



South East Wales Unitarian News

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November 2012

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 24th November – Rev Professor Paul Badham will facilitate a workshop at Highland Place Church, Aberdare to consider the issue of ‘Assisted Dying’. It will take place between 10.30am and 12.30pm and will be followed by a shared lunch. Anyone, from our congregations or from further afield, who is interested in this issue is welcome to attend. There is no charge.

Sunday, 2nd December – District Christmas Service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefncoedycymer.

VISIT BY THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2012

This event was held at the Ivy Bush Royal hotel, Carmarthen on Saturday 20th November 2012 and as befits a presidential visit the hotel has Unitarian connections with Iolo Morgannwg and was also a place where Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton visited! We were very glad to welcome Lis and her daughter, Sam who accompanied her to the evening event.

It was a great chance for members of the two districts to come together to share a social evening and meal and there were comments at the end of the meal as to how it would be good to come together again on another occasion. It was lovely to see Sheila and Simon Cousins at the dinner. Sheila attended Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd since childhood but has now moved to near Carmarthen. The Rev Cen Llwyd and Rev Wyn Thomas were also present, as well as the Rev Eric Jones and Anne Jones.

Our very own Lis Dyson-Jones from the Cardiff Congregation and South East Wales District was welcomed as National President by Elaine Davies who is President of the South Wales district. Speeches were also made by Megan Jones as Chair of the Welsh Department and by Philip Griffiths as President of the South East Wales District. Philip was accompanied by his wife Margaret. Philip covered some of the challenges of communication between South East Wales district and the Executive Committee of the General Assembly and felt that there was an opportunity to discuss the way forward at the forthcoming meeting with district representatives on Saturday 17th November 2012 at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester.

We have been lucky to have had Lis Dyson-Jones as link person with our district and the Executive Committee and now as National President. Lis was thanked for her long association with Unitarianism nationally, at Welsh Department level, at district level in South East Wales Unitarian Society as District President and Secretary and for her work over the years with Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd which has included her taking the roles of Secretary and Chair. Lis was able to reply to the speeches with her own, complete with funny stories! It has been an honour for us in Wales to have had one of our members become the National President and we wish Lis all the best for the remainder of her term until the next General Assembly meetings in Nottingham in April 2013. We know that Lis will do an excellent job in representing and promoting Unitarianism and look forward to hearing about her experiences and what she has learnt from her term as National President.

Lis was presented with gifts, a rose named after her as National President from Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd. Lis has said this will go next to her Elisabeth of Glamis rose in her garden to remind her of her presidential year. She was also given a beautiful picture of chapels from South Wales and a lovely gift made of slate from South East Wales district.

During our hot buffet meal with a choice of desserts we were treated to harp music played by the Welsh Secretary, Carwyn Tywyn who played during the evening on two harps. I don't know the technical names but there was a big one and a little one. Many thanks to Carwyn for arranging the evening which went very successfully and to the District Presidents and Chair of the Welsh Department who gave speeches.

Sarah Boyce

HEN DŶ CWRDD, TRECYNON

Saturday, 22nd September saw over 50 people, many from other areas of South East Wales, attend an event at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon to launch a much awaited new book entitled "They love to be Dissenters" written by David Leslie Davies, a well known local historian. It explores, in detail, the development of dissenting congregations in the Merthyr and Aberdare areas during the seventeenth century and then moves on to cover the development of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon from 1751.

The book contains a number of photographs and some interesting facts. No Unitarian should be without it and copies are available for £7 plus postage. Please contact the Rev Eric Jones.

The building is now watertight with new windows and door, as well as the ceiling being restored. The final phase of restoration will concentrate on the pews and gallery areas and should be completed during the next 12 months.

David Leslie Davies spoke about the background of the new book and Rev Eric Jones spoke about some of his memories of the membership of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd in the Sixties and Seventies of the last century.

The launch had been well publicised by the local authority via the "Open Doors" initiative. The objective of "Open Doors" is to enable individuals to have access to places of local interest which are not usually open to the public.

REFUSED ENTRY

In contrast to the above item which tells of the oldest chapel in Aberdare opening its doors to *all*, as it did for 250 years, another Aberdare chapel chooses to have its doors firmly closed—against one person in particular. Rev Eric Jones has given a short harvest address to the children of the Aberdare Welsh School for the last 50 years. Each year, the school uses a different chapel or church in which to hold the service. This year, however, the host congregation asked the school not to invite Rev Jones to take part in their chapel.

Rev Eric Jones, in response, said that this was the third instance of his being requested not to take part in churches of other denominations – two of which have now closed. He said, "I thought that such narrowness had died and that people had more of a Christian spirit about them in this day and age. In such instances as this, the small congregation involved don't seem to know anything about respect, a spirit of understanding and working towards the general unity of mankind. Love, tolerance and justice seem to take a back seat. I wonder what they would do with a Buddhist or Moslem and would they not benefit from looking over the fence?"

AWAY DAY AT GLYNNEATH

On Saturday, 6th October the South East Wales Unitarian Society held an Away Day (10am – 3.30pm) entitled *Keeping Unitarianism Alive – An approach to Congregational Development*.

Twenty-three representatives from the seven congregations in the district attended the event held at the Glynneath Training Centre which was facilitated by Rev Eric Jones and Ella Lewis-Jones.

The day started with the participants, in groups, compiling their 'Hopes, Fears & Expectations' which were then fed back to the combined group.

Eric Jones then led a session on "Leadership without a Minister". So much discussion taking place that the time set aside for this session was very considerably overrun!

Julianne Morgan, Lay leader at Wick, then gave an idea of her 'Delights & Concerns' about leading worship.

'The Worship Studies Foundation Course' was presented by Ella Lewis-Jones who completed this course earlier this year. Resources for Services was a major concern of the participants and Ella was able to give examples of resources that she used.

'Possibilities and Pitfalls - introducing new ideas' proved a very fertile section with everyone coming up with something different that they would like to try in their chapels.

At the end of the day, the feedback from those taking part was very positive and it has been decided to hold further events but with fewer subjects, allowing them to be covered in greater depth.

Keith Lewis-Jones

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

The interview in this issue of South East Wales Unitarian News is with Joy Foster. Joy is a member of Highland Place Unitarian Church and has a long association with Unitarianism. As a child Joy attended the Highland Place Sunday School and enjoyed memorable holidays at Cwmwrdu. A very talented and creative person, Joy has successfully completed the General Assembly REvolution course which is designed to provide training for Unitarians who wish to run a children's group. As a result, for almost two years, Joy has been running a very successful children's group at Highland Place. None of the children who attend the Sunday UNI club or their parents had any previous association with the church. It is clear from the work that the children produce, which is regularly displayed in the Schoolroom, that the children really enjoy the club whilst learning about Unitarianism. Joy is also a previous President of both Highland Place and South East Wales Women's Leagues. The Scroll which was recently presented to Rev Eric Jones conferring the Honour of Minister Emeritus upon him was produced by Joy and her husband Tony and demonstrates what a creative and capable couple they are. A much appreciated asset to the church.

Joy tells us:

My father was born within the sound of Bow Bells in 1914. He met my mother whilst she was in service in London. They married and owned a greengrocers, but when the Second World War started, my father joined the RAF as a wireless operator, and my mother moved back to Aberdare with my eldest brother. After the war my father joined my mother in Aberdare, living with the in-laws in a small house. Eventually finding full time work as an aero engine fitter with BOAC (later named British Airways) and remained there for 45 years, until he retired. A life long communist, always fighting for the underdog, he didn't believe religion had the answers for the struggles of the working class. (He should have checked out the Unitarians.) My parents were married for 54 years and had a great love of Wales, its coastline and countryside. I spent many happy times travelling North, South, East and West with them. I have four older brothers.

I was educated at Caradog Primary and Clive Hall school in Llandaff. Marion Davies's sister was a supply teacher there. I have one daughter who also went to Caradog Primary, then Aberdare Girls. It was one of my proudest moments to see her graduate from Magdalen College, Oxford, with a degree in Modern History.

When you were growing up, who or what influenced your life?

My father gave me a sense of social conscience and justice, but also told me at a young age there was no such person as Father Christmas, hmph! But it didn't wash with me because I knew there was! My mother taught me compassion and love. Highland Place Sunday School gave me a sense of belonging and trust. And like everybody else, the people and places around me.

Is there a book you particularly remember reading as a child?

Brer Rabbit stories, The Water Babies, Black Beauty, Alice Through The Looking Glass, Lorna Doone, Little Women, The Call of The Wild were my favourites. But if I had to choose between them my favourite would have to be The Brer Rabbit stories. On my way home from Senior School my weekly treat for myself was 'Jackie' magazine. Then, I thought I was really grown up! Hee.

Do you think that school days are the best days of your life?

Yes and no. I'm not sitting on the fence here but sometimes happy sometimes cruel. An institutional environment from a young age, you sink or swim. A certain type of teacher can make you feel you can achieve anything, while another can make you feel totally inadequate. The secret lies in which one you believe, but unfortunately it is the negative that usually sticks in your mind. Inspirational teachers are worth their weight in gold. So, thank you Ella, I have just decided the answer is no! They weren't the best days of my life

Has there been a significant turning point in your life?

As the Churchill Insurance dog says, "Oh Yes".

What takes up most of your time?

Well funny you should ask, Highland Place of late. Ha ha. Sunday Club in the morning, the service on Sunday evenings. Coffee mornings on Mondays. Women's League on Wednesdays and preparation for Sunday Club on Saturdays. But that's fine by me, I look at it like this, each day is a new day, and a gift. I don't mind if I spend it pleasing others I care about, or pleasing myself, whichever crops up first. I tend to live in the moment. A blessing, and a curse sometimes, as I don't plan ahead a great deal apart from the Sunday School, which, although it is a big commitment, is rewarding for both Highland Place (hopefully) and therefore for myself. The rest of my time is spent with family, friends and making hats, fascinators, corsages and jewellery. I certainly pack a lot in to a week.

What qualities do you think the facilitator of a Sunday Club for children should have?

A love of children helps, and the ability to try and see life from a child's point of view. The ability to

create a nurturing environment to enable them to express their feelings and ideas without judgement or scorn. Plus lots of patience

For a Unitarian Sunday club, the same as above, with the addition of an interest to discuss various faiths, with special emphasis on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. (In my view all paths lead to one god or universal spirit. The journey of discovery is our individual choice, which is what is so good about Unitarianism, it gives you the freedom and opportunity to explore. Thank God for free thinkers.)

What would make the world a better place?

Compassion, tolerance and common sense. Or put another way, Unitarianism!

What is your greatest strength.

My optimism.

What does happiness mean to you.

Apart from the obvious, my daughter and her happiness, sharing my life with Tony and close friends. Happiness to me is also a good service at church, a successful session at Uni'Club Sunday School and spending time with all my dear friends at Women's League. But on a very personal level, happiness to me is all the pets I have owned, seeing the visitors to my bird table, the coast, an empty beach, and a sunset, driving, painting, the wonder of Nature and a beautiful piece of music. Kindness being shown by one human being to another.

What is the trait you find most difficult in others.

Sarcasm, meanness and impatience are all equally unattractive to me.

Have you achieved your dreams or ambitions?

Some, I have lots of ambitions. Like I said before that I tend to live in the moment. I think I'll have time to have lots of adventures. So I will jolly well have to live to be 106, well at least a 100. Then I will start a club for that too, but I suspect Rev Eric Jones and a few others at HP will beat me to it. (Hopefully!)

What are you most grateful for?

I am most grateful for the parents I had, the daughter I have, the husband I have, my eternal optimism and lots of things. I count my blessings very often. Life, however difficult at times, is sweet. A heady cocktail of challenges mixed with pleasure.

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION 2012

The period for receipt of nominations has now closed. Popularis Ltd have confirmed that the following seven candidates have been validly nominated and that an election will take place for the five positions available on the Executive Committee.

- James Barry: Ditchling Unitarians
- Philip Colfox: Bridport Chapel in the Garden
- Joan Cook: St Mark's Unitarian Church, Edinburgh
- David E Gillman: Coventry Great Meeting House
- Robert Ince: Fulwood Old Chapel, Sheffield
- Louise Rogers: Newcastle-under-Lyme Meeting House community
- Jacqueline Woodman: Manchester College Oxford Chapel Society

Each Congregation will be sent a supply of blank voting papers in accordance with the number of quota paying members in that Congregation for the financial year 2010/11. Separate arrangements are being made to cover voting by full and associate members. A booklet giving a profile of each candidate will also be included with each ballot, together with a pre-paid response envelope. These will be sent by Popularis Ltd of 6 De Montfort Mews Leicester LE1 7EU, the company appointed by the GA to run the election. This mailing is scheduled to occur on 5th November.

The voting period begins on 12th November and ends on 14th December. It is expected that the results will be available on 17th December 2012.

Jill Hudson, Wade Miller-Knight and Howard Wilkins, Electoral Panel.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 1 SEPTEMBER 2012

1. Meeting with District Representatives, 17 November 2012

Arrangements were confirmed for the meeting with District Representatives which will take place from 1.00pm to 4.00pm on Saturday 17 November 2012 at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. The objective of the meeting will be to involve 3-5 representatives from each District in discussion on key issues affecting the Denomination. An external facilitator has been appointed and Districts have been asked to help develop the agenda. Letters of invitation have subsequently been issued to District Secretaries.

2. **Resignation of Rev Andy Pakula**

It was with regret that the Executive Committee received the resignation of the Rev Andy Pakula with immediate effect. Andy was thanked for all his work as a member of the Executive Committee since 2009. As Andy's position was coming up for election it was agreed that no co-option would be made.

3. **Budgets 2012/13**

The congregational quota for 2012/13 was agreed as £30 per quota member as previously indicated. This is an increase of £1 on the current year. The Executive Committee faced difficult decisions in making the budget balance for the financial year beginning 1 October 2012. The original estimates showed a substantial deficit which was not acceptable. Despite expenditure being kept under control; the General Assembly, like many churches, is facing pressure on its income in a number of areas. This has a knock-on effect on matched funding from the Bowland Trust. Measures were agreed with the aim of increasing income; some of which carry a risk. Some of the requests for new spending were not approved. A budget was approved. Robert Ince, Acting Honorary Treasurer; Derek McAuley, Chief Officer and Martin Sarbicki, recently appointed Head of Finance and Administration were thanked for all their work in preparing the draft budget.

4. **Safeguarding Policy**

A revised Safeguarding Policy and manual was approved. Rev John Harley was thanked for leading on the review of the Policy as were all who had contributed. Further information will be circulated on the responsibilities of congregations. All congregations were asked to ensure a representative attended the GA's forthcoming safeguarding awareness training arranged by the Local Leadership Strategy Group (unless they make alternative local arrangements).

5. **Executive Committee Elections**

Arrangements are in hand for the forthcoming elections. The Electoral Panel comprises Jill Hudson, Wade Miller-Knight and Howard Wilkins who are responsible for ensuring a fair, free and transparent election process.

6. **2020 Congregational Development Fund**

Arrangements are being made for a formal launch of the 2020 Congregational Development Fund which should be open for applications in early 2013. Lots of work has taken place on a website and promotion, worship pack and fund-raising plans.

7. **Ethical Investment**

The meeting received details of the General Assembly's current policy statement on social, environmental and ethical investment: "The Executive Committee is anxious to invest in companies and trusts with good ethical standards and in particular mandate the Investment Manager to avoid investment directly into companies which are predominantly involved in the production of armaments, alcohol, tobacco or in gambling." Newton's Investment Managers have confirmed that Lonmin – the mining company in South Africa – is not held in either of the two funds – Global Growth and Income and Socially Responsible Investment – in which the General Assembly invests.

8. **Millennium Fund**

It was agreed to award Bury Unitarian Church £500 from the Millennium Fund as a contribution towards the installation of two sound enhancement systems in areas adjacent to the worship area and which would include inductive loop systems for the benefit of people with hearing impairment.

9. **Visibility Strategy Group**

It was agreed to appoint Diane Bennett as a member of the Visibility Group.

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

Whether we like it or not, we are an example for good or evil.
Everything we say, reveals what we are.

However rushed you are, give the one who interrupts you the sense that you have all the time in the world for them.

From *'Ideas for Living'* compiled by Corrine Williams

ABERDARE

The past six weeks has been a busy time for the congregation at Highland Place with several different events taking place within a short period.

In response to an invitation from the Cribyn Congregation in Ceredigion, on Sunday the 23rd September, members from Aberdare, Cardiff and Cefn joined together to celebrate 50 Years of Eric's Ministry. The bilingual service in the afternoon was led by Rev Cen Lloyd. Lis Dyson-Jones, President of The Unitarian General Assembly brought greetings and congratulations from the wider Unitarian Movement. Rev Jones, in response, had many affectionate reminiscences of the Cribyn area to recount. Following the service, the ladies of the congregation provided tea, including bread & butter which has been much celebrated and copied since.

The Harvest Service on 30th September was conducted by Rev Patrick Timperley. Rev Timperley was trained for the Anglican Ministry at Lampeter and served as a priest in Pembrokeshire before re-training for the Unitarian Ministry. He is currently at Mansfield. This was a joint service with congregational members from Cardiff and Cefn Coed present. Tea was served in the schoolroom following the service.

The excellent Dinner on the 4th of October at Aberdare Golf Club, attended by 74 people, was both a happy and moving occasion at which the honour of Minister Emeritus was officially conferred on Rev Eric Jones. An illuminated scroll, which was produced by Joy and Tony Foster, was presented to Rev Jones on behalf of the congregation by the Chairman Humphrey Evans.

There was a speech from the current President of the Unitarian General Assembly, Lis Dyson-Jones, who related some of the helpful advice which Eric had given her over 30 years, as well as sharing some of the humorous incidents in Eric's long ministry at Aberdare.

The President of the South East Wales Unitarian Society, Philip Griffiths, also spoke of the many years in which he has known Eric, starting from his time as a student at Cardiff University and some years later as Secretary of SEWUS. Philip recounted that, unlike some the very best horses which the farmers from Eric's home in Ceredigion cannily refused to sell, Eric was an example of the "very best" who, for one reason or another, they had failed to keep—to the good fortune of South East Wales.

Anne and Eric were presented with David Austin (Roses) vouchers by Mrs Marion Davies and by Mr Arthur Saunders (on behalf of Marion Lewis of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon). Eric was also presented with a book entitled "Fifty Years of Shepherding" which contained reflections and reminiscences of Eric's ministry contributed by Unitarians from throughout the United Kingdom. To conclude the evening, a light-hearted vote of thanks was given by Mark Jones, Deputy Chairman of the congregation.

Ella Lewis-Jones

Women's League

In August two successful events were held to raise money for charity and Highland Place Church. On 4th August Anne Jones held her annual coffee morning, and on 18th August we enjoyed our first garden party. The afternoon tea was greatly appreciated, and the auction was great fun.

The Women's League programme got off to a great start with a talk on diabetes by Joan Harlow. Joan, a fairly new member and retired head diabetic nurse, gave clear, well-structured, essential information on the two types of diabetes, symptoms, control, and possible complications.

Members have also enjoyed one of Hazel's picture quizzes, a demonstration of how to produce beautiful items with sewing machine embroidery, and short debates on a variety of topical issues.

In the most recent meeting, members enjoyed a perennial favourite – members' own choice of music and words. Music ranged from Andrea Bocelli, Bach and Litz to Russell Watson, Shirley Bassey, Harry Secombe and an Australian Male Voice Choir. The music was punctuated by stories, poems and prose written by various members.

Dilys Evans

Highland Place Uni'Club Sunday School News

Uni'Club Sunday School, so named as we meet not only on Sundays but also as a club every Wednesday during school holidays. We are a Unitarian Club hence Uni'Club. With that explained I also have some news for you.

July was our first anniversary! We celebrated by going to the 'Big Cheese' festival at Caerphilly. This trip was funded by the money the children had raised themselves with their stall at the previous Spring Fayre. The Big Cheese is an annual event held in and around Caerphilly Castle. It was a glorious sunny day, we travelled by minibus and took a picnic with us. We had a ride on the model steam train run by enthusiasts, and some of the children were brave enough to attempt the climbing wall. There was plenty to see, with stalls, entertainers and a fair. The only problem with the day was— *too many people*. There were thousands there. The children all had a lovely time and were a pleasure to be out with as they were so well behaved.

In our usual Sunday sessions the children start with their own chalice lighting and prayers, then there is Circle time, where they share any news and grievances or ideas. They have also enjoyed Bible stories as well as stories with a message which we discuss. We have had a talk on fire safety with an outside specialist, and have had sessions drawing, painting and making cup-cakes.

The children have also spent two Wednesdays visiting Aberdare Museum, where they were given living demonstrations of 'Grandma's Washday' and 'Toys of the Past'. These sessions were conducted by Jackie Jones of Aberdare Museum and were very educational. Our thanks go to Jackie and the Museum for two excellent days and we hope to return in the next school holidays for 'Shopping, Past and Present'. We also had a whole Wednesday of crafting, 10am-4pm, where the children made presents for their parents.

We had a display in the schoolroom for the Harvest Service, where fruit, vegetables and leaves of gorgeous hues were arranged for the congregation. The children made salt dough animals, a harvest mouse and a church mouse. Each child wrote an 'I Give Thanks' note, and some of their comments on life, love, family and friends were very moving. Thank you to all who took the time to look at their display.

Uni'Club is going from strength to strength: we now have fourteen children on our books, with some coming from Maerdy and from Abercynon. They have a busy time coming up! – working on Chalice Awards, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Fayre and rehearsals for a Christmas concert, which will hopefully be as successful as last year's Nativity.

I am also pleased to tell you that we have a new member on our team of Leaders – Joan Harlow, who this year joined our congregation and is also a member of Women's League. Joan has been an asset already to our church and league, and actively gets involved in our events and groups.

I am really pleased to have her on board, together with Dilys Evans who has been with me since Day One, and Anne Watts when she is able to attend.

If anyone is interested in dedicating some time to Uni'Club please don't hesitate to make yourself known to me for further information and consideration!

Thank you for reading this and sharing in our endeavours.

With love
Joy Foster

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNODIAID CAERDYDD

At the end of August members of our congregation returned from their summer break. Since then it has been a very busy time for us.

At our first committee meeting, held on 5th September, the committee agreed to the suggestion, put forward by Sarah Boyce, that in our monthly Circle Service we would study and debate the book "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life" by Karen Armstrong. The first session will take place on Sunday, 21st October when Sarah will lead us through the first step to a "compassionate life."

On Sunday, 9th September, a Thanksgiving Service was held at Penrhiw Chapel, St Fagans. This service was open to the public and a few visitors attended. The Rev Eric Jones led the service and reminded us all of the importance of sharing and of giving thanks for what we receive from nature's abundance.

Dewi Owen and Sarah Boyce attended a training course at Rhiwbina Baptist Chapel in mid-September on how to keep young people in Sunday school throughout their youth. Other youth leaders from other denominations were present. Another training session will take place on 29th November.

On 21st September Dewi and Sarah, attended a meeting of CND Cymru and Cynefin Y Werin at the Temple of Peace. It may be possible for us as a congregation to become more involved with the just cause of disarmament and the promotion of peace.

On Sunday, 23rd September. Sarah and Dewi joined other District members who travelled to Cribyn for a service led by the Rev Cen Llwyd to celebrate the Rev Eric Jones's 50 years in the Unitarian ministry. The bus arrived on time for Sunday lunch at the Grannell Hotel, Llanwnnen and, after a hearty lunch, they made their way to the chapel Eric had attended until he left to take up the ministry, over half a century ago. Rev Cen Llwyd gave a short address and this was followed by a tribute from GA President Lis Dyson-Jones who arrived to give Eric a surprise. She addressed the audience by illustrating what a positive influence he has had on her life. In responding, Eric instanced some of the rich characters he had encountered and circumstances he had experienced as a minister over the years. The visitors were overwhelmed by the warm hospitality of the Cribyn congregation who had prepared a wonderful spread. The cakes were delicious!

There was more travelling and feasting involved when members attended two events at Aberdare. First, on Sunday 30th September for a Harvest Service at Highland Place, and again, on 4th October at Aberdare Golf Club, for a further celebration of Rev Eric Jones's time in the ministry. Again, the food at the Dinner was good and the company was wonderful. It was a very enjoyable evening.

On 6th October Sarah and Dewi represented Cardiff congregation at an Away Day facilitated by Ella Lewis-Jones and Rev Eric Jones. The day was inspiring and stimulating, providing a good opportunity to learn and discuss with other members of the South East Wales congregations methods of how to increase membership.

The Sunday Club began in earnest on 14th October following an autumn theme. On the same day a Welsh service was led by the Rev Aled Gwyn who eloquently paid tribute to the pacifist poet Waldo Williams and his Quaker background.

Diana and Dewi met with Sioned Hughes, the Curator of St Fagans Folk Museum on 18th October to discuss how to promote Unitarianism at Penrhiw Chapel. Sioned informed them that, as a result of receiving a generous lottery grant, the museum is to be extended. A major part of this development will be devoted to interpreting the role of religion in the political, social and cultural history of Wales. Being the only example of an early Nonconformist building on site, Penrhiw would play a crucial part in this interpretation. Ways to promote Penrhiw and Unitarianism to a wider audience were also discussed. Many ideas were explored, including holding more services and inviting speakers to deliver public lectures at the building. It was agreed to hold further meetings with the museum in the future and to report back on progress.

Cardiff Unitarians have been approached by a small, ancient religious group called the Karaites who have beliefs compatible with Unitarianism. It has been agreed that a spokesperson from the group would address the congregation in the future to explain how we might work together.

Margaret Evans has returned from Tenby and is now at home in her flat. Also, Lyn Davies's sister, Olwen has been unwell and is being looked after by her. We send them our best wishes. We also wish Marjorie Collins a speedy recovery after her recent operation.

We look forward to Saturday, 20th October when GA President Lis Dyson-Jones will address Welsh Unitarians at The Ivy Bush Hotel in Carmarthen.

At a special Christmas service on 23rd December, to be led by Gwynn Pritchard, Cardiff Unitarians will hold a party in the hope of attracting past members back to the fold. Needless to say there will be more feasting! Perhaps Cardiff Unitarians will have to enrol at a Gym in 2013!

Dewi Owen, Development Officer

CEFNCOED

Women's League

We still meet every two weeks on a Wednesday afternoon. Unfortunately, one meeting had to be cancelled as the weather was really bad.

We have left it too late this year to have our annual day out, but *have* managed to arrange our Christmas Lunch.

Quite a few league members went to the Harvest Service at Aberdare and we were much impressed with the lovely display—it made us realise how much we missed holding our own Harvest Thanksgiving at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd. So we cajoled Morgan Chambers into giving his upcoming service a harvest theme, and a fortnight later the league ladies arranged a lovely collection of flowers and produce. The service was enjoyed by everyone.

Vera Tomsett

Open Doors Weekend

As part of the European Heritage Open Doors initiative Hen Dŷ Cwrdd opened its doors to visitors on Saturday, 9th September between 2 pm and 4pm. and on Sunday, 10th September between 2:30pm and 6pm, with a Service of Celebration at 6pm which marked the chapel's 265th Anniversary. The weekend was a pleasing success, with visitor numbers well up on previous years. The service was very well attended – helped by the presence of a number of relatives of Phil Griffiths who were renewing the link of the 'Cwm Nedd' family with the chapel.

Out and about

During the autumn months some members have attended a variety of events and services.

On Sunday, 23rd September, in the company of friends from Aberdare and Cardiff, a party of Cefncoed members boarded a coach bound for Ceredigion. After an excellent lunch at the Grannell Hotel at Llanwnnen they arrived at Cribyn chapel to attend a celebratory service in recognition of the contribution that life-long Cribyn member, Rev Eric Jones has made to the Unitarian movement. After the service the Cribyn ladies provided a most lavish tea.

On the following Sunday afternoon Hen Dŷ Cwrdd was once again closed because of an exodus – this time in cars and not so far afield – to join Aberdare and Cardiff members for a Harvest Service at Highland Place, Aberdare conducted by Rev Patrick Timperley of Mansfield. On returning home a few decided to 'make a day of it' and attended another harvest service – at Bethel Baptist Chapel, Cwmtaf which is the chapel attended by Phil Griffiths's wife, Margaret.

Into October – and another trip to Aberdare for 10 members who attended the Dinner at Aberdare Golf Club on 4th October at which the status of Hon Minister Emeritus was conferred upon Rev Eric Jones. Mindful that there would be strong beverage involved, the group wisely decided to travel by minibus. The meal was excellent, the speeches amusing and not too long, and the company convivial: a most enjoyable evening.

At the District Away Day held at Glynneath on 6th October to discuss 'Keeping Unitarianism Alive', Hen Dŷ Cwrdd was represented by Phil Griffiths and Ken Morgan.

Unfortunately, only Phil and Margaret Griffiths were able to attend the National President's Dinner at Carmarthen on 20th October. A number of members who had intended being there had to withdraw due to family commitments or because of sickness.

Pen Blwydd Hapus

On 9th November Mrs Nancy England celebrates her 96th birthday. We send her our love and our very best wishes.

Ken Morgan

SWANSEA

There is no special news from High Street. We continue to enjoy our Sunday services and are grateful to all those people who come to fill our pulpit. We are pleased that the dinner to mark the Rev Eric Jones's 50 years of service to Unitarianism was a success and look forward to his next visit. We thank Mr Brad Williams for a lovely autumn display of fuchsias in our forecourt.

Pamela Taylor

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

Hywel Jones assisted on the Unitarian stand at the National Eisteddfod. He is now of course back in university and we were sorry to see such a livewire go, but we look forward to his return to us over Christmas. Brother Caradog is now also away at university. We wish them both well.

Congratulations to Josie Nemeth who did so well in her exams. Fortunately we shall be keeping her for a little longer, we can't afford to lose them all at once.

Our folk service in August brought in about a hundred people. Service was held together by the Rev Alun Wyn Dafis who arrived with daughter Ffion in tow – two great musicians. Add to their piano accordion and saxophone the violin of Jamie Nemeth, the harp of Caradog Jones, Josie's euphonium, Hywel's trombone and some lusty singing –that's really *some* combination – and we were uplifted. For the second year running Richard Emmanuel came with guitar, mandolin and song-sheets and our local folk club also weighed in with gusto.

On the day before the folk service we set up a stand at the Pontardawe Summerfest advertising the service, providing free literature obtained from Essex Hall and selling copies of "Be Gentle" written by the Rev D Elwyn Davies. Sales of cakes and preserves covered the cost of the stand and added a little to our funds.

Within a few weeks we were celebrating harvest, the service was taken by Angela Nemeth and cawl provided by husband Sandor. On this occasion numbers were small, but it was a feel-good Sunday morning when we shared a meal afterwards and the sun shone.

We hear that Mrs Jenny Cropley has celebrated a big birthday and wish her a marvellous year

Julie Nedin and Marian Littlepage had the pleasure of attending Eric's celebration dinner in Aberdare. It was a lively and very enjoyable occasion. I hope Eric realises how much he is appreciated by us all.

Many thanks go to those who give of their time and effort to take and guide our Sunday services. Where would we be without their goodwill and application. Diolch yn fawr!

Marian Littlepage

WICK

Harvest Thanksgiving has always been a special service for our congregation, as our chapel is in the midst of a farming community. We remember the group of six farmers who came together to give the land on which our chapel was built 220 years ago. Up until then, the worshippers met in each other's barns. Our older member 98 year old Phyllis Rose remembers all the men sitting in the gallery and the singing as "loud and joyful, ringing out across the village green," – her words.

The singing this year was certainly joyful but probably not as loud as in years gone by. It was heartening to be part of a larger than usual congregation.

Our boundary wall has been repaired and also the inside wall of the chapel where the original fireplace has been removed, has been painted, so the chapel itself looked good for harvest.

Our member Eva Morgan is still in hospital, she is missed by us all and she misses us.

We were all saddened by the death of our long-time member Margaret Escott. She had been plagued by ill health for some time and it so sad to see her usual seat in chapel empty. Her funeral services in the chapel and at Bridgend Crematorium were conducted by Julianne and her ashes were interred in the chapel graveyard together with her husband's ashes.

According to village custom, this year the village Remembrance Service will be held in our chapel. Julianne will conduct the service at the village memorial first of all and then church and chapel congregations will combine in our chapel. A beautiful custom.

Our best wishes to all friends in the District.

Julianne Morgan

NOTTAGE WEEKEND BY THE SEA

This weekend (14–16 September) was advertised in the last two issues of the SE Wales Unitarian News. It was a delight. The weather was kind, the B&B most comfortable and reasonably priced. Further meals and activities took place in the very comfortable Nottage Chapel Schoolroom. The weekend was arranged by Marie Rosenberg (Nottage) and Kathy Beckett (Southampton) and their arrangements were meticulous. On the Saturday morning I found myself sitting on Newton Beach – I've not sat on the sands there for many years—the suggested swim did not appeal to me. I do hope Marie and Kathy will consider doing this again.

Marian Littlepage

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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Items for publication should be sent by to:-

Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016.

Copy may also be e-mailed to kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net or to Philip@philipgriffiths.co.uk

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