



August 2018

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 25 August – Unitarians join Pride Cymru parade in Cardiff.

Saturday & Sunday, 8 & 9 September – To celebrate its 271st Anniversary, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefncoedycymer will be open to the public as part of Cadw's 'Open Doors' event. Saturday: 2–4pm; Sunday: 2.30–5pm, with a service at 6pm.

Sunday 9 September – 2pm at Capel Penrhiw, Sain Fagan. Talk by Rev Gen Llwyd: "Porthi'r corff a phorthiant i'r enaid," (*Feeding the body and nourishment for the soul.*) Translation facility available.

Saturday 20 October – Copy deadline for the next issue of the District News.

DISTRICT RALLY



(Most of us) gathered outside the Visitor Information Centre

Photo: Rory Castle Jones

The 2018 Annual District Rally was to Dinefwr Park, a country estate near Llandeilo in Carmarthenshire. The 800 acre park is now a National Trust property. After a succession of extremely hot sunny days it was a relief, on Sunday 1 July, to have a more temperate day with the temperature down to a comfortable level.

After arriving at our destination at around 2pm we went our separate ways for a couple of hours, following some of the park's walks – viewing the ruined medieval castle or uncovering the secrets of the 17th century Newton House, or even getting up close to the very rare White Park Cattle.

We all got together again at Newton House for tea at 4 o'clock, before departing at 5pm.

Despite some delay on the return journey, with road traffic slowed down due to the Swansea Air Show, the day was most enjoyable. Our thanks to Lis Dyson-Jones and Rev Eric Jones for arranging the trip.

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

It has been a glorious Summer for sun worshipers but not so good for farmers and gardeners. It is going to be a poor harvest (so they said on the news) which means that there is a possibility that the price of vegetables will go up. As far as my own allotment is concerned I have had a good crop of peas, tomatoes and potatoes, but my runner beans and onions are a total disaster. Never mind – better luck next year hopefully.

On June 10th the Welsh Service at Penrhiw Chapel in St Fagans was very successful. The service was led by Dylan Iorwerth who delivered a dramatized history of the “Lockout” at Llwynrhydowen Chapel following the 1868 General Election when the tenant farmers were evicted from their farms by Tory landlords for the reason that they had cast their vote to the Liberal candidate. There will be another service at Penrhiw on September 9th when Y Parchedig Cen Llwyd will lead the service and talk about the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. I look forward very much to that service.

Sunday July 1st, was another glorious day – perfect for the SEWUS Rally, set to visit Dinefwr Country Park. I did not travel on the bus as I was already in West Wales. I was at Aberaeron on the Saturday evening for the 200th anniversary celebrations commemorating those farmers and their families (all from the same community) who, in 1818, sailed from Aberaeron to Liverpool where they boarded a ship which took them to a new life in America. I travelled down the following day to Llandeilo and arrived just in time to join everyone for afternoon tea. Everyone enjoyed the trip and our thanks go to Y Parchedig Eric Jones and Lis Dyson-Jones for organising the trip. Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi.

This week I have caught the No 8 bus each morning to take me to the National Eisteddfod which is taking place this year at Cardiff Bay. The weather has been dry and sunny which is very unusual. A visit to the Eisteddfod usually involves kitting up with an umbrella, a mackintosh and wellingtons. To-day the Welsh Unitarians hosted a lecture at the Welsh Senedd where Professor Prys Morgan (Rhodri Morgan’s brother) gave a lecture on the 1868 General Election, the lockout at Llwynrhydowen, and the impact that had on Welsh Politics from then on till the present day.

Lastly. Our deepest sympathy goes to members of the Congregation of Cardiff Unitarians and the families of Mrs Winifred John and Mr Gareth Evans – two long standing and faithful members of the congregation and who died recently. They will be sorely missed.

Diana Bianchi

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITARIAN WELSH DEPARTMENT

*Cyfarchion o'r Eisteddfod!
Greetings from the Eisteddfod!*

Thank you to Bronwen, Diana, Eric, Sarah and Stephen who have already helped out on the Unitarians Wales stand, and to Rhys and Rory who will both do a shift on Saturday. Today is the day Professor Prys Morgan will deliver a lecture in the Senedd building on our behalf, which is very exciting.

In a fortnight’s time we will be down in Cardiff again for the Pride Cymru march. There are a few places remaining, so please let me or Rory know as soon as possible, as the final arrangements for t-shirts etc will be made as soon as the Eisteddfod is over.

There follows a third visit to Cardiff – this time to Sain Ffagan on the 9th September. Undodiaid Cymru will be holding a service at Capel Penrhiw at 2 o’clock, led by the Rev Cen Llwyd. Entitled “Porthi’r corff a phorthiant i’r enaid,” (*Feeding the body and nourishment for the soul,*) you will hear the tales of those Unitarians who have influenced lives by utilising their freedom of thought to follow their conscience and be tolerant of others. It will be a Welsh language event, but there will be translation equipment available. If you require a parking ticket for the event, there will be a few available. It will be a case of ‘first come, first served’, so please do get in touch ASAP.

May you enjoy the rest of this glorious summer, and please do try and attend at least one of the events that Unitarians Wales have arranged in the SEWUS area.

Melda Grantham

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

Humans have never been so unhappy as at this moment, when we are accumulating so much.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane

ABERDARE

Women's League

I am pleased to report that Celia Evans is back in our ranks once more, which delighted all members. Dorothy Jones is unwell and we hope that her condition will improve sufficiently to allow her to join our meetings, once more. Diane Jones has not been well at times but soldiers on. Betty Evans' mobility is improving. The stoicism of our members through adversity can only be admired.

Following a very enjoyable group luncheon at the New Inn in Rhigos on 30th May, the next time we met was on 6th June. On that date and 11th July, we were enthralled to hear a talk by Mr Phibben on bee-keeping and on the latter date, he brought along his potions, lotions and of course, pure honey, which he sold to members.

On June 13th, we had a relaxed afternoon listening to members' choice of music. Our Women's League's Service on 17th June was awe-inspiring to those who took part and to the congregation as the lives and exploits of inspirational 'Unitarian Women' were conveyed. Many thanks to Lis Dyson-Jones, who organised the service and supplied the readings. Also, we are grateful to Joy Foster for her Suffragette banner and accessories in Suffragette colours, which added to the spirit of the event.

On Tuesday, 19 June, our District Rally was a real treat! In conjunction with the members of Cefncoed Women's League Branch and friends, we visited the town of Ludlow. The weather was glorious as we explored the bustling, pretty, historic town centre, with its 11th century Castle and admired the beautiful countryside of south Shropshire and the Welsh Marches. It was certainly a day to remember.

On 27th June, I gave a talk on 'Beatrix Potter' with her prestigious Unitarian roots. I told the story of a lonely Victorian child, whose heart was in Nature and whose many pets were her closest friends. They inspired '*The Tale of Peter Rabbit*' and the rest is history. Unknown to many, Beatrix Potter was a talented scientist but her expertise was ignored or rejected by male only scientific institutions, until after her death. Their loss was our gain as generations of children have delighted in her stories ever since. My talk was much appreciated.

On 4th July, we enjoyed the entertaining 'La La Land' film as the speaker had to cancel due to unforeseen circumstances.

We had a real treat on 11th July when Mrs Jennifer George delivered a talk, which had several titles including 'Save the Best for Last.' She inspired us all by giving us two examples of people, who began their world-wide success in retirement and in 'old age.' Her first example was Geoffrey Chaucer, who began writing his universally-acclaimed 'The Canterbury Tales', when he was retired. He has been given the accolade of being recognised as 'The Father of English Literature,' no mean feat in his old age! The talk was enhanced by the reading of an extract from 'The Canterbury Tales.'

Mrs George then introduced us to a most inspirational artist, Anna Mary Robertson Moses, (known as Grandma Moses), who became a renowned American folk artist in her 80s. Mrs George circulated copies of Grandma Moses' delightful paintings, which appealed to all of us, as it illustrated ordinary life in America in a gifted yet simple manner.

These individuals, who successfully began a stellar career at an advanced age, give hope to those of us, of a certain age, that our best is yet to come!! We were certainly encouraged by this marvellous talk.

In addition to our monthly Sepsis Project collections, it was decided to hold a sepsis fundraising event, a 'Strawberries and Cream Tea with Bubbles' on 25th July. The weather was absolutely glorious for the tea and it was well-attended. A total of £210 was raised thanks to the efforts of our members, including the waitressing skills of Joan Harlow and particular thanks to Joy Foster, who purchased the cake. Well done everyone involved!

We look forward to our summer break and meeting again on September 12th to plan another diverse and interesting programme.

Have a relaxing summer break!

Best Wishes to all,

Anne Watts

On June 17th, our Women's League held their Annual Service. It was an excellent service on famous Unitarian Women and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We were delighted to welcome Professor Robin Atfield to deliver the Annual Lecture on June 28th. Despite it being a very hot evening, the Football World Cup on television and the Cwmbach Male Voice Choir performing in the Country Park it was a well-attended event.

Those present enjoyed Robin's talk on the importance of doing what we can to protect the Earth and the environment. A lively discussion followed, and Anne Watts gave the vote of thanks. Light refreshments were served in the hall afterwards

Ten members from Highland Place joined with members from across the District for our Annual Rally. The destination was Dinewr Castle and Newton House in Llandeilo. It was a very enjoyable afternoon with the chance of viewing the castle, the house, the herds of deer and the famous white cattle. Did anyone notice the tree with a door in the trunk? Our thanks to Lis Dyson-Jones for arranging the trip.

Our Flower Service and All Present Service was held on July 15th and was led by Rev Eric Jones. It was a very well attended service and it was good to see some old friends present. Members of the congregation brought posies of flowers which were collected at the beginning and redistributed at the end of the service. So, everyone took home flowers that were brought by someone else. Members were invited to sign a sheet of paper to show their presence and support for Highland Place, which was then inserted in to the Church Records Book.

Our weekly activities, Coffee Morning, Meditation and Women's League have been suspended for the month of August so that everyone can recharge their batteries ready for the return in September.

Tony Foster

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

As I write this we are preparing for the National Eisteddfod to descend on us here in the capital. It will be another busy time in an always busy city, and some of us from Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd are supporting the Unitarian stall down the Bay during the week. It will be another good opportunity to engage with the city and its visitors, something I am often doing as pioneer minister.

Unfortunately this has been a sad time for us here in Cardiff as two of our members have died in recent weeks. Gareth Evans and Win John were both long time members who contributed a great deal. We shall miss them and we send all our condolences and love to their families.

It was good to join with Unitarians across Wales for a Welsh language service at Penrhiw Chapel, at St Fagans Museum on 10th June. The service commemorated the ejection and the 1868 election.

As part of my pioneer ministry I spend a lot of my time supporting movements for justice and peace in Cardiff. As part of this ministry I joined with other members and friends of the congregation in the Wales Together Against Trump demonstration on 12th July. We stood together as many diverse people against racism, Islamophobia, and other prejudices (I was due to go to the protest in London too, but the bus I was booked on was cancelled at the last minute). As Unitarians we continue to stand for a diverse and inclusive Wales where all are welcome.

On that note, I shall end on a quote by L R Knost, that we recently shared on our Facebook page, "Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you."

Stephen Lingwood

CEFNCOED

Women's League

We very much enjoyed the talk given by Mrs Pat Evans, of Aberdare WL Branch, on 30 May: her subject was the composer and musical impresario Andrew Lloyd Webber. Pat played recordings of some of Lloyd Webber's hit songs giving us the opportunity to join in, enthusiastically singing along to well known favourites such as "Don't cry for me Argentina" and "Any Dream Will Do," etc.

Our annual Women's League service was held on Sunday, 10 June. The service, which incorporated a Flower Service, was conducted by League members who presented readings by female writers. We were reminded that a bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower and our congregation would not be the same without each and every member.

On Tuesday, 19 June, together with members of the Aberdare WL branch, we boarded a coach for a trip to the Market Town of Ludlow. The weather was kind (proving the sun shines on the righteous?) and we had a nice time looking around the town. Our thanks to Marlene Aubrey for arranging the trip.

Nothing says summer like strawberries and cream – so, on Wednesday, 25 July, we celebrated the glorious weather and indulged ourselves with just such a treat. Scrumptious!

With members being on holiday we have decided to have a short break from meetings during August.

Out and about

Eleven of us from Hen Dŷ Cwrdd joined the District Rally to the Dinefwr Estate at Llandeilo on 1 July and very much enjoyed meeting district friends, both old and new. We were also particularly pleased to have the chance of a lengthy chat with Mr and Mrs Lyndon Harris over coffee in the Newton House café. Lyndon and Margaret now live in Llandeilo and came along to Dinefwr for the afternoon specially to meet up with us. Lyndon is a descendent of Siôn Llewelyn, a leading member of the band of worshippers who founded our chapel in 1747.

Sadness

We were sad to hear of the death of Gareth Evans and of Win John, who were members of the Cardiff congregation. Two of our members attended Win's funeral at Thornhill Crematorium on 1 August.

Congratulations

We are very pleased to hear that Emily Farmer was awarded First Class Honours on the completion of her degree studies at Swansea University. Emily, who is the granddaughter of Vera and Paddy Tomsett, plans to remain at Swansea for another year in furtherance of her aim to become a solicitor. We send her our very best wishes for the future.

Birthday Wishes

Happy Birthday to Margaret Edwards who was 94 on 2nd August. Margaret has been a little unwell recently but we are pleased to report that she is now getting back to her usual sprightly self.

Ken Morgan

SWANSEA

Our building has again taken much of our time.

We are getting further advice to try to sort out the damp problems before committing ourselves to considerable expenditure. Harry the hawk is now on the scaffolding scaring the pigeons and seagulls from the front of the church. We now need a Henrietta to scare them from the back. We have decided to employ a professional to decorate the foyer of the church and invest in some new flooring to improve the entrance. The church members have agreed to paint the vestry themselves.

We have resubmitted the application for same-sex marriages and hopefully (third time lucky) we may be successful. We do have a provisional booking for a same-sex marriage in February from a couple living in High Street.

We are holding a free concert on October 6th with a Unitarian Drag artist as the starring role. Sion is the support act. An invitation is offered to all the people in our District. Please support us in this venture.

Two of our congregation visited the eisteddfod in Cardiff. What a fantastic event and the Unitarian Tent had a pleasing presence there.

Swansea Congregation sends good wishes to all in the District.

Hilda Dumpleton

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

Of late we have had occasion to sing Happy Birthday three times. We sang for Rory Castle Jones, Rhian Jones, and then for Lawrence Bowen's eightieth birthday. Lawrence has been deeply involved with the music of Gellionnen and Graig Chapels since he was a child and chose to teach music as a career. He founded the Graig Chapel Choir, which quickly became a local community choir, and on the Sunday that we gave him a small token of our thanks there were six present at the service who had at various times been choir members. There was Monica Bowen, Clive and Mair Evans, Rhian Jones, Marian Littlepage and Megan Price. Lawrence took us through from the music of Palestrina up to Karl Jenkins. It was a huge learning curve and we thank him for his patience and dedication.

We had our "Blowaway Barbecue" on 28th July. After weeks of scorching sun the rain came and our awning almost blew away. Many thanks to our neighbours from Spa House, Andy and his father Roy Farrell, who arrived with a super big barbie, and to those who supplied delicious dishes of food. Members of our Swansea Church braved the elements to support us and we also had a few visitors.

The graveyard has had another tidy-up with many thanks to a vigorous group of helpers. Martyn Edwards has strimmed for several years and of course we now have Rory Castle Jones taking a historic interest in the gravestones. Our windows have been cleaned in readiness for a forthcoming wedding which will be registered by our deputy registrar, Rhys Castle Jones.

Our Tenby trip was delightful, we can recommend an excellent fish and chip shop. The District visit to Dinefwr Park and Newton House was a new experience to several of us and much enjoyed.

Congratulations to Jac Evans Mason who has won an award from the Mark Jermyn Drama School for best comedy act. Jac played Edna in the musical *Hairspray*.

Claire Smith is back home and recovering fast from her kidney transplant operation. Claire was one of our Llanmadoc campers and at that time would have come to Llanmadoc with the Nottage contingent.

Our visitors' book shows that in the last two months we have been visited by folk from Amsterdam, the Caribbean, Wreccsam and Somerset.

Sadly, not all news is good news. For a short while we enjoyed the company at service of Iona Hilldrep. Iona died in July and we convey our deepest sympathy to her husband Simon and their young family Aurian and Iona. Iona's funeral service took place in North Wales but many local friends wished to meet together here at the time of service. Martyn opened the chapel doors for the occasion. Iona, we shall miss you.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

We have been experimenting with new service formats and at a recent service we brought a 'treasure' to share. We had a wide variety of hymns, objects, photographs, memories, poems, events, readings, happy and some sad stories which made up an unusual and moving worship experience.

During a recent service, we were interrupted by a local farmer who was unable to get his tractor and large trailer past our parked cars. Five cars had to be driven round the village green to accommodate him. This could only happen at a village chapel.

On our last Sunday before our August break, I had to stop my car just past the St Bride's village pond to allow a peacock to stroll – literally – across the lane. He even stopped half way across and gave me a hard stare. He was a beautiful bird, and slowly walked on and disappeared into the lane behind the village Inn. We decided it could only happen in our chapel.

Our next service will be our Harvest Thanksgiving on Sunday 9th September at 3.00pm. As usual our offerings will be for the Bridgend Food Bank.

Julianne Morgan

MEN'S GROUP

The Men's group have made two visits since the last District News. In June we travelled to the National Museum in Cardiff. A pleasant few hours were spent touring the exhibitions before taking lunch in the museum restaurant. The main exhibition is the 'Evolutions of Wales' from the very beginning of time to the present day. The story begins with the Big Bang and takes you on a 4,600 million year journey including dinosaurs and woolly mammoths. This is an excellent exhibition and if you haven't been, it is well worth visiting.

In July we travelled to the Garwnant visitors' centre in the forestry at the northern end of Llwynon reservoir, just a couple of miles from Cefncoed. After coffee we went to the reservoir to view Pont Ar Dâf bridge, which was the route the old road from Merthyr to Penderyn followed.

The bridge is normally submerged, but after the heatwave we've had this summer the water level is so low the bridge is visible and has been featured in a number of TV news reports recently. This is the site of the hamlet of Ynysyfelin.

There were two pubs, a school, a woollen mill, some small holdings and Bethel chapel, all of which were submerged in 1924, beneath the Llwynon Reservoir. The New Bethel Chapel was built at the side of the A470 overlooking the reservoir. Bethel is the family chapel of Margaret Griffiths (Phil's wife).

Your intrepid adventurers weren't content with looking from the roadside, we climbed over the stile and down to the bridge to make a closer inspection. It is still quite sturdy after 94 years under water as can be seen from the photograph. Our venue for lunch was the nearby Nant Ddu Lodge.

Tony Foster



Pont ar Dâf (*Bridge on the Tâf*)



Arthur, Ken, Eric, Tony, Alun, Bill and Phil

PICTURE GALLERY

VISIT TO DINEFWR PARK Courtesy Rory Castle Jones





ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the South East Wales Unitarian News: **Saturday, 20 October 2018.**
Items for publication should be sent to:- kenneth.morgan25@talktalk.net or
Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016.