

CONNECT

The Magazine of the Swansea and Gower Methodist Circuit

Autumn 2016

Thanks Pam

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Tell us all your news

Keep us informed with news of people, activities and special events by sending your contribution to the Editor or sending her an email.

**Deadline for the next issue is
21st November 2016**

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Mr Martin Gregson (circuit steward) presents Rev Pam Cram with a gift from the circuit to mark her retirement from ministry

On Sunday 24th July 2016 a special circuit service was held at Capel Y Nant in Clydach to mark the retirement of Rev Pamela Cram. Pam has served in circuit for 26 years, 16 of them here in Swansea. In that time she has had pastoral responsibility for Penlan, Morriston, Brynhyfryd and Clydach churches and was the first (and to date only) female Moderator of the Free Church Council in Wales. The service which took the form of a Gymanfa Ganu was led by the musical director Arfon Jones and the organist Eurig Davies. Bible readings were given by Martin Gregson, circuit steward and member of the Methodist society in Clydach and Robat Powell, team leader at Capel Y Nant and Chair of CYTUN Clydach. Prayers were led by Dewi Hughes, former secretary of the Union of Independents and former team leader of Capel Y Nant. The Circuit Superintendent wished Pam well for her retirement and shared some thoughts on 2 Corinthians Ch 4. He said, 'All of us have been given the wonderful gift of the Gospel to share with others but today Pam we want to thank God for the way in which you through your ministry have shared it with us.'

**Swansea and Gower
Methodist Circuit**



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Uniting Church Sketty

Stories of Justice and Hope – Garth Hewitt
Stories of justice and hope from Nicaragua,Palestine,
and the Dalits, in word, picture and song with Garth
Hewitt. Saturday November 12th at 7.30 p.m. Tickets
£10 (£8 concessions). For more Information please
contact Alan Cram.

Brunswick

Bible Study 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at
11.00 a.m.
Every Wednesday 4.00 p.m. FAN 'Friends and
Neighbours'
11.30 a.m. Intercessory Prayer Meeting
Coffee morning every last Saturday of each month.

Circuit Project

Monday 26th September: 7.30 p.m. at the Rose
Indienne restaurant St Helen's Road. Come and enjoy
a curry whilst raising funds for our circuit project.
(Drinks extra)
Saturday 29th October: at 2.00 p.m. Film show and talk
about old Swansea from the Swansea and District
Historical Society in the Wesley Room, Brunswick
Church. Donations invited on the day.

Mumbles

Theo's Coffee Shop - open daily 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Wednesday Lunchtime Worship 12.15 p.m.

Clydach

Saturday 12th November (time t.b.c.): Christmas Fayre,
Capel y Nant

Wesley

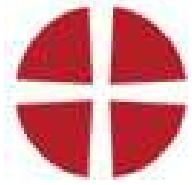
Bible Study every Tuesday 10a.m
Lite Bites – Every Thursday 12-2p.m

Penlan Praise

Special services will take place on Sunday
9th October & 6th November all at 6.00 p.m.
9th October 6.00 p.m. – Circuit Missions Service –
preacher Rev.Dr.Stephen Wigley, Chair of Wales
Synod



Message from the Superintendent



Welcome to the autumn edition of the Connect magazine. I hope that you enjoy reading all of the interesting articles concerning the work of the Methodist Church here in Swansea and the wider Methodist Connexion.

As many of you will know the Methodist Conference met in July at Westminster Central Hall, London. You can read all about what happened and the important decisions taken in the special Conference digest found in the centre pages.

This summer has seen quite a few changes taking place in the circuit. In July we marked the retirement of Rev Pam Cram with a special Gymanfa Ganu (Singing Festival) at Capel Y Nant in Clydach. Pam has served the Lord and our circuit faithfully over many years and we are delighted that she and her husband Alan will continue to live here in Swansea. Pam joins an ever-growing band of Supernumerary ministers that also now includes Rev Linda Woolacott who has joined us from the West Hertfordshire and Borders Circuit. Linda is no stranger to South Wales as she is a former Superintendent of the Neath/Port Talbot Circuit.

Following Pam's retirement, Rev Leslie Noon has taken on pastoral responsibility for our Clydach fellowship and I have taken on pastoral responsibility for Penlan. Thank you to Leslie for all her hard work in Penlan over the last three years. Please see the article on Penlan written by Ken Allison later in the magazine.

In July, we held a special circuit service to mark the occasion of Caroline Buckler becoming a fully accredited local preacher. Caroline gave a powerful testimony and Alan Cram, the Local Preacher's secretary read a special letter to Caroline written by the President of the Methodist Conference, Rev Roger Walton. We now have 17 active Local Preachers in the circuit including two in training. Their ministry amongst us is very much appreciated.

This summer also saw the re-opening of our Wesley church building in Brynhyfryd after extensive renovation. It has been quite a remarkable achievement given the size of the membership to raise the funds and complete the building work in such a short space of time. Well done everyone at Wesley! We believe in quite a remarkable God!

In August our church in Murton held a flower festival and took as its theme the Olympics. The displays were stunning and were certainly gold medal standard. My colleague Rev Andy Walker reflected in the programme notes ' Wherever you are on the journey of faith, however far along the track, or perhaps tentatively contemplating that first step across the starting line, may you run with perseverance the race marked out before you and know the fullness of God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ogof Adullam, the project supporting the homeless operating out of our Brunswick church has been chosen by the Fundraising/Engagement team at Methodist Church House in London to feature in the Advent resource material focussing on Mission in Britain. This followed the news that the project had been awarded a grant from the Methodist Mission alongside the Poor Programme. Huw, Cerys and all the volunteers at Ogof Adullam are doing a marvellous job bringing hope, comfort and, more importantly, the message of Jesus to those in great need living on our city's streets.

At the end of August Derek Norton stepped down as a circuit steward, a role that he has ably filled for many years. Much of what circuit stewards do goes unnoticed by the vast majority of church members but the role they play in the life of the church is vital. A big thank you to Derek for all his hard work but a special thank you from all the ministers and their families for the care and concern shown to them over the years. Ken Allison (Mumbles) and Michael Price (Murton) join Heather Coleman and Martin Gregson on the Circuit Stewards team. We wish Ken and Mike well in their new roles.

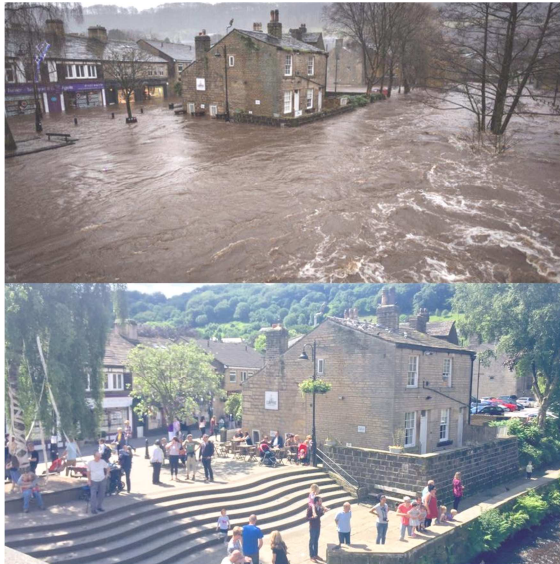
(continued on page 4)

They that deny themselves for Christ shall enjoy themselves in Christ.

John Mason

Calderdale Floods

I have been asked by my mother, Ann Beynon, to give you all an update on what has happened since the floods in the Calder Valley on Boxing Day 2015. Most households are now back and most of the businesses are up and running. A few of them decided not to re-open but these have mainly been taken over. Some people are still living in temporary accommodation while their homes are renovated and flood proofed. In September, the local primary schools will re-open too. Most of the affected churches still remain shut. The Methodist church in Hebden Bridge was untouched and has remained open throughout.



The bottom photo was taken before the flood. The top photo shows how bad the flooding was. It is the same shops and house!

The priority now is to minimise the impact of any future flooding. It is recognised that the Valley is likely to flood again at some point in the future so the challenge is to look at ways of minimising the amount of water which comes down the valley and when it does to ensure it passes through without causing significant damage.

The People in the valley have come together in various voluntary groups and capacities so assess how this can be achieved by working with each other, the council, government agencies and other professional bodies.



This photo shows the torrent of water. The two metal rails are the edge of the pavement going over the bridge

More information on this work can be found on the two websites below.

www.slowtheflo.org.uk
<http://eyeoncalderdale.com/>

Adrian Horton

Brunswick Fundraisers in aid of Zambuko ra Jehovah

Monday 26th September: 7.30 p.m. at the Rose Indienne Restaurant St Helen's Road. Come and enjoy a curry whilst raising funds for our circuit project. (Drinks extra)

Saturday 29th October: at 2.p.m Film show and talk about old Swansea from the Swansea and District Historical Society in the Wesley Room, Brunswick Church. Donations invited on the day.

I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I wish to be; I am not what I hope to be; but by the grace of God I am not what I was.

John Newton

An evening with Garth Hewitt Saturday November 12th



Justice campaigner and Anglican Priest, **Garth Hewitt** will be returning to Uniting Church Sketty on Saturday November 12th @ 7.30 p.m.

Over the past 40 years Garth has visited areas of poverty, conflict, deprivation, and disaster, prioritizing friendships with local people and bringing them encouragement. Garth passionately believes that people of all faiths must speak up and call for justice, reaffirming the dignity, rights and value of each human being made 'in the image of God'. Through word, pictures and gentle songs, Garth will be bringing the personal stories behind the media headlines, challenging the privileged to share and to join the protest against injustice. In short, good news stories of hope, perseverance, justice and challenge from countries such as Nicaragua and Palestine, as well as from the Dalits (untouchables) of India.

Founding the human rights charity Amos Trust in 1985, Garth worked for 26 years as its Director

Tickets are £10 (£8 concessions); further details from Alan Cram (01792) 845942

Mumbles Fundraiser

On Saturday 29th October, at 7.00 p.m. the Pontarddulais Choir have been invited to come to All Saints Church, Mumbles, as a fundraiser for Mumbles Methodist Church Youth Work and Ogof Adullam drop-in centre for the homeless. Also appearing will be Roz Evans who is a very entertaining soprano.

I know you will enjoy the special evening. Tickets will be available from Caroline on 01792 361190 or c.buckler@btinternet.com

Thank you

I'd like to thank everyone who turned up to the Circuit Service in July, and for all the cards, texts, apologies etc. I was quite overwhelmed by the response not only from our Circuit but also from Clydach churches and other connections. Thank you too for the lovely rose and other gifts. As always our Guild ladies (and one gentleman cake maker!), excelled themselves with the catering, which was commented on by many there. I'm also grateful to our friend Arfon for coming, during his family holiday in Mumbles, to lead the singing; to Eurig, one of the Capel y Nant organists, for his expert accompaniment on the organ; to Sarah and Grace and their children for their singing, readings and signing; and to Howard for his 'homily', Martin and Robat for reading, Dewi for leading us in prayer. As always I'm grateful to Alan for keeping me in order – necessary on such stressful occasions!

As we're staying in the Circuit, after a few months break, you'll still see me around. However, I'm more than happy to pass on the responsibility of 'pastoral charge' to someone else. Thanks to Leslie for her conversation and co-operation so far. I look forward to supporting you in the future.

Pam

The re-opening of Wesley, Brynhafydd



*From left to right – Mr Richard Dicks (contractor)
Mr Rob Fisher (Architectural Design Consultant)
Rev. Howard Long, Mrs Elaine Davies (Church Treasurer) Mrs Pauline Evans (Church Secretary)*

It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people.

Horace Greeley

The price of a cup of tea

Many ministers, when on their sabbatical, do some amazing and wonderful things. They climb mountains. They go on pilgrimages, they complete their PhDs. I confess I did none of those amazing and wonderful things – although I did have an amazing and wonderful time!

Having more time on my hands meant I visited various cafes around Swansea to sit and read and have a cup of tea. I even began a mental list of what the various prices were, for it was interesting to note that the price ranged from £1.80 to £2.20. But whatever the price, I enjoyed the slower pace of life.

I also enjoyed slowing down when I spent a week on a retreat designed especially for ministers, at a beautiful centre in Devon. It forced me to stop and take stock and to reflect on my life and my ministry.

I especially enjoyed spending more time with family and friends. The highlight of this was a week in Tenerife, when I took the service of marriage blessing for my nephew and his wife. With a congregation made up of 90 family and friends who had travelled out for the occasion, we sat (well, I stood!) on a cliff top in bright sunshine overlooking a deep blue sea. It was very special as they made their vows.

I also went on a very useful and intensive course run by an organisation called *Bridge Builders*. It was for leaders in the church, and was designed to equip us to face situations of conflict and times of difficult pastoral encounters much better. It was one of the best courses I've been on and I know will stand me in good stead.

So whilst I did nothing amazing or wonderful, I did have an amazing and wonderful time – and I can tell you the price of a cup of tea in various establishments, should you wish to know. My thanks go to my colleagues and stewards who held the fort while I was away. It was a good three months, but I'm also glad to be back!

Rev.Leslie Noon

Madagascan Morning



In the 19th century missionaries went from Wales to Madagascar. There are still strong links between the Welsh language denominations and the churches in Madagascar. One Sunday morning in June Capel y Nant's hall was transformed. A huge partition was set up with scenes from Madagascar on it. Stalls with Madagascan crafts lined one side of the hall. There was a buzz in the room as the Capel y Nant congregation, and a couple of members of Wesley, sat down to enjoy a very different morning service. A group of 14 men and women from Madagascar brought their culture to life through dance and song, whilst also presenting their Christian faith and their gratitude to Wales for their Christian inheritance. They were from an arts and crafts group that sends some of their members to other nations every year or so, raising funds in part through sale of crafts as they travel. A further visit is planned for two years' time and we've asked if next time they might bring their presentation to a larger venue with an invitation to our Circuit.

Rev.Pam Cram

It is my prayer that we all may find room in our lives for the love of God through Christ our Lord.

H.M.Queen Elizabeth II

Nobody who has truly seen the cross of Christ can ever again speak of hopeless cases.

George Campbell Morgan



FAN is a local charity that brings people of all ages together in the spirit of friendship. If you enjoy meeting others, or are feeling a little lonely, you will be sure of finding a warm welcome. FAN stands for Friends and Neighbours. FAN groups create a sense of community and are a wonderful network. It's a great opportunity for local people to meet newcomers. If you're learning English, FAN can be a good way to improve your skills.

When and where? Our group meets weekly

Swansea Wednesdays 10.30 a.m.
Brunswick Methodist Church, St. Helen's Rd,
Swansea, SA1 4DG.
☎01792 206793

Cost? There is no charge

The "Friends and Neighbours" Group continue to meet in friendship and love at the Brunswick Methodist Church.

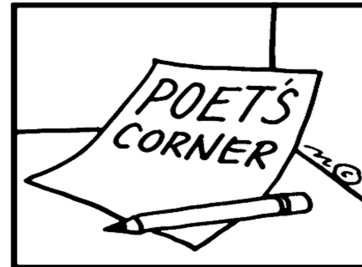
Other FAN groups in Cardiff closed for summer holidays but the Brunswick group stayed open to try and bring those who cannot go on holidays to come and find company.

The FAN Development co-ordinator, Sarah Duncan-Lloyd, together with another Founder member of FAN, paid us a visit on the 20th July and was indeed pleased with our momentum and they encouraged us to continue as they thought that we were doing extremely well.

The new FAN group that we nurtured through their leader Gill from Bridgend is also doing very well. The group planned an away day here in Swansea and visited us at Brunswick on Wednesday 17th August.

My wish is that all our people around Swansea could come to our group and find friendship and love. In this way our group will continue to grow strength to strength.

Reverend Siperire Mugadzaweta



Maternal Town

A jumble of streets and houses tumbling down
to the humble seaside town
bumbling along with
its crumbling castle,
chip shops and
churches.

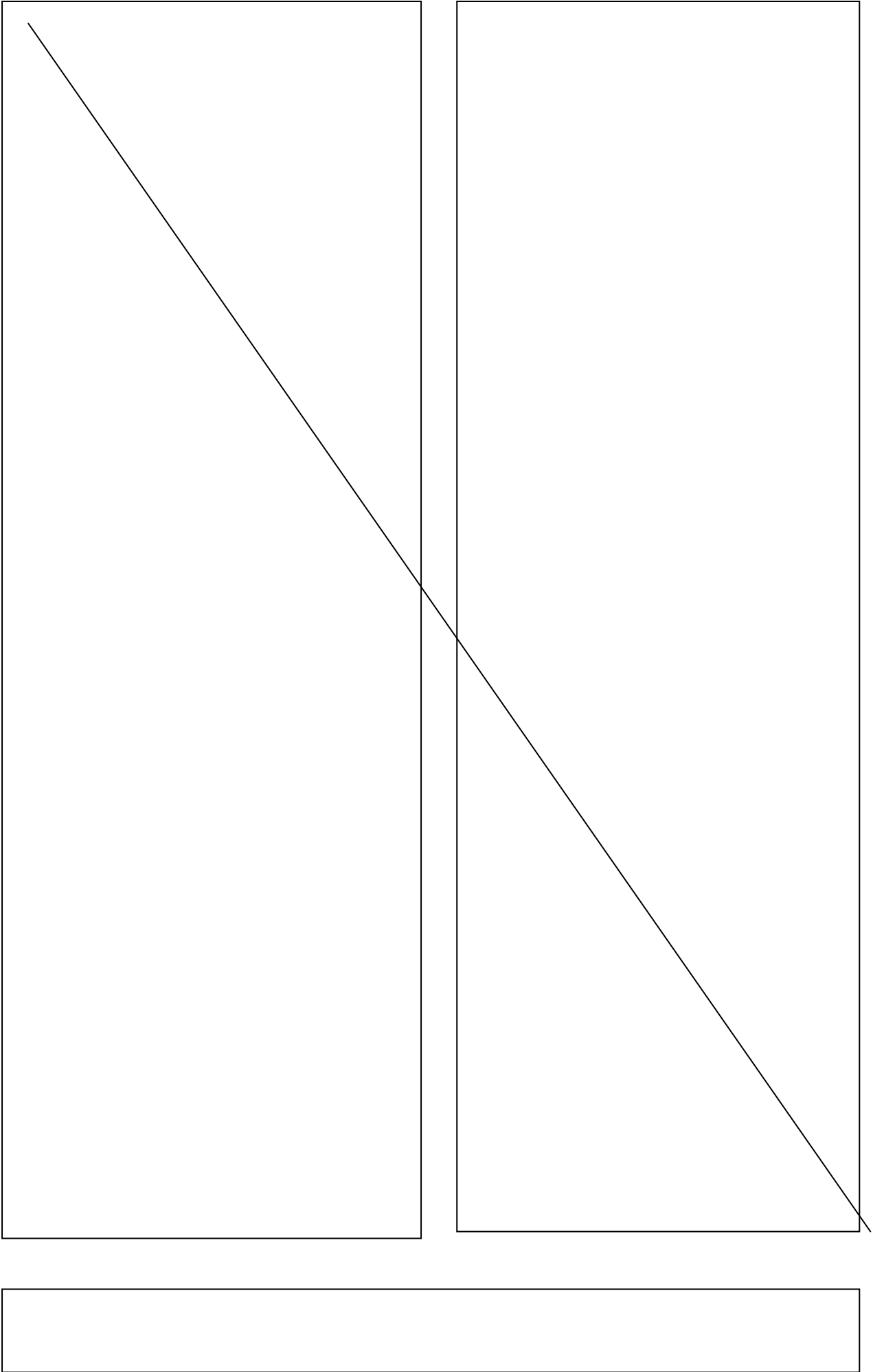
The buffeted bay, bountiful with boats and
buoys, bereft now of its trundling train which
once rumbled along the seafront laden with
fun- seeking trippers eager to sample the joys
of Mumbles town.

To stroll along the pier where the lifeboat
lurks, catch a glimpse of the ship-warning
beam of the lighthouse, visit the Big Apple for
buckets and spades, sugar-sweet, nose-
tickling candyfloss, toffee apples and pink and
white sticks of jaw-aching rock.

Or stumble
mumbling and grumbling
up the steep slopes of the gorse and
heather-clad mount, high above the jewelled
bay of Bracelet, where skylarks soar and
robins sing, to gaze in breathless triumph at
the far away hills and sweep of the sandy
shore stretching back to Swansea.

Diane Norton ©

Witnessing is not something we do; it is something we are.



Christianity EXPLORED

Brunswick has just completed a very successful Christianity Explored Course.

Christianity Explored is a way of sharing the best news ever heard, and gives people space and time to think about the big questions of life. Over seven sessions in Mark's Gospel we found out more about the life of the person at the heart of the Christian faith - Jesus Christ.

Through watching a film and reading the Bible the group looked at various topics including Good news, identity, Sin, The Cross, Resurrection and Grace.

One couple who saw our advertisement while walking past the church decided to join the group and participate for a session, while five people from outside our church thoroughly enjoyed the course as shown by their regular attendances and their level of participation.

Bible study/teaching is so important in the life of the church. This is how we discover something new about God and understand Him better, regardless of the number of times we have read the Bible before.



Christianity Explored is a simple but very meaningful course. We shall be launching

another course early next year titled "Discipleship Explored". All are welcome to come and join us. Watch this space for more information!

Rev.Siperire Mugadzaweta

Letters of welcome from Sketty

Following an appeal from Oxfam Cymru, the morning congregation at Sketty sat down to write letters of welcome to newly arrived refugees in Wales. During the service on 21 August, we thought about the parable of the Good Samaritan as well as Jesus' command to 'go the extra mile'. Using some Bible Society resources, we were challenged to think whether it was easier to be a neighbour to people who are like us. The service was shorter than usual to allow all those who wanted to, to go the extra mile and write a letter, as requested by Oxfam. It was challenging to do, but working sometimes in pairs and as families we wrote nearly 40 letters which will be delivered to the local Oxfam shop for onward distributing to refugees and asylum seekers all over Wales. Here are a few phrases that were written:

"I am writing a letter to welcome you to Wales"

"We hope you will feel safe"

"May you find courage, peace and love"

"I am happy that you have come to Wales"

Rev.Leslie Noon

I cannot tell where God begins, still less where he ends. But my belief is better expressed if I say there is no end to God's beginning.

André Gide

A witness in a court of law has to give evidence; a Christian witness has to be evidence. It is the difference between law and grace!

Geoffrey R.King

There are two ways of spreading light; to be a candle, or the mirror that reflects it.

Edith Newbold Wharton

(continued from page 3)

Keith Morris has joined Andrew Phillips on the new circuit property team. Keith brings a wealth of experience to this role and both he and Andrew are getting around the circuit and supporting churches with property matters.

As we begin a new connexional year I urge you to be bold in the proclamation of the Gospel.

If you were to make a visit to Wesley's Chapel on City Road in London you would see a statue of John Wesley. It stands outside facing out to the world and underneath are the words "the world is my parish".

Wesley said on many occasions "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it my duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation." John and his friends would share the Gospel everywhere they possibly could be it in prisons, public houses and on ships. In Epworth where he was born and brought up he wasn't permitted to preach in the church itself and so he stood on his father's tombstone (for that belonged to the family) and he preached to a massive crowd of people in the open air. At Cornwall he preached at Gwennap Pit a natural amphitheatre to a crowd of 30,000!

Wesley died on March 2nd 1791 and is buried in London but as his brother Charles said 'God buries his workmen but never his work.' The work goes on today and the message for the church is a simple one – Let us keep focusing our mission on the world, the world for which Christ died.

Howard

A Year to Prepare

A Flower Festival we haven't done one for a few years. OK, firstly we have to have a theme. The Olympics 2016.



Monday 15th August 2016 a whole year has passed and here we go. Mechanics to be set up. Gareth to dig deep into the bowels of the hall to find the window boards, ladders to be extended to reach the tallest of cross bars in the Church in order to hang the 5 hula hoops covered in the Olympic colours, half the gym apparatus from the comprehensive School moved into the vestibule for the gymnastics and field and track display. A flag pole for the Olympic flag to be hung and a stand for the Olympic flame. A wheel chair for the Paralympics display. A horse jumping fence and boots, bow and arrows and target, ships and boats of various sizes, shuttlecocks and tennis balls, golf clubs and rugby ball (the new Olympic sports) a racing bike high up in one of the windows, dumb bells, basketball stand and net, hockey sticks, swimming pool and diving board, and a boxing ring. Not forgetting the rings, covered in wool of the Olympic colours, above the door and on the railings and the flags.



Wednesday 17th all hands on deck again and the ladies arrive to eagerly commence to put their God given talents into the most amazing floral displays. Coffee, biscuits and cake, chatter, the odd piece of news and much laughter, snipping of scissors is ringing through the Chapel. Stand back and take a look, more tea and cake and even more laughter and fun. Finally, the display is completed and everyone begins to pack away their scissors, and bids each other goodnight and the Church is dusted down hoovered and ready for the opening service on Thursday morning.

(continued on page 5)

Don't be afraid, just believe.

Mark 5:36

Penlan 2016



There has been an active Methodist church in Penlan for some 65 years. The current church building was opened in 1958 and there has been a very faithful congregation over the years with many different mission initiatives to reach the local community. Sadly with fewer people attending Sunday worship it is no longer sustainable to hold weekly services at the church and the few Penlan members that are left now meet with Wesley Methodist in Brynhyfryd on Sunday mornings.

The circuit has always recognised the importance of Christian ministry in the Penlan and surrounding area and believe that God has great things planned for the church. We have a church building in good condition that is used regularly by various organisations and is in a sound financial position. We therefore aim to “plant” a new church congregation that will meet the needs of the people in the Penlan community and convey the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Penlan planning team has given much thought to a new approach along the following lines:

- We need to begin with prayer. In early August some 20 people joined in a prayer walk around the streets of Penlan.
- We will try new ways of reaching out to the community and find out how as a church we can meet their needs.
- We will need the support of the entire circuit in this mission.
- We are prepared to work together with Christians of other denominations.
- We will need to try new means of being church such as “Messy Church”

New style Penlan services have already begun. The September 11th service at 6.00 p.m. was well attended and everyone enjoyed the food before worship began. Thanks to the ladies at Wesley for the tea. Other services are planned for

9th October and 6th November.

The October service will be a Circuit Mission Service. At 4p.m there will be an update on our circuit project ‘ZrJ Trust - Caring for Zimbabwe Orphans’. This will be followed by tea and at 6p.m the Circuit service will be led by the circuit mission team and the speaker will be Rev Dr Stephen Wigley the Chair of Wales Methodist Synod.

Would you please give some thought to our mission in Penlan and whether God might be calling you to help? Please come along and join in! Contact Ken Allison on 401620.

A New Supernumerary – Rev.Linda Woolacott



It comes as a surprise, instead of being stationed in different parts of the Connexion, which for me has been Pembrokeshire, Neath & Port Talbot and finally the West Hertfordshire and Borders Circuit, on ‘sitting down’ or retirement to be able to choose where I am placed. I was born in Birmingham but have known Swansea all my life (my father grew up in the Mumbles and my mother near Singleton Park) and as most of the family was here we returned often. I look forward to a time of exploration of where God is leading me in this next part of my life, to being more involved in family activities than ministry has formerly allowed and to reclaiming a derelict garden.

Linda Woollacott

Trials are not enemies of faith but are opportunities to prove God’s faithfulness.

New Circuit Stewards

Mike Price



Mike was born in Swindon, Wiltshire and moved to Pennard in 1986 to work in the Swansea University Mechanical Engineering Department. He has also worked in Dynevor and Dylan Thomas Comprehensive Schools. He is married to Dianne and they have a son called Mark who lives in the Midlands with his wife Theresa and their son Felix.

Mike and Dianne have been Christians for many years worshipping at our Murton church where Mike has served as a church steward on two occasions and is actively involved in church life. Dianne is the World Church Treasurer for the Circuit and is about to become a church steward at Murton.

One of Mike's interests over the years has been caravanning, enjoying many holidays at home and abroad but his main interest for 45 years has been the Air Training Corps where he served as an adult instructor / lecturer and Warrant Officer finishing as Squadron Warrant Officer with 215 City of Swansea A.T.C.

Ken Allison



Ken was born in Middlesbrough. After graduating

in Chemistry at Liverpool University he moved to Hull to take up an appointment in manufacturing with BP Chemicals. He moved to Swansea in 1988 to work for BP at Baglan Bay where he was based until his retirement. He led the BP team responsible for Baglan Energy Park and the new Baglan Power Station.

Ken is married to Julia. They have a son, Mark, in London and a daughter, Helen, who is married to Andrew and have three children Euan, Seren and Alys. They live in Penclawdd.

Ken came to faith in 2002 through an Alpha Course in Mumbles Methodist Church. That was a life-changing experience and he trained as a local preacher and was accredited in 2007. He has led several Alpha Courses and has served as Chairman of the Mumbles Church Management Group.

Ken's other passion is sailing. Over the last few years he has sailed a yacht in stages from Swansea to Greece.

Open Doors News



"If one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26

Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. The charity supplies Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. Open Doors also seeks to mobilise the church in the UK & Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

We dream of a world in which every Christian who is persecuted is remembered and supported by other Christians.

Find out more about Open Doors by visiting www.opendoorsuk.org/

I find that doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plans.

Macdonald



(left) Rev Robat Powell from Capel Y Nant wishing Pam well for her retirement
(right) Pam with Arfon Jones who led the singing at the Gamanfa Ganu



A Rocha is an international Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world: a response to the biblical mandate to care for the earth, and a demonstration of the Christian hope for God's world. A Rocha does this through:

- practical involvement in nature conservation projects and ecological research;
- campaigning on biodiversity issues;
- engaging with churches, schools, communities and individuals
- encouraging congregations to apply for the "ecochurch" award.

A Rocha has projects throughout the world, including running a residential centre at Llanmadog, on the Gower. However, in August I was privileged to visit A Rocha's major French project in the Alpine foothills, just inland of Nice. A former colleague from my Gorseinon College days, Chris Whalley, is the Conservation Officer for the project at Les Courmettes. The site, at a height of 3000 feet, covers a huge area of forest, old pastureland, limestone cliffs and

and peaks, with a wealth of wildlife, including wild boar and swallowtail butterflies. There are numerous footpaths and ancient tracks criss-crossing the site which link up with long distance walking routes. There is an old country mansion, now converted into a residential centre for groups and individuals who want to study the wildlife, volunteer on the site, or simply have a holiday. The views from the centre are spectacular, overlooking the Mediterranean to the south, and the maritime Alps to the east and north. With around 360 days of sunshine a year (compared to Swansea's 360 days of rain!), the scenery, the excellent food, the good company..... this is paradise! Sadly, a paradise which is being adversely affected by human-induced climate change.

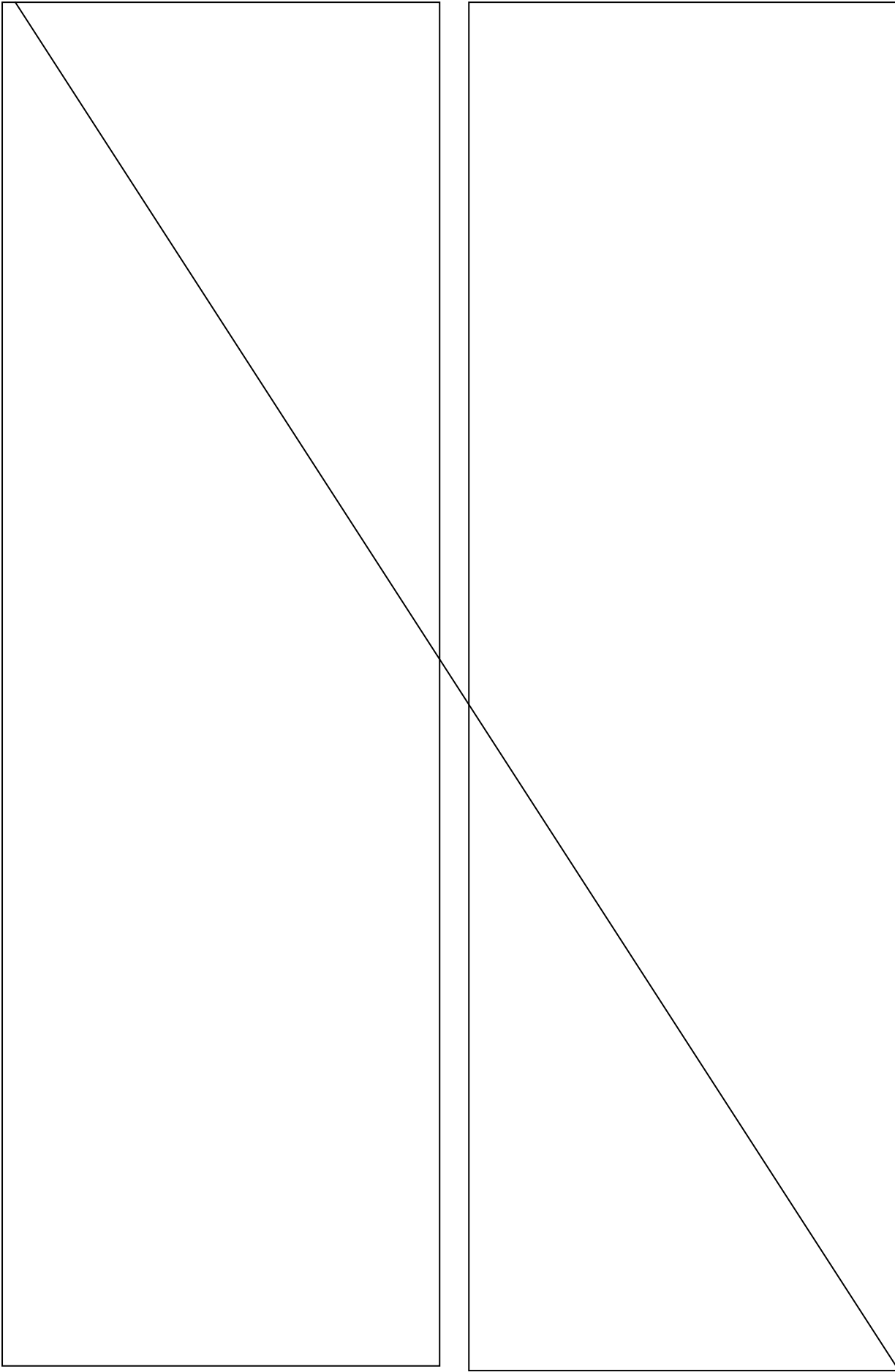
In addition, Nice is fresh in our minds because of the recent slaughter of 85 people by the driver of a lorry who deliberately mowed down families enjoying the Bastille Day celebrations. On my final morning, I walked along *La Promenade des Anglais* on my way to the station for my train back to the UK. As I enjoyed with hundreds of others the warm sunshine and a swim in the Mediterranean, I was reminded by the numerous bouquets of flowers placed strategically along the Promenade how fragile life is, and how easily we humans bring death and destruction to this wonderful world for which God calls us to care.

For more information about A Rocha, look at their website www.arocha.org.uk or if you would like to visit Les Courmettes, please contact me.

Alan Cram

Prayer is the mortar that holds our house together.

Mother Theresa



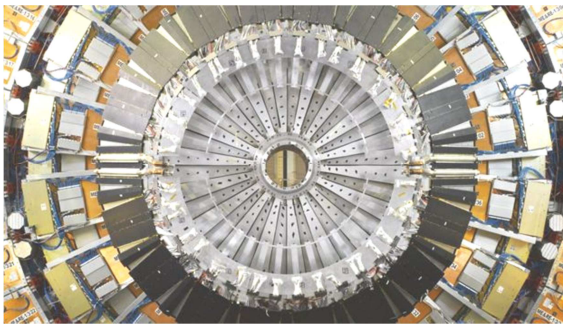
Was the Weasel a messenger from God?

If so what message was it trying to deliver?



'Weasel Apparently Shuts Down World's Most powerful scientific instrument.'
(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36173247>)

The charred body of a 'small furry animal' was found next to a gnawed-through power cable at the Large Hadron Collider and it is believed the creature was "a weasel".



Best known for discovering the Higgs Boson, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world's biggest science experiment.

The Large Hadron Collider is the world's largest scientific instrument and is the world's highest-energy particle accelerator. Built between 1983 and 1988, and continually updated since, the collider is contained in a circular tunnel, on the border of France & Switzerland. The tunnel has a circumference of 17 miles, at a depth ranging from 164 feet to 574 feet below ground. The equipment sits in a 12 foot wide concrete-lined tunnel, and it crosses the border between Switzerland and France at four points, with most of it in France. Surface buildings hold

ancillary equipment such as compressors, ventilation equipment, control electronics and refrigeration plants. A huge amount of electricity is used to power all this enormous equipment. Weigh over 43,200 tons there are 1,600 super magnets, that need 96 tonnes of superfluid helium-4 to keep the magnets at -271.25°C ! This enormous equipment is designed to smash protons together at close to the speed of light!

There are several detectors one is used to look for signs of new physics, including the origins of mass and extra dimensions. Another will hunt for the Higgs boson and look for clues to the nature of dark matter. (I'll help them, it's dark!) A Third is studying a "fluid" form of matter called quark-gluon plasma that existed shortly after the Big Bang. A 4th looks to prove that equal amounts of matter and antimatter were created in the Big Bang and will try to investigate what happened to the "missing" antimatter.

The Higgs boson, was a theoretical particle that may have existed for an instant after the creation of the universe, is also known as the 'God' particle.

However as a lay-person, I find it hard to see the benefits to mankind of such experiments. I presume God thinks the same. As after the 17-mile equipment went offline as engineers investigating the mishap, they found the charred remains of a furry creature near a gnawed-through power cable! It wasn't the first time either." There have been previous incidents, including one in 2009, when a bird (a raven?) is believed to have dropped a baguette onto critical electrical systems. Nor are the problems exclusive to the LHC: In 2006, raccoons conducted a "coordinated" attack on a particle accelerator in Illinois! It is unclear whether these were random attacks, or the animals are trying to stop humanity from its own folly!

However the use of animals as metaphors or messengers, is well documented in the bible. Noah sent out a raven & a dove so he might know if the flood had ended. Elijah was fed by ravens, and John the Baptist ate Locusts and Wild Honey when he was in the desert.

When Jesus was baptised heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him 'like a dove' Jesus continually made

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Peace is seeing a sunrise or a sunset and knowing whom to thank.

(continued from page 19)

reference to Lambs and in one of his healing miracles he used pigs (swine) to help rid a man of his demons (Luke 8:27-39) New International Version (NIV).

When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left. The man from whom the demons had gone out, begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

So if God has used a weasel, a bird (raven?) or racoons to thwart the work of these scientists, what is he trying to say? In my humble opinion there are 2 points worth considering. One, is that no-one can consider the wonder and beauty that god has created in the universe, from a hole in the ground! Jesus confirmed this (Luke 12:27) Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I

tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Also why are they spending their lives in pursuit of this goal? Jesus had several important things to say on the matter, (Matthew 6:27) Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? (Matthew 18:3) Truly I tell you, He said, "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven' So with a little bit of faith they may find the answer they are seeking in the Bible, rather than a hole in the ground!

Robert Allender

Caroline's Accreditation as a Local Preacher



In the picture are (back row) Richard Davies (organist) Rev. Howard Long, Mr Ken Allison, Mr Alan Cram (LP/WL Secretary) (front row) Ann Beynon, Caroline Buckler and Cynthia Mumford

You are invited to a "Sparkle" Evening at 2 Westport Avenue, Mayals, Swansea SA3 5EA on Wednesday 2nd November at 7.00 p.m.

This is a fund raising event of fun and fellowship. Please invite friends and family.

Organised by Ken and Julia Allison and the Mumbles Tuesday cell group. Make a note in your diary and turn up!

....send plenty of time with God; let other things go, but don't neglect Him.

Oswald Chambers

Choices, Choices



What a quandary. A choice had to be made. It was a toss up between going to Wimbledon to watch matches on Centre Court, OR, attending an evening reception at St. James's Palace, to meet the Duke of Edinburgh.

This was a quandary.....Why?..... because both events were on the same day.

As it happens, the decision was easy to make. A friend of mine had been allocated the tickets. She was suffering from sciatica and couldn't sit for long and as the tickets are not transferable that was that. St. James's Palace here I come.

I was invited to meet the Duke of Edinburgh because he has been Patron of Muscular Dystrophy UK for 50 years. I have only been actively involved with the charity for about 15 years, so I counted myself lucky to have been invited. The chairman and vice chairman of our branch were also invited.

When the invitation arrived, it was accompanied by many instructions, including – no cameras allowed! The dress code was cocktail dresses for ladies. That was the first problem as I didn't have a dress, as most types are too difficult for me to get on and off. I had an outfit in mind, until I remembered it creases very easily, so back to the drawing board. Looking online, I found a reasonably priced dress. Then I was bombarded by people asking me what jewellery I was going to wear – what a palava! That was easy to narrow down as it had to be something I could take on and off by myself, so I went for a pendant with a magnetic clasp.

All those attending were divided into small groups. The Welsh contingent was all together. I had read earlier that day that the Duke and Queen were due at Westminster Abbey at 7.30 that evening to take part in the prayer vigil to remember the battle of the Somme. So, sadly I thought he might not attend our reception. But, at exactly 6pm, he entered the room. Wow, I didn't realise he was so short, about my height. He must have "shrunk" over the years, after all he is 95. But walking alongside the Queen he appears tall, because she is so short.

He spoke to everyone in each group. He asked me where I came from. Two speeches followed. He gave his without any notes. He doesn't wear spectacles, so perhaps he has contact lenses. But he has two hearing aids.

After the speeches the Duke chatted to people again. Then I realised there were guests gathering at the end of the room where I was standing. Why? I looked around. There was Alex Ferguson and a lady whom I did not recognise. Who was she? Gosh, it was Mary Peters, the long jumper – you have to be a certain age to remember her! Also circulating was Christine Hamilton (wife of Neil). She was most pleasant and she got down on the floor to speak to wheelchair users, so that she was at eye level with them.

At 7pm sharp, the Duke left. This must have given him just enough time to change his tie, go to the loo, get in the car and be whisked to the Abbey. I really admire his energy levels and commitment and also those of the Queen.

The following day I was able to see all the photographs which had been taken and download the ones I wanted to print. I immediately put two on Facebook. Then I re-read the e mail from Head Office, which said no photos were to be shared on social media!

So that's why you haven't seen me lately as I had to do a spell, under guard, in the Tower.

Janet Neilson

When you doubt the lovely silence
Of a quiet wooded place,
When you doubt the path of silver
Of some moonlit water space,
When you doubt the winds a'blowing,
Flash of lightning, glistening rain,
Sun or starlit heavens above you
On the land or bounding main,
When you doubt the sleep of loved ones
Deep beneath some precious sod,
Listen to a soft voice saying,
"Be still, and know that I am God."

S.Alicia Pool

The desire to pray can be a prayer in itself

(continued from page 4)

Rev Gill Evans has kindly agreed to conduct the short communion service before we open our doors to the public. This truly was a time of peace and the presence of God could be felt all around.

Sunday we had the very great pleasure to welcome the Rev Alwyn Evans, one of our past ministers, who conducted the morning service with some wonderful hymns and of course Pantyfedwen (his favourite). Rev Alwyn told us that the statue of Christ on the mountain overlooking Rio de Janeiro was constructed using melted down armaments from war. During the BBC coverage of the Olympics the statue of Christ was predominant, reminding us that Christ is there for everyone and rules over all. Even in our own Church, if you looked from the balcony, the cross was in the centre of the Olympic rings that hung from the cross bar in the roof.

Sunday evening Jan and Owain Davies and members from their house group, gave accounts of both past and present Olympians who have a Christian faith and these were interspersed with hymns. The church was full and a wonderful evening of singing was enjoyed by all, culminating with the taking down of our Olympic flag and the extinguishing the flame.

Sadly Monday morning it was back to reality, the arrangements were taken down, the church cleaned polished and everything returned to normal, but what a wonderful week of celebration, friendship and outreach we had all experienced.



Myra Thomas

Murton Outreach



For the past six years a small group of members at Murton have organised a weekly outdoor Coffee Morning and Book Sale on the lawn to the front of Murton chapel throughout the months of July and August. It is not intended to be a money-making enterprise, but is viewed, rather, as a form of "Outreach" to the community. We usually put up a couple of sun-umbrellas as highly visible markers and set out tables and chairs for our anticipated visitors to partake of tea/coffee and biscuits and enjoy a lengthy "chin-wag". The books are displayed on two large tables, a short distance away from our customers – and there you have it.

We have an interesting variety of patrons: some of our church members are regular visitors, other local residents are drawn in and folk who are holidaying in the area have proved keen to soak-up some local culture and, as a result of their visit have joined us on a Sunday for one or more of our services. On occasion, we have had a passing Local Authority Social Services mini-bus stop and disembark its passengers to enjoy our hospitality.

We seek, by our efforts to raise the profile of our church in the community – to show that the church is alive and well and that we have a faith and a worthwhile way of life to offer. And, what is more, we believe in and enjoy what we do. Just look at the faces of the happy and smiling folk in the picture!

(To answer your unspoken question – if the weather is unkind, we gather indoors.)

Owain and Jan Davies

Man sees your actions, but God your motives

Thomas à Kempis