



South East Wales Unitarian News

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June 2016

FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday, 3rd July – District Rally to Llwynrhydowen and Pantydefaid. (See details below.)

Saturday, 6 August – copy deadline for the District News.

Sunday, 21st August – Folk Service at Gellionnen at 10.30 am.

DISTRICT RALLY (Information)

Sunday, 3rd July – Visit to Llwynrhydowen and Pantydefaid.

Pick up points: Cardiff (at Pontypridd) 9.45am; Cefncoed c.10.05am; Aberdare (at Hirwaun) c.10.20am;

Swansea, Nottage and Trebanos (at Llangyfelach roundabout) c.10.45am.

Coach (subsidised) £5. Lunch at the village of Ffostrasol (cost around £12, depending on your order.)

Following lunch we visit Llwynrhydowen Heritage Centre – the Unitarian chapel whose congregation was locked out by the Landowner after the General Election of 1868: the minister at the time was Rev Gwilym Marles, the great uncle of Dylan Thomas

Then on to Pantydefaid chapel for a service at 3.30pm conducted by Rev Wyn Thomas. After the service, there will be tea and light refreshments.

The chapel is where Richard Lloyd Jones and his family worshipped prior to emigrating to America. One of his children, Jenkin became a Unitarian Minister at Chicago. Rev Jenkin Lloyd Jones was the uncle of the eminent architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.

In the cemetery of Pantydefaid is the grave of the late Rev Marles Thomas who was a successful minister at Cefncoed for many years.

Please make an effort to come yourself and invite others to join us. You will not be disappointed.

Rev Eric Jones

DISTRICT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Photos: Joy Foster

The Annual General Meeting of the South East Wales Unitarian Society was held at Nottage chapel on Sunday, 15th May. (See: *From The District President*, below...)

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Well it has certainly been a busy time since my last article for the District News. I attended the GA meetings March 30th to April 2nd with seven other members from the District. It was an intense, exhausting but enjoyable time. All motions at this year's meetings were passed.

The Relly Beard Lecture on the subject of Theology and Films was given by Anglican Minister Peter Francis, who is a regular contributor on Radio 4. Clips of films ranging from Spiderman, Monty Python's Life of Brian and Jesus of Montreal amongst others were shown.

This year's Keynote Speaker was Tehmina Kazi, Director of British Muslims for Secular Democracy. She spoke of her work with Prevent, Women Against Fundamentalism and Inspire.

At the Women's League meeting, Joy Foster presented a cheque for £6,000 to Rev Alex Bradley from the 2015/16 Project - Unitarian College Manchester. Joy then gave a summary of her year as President before handing over the Presidency to Janet Poole of Bank Street Chapel, Bolton.

After the Women's League meetings, all of the Welsh contingent hurried to rehearsals for the Welsh Department's presentation on the life of Rev Jacob Davies. After the rehearsal it was straight into the spotlights, where we took part with readings and singing. Jacob's daughters Hewys and Heini, the GA Chief Executive, and the GA President were all in the audience. Our thanks go to Rev Cen Llwyd for his research and preparing the script.

As well as the plenary sessions, other meetings I attended were the Buildings Advisory, the Historical Society, The Inquirer with guest speaker Ruth Gledhill former Religious Affairs Correspondent at The Times.



Welsh Department Meeting at the GA
Rev Wyn Thomas, Elaine Davies, Nans Davies, Diana Bianchi, Gwynn Pritchard and Anne Jones
Photo: Joy Foster



President Dot Hewardine with Retiring President, Rev John Clifford and some other past presidents – including Lis Dyson-Jones and Rev Eric Jones.
Photo: Joy Foster

On the final morning Rev John Clifford gave a report on his year as President and Lis Dyson-Jones gave an excellent speech when she nominated Dorothy Hewardine as the new GA President.

On 3rd May, Diana Bianchi, Joy and myself attended the BAWSO headquarters in Cardiff to present a cheque for £200 raised at the International Women's Day event in March.

At the last District Executive meeting it was decided that we would have a new banner made for the District as the current one has now reached the end of its life. All congregations in the District have been asked to submit ideas for a design to Lis Dyson-Jones. So thinking caps on please.

On Sunday 15th May we held our District AGM at Nottage. It was a very well attended event. The morning started with the business meeting, which was followed by a short film which was first shown at the GA meetings in Birmingham. The film titled 'From Vision to Action: The Next Steps' was introduced by Gwynn Pritchard. Following the film we retired to the Old Schoolroom for a delicious lunch prepared by the Nottage Congregation and our thanks go to the ladies of Nottage for all their hard work.

After lunch it was back into the chapel for a short service taken by Rev Lewis Rees. As usual a collection was taken which was shared between Nottage chapel and the District. I wish to thank Lis Dyson-Jones, Gwynn Pritchard, Rev Lewis Rees, Nottage Chapel for hosting the event and all who attended.

It was back to Nottage on 22nd May for the joint service with the Nottage congregation and the South Wales Bahá'í Community. The service was filmed for UK Unitarian TV. It was a very interesting and enjoyable service which was followed by refreshments in the Old Schoolroom.



Two Bahá'í Community members entertain the congregation at Nottage on 22nd May.
Photo: Joy Foster

Tony Foster

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITARIAN WELSH DEPARTMENT

A lot has been going on since the last edition of the SEWUS newsletter – with plenty more to come over the summer months!

First, there was the trip to Birmingham for the GA Annual meetings which as always was an exhilarating but exhausting experience. The performance put on by the Welsh Unitarians to commemorate the life of Rev D Jacob Davies, who would have been celebrating his 100th birthday this year was a very professional and well presented event. Many members from SEWUS took part, but special mention must be made of the duet sang by Rev Eric Jones and his cousin Ronald from Cribyn. It's quite an achievement to be able to sing in perfect harmony when you haven't had a rehearsal, and one of you (Eric) has a really bad cold as well. Congratulations to all who took part.

Some of you may be aware that the Welsh Department and the two District Associations have accepted an invitation to present the opening ceremony at the GA Annual Meetings next year, and there will be a call for volunteers before long. We would dearly love to see as many of our younger members as possible take part, so if you are interested in taking part then please do get in touch. It will be on Monday evening, April 10th 2017 and the meetings will be held once more at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole.

We will also be looking for volunteers to man the stand at the National Eisteddfod which will be held at Abergavenny this year from the 30th July to the 6th August. As the location this time is very far south, it is likely that fewer members from Ceredigion will be able to attend, so we will be relying on our SEWUS members. I will be sending out "Volunteer Forms" shortly which will enable you to state which days and times you would be able to cover. I will also be asking on the form if you can speak Welsh – this is only because the Eisteddfod rules state that there must be a Welsh speaking person on the stand at all times, and ensures that I can arrange the rota appropriately.

Our congratulations and best wishes go to Rev Alun-Wyn Dafis who has commenced in his role as minister for Brondeifi chapel, Lampeter on the 1st June. We wish him and the congregation every success.

Thank you to everybody for the warm welcome that I always receive at the individual churches and chapels (and especially for the chocolate cake). I'm looking forward to extending the same welcome to you when the SEWUS summer rally ventures up West! I hope that I'll get a chance to see all of you at one event or another over the summer, and please do let me know if you are holding any special services or events. I can't promise to make it to them all – but I'll do my best.

Melda Grantham

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 13 and 14 May 2016

1. From Vision to Action – "The Next Steps"

The Executive Committee spent considerable time reviewing the 15 priorities set out in the document "The Next Steps", which was accepted by the Annual Meetings. The EC went on to decide on the key outcomes required. An initial plan for each priority will be developed for consideration and discussion at the next EC meeting in July.

A new three-minute video for seekers "What is a Unitarian?" has been produced. It uses relevant footage from the longer 18 minute video presented at the Annual Meetings as well as some material not previously seen. It can be found on the GA website.

2. Volunteer Pool

A report was received on the response to date to the request for volunteers to join a Pool of people who would be prepared to be involved in various projects or to carry out discreet pieces of work as we take forward "The Next Steps". The creation of a 'Volunteer Pool' was one of the suggestions which came out of the Sheffield meeting last November which resulted in "The Next Steps" document.

Joan Cook has been asked, on behalf of the Executive Committee, to collate the names and contact details of people who are prepared to have these details included in an open list of possible volunteers, along with any special skills or interests they have which could be used to the benefit of the wider Unitarian movement. It is envisaged that such a list would provide a pool of people from which we could draw as and when the need arose, and could be updated as required. Anyone interested in joining the Pool should contact [Joan Cook](#).

3. Financial Update

Peter Hanley, Honorary Treasurer, presented a range of investment plans for the future in light of the substantial donation from the Bowland Trust. A process for review of the investment management arrangements was agreed.

4. Annual Meetings

A report was received on the Annual Meetings and the results of the feedback survey were presented. Overall, the Meetings were considered to have been well organised and the survey showed that they had been overwhelmingly well received by attendees. All those who completed the survey were thanked.

5. Ministry

Rev Daniel Costley, Chair of the Ministry Strategy Group, attended the meeting to discuss the progress made with the review of ministry training, particularly in light of "The Next Steps". It was agreed that the General Assembly would continue to work collaboratively with Unitarian College Manchester and Harris Manchester College, Oxford and seek to broaden and deepen these relationships. The General Assembly will encourage them in the task of filling any gaps in the provision of ministerial competencies, utilising outside providers as needed.

6. Annual Meetings Resolutions

The Resolutions approved at the Annual Meetings were reviewed and an update on actions received:

- CIO status – referred to the Constitutional Review Committee
- Constitutional Changes – reported to the Charity Commission by the Chief Officer and reply awaited
- Surveillance – Chief Officer and Penal Affairs Panel members are attending the Liberty AGM on Saturday 18 June 2016.
- Syria Appeal – an update on financial contributions is to be obtained from the Red Cross
- Climate Change – Buildings Advisory Group is to circulate to congregations in the next Mailing an Annual Energy Consumption Form for completion.

7. Ministry Strategy Group – membership

Kay Millard was appointed as a member of the Ministry Strategy Group.

8. Director of Ministry

The Executive Committee thanked Rev Linda Phillips, who was retiring at the end of June 2016, for all her work as Director of Ministry.

Executive Committee

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

“The secret of living is to do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” *Theodore Roosevelt*

ABERDARE

It was with deep sadness that we announced the death of Dorothy Hughes on Friday 22nd April. Dorothy was a life long member at Highland Place, a former Headmistress at Abernant Primary School, a former Sunday School Teacher, conducted services, was an active leader of the Youth Group and for many years Secretary of Gwersyll Cwmwrdu at Gwernogle. Dorothy had not been well for sometime but there was a rapid deterioration in her health in the last two months. Our sympathy is extended to her sisters Barbara and Sandra in their loss. The funeral was held at Llwydcoed Crematorium on 5th May and was conducted by Rev Eric Jones.

On Sunday 10th April after our morning service, 25 of our congregation went along to Aberdare Golf Club for Sunday Lunch. Our thanks to Dilys Evans for making the arrangements. It was a happy occasion and we look forward to more.

On 9th June, at 7pm, we hold our Annual Lecture. This year's lecture will be given by Roy Noble OBE, and he will speak on the subject 'Backwards to the Future'. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

Dilys Evans

Women's League

Since our last report we have had a quiz on all things Welsh. To accommodate members with sight difficulties it was done on a "shout-out" basis, leading to a great deal of fun.

This session was to a large extent taken up with our Branch and District AGMs. However, we also managed to fit in a demonstration on creating hanging-baskets and a talk on "Adref", a charity for the

homeless in our locality. We also had a visit to our Country Park, a recording of "Desert Island Discs" with Lemn Sissay and a planning session.

At the GA meetings in Birmingham, Barbara and John Clifford stood down as editors of the League Letter and it was announced that Joy and Tony Foster were to be the new editors.

To finish, one of the Church howlers collected by member Dorothy Jones. *"At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice."*

Dilys Evans

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

Several members attended the Welsh Department Conference in Carmarthen at the beginning of March and took part in some lively discussion about the future direction of Unitarianism in Wales.

A few of our members were able to attend the re-arranged Joint Service in Cefncoed at the end of March and as usual, enjoyed the fellowship there.

We were able to have three members attend the General Assembly Meetings in Birmingham where we took part in the fitting tribute held to celebrate the life of the Rev Jacob Davies. The meetings were well presented and we were able to attend informative sessions centred around the 'Next Steps, Vision initiative', currently the focus of the future of Unitarianism in the UK, and a variety of other meetings illustrating the work being undertaken within the Movement. There were some *magic moments* including the installation of a new GA President but also some which sadly disappointed. However, the overall content and management of the 2016 Meetings is to be applauded and the Essex Hall team and Annual Meetings Panel worked hard on our behalf.

Towards the end of April, we were delighted to welcome the Rev Maud Robinson to conduct worship and meet the congregation at the start of her expression of interest to become the Minister in Cardiff. We are hopeful of a successful outcome to her candidacy and a final decision will take place in the early autumn.

The Annual General Meeting of the United Nations Association Cardiff will take place at the Temple of Peace on Thursday 7th July 2016 at 7 pm. Future events of the Association include a meeting on 5th October when Amanda Potts will speak about the UN War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and on 9th November there will be a meeting concerning the 'Right to Food', led by Niall Cooper of Church Action on Poverty. (Details of both meetings will be given at a later date).

We were sorry to have news that Robin Atfield has been in hospital and we send him our best wishes for a speedy return to good health. It is good to see Marjorie Collins return to our services following further hospital treatment.

We look forward to welcoming friends from Aberdare and Cefncoed for a joint service in Cardiff on Sunday 7th August at 4pm.

'I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can still do something: and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.' (Edward Everett Hale)

Lis Dyson-Jones

CEFNCOE

Women's League

We were pleased to welcome our new District League President, Anne Watts to our first League meeting in April. We were given a very interesting talk by Anne—she is one clever lady: it was an enjoyable afternoon. We thought flowers were in order on the day to show her how pleased we all are at our League that she is President.

It so happened that our first meeting in May fell on my birthday, May 11th; we had a surprise Tea provided by my daughter, Janice, and had a lovely afternoon. We also enrolled a new member that day – she was made very welcome – her name is Joyce Jackson.

We were busy in our last meeting sorting out our District Rally meeting in June.

My best wishes to everyone as always.

Vera Tomsett

Joint Service

It was good to welcome friends from Aberdare and Cardiff congregations to a joint service on Sunday, 27th March. The service celebrated the coming of spring and readings were presented by chapel members on the theme 'Waiting to be Discovered'.

We were pleased to have the company of Gwen Everrit's son Emlyn and his wife Elinor with their daughters Anya and Lana. Singing unaccompanied in Welsh, Anya and Lana presented a medley of songs that captivated and enthralled all present—a talent which truly is, *'waiting to be discovered'*.

Following the service all gathered in the vestry to enjoy refreshments provided by Hen Dŷ Cwrdd ladies who maintained their usual high standard.

District AGM

Several members attended the District AGM and service at Nottage Chapel on 15th May. The buffet prepared by the Nottage congregation was very much appreciated.

Wedding

It is quite some time since we had a wedding at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd and our chapel registrar, Morgan Chambers is a bit fed up at having to write 'nil' when completing his quarterly returns. So we were very pleased when Rachel Harris and Christopher Jones decided they would like their marriage to take place at the chapel. The ceremony took place on 1st June, with Rev Eric Jones officiating.

Rachel was reminded that, as an infant, on the occasion of her naming ceremony, she had cried her heart out and the chapel had echoed with her wailing. *This* time there were no tears from Rachel, instead a radiantly happy smile, and, thanks to Telynores Megan Morris, a rippling cascade of harp music flowed through the chapel, while organist Marian Lewis provided accompaniment for the singing of 'Love Divine' and 'Calon Lân'.

In our thoughts

Janis Farr, and Roy and Megan Lewis have been unwell for quite a lengthy period of time and unable to attend chapel. We look forward to having them join us for services again soon.

Arthur and Ken travelled to Hay on Wye on 18th May to visit Peter Powell at Cartref Residential Home. It was good to find Peter in improved health and spirit; good also to hear of his planned move to Trenwydd Residential Home at Llanfaes, Brecon—this will be more accessible to his family and friends.

We have since heard that Peter has taken up residency at Trenwydd and is settling in well. Members hope to visit him again soon.

Gwynfa Bowen has had knee surgery and is now recuperating at the home of her daughter Elizabeth in St Mellons, Cardiff.

We send our best wishes to them all.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

On March 16th, suddenly, but peacefully, Gwladys Howell died. Lewis conducted the funeral, and paid a fitting tribute to a very special lady, President of our chapel, and dear friend to all.

Gwladys had been a member at Nottage for 74 years, since she married Les. She rarely missed a service until she was well into her 90s, and looked after herself in her own home until she was 92, she paid her weekly collection to the end. The chapel was full of mourners, and the music played and sung had all been chosen by her. She was a huge part of my memories of Nottage in the past, and is greatly missed. Helen Steele very kindly made a beautiful floral arrangement for the funeral, and Gwladys would have been very pleased that it was Nottage's own Minister who conducted the services.

We have been holding coffee mornings in the schoolroom on a regular basis since Lewis began his ministry with us, and we were amused (and pleased!) when the Conservative candidate for our area came to join us one Friday. George Jabbour had noticed in the local press when we met.....which I think was most impressive, no other party candidate came to visit!! I don't know if any of our congregation gave him their vote, but he was trying for a seat in a Labour stronghold!

Rose Owen celebrated her 87th birthday recently, and was very pleased that some of the congregation went to visit her, best wishes and many happy returns to you.

Thank you for the good wishes sent to Lewis on the front page of the last District News, he is much improved and "getting on with getting on"

We were pleased to host the District AGM on 15th May, it was good to have a well filled chapel, and meet with old friends.

A week later, we had a well filled chapel once again. It had been planned for some time that one of our services would be filmed by UK Unitarian TV, and Lewis arranged a joint service between us and members of the Bahá'í community in South Wales. Between 30 and 40 Bahá'ís turned up, and our ranks were swelled by friends from Aberdare and Cardiff and 'Y Smotyn Du'. Thank you all. As is our custom, we had fellowship to include all after a most interesting service, and when I left at 1 o'clock the room was still full of friends and visitors. A huge thank you to Lewis who made it all possible.

I hope you all have a good Summer, and enjoy the Rally, best wishes.

Avril Protheroe

SWANSEA

With the holiday season just about to start, members of the Swansea congregation are planning trips far and wide. From Marbella to New Zealand via cruises to the Med, our bags are packed and we're off!

Meanwhile – something a little different for the Church. Our acoustics are so good we've recently hosted a choir in the church, recording a backing track for a film. Rehearsing in the downstairs schoolroom, they then had to get all their equipment up to the church where they chose to do the final recording because the high roof afforded the acoustics they needed. Having broken the beam on the lift (which then stops the lift) they had to lug the equipment up our very steep stairs. And still had breath to sing!

The 6 members of the Swansea congregation who travelled to Nottage for the AGM report a lovely day spent with other congregation members. Thanks to Nottage for preparing the delicious buffet.

Refurbishments of the church continue with work being carried out in the grounds at the rear to clear weeds and manage the trees.

Two of our members, Pam Taylor and Glenys Merrells are still not well enough to attend services but they are always in our thoughts.

Kirsteen Reed

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

The larks are rising and the gorse is in glorious flower. We arrived recently for service to discover that someone had cut through the lock holding the barrier which leads onto our track. They had also damaged the very sturdy hitching post to which the barrier is attached when open. No further damage was done but one does wonder why.

We wish Mary Stone well. She is recovering from an emergency operation. Also, it is good to have Rhian Jones back with us.

Rory Castle is now Dr Castle with a doctorate in history. This is obviously a year of great happenings for he will be married in Gellionnen in August.

Julie Nedin has announced that she is to take early retirement. She is an enthusiastic gardener, musician, and dog walker and frequently takes service at Gellionnen, so life should continue to be busy but hopefully not hectic.

Gellionnen members attended the District AGM and service in Nottage Chapel and also appreciated a scrumptious meal in the hall. Unitarians are very good at 'getting together'. It is always such a pleasure to join friends.

We are beginning to think about the August Folk Service which it will be on the 21st at 10.30 am. The Rev Alun Wyn Dafis is coming back to his home patch to take service on that day.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

The bluebells, daffodils and primroses are in abundance all through our graveyard this year – but unfortunately so are our trees, and they need urgent surgery. However some have preservation orders on them so we have had to apply to the local council. Some can be cut and others may be trimmed back but we have to plant a few new saplings in their place. This will entail unexpected expenditure, a big problem for our small congregation. Graveyards are diminishing in number but give our congregations increasing concern.

Wick is one of our denomination's smallest chapels with a large graveyard still in use – so we have to maintain it.

On a lighter note the village fête is being held on June 4th and the committee will use our vestry as usual. Our chapel Flower Service will be held on June 12th and we look forward to meeting old and new friends.

With every good wish to our District members.

Julianne Morgan

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the South East Wales Unitarian News is **Saturday, 6 August, 2016**. Items for publication should be sent by to:- **kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net** or Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016
