy and Tony Foster delivered donations on 1<sup>st</sup> August and the staff were very grateful as food stocks are running low in all food banks, mainly due to the school holidays, with parents having to provide daily lunches at home.

Our thoughts are with Marian Lewis of Trecynon who is unwell and is now in a care home in Aberdare.

A group of Prague Unitarians visited Capel Penrhiw on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July. Rev Eric Jones gave a talk on the history of the chapel. The visitors had spent the previous day and evening as guests of Nottage Chapel.

### Two important dates for your diaries:

We have a very special Service on **8<sup>th</sup> October at 4pm**, when **First Minister Carwyn Jones** will give an address. Please come along and join us at Highland Place for this unique Service.

The postponed Highland Place Annual Lecture on **Aneurin Bevan and the NHS** will now take place on **12<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm**. The speaker will be **Nick Thomas, MP for Torfaen**. Everyone is welcome.

Our congratulations go to.....

Lauren, granddaughter of Anne and Alun Watts for gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> in Archaeology at Liverpool University.

Dafydd Jones, grandson of Anne and Eric Jones for a distinction in Grade 8 Piano.

Menna Jones, granddaughter of Anne and Eric Jones for a distinction in Grade 1 Piano.

Mali Jones, granddaughter of Anne and Eric Jones for a distinction in Grade 2 Harp.

Congratulations and Well Done to you all!

*Tony Foster*

## **CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD**

It was good to welcome members of Highland Place Aberdare and Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Cefncoed to a joint service in June. The sun shone as members of the Cardiff Worship Group presented their support of 'Sustainable Living'. Sharing worship and fellowship after the service gave the opportunity to meet up with old friends.

It has been good to see Win John and Marjorie Collins attend services as often as they are able but Win has been rather poorly during the past couple of weeks. We send our warmest wishes to her for a speedy recovery.

Carrie Boyce is back from her year teaching English in Spain and has had a busy summer teaching English to students in Chester. She has attended a dance retreat in Holland and will be attending a drama training course in Walton on Thames in the near future. She's a busy girl.

There are two UNA Cardiff and District meetings in October:-

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October on 'Fair Votes and Electoral Reform' when the speakers will be Jessica Blair of the Electoral Reform Society, Dawn Boden, AM for Merthyr and Rhymney and David Melding AM.

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October on 'Balfour Declaration of 1917: Britain, Palestine and Israel' given by Professor Avi Shlaim and Kamel Hawwash.

We all look forward to summer holidays and as people travel far from home in search of new adventures and experiences it may be worth noting that although we think most of the world speaks our language, we often find that they don't. Sometimes, things get lost in translation, as this notice seen in a Japanese taxi shows: '*Safety First! Please put on your seatbelt and prepare for an accident!*'. Then there are the notices in hotels: '*Suggestive views from every window*' (Amalfi, Italy) and one from Las Palmas, Canary Islands '*If you telephone for room service you will get the answer you deserve!*'. Happy holidays to everyone and may your sense of humour never leave you!

Something to remember '*If there are brambles on the path, go around them.*' (Marcus Aurelius)

*Lis Dyson-Jones*

## **CEFNCOED**

### **Women's League**

We very much enjoyed the talk on the Windsor Royal Family given by Anne Watts, Highland Place on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Anne unearthed a few skeletons—buried, not in the Hen Dŷ Cwrdd graveyard, but in Royal cupboards. Not least among the 'secrets' were those linking Edward, Duke of Windsor with Nazi Germany.

On 12<sup>th</sup> July, eight of us boarded a minibus and headed out of Cefn on the country road that leads through the Brecon Beacons National Park to Talybont-on-Usk, and on its way passes Pontsticill Reservoir. Our destination was the Old Barn at Ystradgynwyn, Torpantau, just beyond the reservoir. It is a beautiful 18<sup>th</sup>-century barn, now converted into a Tea Room with vintage furniture, and it serves great cream teas! The food was excellent, with plenty of choice: the fresh, double-sized, scones with heaps of cream were irresistible and scrumptious!

We then moved outside for a short stroll and an alfresco ice-cream. The only intrusion on the peaceful surroundings was the pleasant sound of a steam locomotive happily chuff-chuffing along on the narrow-gauge line, making its way to nearby Torpantau Station—the northern terminus of the Brecon Mountain Railway. Like the train, we, too, were chuffed – quite pleased with ourselves that we'd managed to pick such a marvellous day for our trip into the countryside. The weather was perfect and the scenery spot on. A good time was had by all.

## **Sadness**

As was briefly reported in the June newsletter, Megan Lewis, a faithful, respected and well-liked member of our congregation, died on 12 June. Megan's funeral took place on 21 June and was conducted by the Rev Eric Jones. The service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd was followed by burial at Cefncoed Cemetery. We extend our sympathy to Julie in her sadness at the loss of her mother so soon after the death of her father Roy. We also offer our condolences to other members of Megan's family.

## **Flower service**

Following the request made by Czech Unitarians that the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the original Flower Communion founded by Rev Dr Norbert Čapek be celebrated globally, we held a Flower Service on 11 June conducted by members of the congregation, with everyone participating in some way. It is many years since we last held such a service, so for some members it was their first experience. It was enjoyed by all.

## **Out and About**

On Sunday 25 June, despite a road closure causing us some confusion, we arrived on time at the Friends Meeting House, Cardiff to join Aberdare and Cardiff Unitarians for a Joint Service, led by the Cardiff Worship Group, on the theme 'Sustainable Living'. The service was meaningful and much appreciated. Our thanks to the Cardiff congregation for their hospitality and the tasty buffet provided.

On the following Sunday, 2 July, we were again away from home—this time off on the District Rally. After the coach picked up the Cardiff contingent at Taffs Well we were to be next. 'Straightforward,' you might say, except that one of our members – not used to such an early start to the day! – arrived at the appointed time and pick-up spot and climbed aboard the waiting coach, only to discover that it was bound for a Jazz Band Festival! Shamefacedly, he quickly removed himself and waited for the correct coach to arrive, which it did a moment or so later. Then we were off to pick up the Aberdare contingent and others along the way. We had a marvellous day—but I (yes it was ME) must remember my kazoo for the next Rally!

## **Congratulations**

We are very pleased to hear that Emily Farmer has successfully completed the second year of her law degree course at Swansea University, gaining two "Firsts" and two "Two-ones." Emily is the granddaughter of Vera and Paddy Tomsett,

## **Birthday Wishes**

Happy Birthday to Margaret Edwards who was 93 on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Margaret, with her apparently boundless energy, puts many of us younger ones to shame. Well done Margaret!

*Ken Morgan*

## **NOTTAGE**

Jean Thomas has a small family now, but is justifiably proud of them. Never more so than now, of her nephew, Iolo Edger. Iolo is a jeweller in Bridgend, and was invited to make the crown for the Urdd Eisteddfod, which was held in Pencoed this year. She tells me that she tried it on.....but we don't have photographic evidence of that!! Llongyfarchiadau Iolo!

I hope June Pattimore will forgive me for telling you all that she has just celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! It was very disappointing that on the day Lewis was not well enough to conduct the service, especially as all of June's family came to chapel with her, but Reverend Eric Jones kindly filled in, and the whole congregation was treated to birthday cake before the family crossed the village green for lunch. Many happy returns June.

Janet Hales is a very good gardener, and particularly so of Sweet Peas. When Janet, who lives in Carmarthen, last came to chapel she brought with her a lovely example, and after the flowers had filled the chapel with their distinct smell, she gave them to June to take home, thank you Janet.

The 'poorly bug' has continued to hit our small congregation. We were all shocked and saddened by Lewis's latest illness, and, added to that, both June and Harry have had operations which have kept them at home. We miss them and send them all our Best Wishes for a full, speedy, recovery.

We would like to extend our sympathy to the family of George De Gay who died recently, and to Marian Littlepage whose brother-in-law, Colin, has also passed away. God Bless.

We ended the month on a 'high'!! Nottage hosted a group of nine Czech Unitarians, for the last two nights of their whistle-stop UK tour. What a delight they were to meet—a group of mixed-age Unitarians who just wanted to “see it all.” We introduced them to fish & chips on Friday evening. This was received in silence, and I was wondering what else we could give them to eat – they had spent all day battling the Friday traffic from Hucklow and were clearly hungry – but they soon got the hang of it! When they gave me a box of chips back I thought it was for the food waste, but they asked me to keep it for their breakfast .... and they *did* eat them then! The response to a trifle I had made was similar, until they tried it: after they left on Sunday morning the bowl was clean! One of the ladies – who all had good English – told me we had ‘overfed’ them: it was a pleasure, they were all so friendly and appreciative.

On Saturday, ten of us from Nottage took them to St Fagan`s for the day. At Capel Penrhiw, we were joined by Rev Eric Jones, with Joy and Tony Foster. Eric gave a really interesting talk on the history of Penrhiw, and Unitarians in Wales in general, which was well received. One of the ladies later told me, “he spoke the kind of English we could understand.” Diolch, Eric. The rest of the day was spent with them exploring houses and the castle & gardens, without exception they loved it, and were so pleased to have had the opportunity. Our thanks go to Lewis for arranging such a life-enriching experience for Nottage congregation. I also thank Jeff for arranging the bus, and weeding outside the chapel, Helen for her cake baking – which they raved about! – and Jean and Jonathan for their help in all the necessary preparation. Diolch.



Hosts and visitors together at Capel Penrhiw

Photo: Joy Foster

*Avril Protheroe*

## **SWANSEA**

The Swansea congregation hopes everyone is enjoying the summer. The entrance to our church is looking very attractive with the overflowing hanging baskets and pots of colourful bedding plants lining the path. Our thanks to Lynn for all his efforts at making our church look so attractive to all.

It is holiday season for many of our congregations as they travel to far flung places, Greece, Croatia, cruises and even Builth Wells for the Royal Welsh Show! We hope everyone enjoys their holidays.

Four of our congregation attended the District Rally and enjoyed themselves very much. Both the visit to the old chapel and to the National Botanical Garden was a really good experience. Thanks to everyone who organised the trip.

Gellionnen and Swansea Congregations are enjoying closer co-operation, with members from both churches attending social occasions and services at both. In present times it is nice to support each other's ventures.

We wish all our churches and chapels good fellowship and togetherness.

*Hilda Dumbleton*

## **TREBANOS**

### **GELLIONNEN**

As we do each year, we have watched the rising of the larks and the return of the swallows.

Congratulations to Jane Jenkins and Robert Bevan who were married here by the Rev Eric Jones. We wish you much happiness. Birthday wishes go to Rhys and Rory Castle Jones – both thirty. These two people have made a huge difference to the life of the chapel. They are always ready to get involved, they have taken a number of services and are responsible for the setting up of our own collection point for the

Pontardawe Food Bank. Congratulations to Siân Evans, she was recently presented with her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award at Buckingham Palace by Tim Rhys Evans.

It is good to have Mair Evans back with us after her knee operation. Mary Stone has given us a lovely wooden bowl from the home of her late mother, we shall treasure it. Our sincere condolences go to Dolores Morgan whose husband Colin, a lifelong member of Gellionnen and Graig chapels died in June. Dolores has always supported us and our thoughts are with her.

The trip to Tenby was a great success despite persistent rain. The sixteen-seater bus was very comfortable and once there we consumed coffee and cake, fish and chips and good beer. There is always something to do in Tenby.

We were recently delighted to have a visit from our "old" treasurer Gareth Evans. Gareth and Sheila now attend service in Ditchling Meeting House.

Several of us joined in the District Rally. It was good to meet with the Rev Cen Llwyd in the Baptist Chapel, Llangyndeyrn, and interesting to learn of the early Unitarian minister who served there. He might so easily have been forgotten in the dim and dusty past. We were made very welcome by the chapel secretary and saw the memorial stone of the Rev William Thomas. So he has not been forgotten after all.

Our journey continued to the Botanic Garden. The sun shone, there were many, many visitors but no feeling of overcrowding and an, all pervading, air of calm and pure pleasure.

A recent "open Sunday" was arranged by Julie Nedin and Lawrence Bowen, when Lawrence took us through a few of the hymns not known to us in the purple hymn book and the Perlau Moliant Newydd. We are getting better and Lawrence is very encouraging. We are also learning a beautiful sung version of the Irish Blessing written by Lawrence (originally in four parts) for the Trebanos Mixed Choir.

Many good wishes to June and Arthur Grist who have celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Arthur and son Andrew were the two who waved their magic wands and put back together our badly damaged pulpit when we were vandalised some years ago. At first sight the pulpit looked as though it had been totally destroyed.

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September we are to hold a Gellionnen Open Day. This is for those who would like to see the inside of our grade-two listed building but do not wish to attend service. There will be a cup of tea available and a treasure hunt for anyone under a certain age.

*Marian Littlepage*

## **WICK**

The funeral service for Ruby Key was held in our chapel on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Ruby was the last of the Escott family from Brooklands Farm, long time members of our chapel. She had lovely stories to tell of chapel and village life when she was young. In later years she lived in Newport, finally near her daughter in Hertfordshire. It was her dearest wish to be buried in Wick. Julianne conducted the service in our chapel with readings from her son-in-law and granddaughter and then at Coychurch Crematorium. Her ashes will be scattered in chapel during August. A wonderful lady who will be sadly missed.

Wick congregation is now on its annual break for the month of August. This has taken place since the chapel's inauguration, being in a farming community with all the chapel's members at the outset, being involved in Harvest proceedings they were needed to bring in the Harvest. They then celebrated with a great Harvest Thanksgiving Service in September. We continue with our Harvest Thanksgiving on September 10<sup>th</sup>, not with standing room only as in our early days, but hopefully with a larger than usual congregation.

We *did* have a very good number at chapel in our July service. We were so pleased to welcome Rachel Dodd (née Board) home for a short holiday from Australia with her young daughter Eliza. Rachel has been coming to chapel since a very young girl and always delighted us with her contributions to our services. Our average was greatly reduced on this occasion with so many young and very young worshippers and they all took part in some way. A lovely service.

We send our best wishes to Dilys Loman, sister of our treasurer Mansel Lalis. She is hoping to leave hospital and Mansel is in London with her.

We were delighted to welcome Joy and Tony Foster to our service, it was their first visit and luckily the weather was kind, they returned home via Ogmores to enjoy the wonderful view of the coast.

*Julianne Morgan*

## MEN'S GROUP

It was a very hot summer's day in June when we met up at Pont Nedd Fechan for a walk along the waterfall trail. It was a leisurely stroll following the old rail track above the river which leads to the site of an old munitions factory. Unfortunately, we didn't see any waterfalls due to time constraints and a booked table waiting for us at the Angel Hotel. Whilst eating our meal, a member of Aberdare Women's League entered the pub. We are still not quite sure if she was a spy on a mission to see if we were behaving ourselves.

In July, we met for the last time before our summer break. The destination was St Mabon's church, Llanfabon near Nelson. The church floor under the pews was recently renovated for some modernisation when central heating was installed. Underneath the floor were found the remains of 103 individuals. Their identity remains a mystery, but their remains still lie under the floor. It was interesting to see that a supply of bottled spring water and a bowl of apples were placed in the church for visitors to help themselves. Lunch followed at the 15th century Llanfabon Inn which is opposite the church.

We hope to restart our travels in September. If there are any men in the District who would like to join us, please let us know, you will be most welcome.

*Tony Foster*

### **'INDISPENSABLE MAN'**

By Saxon White Kessinger (1959)

Sometime when you're feeling important;  
Sometime when your ego's in bloom  
Sometime when you take it for granted  
You're the best qualified in the room,

Sometime when you feel that your going  
Would leave an unfillable hole,  
Just follow these simple instructions  
And see how they humble your soul

Take a bucket and fill it with water,  
Put your hand in it up to the wrist,  
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining  
Is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You can splash all you wish when you enter  
You may stir up the water galore  
But stop and you'll find that in no time  
It looks quite the same as before

The moral of this quaint example  
Is do just the best that you can,  
Be proud of yourself but remember  
There's no indispensable man.

[We are grateful to Lis Dyson-Jones for bringing this to our notice.  
Clearly, it was written before language became more gender-sensitive.]

## DISTRICT RALLY PHOTO GALLERY



We're on our way.

Photo: Rory Castle-Jones



Photo: Rory Castle-Jones

Rev Eric Jones, Alun Watts, Rev Cen Llwyd, Lis Dyson-Jones and Tony Foster in the 'Sêr Fawr' at Bethel Baptist Chapel, Llangydeyrn.



In the Butterfly House at NBG.

Photo: Joy Foster

Some butterflies conceal themselves using camouflage. Even so, Arthur Saunders –camera at the ready– seems to have spotted one. But, can YOU spot Marian, Arthur's wife?



### The Meditation Fellowship

**Retreat Weekend**  
3rd to 5th November  
at  
Sarum College, Salisbury

For further information contact:  
Richard Bober (Leader) 0788 4251294  
Alf Withington (Bookings) 01942 733559  
or email: [alfwithington@gmail.com](mailto:alfwithington@gmail.com)

### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the South East Wales Unitarian News: **Saturday, 21 October 2017.** Items for publication should be sent to:- [kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net](mailto:kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net) or Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil. CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016