



### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sunday 2 December 2018** – District Christmas Service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Trecynon, at 11am

**Saturday 5 January 2019** – Copy deadline for the next issue of the District News.

### FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

On Saturday August 25<sup>th</sup> a large contingent of our members (mainly from the Smotyn Du district, Swansea and Gellionnen took part in the very colourful “Pride” march when hundreds of people marched through the streets of Cardiff. The Unitarians were easily recognisable by their bright red T shirts. It was a very enjoyable day.

On September 9<sup>th</sup> I attended a bilingual service at Penrhiw chapel St Ffagan where quite a crowd of people had gathered to listen to Parchedig Cen Llwyd deliver a very inspiring sermon titled “Feeding the Body and Nourishment to the Soul.”

Joy Foster and I attended a Welsh Women’s Archive conference at Swansea University on October 6<sup>th</sup>. We attended as many lectures as we could on Welsh women’s history especially the history of Women’s Suffrage in Wales. We have so much to be thankful for to those women who fought so bravely so that we, the women of today, are able to participate in the democratic process of casting votes. It was a very enjoyable occasion but also a firm reminder that there is no room for complacency as there are still issues on women’s inequality to be fought for today.

A few days prior to that conference, Côr Cochion Caerdydd (a choir of which I am one of the founder members) was invited to sing at the Wales Millennium Centre at Cardiff to celebrate a hundred years since the birth of Nelson Rolihala Mandela. This was a great privilege for us as a choir as all of our members had been active supporters of the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement and had been involved in various campaigns up and down the country protesting against apartheid in South Africa. It was on one such occasion whilst we were singing songs of protest against apartheid outside Tesco’s in Merthyr that the police were called. This resulted in the whole choir being arrested and locked up in the cells all day till they were finally released at teatime (probably because the staff at the police station were sick of listening to the choir singing.) The choir later appeared at a magistrate’s court where the bench dealt out “absolute discharges.” The irony was that two years previously the choir had been invited by Merthyr Council to sing at a reception to welcome Archbishop Desmond Tutu who was being honoured with the freedom of that town. Some years after that incident (and with the release of Mandela from prison) the choir received a letter of thanks from Desmond Tutu saying:–

*“You and your colleagues were wonderful to me by your melodious welcome and by your commitment to our struggle until victory was won. Thank you for continuing your passion for justice”*

As John Midgley would say, “It’s a funny old world.” Indeed it is and here are some facts that may support that:

- If food waste were a country it would be the biggest source of carbon pollution.
- Orang-utans, our fellow apes, are being pushed to the edge of extinction as palm oil producers clear the rainforest.
- The Welsh Government has agreed to let Nuclear contaminated mud be dumped in the sea a mile off Cardiff.
- Babies born today will be 22 when global warming hits 1.5c
- UK Supermarkets generate over 800,000 tons of plastic packaging waste every year.

I will leave a fellow Unitarian. Fergus O’Connor, have the last say–

*“When did the simple concept of leaving the planet a better place for our kids become a partisan issue?”*

From October 5<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup> there is an Exhibition presented by Apartheid Museum, Anti Apartheid Movement Archives and the South Bank Centre. The Exhibition is about Mandela’s life career and commitment to equality and justice.

*Diana Bianchi*

## FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITARIAN WELSH DEPARTMENT

As we look back on the summer, we Unitarians in Wales can feel justifiably proud of our achievements. It was a busy summer, starting with a week at the Eisteddfod down in Cardiff Bay. This year, the stand was smaller than usual and we did not offer cups of tea, and it was a very successful experiment. We welcomed a greater number of visitors from different backgrounds, and there was a very positive reaction to the change of image. The lecture which was presented on our behalf by Professor Prys Morgan was another great success, with a large crowd attending to hear him speak of the 1868 Election and the effect on Wales and her people, with special reference to the Unitarians and the eviction at Llwynrhydowen. Many thanks to all of you who showed your support by volunteering to be on the stand.

Thanks also to everybody who joined us at Pride Cymru to parade through the streets of Cardiff on August 25<sup>th</sup>. It was great to see so many Welsh Unitarians walking together in their matching new t-shirts, carrying the new banners, showing their support and enjoying the atmosphere of this great event. A quarter of our chapels are now registered for same-sex marriage, and several others have put their applications in. If you haven't already done so, then please do consider it.

Unfortunately, the last meeting of Unitarians Wales had to be cancelled because of the effects of Storm Callum and the serious flooding which affected several of the committee members. Hopefully, by the time the next newsletter comes out, I will be able to provide information about the events planned for the winter months and I look forward to seeing you all at some of them.

*Melda Grantham*

## THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

One of the deepest secrets of life is that all that is really worth doing is what we do for others.

*Lewis Carroll*

## HEN DŶ CWRDD, TRECYNON

We have received the following news from Christine Moore regarding the chapel:

*Just to let you know that we have been awarded £3,900 from the Penycymoedd micro grant to enable us to put some electricity back into Hen Dŷ Cwrdd.*

*We had a quote from Western Power of £2300 to do the necessary work to reintroduce the supply this would leave c £1600 to get some works to the internal electrics.*

*I cannot guarantee that we can get this done by the Carol Service on 2<sup>nd</sup> December – this will be dependent on Western Power.*

This is a small grant in comparison to the fairly large amount requested for further renovation, the building of a tea room, kitchen and toilets as well as the salary of a Warden, resident at the building for three years. One small step at a time.

*Rev J Eric Jones*

## ABERDARE

### Women's League

I hope everyone has returned to Women's League refreshed following a very hot and enjoyable break.

I am delighted to report that Celia Evans is attending Women's League once more. Diane Jones has not been at all well from time to time. Dorothy Jones has not been at all well but we hope to welcome her back in the near future. Betty Evans is awaiting an operation to hopefully ease her painful mobility problems. I have had a stent inserted into the main artery in my heart and although the procedure was more involved than planned, I feel well. Since it took place on my birthday, I could not have asked for a more precious gift as, now, I enjoy a very welcome sense of well-being!

On 12<sup>th</sup> September, we met to plan a varied and interesting programme. We re-instituted our monthly national project subscription in support of 'Sepsis.'

On 19<sup>th</sup> September, we enjoyed a social gathering with lots of chat and a cup of tea.

Members enjoyed the film, 'Ladies In Lavender' on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Thanks to Joy Foster for organising it and Joan Harlow for operating the equipment. Once again, we are grateful to Tony Foster for setting up the equipment.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October, everyone enjoyed the popular item of Anne Jones' quiz, which is always informative and entertaining.

A musical afternoon with members' CD choices was appreciated on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

On that occasion, we had to sadly cancel our District Meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> October. As only the Aberdare branch would be in attendance, we had to also cancel the visit of our National President, Anne Gemmell and the celebration of the centenary of the Women's League District, constituted in 1918. So, we will now celebrate this centenary, with a celebratory cake, in our branch meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October. We are now looking forward to having an enjoyable tea in the Dare Country Park on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

Best Wishes to all  
*Anne Watts*

Members of Highland Place took their share of helping in the Unitarian tent at this year's National Eisteddfod, which was held in Cardiff Bay. The venue was a great success with visitors who would not normally attend an eisteddfod experiencing Welsh culture for the first time. There was a steady flow of people into the Unitarian tent and one lady called in to say she had been to a funeral at a lovely Unitarian Church the previous week. It turned out to be Highland Place and the funeral service of Captain Michael, which was led by the Salvation Army. So, it was nice to have a complimentary mention. Captain Michael and his wife Lindy had a long association with us at Highland Place. It was their base for 'Vibes' the children's Foundry Town Brass Band. For many years, Captain Michael and Lindy worked with children and young people, teaching them to play musical instruments, and twice a year the children would hold a concert in the church.

Claudia and Kathy represented Highland Place with the Unitarian contingent at Cardiff Pride Cymru, which turned out to be a wonderful weekend.

Two charity events were held in the Summer. Joy Foster organised a Strawberry Tea for Women's League, which was open to the community, and Anne and Eric Jones hosted a Coffee Morning at their home, which was also open to the community. £548 was raised at these two events. £394 has been given to the National Women's League Project for 'Sepsis UK' and £154 to the NSPCC.

Rev Cen Llwyd conducted a service at Penrhiw, which coincided with the St Fagan's Food Festival. Members from Highland Place attended, and the well-attended service was enjoyed by everyone, with non-Welsh speakers provided with a translation service. The chapel had a harvest decoration provided from the museum's gardens.



The café-style Harvest Thanksgiving

On September 30<sup>th</sup> we held our Harvest Thanksgiving. It was once again a café style service with the Cefncoed congregation joining us on this occasion.

It was a delightful service led by Rev Eric Jones, with three readings given by Cefncoed members and three by Highland Place members. The readings were interspersed with hymns, music, food and drink. We were delighted to have Ken Morgan join us so soon after his operation and were also pleased to have the company of the Rev Carie Johnsen from Augusta, Maine. Our thanks to Joy for the wonderful harvest display in the church. Congregation members brought food donations for the foodbank and a collection was taken after we had retired to the schoolroom for tea, coffee and cakes. Joy and Tony Foster took an amazing 112 kilos of food and £50 to the Merthyr Cynon Foodbank. Thankyou to everyone for their generous donations. Universal Credit has recently been introduced to the Merthyr Tydfil area and the foodbank has seen a 20% increase in usage. Universal Credit is being introduced in the Cynon Valley in November, so the foodbank is under increasing pressure.

Good wishes go to Dafydd Jones, grandson of Anne and Eric, as he starts his University course at Reading University, and to Jacob Jones our former organist, who is spending a year studying in Austria.

We look forward to welcoming our friends across the District to the SEWUS carol service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

*Tony Foster*

## **CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD**

I write this on a pleasant, perhaps unseasonably warm, October day. The leaves are beginning to turn a variety of colours and it's a wonderful sight to see the multicoloured trees beside the River Taff as I cross the bridge every day. And yet just a few days ago there was severe flooding affecting several parts of Wales. It's a reminder that the Earth is a wonderful, holy place, and yet it is also capable of destruction and danger.

But of course some of that danger is caused by humanity. Extreme weather is becoming more common as climate change is beginning to happen. This month the United Nations IPCC has produced a dire warning telling us we have twelve years to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees, otherwise things are going to go very badly. We are currently living through a climate emergency and need to take action. This was on our minds last month at Cardiff Unitarians as we followed the theme of "Earth" during September. There is a need for us to develop a spirituality that is rooted in love for the Earth and justice for all.

We are now following a theme for each month in our services, which includes a discussion on each month's theme. In October we are following the theme of "Humanity and Identity" – which included watching the film *The Color Purple* as part of an occasional Spiritual Film Club in members' homes. This theme of course ties in with our social justice commitments. At the end of August several members of Cardiff Unitarians marched in Pride Cymru along with a large group from across all of Wales. We are proud as Unitarians to affirm people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and to offer a warm welcome to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender + community.

In November our theme will be "Peace". This coincides of course with the hundredth anniversary of the armistice that ended the First World War, as well as the eightieth anniversary of the opening of the Temple of Peace in Cardiff. I have been working with Gentle/Radical, a local arts organisation, around this commemoration and there will be an event to mark this on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. Check our Facebook page for more information. So, finally, some words from the Qur'an:

True servants of God  
are those who walk humbly  
on earth and say: "peace!"  
to the ignorant who accost them.

*Stephen Lingwood*

## **CEFNCOED**

### **Women's League**

On 17<sup>th</sup> October we were visited by Deanne Rebane, a Community Coordinator on the staff of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT). Deanne's role focuses on working with GPs, pharmacists and others in the primary care setting across Rhondda Cynon Tâf and Merthyr to encourage them to use the services that are available in the voluntary sector. Her talk was very interesting and informative—she spoke about the help that is available to those who are getting on in years and living on their own, encouraging us to consider the 'Lifeline' Community Alarm Service. She was very helpful and we were few in number, which was disappointing, but we hope to see her again at a later date.

For quite some time, league members have felt that the excellent structural change made to the ground floor of the vestry was let down by the poor state of the kitchen. We are pleased to report that, with our help, a major upgrade of this area is currently under way. We look forward to the completion of the remodelling in time for our next league meeting.

### **Out and about**

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, a party of us attended the joint café-style Harvest Celebration at Highland Place Church Aberdare, with three of our members presenting readings. It was a novel experience which we all much enjoyed.

### **'Freshers' at Swansea**

Beth and Megan Lewis, twin-granddaughters of our organist Marian Lewis, are now students at Swansea University where they will read Psychology. We wish them both every success in their studies.

## Happy Birth Day

Congratulations to Margaret and Phil Griffiths on the birth of their fifth grandchild, Molly Barbara Wray who arrived on the scene in the early hours of 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Molly is the first child of Bethan and Matthew.

## Heritage Weekend

We celebrated the 271<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the founding of the chapel in 1747 at a congregation-led service on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> September. The anniversary celebration was part of an 'Open Doors' weekend heritage event at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (8 & 9 September) which, as well as receiving local support, attracted visitors from Cardiff (Rhiwbina and Whitchurch). Two streams of bunting, fluttering gaily in the wind, lined the forecourt and a large banner draped near the entrance gate invited passers-by to step inside the 'Open Doors'. The total footfall over the two days was disappointingly low but, as a comment entered in the visitors' log by a gentleman who had travelled from Cardiff attests, the opportunity to visit the chapel was appreciated – it read, *"A fascinating history and a well-kept interior. Well worth visiting."*



Phil Griffiths (left) with visitor John Morgan

Photo: Mog Chambers

*Ken Morgan*

## NOTTAGE

There has been a change of Officers at Nottage with the resignation of our treasurer Alastair Rosenberg and the retirement of secretary Avril Protheroe. A new treasurer has yet to be appointed but Avril's duties have been taken over by me – Jeannie Monks.

We recently held a MacMillan coffee morning and raised £141.00.

A representative from Christians Against Poverty joined one of our services and £55.00 was donated to the charity.

Ken Gadd, dear husband of Joan, has sadly passed away, aged 86. Lewis conducted the ceremony at Margam Crematorium.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October we held our harvest festival service, followed by lunch for the congregation in the Chapel Hall. Everyone brought food for the happy occasion, and also many items for the local food bank.

*Jeannie Monks*

## SWANSEA

The Concert "Celebrating Love" held in our hall in October was a great success. Thanks to all who came and those who sent messages of support to this venture. We had over 70 people in the hall which was a wonderful sight. The hall was transformed with brightly coloured decorations and the tables sparkled with crystal and nightlights. Marcia D'Arc from Bristol gave a superb performance as did Sean as the supporting act. Rory was a great compère. We also raised over £100 in a raffle for the Swansea Homeless Sanctuary in High Street. Thanks must go to Rhys and Rory for organising this event and to all the other people who helped make it such a big success.



The audience enjoying the entertainment in the brightly decorated hall

Photos courtesy Rory Castle Jones



Marcia surrounded by the support staff



Marcia in action

We have also welcomed two events from the Swansea International Festival. One was a performance of some of the works of Daniel Jones, one of the Dylan Thomas group and the other a late night performance of Baroque music. Lynn had the task of locking up after this at midnight. Many thanks to him for being so willing to do this.

Our vestibule has had a coat of paint on the walls and the doors. It looks much fresher as a result. We even have a painted notice board where we have put up some of the Unitarian Posters. We are now hoping to sort out the flooring to improve the entrance even more.

Christmas is approaching and our church Christmas dinner has been booked for November 12<sup>th</sup>, just before the setting up of the crib. Any ideas for a thief proof, collection box?!

Best wishes and early Christmas Greetings from all of us at Swansea.

*Hilda Dumpleton*

## TREBANOS

### GELLIONNEN

Where to begin? We said goodbye to Delyth and Andy, they were returning to Germany with Boris whose doggy behaviour is so immaculate in chapel that he was presented with a packet of treats for good behaviour and attendance.

Several of us went on the Pride March in Cardiff, travelling together by train. We took the Gellionnen/Graig banner. The Unitarians were placed between two groups representing MIND and TENOVUS. Melda's outfit was stunning!

The marriage of Eve Polycarpou and Alwynne Taylor was conducted by Eric and registered by Rhys Castle Jones – his first registration. The accompanist was Stephen Fletcher of our Stratford Church. Music had been specially written for the occasion, and words also. By all accounts it was a wonderful day. We wish Eve and Alwynne great happiness; they have been together for many years and chose to celebrate their wedding with us – thank you for sharing your very special day, we were honoured.

The Folk Service went well, taken by Julie Nedin, though she was heard to say that it takes itself these days. Shortly after she and Martyn went on pilgrimage to Spain. They did 260 miles and intend to return and walk the remaining 240 miles.

For the Harvest Service we requested dry goods to be donated to our local food bank and were gratified by the response.

Our Saturday afternoon concert on a sharply cold and sunny September day was given by Lawrence Bowen. Gwynne Williams filled the urn and laid out cups, saucers and plates of cake on our best lace tablecloth, and Sarah Jones set and put a match to the fire. Lawrence gave us a delightful afternoon of music both played and sung. It was very special.

Madame Marcia D'Arc's drag act in the huge ground floor hall of our Swansea Church was fun filled. Marcia had some outstanding outfits and her hairdresser is to be congratulated! On the following morning Mark Stewart (Marcia) was at our service. This gave us the opportunity to send our greetings back with Mark to his own Frenchay Unitarian Chapel. We presented him with a copy of Dr Elwyn Davies's book 'Be Gentle'.

Our most recent happening was the Animal Service led by Martyn Edwards. Lo and behold our little four legged friend Boris was back with us again. We also had Margot a five year old and recently adopted greyhound brought by her family James and Paul, then there was Leo from our neighbouring Spa Farm, brought by Andy. All three dogs were on their best behaviour and, as befitted the occasion, each received a very personal blessing.

We congratulate Rory Castle Jones on becoming Communications Officer for the General Assembly.

A superb yield from the orchard of Sara and Ernie Sanford Francis has meant that for several weeks recently they have treated us to bags of crisp, rosy apples to take away after service.

Megan Clark is now settled in to her first year in Cardiff University. We wish her well. God bless.

Alastair Bowen, son of Monica and Lawrence has completed his American trek for charity. He had made his way through the Bryce Canyon, the Sion Canyon and the Grand Canyon. Congratulations – some trek!

Our thoughts, love and best wishes go to our chairman Clive Evans, presently being treated in Singleton Hospital and to Jan Green who walked with us on the Pride March.

## ADDENDUM

The last issue of the District News mentioned a surprise gift and cake presented to Lawrence Bowen to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, with thanks and in recognition of years of service as Musical Director at Gellionnen and Graig chapels.

These photos of the event are by Julie Nedin.

Lawrence was asked to play the piano for the congregation to sing Happy Birthday to him !



Lawrence accepting the gift from Chairman Clive Evans



Lawrence and wife Monica with the cake

*Marian Littlepage*

## WICK

Our Harvest Thanksgiving was very well attended and everyone present took part in some way – with our two youngest taking the collection. The offerings – which as usual were for the Bridgend Food Bank – astounded us all, and were enthusiastically received by the helpers when our chairperson and I delivered them. They sent us a lovely ‘Thank You’ card signed with messages from them all. It is so sad to see the need for these gifts but at the same time heart warming to know that we can help in some way.

The village Remembrance Service will be held in our chapel this year. Julianne will conduct the service first of all at the village memorial, then both congregations – chapel and church will join together in our little chapel. This is a lovely tradition – long may it continue. This year Helen our organist will be missing, she is visiting family in Kuwait, so the church organist will be playing for us. We hope to welcome Helen back in time for our Christmas service.

Our best wishes to all our friends in the District.

*Julianne Morgan*

## MEN'S GROUP

It was back to our monthly wanderings in September after our well-earned Summer break (it's not easy visiting places of interest and eating our way around South East Wales!) We travelled to the Rhondda to visit 'The Workers Gallery' in Ynyshir. The Workers Gallery first came to our attention in the National Eisteddfod. This year's Eisteddfod chair was made by Chris Williams, who along with Gayle Rogers runs the gallery and workshop. Based in the old Ynyshir library, the gallery's exhibits are created by local artists and admission is free. Rhondda Cynon Taf council were so proud to have the Eisteddfod chair made in the Rhondda that they have named the street outside the gallery 'Eisteddfod Road'. We then travelled a little way down the valley for lunch at the Llwyncelyn Inn, Porth.

In October we visited the former Unitarian church in West Grove, Cardiff. It was a little disappointing that we were unable to look around the building as work was being carried out upstairs and the only person there was a young trainee pastor from Angola, who was reluctant to let us go further than the downstairs meeting room. The church is now owned by an evangelical church which was originally formed in Brazil. The pastor did say a prayer for us before we left, perhaps he felt we needed praying for! We then walked back to Churchill Way for lunch in Chapel 1877, the former Welsh Calvinistic Methodist chapel, which has been stunningly converted into a restaurant.

We meet again in December for Christmas Lunch at Alfred's in Pontypridd. Any men in the District who wish to join us please contact Eric Jones as soon as possible.

*Tony Foster*

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the South East Wales Unitarian News: **Saturday, 5 January 2019.** Items for publication should be sent to:- **kenneth.morgan25@talktalk.net** or Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016.