



South East Wales Unitarian News

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November 2013

FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 1st December 2013 at 11 am – District Christmas Service at Swansea

Monday 6th January 2014 at 2pm – Special General Meeting to discuss the future of Gwersyll Cwmwrdu, at Highland Place Unitarian Church, Aberdare. See below.

Saturday 11th January 2014 – Copy deadline for the next issue of South East Wales Unitarian News

MARGARET EVANS

Margaret Evans died at a hospital in Cardiff on Saturday 12th Oct at the age of 93 years. She had dedicated her whole life to Unitarianism and she will be missed by many. Someone expressed the sentiment that this was the end of an era. Her family and friends met for her funeral on 24th October when the General Assembly was represented by Lis Dyson-Jones; also present were the Rev Wyn Thomas and the Rev Peter Godfrey. The service was conducted by the Rev Eric Jones.

Margaret was born in Crumlin, North of Ireland. Her father, the Rev S E Bowen was a minister of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian church there and the family moved to Ceredigion – to Allt y Blaca when Margaret was 10 years of age. She married Len in 1950. Len came from Llanybydder and they moved to Cardiff where Len worked as an Insurance Broker with the Farmers Union. It was a blow when Len died in 1997.

She soon made her presence known at West Grove Unitarian church and in 1955 she became the Secretary of the Congregation and held the post for well over 30 years. She was not the type to just take on the role and do nothing about it. She was always there, always efficient and knew what needed to be done and what was going on, and was not afraid to tell others to get on with it. She showed the same resilience and efficiency when she took over the role of National Secretary of the Women's League. No stone was left unturned and everything was completed on time even before the age of technology. She was proud to be an Honorary Vice President of the League and an Honorary Life Member of the South East Wales Unitarian District.

Margaret knew everything about everyone – or so it seemed. She kept in touch with life in West Wales and was able to relate who belonged to who and how, and what had happened to them. She gathered a store of information about all the people involved in the organisations she belonged to – Probus, the Carmarthenshire Society, one of the WRVS supporters of patients attending the Heath Hospital. She loved the Unitarian Denomination and attended around 60 General Assembly Meetings, taking a keen interest in the development of her church nationally and locally.

I knew her from my student days. She was so kind and helpful. I knew her better after becoming West Grove's minister in 1971. Margaret would keep me informed of any events or happenings or illnesses – a tremendous help and support for any minister. She was happy to act as a host for meals or meetings in her house and simply loved to have people stay with her – members of the Women's League, Students training for the ministry, Unitarians coming to live in Cardiff. She was unhappy at the disposal of the West Grove building but did not take umbrage. During a time when it was uncertain where the congregation would meet, it did not worry Margaret. If they decided to meet on top of a tree, Margaret would get there.

Margaret was very ill, about 15 years ago – suffering from peritonitis and all of us, including the medical staff, thought that the end had come: but not Margaret! Suddenly she regained consciousness and asked what the score was in some cricket match or other. She was an avid follower of cricket and also attended rugby matches in Cardiff and rugby internationals, although she would never tell us who she supported when Wales played Ireland. She attended concerts at St David's Hall and appreciated classical music, world renowned singers and choirs.

That illness in 1997 saw a big change in her attitude to everything. Suddenly, every person was delightful and helpful and kind, every meeting was enjoyable, every meal was delicious and every lecture was superb and well delivered – even though you knew that in reality things were not quite up to scratch.

There was only one Margaret who kept an eye on everything as she journeyed along, loved her food, was always there, understood Welsh but refused to speak it, got information about everything and did not care if she occasionally overstepped the mark

We will miss you. You have left your mark. Thanks for everything and thanks for being you.

Margaret is survived by two nephews and their families – Dr John Bowen in Tenby and Dr Michael Bowen in New Zealand.

Eric Jones.

VISIT OF GA PRESIDENT TO SOUTH EAST WALES

On the second weekend of October, General Assembly President Rev Bill Darlison and his wife Morag were in Wales visiting the two districts.

On Saturday evening they were guests at a celebratory dinner at Llanwnnen, Ceredigion, organised in Bill's honour by the South Wales District.

On Sunday morning they made an early start and headed for Gellionnen Chapel where Bill was to conduct the service at 11am.

There was a good-sized gathering at the mountain-top chapel to welcome our visitors – who were a little confused, but not deterred, as a result of its remoteness.

(See *From The President*, below.)



Rev Bill Darlison and Morag

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

UNITARIANS AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHANGE

It is fairly unusual to have three separate events which simultaneously raise public awareness of the commendable achievements of Unitarians during the nineteenth century. However, Unitarians from Cardiff, Cefn and Aberdare managed this during the month of September.

The first of these centred around the former Carmarthenshire, Capel Penrhiw at St Fagans. This drew a large contingent of Unitarians from Ceredigion to mark and celebrate the 200th anniversary of the passing of the 1813 Trinity Act. This Act relieved Unitarians who expressed doubts about the truth of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from any penalty.

Unitarians representing some of the chapels from south and south-east Wales paraded their banners in procession around the grounds of St Fagans attracting quite a lot of attention from other visitors who were



The Parade

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

attending a Food Festival which was also taking place.

After the parade, Unitarians gathered in the chapel for a service. This was coordinated and predominantly conducted in Welsh by the Rev Wyn Thomas who gave the address on the theme of Tolerance of Difference. A reading was given by Rev Eric Jones. The Prayers and Benediction were led by Rev Cen Llwyd and Rev Lewis Rees. The organiser of the event was Diana Bianchi, Secretary for Cardiff Unitarians.

Following the service tea was served in the Village Hall by Cardiff Unitarians. More than 70 Unitarians enjoyed the delicious sandwiches, homemade cakes and tea which Cardiff Unitarians provided. Lis Dyson-Jones and Pat Simpson having taken a leading role in its organisation.

At a 'Heritage Open-Doors' event, which took place at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Chapel, Cefncoedycymer on the evening of the same day, Joe England (historian, author and broadcaster) gave a masterly address on 'The Contribution of Unitarians to the civic development of Merthyr from the 1830s onwards, described by Prof Gwyn Alf Williams as "*a striking and radical denomination who were key players in the politics of early nineteenth century Merthyr*". Joe England also described the investigation, by Edwin Chadwick, into the living conditions of the inhabitants of Merthyr with mortality rates of 30% in children before the age of one year, which resulted, with the support of prominent Unitarians, in the establishment of a Local Board of Health. However, despite considerable effort it took much longer, until early in the 20th century, to establish a Town Council.

The Annual Lecture, given this year by Huw Williams, took place at Highland Place at the end of September, also drew attention to the role of Unitarians in the Chartist cause in Aberdare and Merthyr. Although a largely peaceful movement 'The Charter' drew attention to the need for political reform and wider participation by a larger proportion of the local population in civic affairs.

These three events left those who attended in no doubt of the formative role which Unitarians played, in challenging circumstances, in securing the right, within the law, to worship in accordance with reason and individual conscience, also in the development of civic administration in their locality.

Ella Lewis-Jones

FDA Report 2013

What does justice mean to you?

Everyone in the world being able to eat at least one meal a day? Getting a well deserved pay rise?
Not having to lose family members to a treacherous disease?

The theme of justice was that of this year's FDA (Fun Days Away) week (11-17 year olds) for Unitarian youth, the next generation to lead our movement; learning about justice is of seminal importance if we are ever to guide the Unitarian movement to bigger and better things

This was my final FDA and, well, it was extraordinary. Per usual. The workshops, led by the leaders, were incredible as expected – a fine blend of learning about ourselves, helping others, accepting and feeling our most intense emotions and understanding our movement and our world.

My favourite part of the week is usually our walk to Eyam, but this time I think our outdoor-activities-day surpassed that. We took a bus to the Whitehall Centre in Sheffield where we spent a day canoeing, kayaking and worming. I spent the entire day in a canoe and I think it was the best fun I've ever had! There are two wonderful, exciting, fascinating girls that live in England; their names are Annabel Kramer-Winters and Elizabeth Smith. I love these girls with all my heart, but if they ever suggest getting into a canoe with you, R U N. Because of these two...special girls, we ended up capsizing not once, but *twice*. I learnt my lesson, and also that I am a terrible canoeist and cannot pull off a wetsuit.

Circle Time, our winding down time at the end of the day was also a huge highlight for me. The 4 FDAers who were having their last FDA this year led the circle time on the last night. We lit a path of tea lights to an (interesting) bonfire that we had constructed and Ross Hartley read a beautiful poem which he had written himself and, well, tears were shed.

FDAers participating in activities and having their say is an integral part of FDA and youth weekends. The leaders don't only appreciate our thoughts of the past weekend and future ideas for events in our feedback session at the end of the week – *throughout the week* we have 'Visionshare' in which FDAers are allowed to lead a session on anything of their choice. Over the years we have had the Welsh language, karate, dance and many more. This is just one of the many ways in which FDA helps people to explore and develop their individual talents.

There's not much more for me to say really. I am distraught that this has been my last FDA (although not my last youth event yet) and that I will never be able to spend a whole week with my favourite people ever

again. FDA is jam packed with laughs, tears, early mornings and late nights, the most brilliant innovative people ever, and it's full of love. I know I don't have long to write to you about how amazing Hucklow is so now I'm pleading with you; send your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, *everybody* there. They don't have to be Unitarian, they don't have to be anything, acceptance is our favourite word.

And don't think we forget about God either! I'm sure one of us shouted a "Jesus Christ!" as we fell out of the canoe...

Elizabeth Rosenberg

17 years young – a Unitarian youth, ready to take on the world.

UNITARIAN MUSIC SOCIETY REPORT 2013

This year the Unitarian Music Society held its annual conference in the Nightingale Centre in Derbyshire. Our central piece that we were focusing on was 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast' by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. The young people were out in force at the conference; a grand total of five girls between the ages of 12-20, a result indeed! Throughout the weekend we had the opportunity to choose different sessions to attend, such as recorders, music making, composition and chamber choir, all interspersed between rehearsals of Hiawatha's Wedding Feast. We also all participated in singing songs from the shows; in this case it was 'Evita', which was great fun. Especially as we had had the opportunity to watch the film earlier on in the day!



In the evenings we had epilogues taken by different people each night, including a brief history on North American Indian Spirituality! We also had two main performance opportunities over the weekend. On

the Saturday night we had 'after dinner salon music', where we all relaxed, some had a cup of coffee, or a glass of wine (or two) and listened to some of the ensembles that had been put together, and on the Sunday night, we had our informal concert; some played, some sang, some told funny stories or poetry – a very entertaining evening.

We attended the Old Chapel in Hucklow on the Sunday morning to listen to David Shaw's service about Act's of God. Somehow squeezing us all in and relegating the regulars to a few pews at the back! A conference wouldn't be complete without an AGM, and this time one of your own has found her way onto the committee... yes, I am now all grown up and joining committees now, whatever next! The next conference will take place from the 8-11 August 2014 at The Nightingale Centre, and we also hope to be making a trip to Dublin in May next year, maybe see a few of you there!

Isabelle Rosenberg

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 13 SEPTEMBER 2013

1. General Assembly Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors

The Executive Committee is pleased to add Rev Cody Coyne and Rev Winnie Gordon to the General Assembly Roll of Ministers with probationary status.

2. Millennium Fund Grants

Two applications were received for grants from the Millennium Fund and it was agreed to award Highland Place Unitarian Church, Aberdare £1500 towards the installation of a new sound and loop system and UKunitarianTV £800 towards computer equipment to mix, edit and create videos. The Millennium Fund helps to support projects that promote – directly or indirectly – spiritual and/or numerical growth within the Unitarian Movement and further information is available from the Chief Officer.

3. Budget

The General Assembly's Budget for the Year commencing 1 October 2013 was approved. The key points are as follows:

- The General Assembly, like many congregations, is facing pressures on spending as well as on income, particularly the need to fund past pension liabilities.
- Maintaining current activities and programmes and funding new initiatives, such as the IT system upgrade and a new GA website, has been given priority resulting in a planned deficit of £16,000.
- The congregational quota will rise by £2 per quota member to £32 in 2013/14.
- Use of various funds held separately – both designated and restricted – were reviewed and will be used to support the work of the Assembly, especially with children and young people.
- Work will commence on a plan to address the long term finances of the General Assembly when financial support from the Bowland Trust ceases in 2025.

4. Using the New Strapline

The Visibility Strategy Group presented proposals for rolling-out the new General Assembly strapline: "nurturing faith, embracing life, celebrating difference".

The strapline will be formally launched at the Annual Meetings, however it will be gradually introduced in publicity materials over the next few months. It is already on the window of the Unitarian Reception of Essex Hall.

5. Annual Meetings

Plans are well in hand for the Annual Meetings in April 2014 at Whittlebury Hall, Northamptonshire. Efforts to promote the event, particularly the high quality new venue, will include a colour flyer which will shortly be circulated and a leaflet in December with the booking forms. The Midland Unitarian Association was thanked for agreeing to arrange a "Celebrating Our Community" evening event.

6. Welsh Department Secretary

The Executive Committee offered its thanks and best wishes for the future to Dr Carwyn Tywyn, former Welsh Department Secretary, who left the employment of the General Assembly on 6 September 2013 to take up a position with Home–Start UK.

7. Strategy Groups

The Executive Committee offered its thanks to Dorothy Houghton, former chair, and to Angela Maher who for personal reasons have resigned from the Visibility Strategy Group and to Kate Buchanan, former co–chair of the Local Leadership Strategy Group, who has stood down having commenced ministry training.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It really did give me a great deal of pleasure to welcome Bill Darlison, GA President, and his wife Morag to the District on 13th October where he conducted service at Gellionnen Chapel. Over 60 people came and we were delighted with that support so thanks to you all.

Bill came to SEWUS as part of his weekend President's visit to Wales, hosted by the South Wales District on Friday and Saturday, staying in Llanwnnen near Lampeter.

Six of us from SEWUS joined the South Wales District at The President's dinner on Saturday evening at The Grannell Hotel in Llanwnnen. It proved to be a much less formal affair than I thought it might be and the assembled 20 or so people were treated to a very relaxed evening with good company, good food and the intriguing story of Bill's personal journey in faith.

Bill is a good story teller, and story collector, but more of that in a while...

During the course of the evening we heard the sad news of the death that afternoon of Margaret Evans from our Cardiff congregation. Rev Wyn Thomas, who has just become the President of the South Wales District, spoke warmly of Margaret and described her as a towering figure in the movement. A member of the Women's League present paid tribute to her as a 'true leader'. It was fitting to be able to pay our respects to Margaret's family and friends in her congregation and wider Movement that evening and at the Sunday service in the presence of The President of the GA.

Bill's belief in the value of stories became clear that evening as he explored with us the apparent struggle we have as Unitarians, in common with much of the secular world it seems, with the question of Biblical fact or fiction. We ask 'did it really happen' instead of concentrating on the value of its lesson for us. During the evening he read an item from a book of collected stories he has published called 'The Shortest Distance - 101 Stories from the World's Spiritual Traditions'. It was an amusing tale and illustrated his point that we wouldn't be concerned about 'truth' in a story from any other tradition. He also told us that one of his favourite quotations (I'm sorry I can't remember to whom it's credited) is *'the shortest distance between man and God is a story.'*

He also told us something of his background as a student at a Catholic college and how he left his studies very shortly before he would have been ordained priest. He soon met Morag and the rest, as he said, is history.

During their day in Ceredigion Cen Llwyd took them on a tour of the 'Black Spot' chapels and both enthused about the number and quality of buildings in that small area. Cen was quite taken with Morag's delight at one particular chapel, which she felt was a wonderful place for a wedding then said that maybe she'd consider a 'Bill replacement' for the purpose! Bill meanwhile enthused over the space in the pulpits – not a luxury he often finds in Unitarian places of worship.

On the Sunday Morag phoned me from Pontardawe needing help with directions (their sat nav had given up on finding us). Bill and Morag arrived a little breathless at Gellionnen and asked why a chapel would be put in a place such as that – it certainly added to their Welsh adventure! I'm proud to say that 'The white Chapel' did gleam that morning, helped by the new paint job.

Our places of worship in South Wales clearly had quite an effect on them both and Bill referred to this during his service. His sermon was a call to us all to be truly open to new ways of thinking.

Those of you who were able to attend his service will agree, I'm sure, that it was a most successful event and the chance to be together and with our President was a delight.

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

Remembering Phil's words from last year's service –“our young people are our future”– we are hoping to have contributions from all ages, youngsters as well as the more mature congregation members. Please come and support this, the young people especially need to know that we have a vibrant community and that they are valued. There will be a shared lunch afterwards and this is always an important and enjoyable time to catch up with friends – young and old. I look forward to seeing you.

Julie Nedin

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

I am sure that I have always thought of Christmastime, when it has come around... as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely.

Charles Dickens (A Christmas Carol)

ABERDARE

Greetings from Highland Place!

Services have been taken by a number of people lately and we feel so privileged to have such willing helpers.

Some of our members have been in hospital or unwell but I am pleased to say that Christine Roberts, Edna Jones, Iris Davies and Betty Evans are all on the mend, and that Alun Watts is recovering after an operation (mustn't forget the men!!) It would seem that all the congregation is troubled with coughs and colds, etc – but never mind, today the sun is shining!!

Women's League continues to flourish with average attendances of 17.

We have had a busy few weeks with a Fashion Show (Naomi Campbell has nothing on Highland Place models!) An Auction, poorly attended but financially successful! A mystery journey through music by Anne's friend Nic Treharne and a yoghurt-making demo by Joy Foster, not forgetting our "silly" quiz and other fun afternoons!

We have been extremely busy making items for our Sale of Work and, in fact, we have formed a Tuesday afternoon Craft Class and while attendees have been only 5/6 people they have been an outstanding



GA President Rev Bill Darlison at Gellionnen

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

success. We have reverted to childhood and been cutting out, gluing, knitting and stuffing! (Snowmen etc, not turkeys!!) We are reminded of "Listen with Mother" or "Playgroup" whatever, we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves and recommend it to other groups – you'll certainly come away with a smile on your face!

Hope to see you all before Christmas especially at our Autumn/Christmas Fayre on Saturday 2nd November at 3pm.

Take Care; Keep Well and Keep Smiling.

Marian Whippey

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

We were very saddened by the passing of Margaret Evans on Saturday 12th October. She was a very dear member of West Grove church and then Cardiff Unitarians/Undodiaid Caerdydd. At her funeral on Thursday 24th October Margaret's nephew John and Lara, her great niece expressed how Margaret was a valued family member to them. The Reverend Eric Jones gave an excellent eulogy at her funeral, remembering Margaret's strong qualities of service to her community through WRVS and other organisations and to her church. She put Unitarianism at the forefront of her life and very rarely missed a service until she was physically unable to attend. We owe a great debt to Margaret who played a central role in our church for many years as Secretary and as a leading light in Women's League in Cardiff and in Women's League at district and national levels. She was involved in all aspects of organisation and fundraising in church. We give many thanks to Margaret for her loyal and longstanding work, support and friendship to all of us at Cardiff Unitarians/Undodiaid Caerdydd and throughout the denomination. She enjoyed life and loved nothing more than to enjoy it in the company of her friends and family.

On the 8th of September a special day was held at the Penrhiw Chapel, St Fagans. The Reverend Wyn Thomas led the service with the Reverends Eric Jones, Lewis Rees and Cen Llwyd taking part. The congregation were delighted by the children's singing. What made the day special was that we were able to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Trinity Act when Unitarians were allowed to worship in freedom for the first time without fear of arrest and persecution. There was a colourful parade of regional banners through the grounds of the Museum.

The Reverend Wyn Thomas gave an inspirational address on how important it is to tolerate the differences we have with people who have other beliefs and lifestyles. The Rev Eric Jones reminded us how Nonconformists were persecuted for their beliefs and had to meet at out of the way places such as Cwm Y Glo farm on a Sunday.

We enjoyed food after the service in St Fagans Community Hall prepared by Lis Dyson-Jones, Pat Simpson and other members of the congregation. Many thanks to Diana Bianchi for her work in arranging this event.

We were pleased to welcome over 50 people to a Naming ceremony on the 15th of September led by the Rev Eric Jones who then, after a busy day, took the Welsh service. Cardiff Unitarians have been in discussion with the Multi Faith forum of Cardiff and will participate in the Inter faith week in November.

We have appreciated our visits to other services in the district such as Harvest Festival in Aberdare on the 29th September and on the 13th of October we enjoyed GA President, Bill Darlison's visit to Gellionnen chapel. Representatives from the Chapels of South Wales travelled to this special occasion and enjoyed the service, hospitality and newly painted chapel.

On the 20th of October the congregation concluded their Circle services on 12 Steps to a Compassionate life held on the third Sunday of the month and overall this was felt to have been beneficial for us seeking to become more compassionate in our human relationships.

Lis Dyson Jones led the service on Sunday 27th October for All Souls. It was for the Celtic People a time of reflection of the remembering and honouring the Dead and we did this during the service by the use of photographs and personal items of loved ones who had passed away. It was an uplifting and moving event that was able to use audience participation to enrich the afternoon of worship. A Worship group has met to discuss a new format to services that church members leading services will follow in the next few months and Lis delivered an excellent example of how to lead such a service.

Cardiff and District United Nations Association invite Cardiff members and those in the district to a talk by Bruce Kent on Wednesday 13th November at 7pm at the Temple of Peace on 'Should Trident be trashed?' Prior to this, a wreath will be laid in the Garden of Peace at 6.45pm for the rights of conscientious objectors.

Dewi Owen and Sarah Boyce

CEFNCOED

Women's League

Since the last newsletter in late August we have had a third visit by the lady from Age Concern Cymru. She came to cook a meal for us – Chicken and chickpeas. Unfortunately the meal didn't go down very well, so I'm afraid African chickpeas won't be going on our shopping lists.

We were disappointed that Mrs Anne Watts from Highland Place League couldn't come and give her talk to us as planned. We hope her husband is now feeling much better, and we send him our best wishes.

We held a very nice Harvest Service on Sunday, 6th October. The Women's League members saw to it that the chapel was decorated with fruit, vegetables and flowers. The chapel looked lovely.

On Wednesday, 16th October we again did lunch for a dozen or so members of a Teachers' Course organised by Gwent College. They arrived a little sooner than planned as bad weather curtailed their visit to an earlier venue. This was the third such visit by a group from the college – the second this year. After the meal they went with Ken to see our lovely chapel and to be given a talk on its history, which I'm sure they will have found very interesting.

Our Christmas Lunch has been arranged for Wednesday, 4th December at the Nant Ddu Lodge.

Vera Tomsett

Heritage

As part of a European Heritage event, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd was open to the public on the afternoons of Saturday and Sunday, 7th/8th September. Over the two days we had a pleasing number of visitors from places near and far – including a family of four from Maryland in the USA, who happened to be staying at Pontlottyn.

Our footfall count was boosted on the Sunday when we celebrated the chapel's 266th anniversary at an evening service conducted by Morgan Chambers. The service attracted a number of old friends of the chapel and also some first-time visitors. We were pleased that Joe England, historian, author, broadcaster and Chairman of the Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Forum kindly accepted the invitation to speak on 'the Unitarian contribution to Merthyr Tydfil's history.' His address was delivered with the consummate ease of the skilful orator, capturing the interest of all present. The evening concluded with light refreshments in the chapel vestry.



Joe England

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

Visitors

It is said about buses that you can wait for ages hoping for one to come and then *three* come along together. The same can be said of the descendants of Siôn Llewelyn (a significant figure in the founding of the chapel in 1747) – three of them have recently visited Hen Dŷ Cwrdd.

It might be a slight exaggeration to say they came 'together' – but their visits were not all that far apart. The first to arrive was Alwyn Evans, now of Penarth, who took the opportunity of the Heritage Weekend to discover more about Siôn and, more particularly, Siôn's grandson Gwilym Harri. Next came chapel member Prof David Brynmor Thomas, now a resident of St Andrew's, Scotland who was making one of his regular visits to us, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth. Completing this trio of descendants came Lyndon Harris, now of Llandeilo, with his wife Mary, keen to examine some of the chapel records.

David and Lyndon were already well aware of each other and their family connection, but Alwyn was a stranger to both. All three 'cousins' are now in contact and sharing with each other information relating to their common ancestry. We are pleased that the chapel played a part in bringing this about.

Out and about

On Sunday 29 September members travelled to Highland Place Church, Aberdare where, together with members of Cardiff Unitarians, they enjoyed a Harvest Service arranged by the Highland Place congregation. Members also enjoyed GA President, Bill Darlinson's service at Gellionnen on 13 October. We were saddened by the news of the death of Margaret Evans and were represented at her funeral service at Thornhill Crematorium on 24th October by six of our members.

Thank you

We are very much indebted to Keith Lewis-Jones. Thanks to his expertise *The History of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd*, written by Tom Lewis (Mab y Mynydd) in 1947, is now available on the chapel's webpage. It can be downloaded at ukunitarians.org.uk/sewus/cefncloed.htm

Pen Blwydd Hapus

We send our love and best wishes for a Happy Birthday to Mrs Nancy England who will be 97 on 9th November.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

We were delighted at the end of August to hold the Christening Service of Ieuan David Protheroe Williams in the chapel. Julianne Morgan kindly officiated. It was a lovely service and Ieuan, who is used to the building because he has attended services with parents Siân and Rhys, quite happily crawled around to note all those present! The chapel was full, so he had lots of attention! Dan Pugh Bevan kindly did the honours on our organ before leaving Porthcawl to take up an Organ Scholarship in Oxford University. Siân and Rhys, who were married in Nottage by the late Reverend Eirion Phillips, had arranged a lunch at the Porthcawl Rugby Club and, because there were to be a lot of children present, a bouncy castle to keep them amused. There is photographic evidence to prove that Auntie Janet (Hales) forgot her age for a while and joined them!

Also in August was the 92nd birthday of our much loved chapel President Gwladys Howell. She enjoyed the day, celebrating quietly with a few friends.

Our schoolroom is always in use on the last Friday of the month, so this year our Macmillan Coffee morning was held on the first Friday of October. We always enjoy getting together, and have some superb cake makers in our congregation, so it really is an occasion not to be missed! As well as eating cake we had a bric-a-brac stall, thanks to Rose and Jean for staffing it, a raffle, thanks to Jennifer for arranging it, and in total made £180, which is amazing considering our small congregation. Thanks to all who contributed in any way.

On the first Sunday in October Julianne Morgan conducted a lovely Harvest Service for us. In an attempt to demonstrate how the wealth of the world is enjoyed by a third of its inhabitants, we made a very messy job of "sharing" a loaf as "equally" as this would allow.....poor Alastair was left with just a crumb! In the past our congregation collection was sent to a third world charity, but this year members and friends very generously gave tins and packets of food which was given to the Porthcawl food-bank. It was received with amazement at the kindness, and by now, I hope, has helped to feed needy folk of Porthcawl and district.

Simple Gifts

We are pleased to hear that Isabelle Rosenberg is involved in organising a social action / community building event in London with youth co-ordinator John Harley and Rob Gregson. They are hoping to organise a circus workshop and a sleepover for the Unitarian youth programme and the Simple Gifts after school club. Good luck Isabelle, we hope this event is a success!

Avril Protheroe

SWANSEA

Correspondent, Pam Taylor reports that she continues to make progress but still isn't able to attend services. She is cheered by news of some 'new faces' at Swansea.

TREBANOS

GRAIG CHAPEL

We were delighted to host an adoption celebration service for Liela May Rees, daughter of the Rev Lewis Rees and Cheryl at the Graig on Saturday 21st September.

The officiating minister was the Rev John Phillip Carter, an American Unitarian Universalist and friend of Lewis, who is currently the minister of Lewisham Unitarian Church, London. More than 70 people attended and shared a meaningful service.

The chapel had been well prepared for this happy occasion and we thank Lawrence and his son Christopher, Sarah and her son Caradoc, and Colin Morgan and his wife Dolores for all their efforts which resulted in everything being spic and span both inside and outside the chapel.

The previous week, thanks to Lawrence, saw the major servicing and tuning of the chapel organ which is now in pristine condition and was funded by the Trebanos Mixed choir. The repairs and replacement of the chapel's rainwater goods were also completed, together with outside painting.

During the past month we were delighted to welcome Armon Emond from the United States, whose mother was Peggy Morgan (late of *Cae is Maen*) who emigrated to the States during the 1960s. Peggy was a faithful member of the Graig. On behalf of his mother, Armon was pleased to give a monetary gift towards the cost of maintenance work at Graig Chapel.

The service led by the Rev Eric Jones on 20th October concerned *meditation with music* and it was a meaningful celebration of the Unitarian National Peace Sunday. It was a memorable service influenced by Eric's selection of readings and poetry and the playing of the chapel organ by Lawrence. The organ had been recently been serviced and tuned. Lawrence's choice of music from well known classical works also added to the occasion

It was sad to note that so many of our worshippers were unable to attend but we should certainly organise a repeat for next year, if only for the officers of our church and others who would enjoy an unusual and uplifting service.

Colin Morgan

GELLIONNEN

We've been painted inside and out and the results are stunning, even on a grey, wet day. For the time that we needed outside scaffolding Robert James arranged that we also had security/protection cover. We were monitored twenty-four hours a day on screen. People were noted approaching the chapel and wandering around it on a number of occasions, possibly to cause damage and it seems they were put off by the obvious presence of an alarm system. All visits were reported to us including that of four women and two dogs one Sunday morning at 10.30. Perhaps next year we shall be able to take part in the European Open Doors Weekend.

Five of us joined the procession and service in St Fagans commemorating the passing of the Trinity Act. We took the banners of the South East Wales District and Gellionnen and Graig Chapels. The sun shone and, as ever, it was good to meet up afterwards with Unitarians from elsewhere. The splendid tea provided by our Cardiff friends was a bonus.

Our August Folk Service was a great pleasure. The Rev Alun Wyn Dafis officiated and we were well supported by local friends. It was very much a group effort with Sarah lighting the fire, Sandra baking Welsh cakes and Gwyn supplying the cleaning up team afterwards with cheese and biscuits. But to report on the service – it was good – we sang our hearts out and our musicians did us proud. Roland Emmanuel of bluegrass fame had to leave immediately after his 'spot' in order to drive on to the Forest of Dean, but he chose to be with us first and take us through some marvellous old hymns. Alun Wyn brought us the hymns of not *one*, but *two* past Gellionnen ministers. And to round it off, we had some coverage from Welsh language TV!

Our harvest service was shared by a small number, conducted by Julie Nedin and concluding with a shared meal of homemade bread and soup and locally picked apples.

Time for another cleanup came when we were to have the honour of receiving the GA President for his District Service. Gardens were raided and vases filled.

When all the preparations were complete we discovered we had no water. The possibility is that we have a blocked downpipe (which conducts rainwater from the roof into an underground tank) or a cracked tank, or both. After some thought our ever resourceful treasurer Gareth Evans phoned the local fire-station. The Pontardawe firemen took a bowser up to the chapel and filled the tank to overflowing. We are so very grateful—how can you host sixty people when you don't have a functioning loo and the means to fill a kettle? Two of the visitors that day were Lillian and Gary Dermody, members who moved away several years ago but who take the trouble to join us once or twice each year.

We look forward to a warmer winter although the need for thermal socks will continue at Gellionnen. The chapel was built for people who wore woollen hose and flannel shirts and petticoats.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

Greetings to all our friends in the District.

Over the August break, we have continued with our structural improvements, they are coming along well. We were pleased to welcome Rev Eric Jones, Jullie Nedin and Keith Lewis-Jones to the chapel to discuss any help the District could offer. Several helpful suggestions were offered and our treasurer Mansel Lalis is in process of acting on them.

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service took on a different theme this year. We considered our World-Wide Harvests and lack of them in many countries, through drought, floods and of course warfare.

Instead of our usual display of vegetables and fruit, we had a collection of 'dried goods'. The array was amazing, our small congregation excelled themselves, we even had two bags left outside our chapel door for us. Julianne took all the offerings – together with Avril from Nottage with their collection, to the Porthcawl Food Bank where the gifts were received with much delight. Thank you to all who contributed.

Sadly, Phylis Rose our oldest member died this last month. She was 99 and remembered wonderful stories of our chapel over the years. Phyl was a wonderful character and her family –the Escotts- have played a great part in our history. She will be missed greatly by her family and by our chapel family. I will certainly miss her, I always had my lunch with her between services at Nottage and Wick. My car knew the way instinctively. Our love and sympathy to all her family and many friends. Julianne conducted the service at her home and the Crematorium and then later in the chapel before her ashes were scattered on her family grave.

There will be no service in our chapel on Nov 10th as this year the village Remembrance Service will be held in the Anglican Church as a joint service with us. Julianne will deliver the Address – instead of the usual Reading.

Our next service will be our Advent Service at 3pm on November 24th. Everyone welcome if able to attend.

Julianne Morgan

GWERSYLL CWMWRDU

Special General Meeting to discuss the future of Gwersyll Cwmwrdu 2pm Highland Place Unitarian Church, Aberdare, 6th January, 2014

As many of you know the old chapel at Cwmwrdu, Gwernogle, Carmarthenshire, has not been used by a congregation as a place of worship for many years. From 1961 it has been a hostel for young Unitarians and provided holidays for children and adults in need. The lives of many have been enriched by Gwersyll Cwmwrdu.

By now, the condition of the chapel has deteriorated and nobody has stayed there overnight for several years. Standards have changed and the simple building no longer meets modern needs. There is no caretaker locally, though the efforts of volunteers to maintain the place over many years are appreciated.

As trustees of the Gwersyll Cwmwrdu charity we are calling this special meeting to discuss:

Does Gwersyll Cwmwrdu have a future?

Should the charity Gwersyll Cwmwrdu be brought to an end?

Should the responsibility for the building revert fully to the Cwmwrdu Chapel trustees?

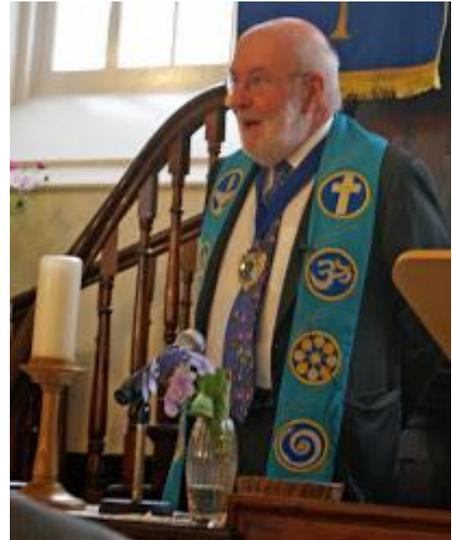
We hope members of your chapel or organisation will attend the meeting so that we can move forward and make responsible decisions about the future of this historic building. If you are unable to attend we would be grateful if you could discuss the matter and let us know your views.

On behalf of the Gwersyll Cwmwrdu charity trustees – Robert Davies, Parch Cen Llwyd, Sheila Cousins

Some further photos thanks to Keith Lewis-Jones



Capel Gellionnen



GA President Rev Bill Darlison at Gellionnen



Capel Penrhwi

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the *South East Wales Unitarian News* is **Saturday 11 January 2014**.

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