



FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 14 December – District Christmas Service at Capel Penrhiw, St Fagans at 11am. (Note the change of time!)

Saturday 10 January – Copy deadline for the next issue of South East Wales Unitarian News.

VISIT TO SOUTH EAST WALES BY GA PRESIDENT

On Saturday, 18th October, South East Wales Unitarians gathered at Capel Penrhiw in the grounds of St Fagans National History Museum to welcome General Assembly President Marion Baker on her visit to Wales. We were pleased, too, to welcome Marion's husband, Rev Ernest Baker, and Welsh Department Secretary, Melda Grantham. It was also good to meet up again with Robert Davies, currently back in Cardiff from his adopted home in Sweden, and his wife Ingegerd.

We arrived for a 3.45pm start—so arranged in order to avoid interrupting a couple's wedding nuptials, conducted earlier in the afternoon by Rev Eric Jones—and were greeted by the pleasant sound of Welsh Folk tunes played on the violin by Martyn Edwards, Trebanos. Martyn also provided the accompaniment for our hymn-singing.

District President Julie Nedin welcomed all present and introduced Dr Steve Burrow, Head of Historic Properties at St Fagans, who gave an informative synopsis of the museum's history and plans for its future development.

Responding to Julie's introduction and welcome GA President Marion Baker said she appreciated the invitation from both Welsh Districts and was much enjoying the visit. As a memento of her presidential visit to SE Wales Marion was presented with a selection of books by Welsh Unitarian ministers, and Ernest received a gift of locally-brewed Welsh ales.

The service ended with the singing of Calon Lân and with Closing Words from Julie, after which we made our way to the nearby Village Hall for afternoon tea organised by Diana Bianchi and Sarah Boyce.



Capel Penrhiw



Martyn Edwards

Photo: Melda Grantham



General Assembly President Marion Baker, Dr Steve Burrow and SE Wales President Julie Nedin

Photo: Melda Grantham

After the welcome nourishment and a chat we dispersed—most heading back to our homes. Marion and Ernest however, with Melda leading the way, travelled on to Ceredigion where, next day, the President's busy weekend was to continue with a visit to the South Wales District.

At Llandysul on Sunday morning Marion and Ernest attended the Sunday School Harvest Festival at Capel y Fadfa and, in the afternoon, Marion conducted the service at Capel y Graig.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE WELSH DEPARTMENT

The clocks have been turned back, the shops are already full of Christmas and I've been in post for six months. They do say that time flies when you're having fun and the last six months have certainly flown by! In some ways it also seems much longer than six months as I feel as if I've known some people for much longer than that. It was lovely to walk in to Penrhiw chapel the other day and know every face and most names as well!

Most of you will know that I was in Penrhiw chapel in Sain Ffagan joining the SEWUS District in a celebration to welcome the National President Marion Baker and her husband to Wales. It was a very successful weekend and the location and arrangements on Saturday were a wonderful way to introduce her to Unitarianism in Wales. The fiddle music and the talk on the work of the museum and the opportunity to walk round some of the buildings added to the informal, relaxed feel of the day and I know that she thoroughly enjoyed it. The tea in the hall afterwards also provided a new experience for me, as it was the very first time that I had tasted a vegan wedding cake. Everyone who attended and helped to make it possible should congratulate themselves.

Another event which I attended this week was the launch of the Addoldai Cymru new website at Cardiff, which showcases not one, but two Unitarian chapels – Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Trecynon and Yr Hen Gapel, Llwynrhydowen. This is a great site which will develop even further as people add their own information and memories. Please do visit it at www.welshchapels.org and don't forget to take the virtual tours! Please also take a look at the new Faith Trail booklet which shows the route from Penrhiw to Llwynrhydowen and contains information about the chapels en-route as well as historical information and postcards. These will be distributed widely and are a fantastic way to raise our profile to those outside the movement. Please spread the word as widely as possible!

Melda Grantham

GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES SEPTEMBER 2014

1. Ministry Strategy Group

The appointments of Rev Daniel Costley as Chair of the Ministry Strategy Group and Rev Ant Howe as a member of the Group were approved.

2. Budget and Congregational Quota 2014/15

The budget for 2014/15 was approved and in order to achieve a balanced position, following a projected deficit in the current year, a congregational quota was agreed at £35 per member. An additional £5,000 was committed to the Ministry Strategy Group budget to enable them to support the ongoing work on ministry training, subject to EC approval.

3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Ministers

The Executive Committee stressed its strong support for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Ministers and asked that the Ministry Strategy Group consider how it might be taken forward and supported by the Denomination, the Colleges and congregations.

4. Annual Meetings 2015

The new venue at the Hilton Birmingham Hotel, near Birmingham airport and the NEC, was welcomed and the convenience to major rail and road connections would be attractive to attendees.

5. Safeguarding

The importance of all congregations taking their responsibilities seriously was reiterated. EC link members would be raising this issue with their link Districts to ensure congregations were supported. Joan Cook was appointed as Executive Committee member to take a lead on safeguarding and liaise with the Chief Officer.

6. President and Vice President

District Secretaries were to be reminded of the request for suggestions for nominations for the positions of President and Vice President of the General Assembly for 2015/16 which will be considered by the Executive Committee at its November meeting.

7. EC Election Timetable

The Electoral Panel – Gavin Mason, Wade Miller-Knight and Howard Wilkins - had met with the Chief Officer and agreed that the Executive Committee election would take place after Christmas and therefore closer to the Annual Meetings where those elected would take up office. Anyone interested in finding out more about the role should contact the Chief Officer or speak to a current EC member.

8. IARF Council

Robert Ince was congratulated on his election to the Council of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF).

Executive Committee

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

As a Movement we stand for inclusivity, reason and social justice. Quite high aims you may feel, especially as we are so small in numbers. We face a tough challenge in these times of promoting to the outside world our faith in action – what can we do to make our mark in our communities in this respect?

I am pleased to say that there are now 2 chapels in our District that have been approved for same-sex marriages: Highland Place and Gellionnen. While it may not be possible for various reasons for all our congregations to support marriage ceremonies themselves I hope there will be a collective pride in this situation and that any gay couple seeking a ceremony will be welcomed and encouraged to contact these chapels.

There are other ways in which we can encourage social inclusion in our own community by reaching out to people of other ethnic origins and spiritual traditions, showing a positive desire to create understanding and good will. Sadly every town is now in need of a food bank and support by faith groups is most important to sustain this effort. We can make a positive contribution to social justice abroad by links to registered charities, supporting basic needs of life such as food, water, clothing and education. When we choose as a group to support a charity we can make a very strong statement of our faith in action and educate ourselves and others in the process.

Our efforts may seem small but I believe each act of compassion is a message that we care enough to start a ripple which creates a wave of hope – much needed in our times.

Julie Nedin

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

From an article by Art Lester in a recent "Inquirer".

Talking about his experience with the Masai tribe in North Kenya during the nineteen eighties, Art says:

"These very poor herders, when things went well for them, gave away most of their livestock. It showed me that they had either advanced to – or perhaps never lost – a living concept of what I have to call enough-ness – that and the fact that they knew that stuff was always just stuff, really – not nearly as important as things like respect and the love of community. We don't seem to know exactly when enough is enough any more."

So maybe this Christmas we can keep Art's words in mind when we shop for "stuff" and "things".

ABERDARE

As always – greetings from Highland Place!

On the 28th September we held our Harvest Thanksgiving service and were joined by members of Cardiff and Cefn Coed congregations. The service was taken by Rev Winnie Gordon from Birmingham, and I hope the lovely weather made her trip to Wales enjoyable. During the service Cardiff and Cefn presented fruit and vegetables to the harvest table, and Phil Griffiths, Joan Harlow and Gwynn Pritchard took part in a harvest story. After the service we joined together for tea and cake in the schoolroom.

We are pleased to send congratulations to Anne and Alun Watts on the birth of their son Gareth's lovely boy. Joshua did not have a good start, having needed surgical help but is now blooming and we are all happy for the new little family.

I am sure that, by now, Highland Place's Monday morning 'Tea and Toast' sessions are well known! But just in case, I want to tell you myself, what a wonderful achievement has been made. We tried to do this type of thing many times before, but it didn't take off! But then . . . Tony and Joan Harlow took over and have made an amazing success story. For 60p (yes 60p!) you can have tea or coffee and a round of toast – and what toast! Best 'cop' butter as my mother would say, on hot toast – it nearly runs down your chin. If you are in the vicinity on a Monday morning – please call in! Sometimes we have had as many as 16 call in – they include some church members, neighbours living around the church and a local walking group. Well done Tony and Joan!! I recommend that other churches try it and will have plenty of encouragement from Tony and Joan.

Women's League is doing well with a variety of events taking place. Last week we all took our achievements along and showed off!! Some took calligraphy and painting examples and some very cleverly talked about their achievements in marriage, keeping their families united, their past employment and many other ways which we all considered so important. A lovely afternoon which made us realise how important the small every day things are and how they add up to happiness - love; friendship; contentment and a sense of achievement!

At the time of writing, League is busy working (or talking) about our forthcoming Sale of Work on October 25th,

Our District meeting was held in Cardiff where we met the National President Sheilah Stott. She was a delightful lady who told us about her life and background of Unitarianism. Sheilah's talk was interspersed with music and ended with Pomp and Circumstance with members singing along and then the much loved "What a wonderful world" sang by Louis Armstrong - how can you top that!!

After a delicious tea, beautifully presented, Sheilah endeavoured to speak to us all individually and enthusiastically. Cardiff did us proud – and even the sun was out to greet us. The project table made an excellent £50 profit; the raffle £25 and collection £21. A very worthwhile afternoon with a happy atmosphere for the 20 members who attended.

The Men's Group met in Penarth on 30th September. They had glorious weather and a very interesting and informative tour of Penarth with Gwynn Pritchard as guide. First stop was Joseph Parry's grave, then "Dagger Town" followed by the 'bourgeois' part of Penarth, a walk through the Italian Gardens and finally lunch on the refurbished pier. They certainly get around don't they?

Hope to see you all soon

Marian Whippey

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

We continue to receive gifts in the form of the variety of services we have and from the care of those who prepare them. It has been heartening to have such a positive response from visiting worship leaders who have embraced the change of style in our worship.

Those who were able, joined the congregations of Aberdare and Cefn Coed at a joint Harvest Service held at Highland Place on September 28th. The service, conducted by the Rev Winnie Gordon, Minister at New Meeting Birmingham, was enjoyed by all as was the fellowship which followed.

After the summer break, the Children's Group has resumed its fortnightly club led by Sarah and Diana who will also lead an Inter-Generational service on Sunday 26th October when the children will play a significant part. The Children's Club meet on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 4pm.

Several members of the congregation attended Penrhiw Chapel, St. Fagan's on Saturday 18th October and were pleased to meet and have tea with the GA President Marion Baker and her husband Ernest. It was good to welcome Robert and Ingegerd Davies to that and to our service on October 19th. Robert will give a lecture at a joint meeting of the United Nations Association and Cardiff Unitarians on October 23rd at the Temple of Peace Cathays Park Cardiff. The meeting will be at 7pm and the title of Robert's lecture is "Shrapnel and Blueberries", a history of the UNA and Work Camps in Cardiff.

The women of the Cardiff congregation held the first meeting on Monday 20th October to reform its Women's League branch. During a pleasant and lively discussion plans were made for the future of this small but enthusiastic group. In realistic manner a variety of suggestions were discussed and agreed and the intention is that the group will meet several times a year to share company with one another. Included in discussion were finances and commitment to the League Project, membership, the League Letter and other national issues. No formal committee structure was considered but Lyn Davies has agreed to continue the role of 'keeper of the purse' and will be Treasurer of the group. We look forward to our gatherings, the first of which will be a Christmas lunch at the home of Pat Simpson on Friday 19th December. Proceeds from this event will enable the start of a build up of the branch finances.

We were very happy to be able to host the South East Wales District Women's League Meeting in Cardiff on Wednesday 8th October. The meeting was held at the United Reform Church building in the city and members from Aberdare, Cefn Coed and Cardiff enjoyed listening to the National League President, Sheilah Stott who addressed us on her personal Unitarian Journey. Sheilah used music to illustrate its importance during her life.

Thoughts to ponder

'Ability is what you are capable of doing; motivation determines what you do and attitude determines how well you do it.' (Lou Holtz)

'Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.' (William Shakespeare)

Lis Dyson-Jones

CEFNCOED

Women's League

Firstly, an update on our Lunch at the Tŷ Newydd Hotel, Penderyn, in August. We were all so disappointed with the meal we certainly won't be going there again.

The two September meetings were taken up discussing the upcoming events in October.

A few of us went to the Harvest Service at Aberdare. The display was lovely as usual. Lovely service and an enjoyable tea afterwards. We held our own Harvest Service the following Sunday. All members made a contribution to our lovely display.

On October 1st we did a lunch for a group from Coleg Gwent, we excelled as usual, they seemed very pleased. Before they left they went to see our chapel and had a talk by Ken. Elizabeth (Gwynfa's daughter) organised their visit.

The next week, on the 8th of October, six of us went to the Autumn Meeting in Cardiff and had a very enjoyable afternoon.

Our Xmas Lunch has been booked at Cefn Coed Rugby Club – the food is great. Margaret Edwards has booked it – she is in charge.

Vera Tomsett

A Tale of Two Sites

For a while now there has been much speculation regarding the possible merger of the two adjacent local authorities – Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Tâf. Even so, in the early hours of 1st September, this did nothing to lessen the shock of the startling discovery that some sort of administrative or topographical experiment seemed to have already taken place – WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING!

The European Heritage *Open Doors – Drysau Agored* event, organised in Wales by Cadw, was about to get under way. Hen Dŷ Cwrdd had been registered as participating in the event as far back as June and all the necessary details supplied – it was now time for a quick look at the official *Open Doors* website to check that all was in order.

The listings were given according to local authority. By clicking on 'Merthyr Tydfil' you were led to a lone entry for Hen Dŷ Cwrdd—*Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Unitarian Chapel, Aberdare* !! On following this link details were revealed about an event at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Alma Street, Trecynon on 7 September, organised by Welsh Religious Buildings Trust. (The date should have been 6 September anyway.) But – if this had been transported to Merthyr – *where* was Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, **Cefncoedycymer**?

The reader has probably already guessed that it was eventually found tucked away in the many listings for Rhondda Cynon Tâf – giving the correct dates (13 and 14 September) but with incorrect times!

The errors on the website were brought to the attention of Cadw, asking that the situation be rectified without delay. The two chapels were then correctly listed in the regions where they belonged—but not before members of the public had already been utterly confused by it all – how many, is anyone's guess.

Christine Moore, on behalf of Welsh Religious Buildings Trust, had quite a pickle to sort out. It was now Tuesday, and a lecture had been arranged for Saturday morning (not Sunday, as the website had led people to believe) : nothing was arranged to take place on the Sunday. At Cefn, we were more fortunate as our event was not taking place until the weekend of the 13th and 14th.

Over the Saturday and Sunday, the approach to the chapel was festooned with bunting supplied by Cadw – something they did get right – it was quite a sight. We had visitors from the Merthyr area and also from as far afield as Llandeilo, Penperlleni, and Blaenafon. Visitors on the Sunday had the added bonus of attending a service conducted by Phil Griffiths, celebrating the chapel's 267th anniversary.

Out and about

Members enjoyed joining with Aberdare and Cardiff congregations for a Harvest Service conducted by Rev Winnie Gordon at Highland Place on Sunday, 28th September. They also enjoyed being at Capel Penrhiw, St Fagans on Saturday 18th October for the visit of GA President Marion Baker.

Funerals

Rev Eric Jones officiated at two funeral services at the chapel during October – that of Mr Raymond Guppy, whose family had close links with Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, and of Mrs Lilian Jones, who was a neighbour of the chapel. The chapel was full to capacity on both occasions.

We extend our sympathy to both families.

Fractured hip

As we go to press, Marlene Chambers (wife of Morgan) is recovering at Prince Charles Hospital after surgery to repair a fractured hip caused by a fall. We send Marlene our very best wishes for a speedy return to full mobility.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

The highlight of Autumn at Nottage has to be the visit of Reverend Ashley Hills. Reverend Hills is the President of the General Baptist & Unitarian movement. He last visited about 5 years ago and it was a pleasure to welcome him to both Nottage & Wick again. He conducted our morning Harvest service and then went on to Wick to conduct their afternoon service. We were able to offer him a "faith and hope" lunch between the two services, which gave us all the opportunity to speak to him. He describes himself as an "old fashioned preacher", in which case we LIKE old fashioned! His service was certainly one to remember, and "uplifting".....another "old fashioned" concept?! Our Harvest gifts were food for the Porthcawl foodbank again.

The turnout for our MacMillan coffee morning was disappointing, but even so we were able to donate £142 for their cause.

The start of our Healing Group was postponed because we are all too busy at the moment!

Glenys Rosenfield is progressing well after her eye operation, and has started to go out alone again. On her first visit to the hairdresser's since her operation, she walked into the *dentist's* which is next door!

Gwladys Howell played indoor boules for the first time a couple of weeks ago and won! She asked for photographic evidence, because she said that no one who knew her would believe it!

Rose Owen's granddaughter, Francis, did very well in her A-levels and was able to take up a place at Trinity College Carmarthen to become a teacher. Her very proud grandmother tells us that she is settling well and likes it: we wish her success in all she does.

Sadly, David Williams's mother died recently. She had been living in a residential home after suffering a stroke some years ago. Apparently when she was young she used to sing to the soldiers based in Bridgend – that is obviously where David gets his beautiful tenor voice from, it is a pleasure to listen to him in chapel. God Bless.

Marie Rosenberg deserves our sympathy on two accounts. Firstly, in her words, "I'm a bit poorly at the moment, but I'm O.K.," and secondly because she has "empty nest syndrome"! poor thing! Elizabeth, Marie & Alastair's youngest daughter, also did well at A-levels, and has taken up a place in Royal Holloway to study English. She also thinks she might be a teacher, but she has a lot of things she wants to do first. We wish her well in it all.

Jennifer is still happy and busy, but she had a fall recently so is sporting a black eye. At least the fall was at home, so no hard pavements to bounce off.

Best wishes to all.

Avril Protheroe

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

Since the last Newsletter we've had a visit from Humphrey Evans. His address was heart warming and we had to agree with him – we must believe in miracles because they happen all around us,

We have spent one sunshine-filled morning removing ragwort from the graveyard. Its glorious colour belies the toxic effect it has when eaten by animals. We do not see as much heather on the mountain top these days. This is due to the fact that the land is not being grazed as much as once it was to keep back the coarse grass. However, the blackberrying was very good, many local people have made up stocks of blackberry jam.

Our harvest thanksgiving brought in some gifts which were grown by the bearers. We enjoyed a lovely service with Ken Morgan and had the pleasure of his company afterwards when we all shared a big pot of vegetable soup with bread. Dry goods were given to the Ponty Pantry, set up recently for those in need of immediate nutritional support.

Katy Clark and Siân Evans have done particularly well in their GCSEs. Congratulations girls and may this coming year of study bring you much satisfaction and success. Congratulations also to Mair and Clive Evans who have celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Three of us attended Penrhiw Chapel for the visit of our GA President Marion Baker. The weather was kind, we were able to move in and out of the buildings quite comfortably and I think Marion and Ernest enjoyed the visit. In Penrhiw Chapel we were entertained beforehand by Martyn Edwards playing some lovely Welsh dance tunes on his fiddle – I could hear foot tapping. Marion spoke in her usual practical, encouraging and interesting way. The talk by Dr Steve Burrow outlined future developments for St Fagans over the coming five years. There will be more 'hands on' experience for people who might want to throw a pot, spin wool, etc and this will make it necessary to move some buildings to other locations. Tea afterwards at the village hall was ample and delicious and there was the opportunity of catching up on news with good friends. We Unitarians do talk a lot. It was a pleasure to see Robert Davies and his wife over from Sweden.

Aneurin Jones has also played fiddle in St Fagans recently. He was invited to take part in a programme entitled *Nadolig Bryn Terfel*. The programme will be on S4C but we've not heard any further news.

We Gellionnen folk are looking forward very much to the next meeting with Unitarian friends in St Fagans on 14 December.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

Julianne Morgan has recently moved home and apologises that, with the upheaval of packing and then unpacking, she has not found it possible to write any news from Wick for this issue of the newsletter.

Julianne's new telephone number is 01792 480167 and her new address is:-
114 Homegower House, St Helen's Road, Swansea SA1 4DW

SADLY,

Since publication of this newsletter, we have learned of the death of Marie Rosenberg of the Nottage Congregation. We send our condolences to Alastair, Isabelle & Elizabeth.

A "Celebratory Mass" is to be held at Nottage Chapel on Friday 21st November, 2014 at 2pm. Alastair, Isabelle & Elizabeth will be pleased to see anyone who would like to attend. They want the service to be a celebration of Marie's life and, as such, have asked that those attending wear bright clothes rather than sombre attire.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the *South East Wales Unitarian News* is **Saturday 10 January 2015**.

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