

# the Treasury

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES

## THE RESCUE

Now that summer is here, this real life incident serves as a warning and a timely illustration that we all should heed the Gospel Call.

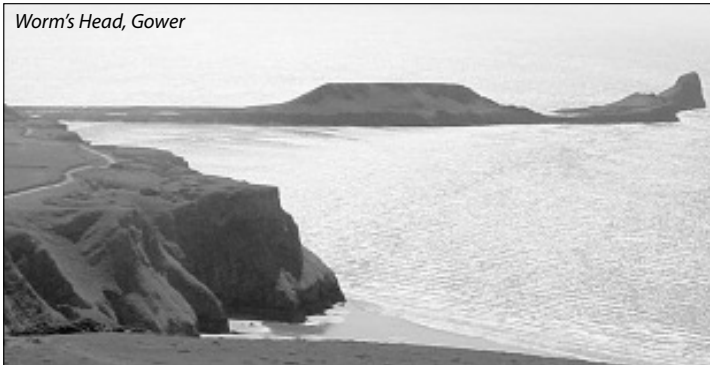


Carolyn Ash

I wonder if you have ever witnessed a rescue of some kind; you know the kind where the helicopter arrives just in time to airlift the injured person off a beach, or a lifeboat answers a distress call out to sea and returns with some people from a yacht that is sinking.

Well, back in February, it was our turn to watch the rescue services at work. One of our favourite places to walk is on the tidal peninsula called Worm's Head at Rhossili, Gower. On this particular day we were safely back on the mainland, and gazing back at the rapidly approaching tide as it gradually hid bits of the causeway from our sight, when our interest was caught by two walkers slowly picking their way over to the Worm. We almost didn't pay them much attention as surely they would see the fast incoming waves and turn back?

However, to our incredulity, and by this time we had whipped the binoculars out to get a better look, they kept going! Could they not see the danger they were putting themselves in?



Worm's Head, Gower

Happily we were standing right near the Coastguard Lookout Station on the end of the mainland, so we were able to alert those on duty to the plight of the walkers. What happened then was really impressive, as a whole rescue plan began to be put in motion.

First of all the coastguard produced a loudhailer and began to shout to the walkers, warning them of the quickly approaching tide. It took a while for the folk over on the Worm to respond (they may have been foreign) but eventually they did. The man on the land shouted over to them how many minutes they had left to cross back over before their pathway back was totally submerged. At the same time all this was going on, a message had been sent to the rescue people to alert them of the possibility of a helicopter rescue, should it be needed. At this point a man in a rescue 4 x4 came with equipment, followed by a man on a quad bike.

I think one of the big things for us as spectators was the surprise at the speed of the response, just in case they were needed. Happily in our case, the walkers got back over just in time so the helicopter and Rescue 4x4 were just on stand-by.

The other surprise was when the coastguard told us that apparently this happens quite often, maybe even as frequently as once a month, despite large signs warning folk of the danger!

We fell to thinking about just how foolish we human beings can be – how we ignore every warning signal, however large, and think we know

## CONTENTS

- 2 Editorial
- 2 News from the Churches
- 4 The Annual Missionary Rallies
- 6 The Spring Meeting of the Association in the East
- 6 From the Archives
- 7 Letters to the Editor
- 7 Remembering the 1859 Revival
- 8 Youth Page
- 8 One more thing

best. "It can happen to others, but never to me!"

Why is it then, despite huge signs warning us of the consequences of going our own way and ignoring God's way, we are surprised that the tide does actually come in separating us from the God who loves us? Let's thank God for those faithful people with their "loudhailers" who warn us of the dangers.

May there be many more heavenly rescues!

*Carolyn Ash is married to Christopher and lives in London. She spends her holidays near Rhossili, Gower and attends Burry Green Chapel. She is the mother of four children.*

## The Association in the East Annual Ministers' Retreat

Having just returned from three days in Coleg Trefeca in late May where she attended the Annual Ministers' Retreat, **Dr Diane Stirling** (Montgomery) sat down without delay to email this Report for our Readers.

The theme of the 2009 Retreat was *Mission and Spirituality - Resources for the Journey*, and was led by Martin Robinson, Director of Together in Mission. These were really worthwhile days when we ministers could not only relax in one another's company, but also had the opportunity to stretch our minds, widen our horizons and discuss openly and thoroughly our ministries and our needs within the ministry, as well as the way forward (in our opinion) for ministry within the

Connexion. We were ably led by Martin who enabled us to journey through the culture and cultures of this modern age.

He gave words of wisdom and encouragement as to how the Gospel can reach out to a secular and multi-faith society. We have to "change the conversation" we have with society. As the church of old, which was of prime importance in the Community, has gone through a period of being dismissed by the Community it is now being recognised as being 'of use' to the Community.

The traditions of the Church should not be laid aside, because they hold a richness from which we can learn. We must change in order to reach out to a new society that is returning to spirituality, but has not yet reconnected with God. All Christian

communities (Church leaders and members) must take on board the 'practice of goodness' i.e. living the Gospel in an obvious way and never allowing the finger to be pointed at us for not living up to our supposed faith. There was, and is, a huge amount to think about from these days at Trefeca. It has done us all good to really consider what the future holds for us, for our denomination and for our local congregations. Amidst the listening and discussion, however, there was also time for prayer and reflection. We were led in Morning Prayers by Revd Mary Turnock and in Epilogues by Revd David Jenkins. Our Moderator, Revd Iain Hodgins, conducted the Communion Service at the close. There was also a time for quiet conversation and mutual encouragement, time to relax in the

peace of Trefeca, time to walk and visit Hay's bookshops!

Perhaps 'Retreat' is not the right definition of this time at Trefeca. The ministers are not fleeing their pastorates for a few days of leisure! Neither are they cutting themselves off from the world in a time of deep spirituality, but they are undergoing refreshment of spirit which helps in their ministries.

In the light of this, I would encourage all our ministers to come next year and share in the fellowship... and I would encourage all our Pastorates to nag their ministers into a few days of relaxation and refreshment. It will do both ministers and pastorates good!!

The 2010 Retreat has been arranged for 18th - 20th May, and will be led by Revd Dr John Morgans (Llanidloes).