

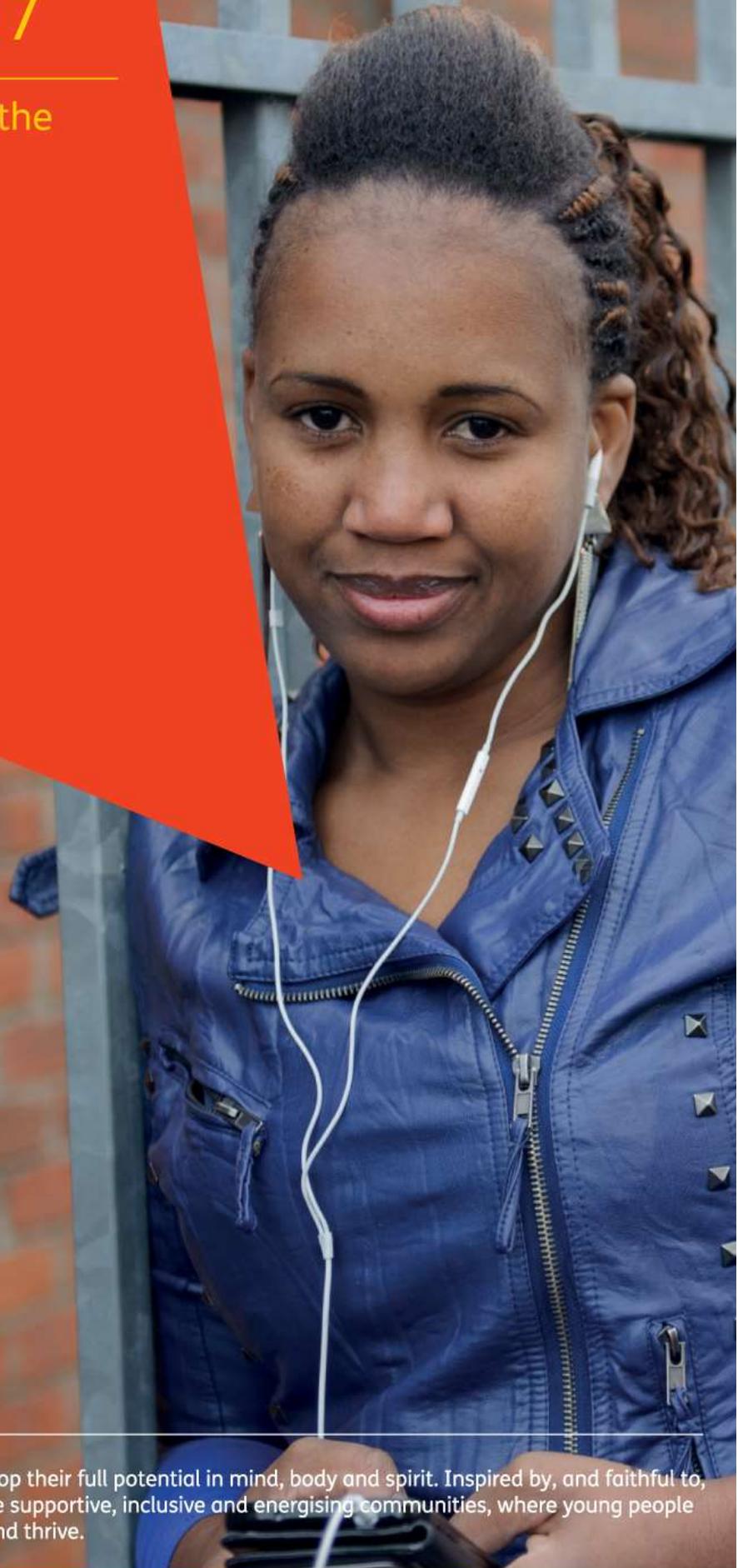
YMCA NEATH

YMCA

Annual Report 2017

Working in the Community for the
Community.

www.neathymca.org.uk



YMCA

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

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1.0 Board of Management

Chairman	Mr Kevin Lewis
Treasurer	Mr Martin Evans FCA CTA
Vice Chairman	Mrs Joanna Jenkins MBE JP DL
Chaplain	Reverend Patrick Baker
	Mr Clive Ball
	Mrs Pauline Buselli
	Mr Roger Draper
	Mr Alun James
	Dr Bryn John OStJ DL
	Dr Donald Thomas
	Mrs Carolyn Wheeler JP DL

1.1 Honorary Advisors

Independent Examiner	Mr Phillip Hunkin W.B.V
Solicitors	Mr Robert Williams, Hutchinson Thomas Ltd

1.2 Staff

Centre Manager	Sian Smart
Centre Administrator	Jessica Kennedy
Fitness Instructor	Brett Jones
Evening Receptionist	Hayley Barnes
Evening Receptionist	Hayley James
Evening Receptionist	Sarah Elias
Cleaner	Craig Bourne

1.3 Bankers

Barclays Bank Plc. (Neath)
Swansea Building Society

1.4 Chaplain, Neath YMCA

When I was first appointed honorary chaplain to YMCA Neath (YMCAN) – officially, five years ago but in practise a little longer – the job description seemed brief and simple. First of all, as a member of the Board I had to accept the kind of responsibility common to all charity trustees. Secondly, I had to be available for those who wanted to share such personal or spiritual needs as members of staff felt unable to handle. (But I have to make clear that although I spent forty years as a minister in Baptist churches in Wales I am not a trained counsellor, and so I can offer such help only informally, as a sympathetic friend.) I continue to find myself on an interesting journey of discovery.

I visit the centre for an hour or so most Monday afternoons and am made welcome by the “Joanies”. On some Tuesday afternoons I and my wife are able to meet the Community Connecting Team; while **I am glad to be there, my wife is better able to relate to their “craft” activities, and the Team and I** are grateful for her interest and support. Other groups meeting at the centre are more structured and I do not normally feel free to intrude on them, although I have met some leaders briefly. If there are others which would welcome me, I hope they will let me know. When the staff are not too busy – and even, perhaps, when they are! – they make me welcome in the office and keep me up to date with events.

YMCAN aims to be available to every kind of person, but its basis is Christian, and so I am called upon to open Board meetings with prayer and to help organise and to lead in prayer at the Good Friday breakfast – a momentous and, I believe, unique annual event. In consultation with the Board I have been exploring what else I might offer appropriately to YMCAN, and in consequence during the past two years I have made a point of calling at the centre most Fridays at 13.30 for ten minutes of prayer for YMCAN and those associated with it. I expect this to continue and I hope that anyone will feel welcome to join me for that brief period. The room used may change from time to time; the staff in the office will always know where I am each Friday. Subject to the approval of the Board it may be possible to make more of that kind of activity in future. Watch this space!

Acting as honorary Chaplain to YMCAN makes a small demand. But it provides me with the privileged opportunity of making wonderful new friends and sharing in the unobtrusive but impressively professional governance of this much-valued organisation. I am grateful.

Reverend Patrick John Baker

Chaplain

2.0 Aims and Purposes

The YMCA is a Christian Movement. At its centre are Christians, who regarding Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, desire to share their faith with others and make him known, believed, trusted, loved, served and exemplified in all human relationships. It welcomes into fellowship persons of other religious faiths and of none.

Accordingly the Young Men’s Christian Association stands for:

- A worldwide fellowship based on equal value of all persons.
- Respect and freedom for all, tolerance and understanding between people of different opinions.

- Active concern for the needs of the community.
- United effort by Christians of different traditions.

The Young Men's Christian Association aims to:

Provide a welcome to members for themselves, in a meeting place which is theirs to share, where friendships can be made and counsel sought.

Develop activities which stimulate and challenge its members in an environment that enables them to take responsibility and find a sense of achievement.

Involve all members in care and work for others.

Create opportunities for exchanging views, so that its members can improve their understanding of the world, of themselves and of one another.

3.0 Full Membership

The Full Membership of the Young Men's Christian Association is a fellowship of men and women over 17 years of age who have accepted the Basics of Union, are committed to the Christian way of life, desire to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to associate themselves with others in Christian service in and through the Association. Full Membership is open to any man or woman over 17 years of age who, by loyally accepting the challenges of Christ, is willing to take his or her part in the fellowship and service which the Association exists to promote.

4.0 Chairman's Report

Welcome to YMCA Neath's 2016 - 2017 Annual Report. I hope you enjoy reading about our work and that of our many partner organisations and sections. This year has been extraordinarily busy.

We have continued to work with many partner organisations including Flying Start; the Probation Service; Neath Port Talbot's Lifelong Learning Service; Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service; POBL; Shaw Trust; Swansea City AFC's Community Trust; Swansea University; Rugby Tots; Neath College Group, Stop Smoking Wales; Relate Cymru; Y Cylch Meithrin and our neighbouring YMCA local associations in Wales. Their support is invaluable.

We have also been supported by AMCOMM; Barclays Bank; the Lodge of St Illtyd; Neath Port Talbot Council; Neath Sportsmen's Society; Western Power and Neath Town Council.

I would like to thank my Board of Management colleagues, staff, section leaders, tutors, and volunteers for their continuing and unstinting support and friendship. I am extremely proud of the people who make YMCA Neath the vibrant place it is.

Sian Smart, our Centre Manager, deserves my special thanks. She is a skilled manager with a wealth of funding bid experience and skills.

Sian is ably supported by six members of staff; three of whom we employ on a part time basis: Jessica Kennedy (Centre Administrator); Brett Jones (Fitness Instructor); Craig Bourne (Cleaner); and

three part-time receptionists, Hayley Barnes; Sarah Elias; and Hayley James. They work tirelessly to ensure our doors remain open.

My Board of Management colleagues [Rev Patrick John Baker, Clive Ball, Pauline Buselli, Roger Draper, Martin Evans, Alun James, Joanna Jenkins, Bryn John, Kevin Lewis, Don Thomas, and Carolyn Wheeler] are extremely able people. I know I can rely on them.

My role as chairman has been greatly assisted by our treasurer Martin Evans; and our chaplain, Reverend Patrick John Baker. Martin, a chartered accountant, oversees our accounting processes and **procedures; while Patrick makes a huge contribution to the 'all inclusive' ethos that is at the heart of YMCA Neath's work.**

It would be remiss of me not to thank one key individual: my Vice Chair, Jo Jenkins. Jo continues to support me at every turn. I owe her a huge debt of gratitude.

I would also like to thank Philip Hunkin, our Independent Examiner, and Robert Williams, our Honorary Solicitor. Their continuing advice and support has been invaluable.

YMCA Neath is a wholly self-funded, non-profit making organisation, established in 1875. This is our 142nd year. We have a rich history. I am proud of the significant contribution YMCA Neath makes to the wellbeing of our local community.

Finally, I would like to issue a call to action. We are your community resource. Please support us. Please use our facilities. Please allow us to make an even greater difference to the people of Neath.

Kevin Lewis

Chairman of the Board of Management
October 2017

5.0 Community Use and Partnership Working

5.1 Adult Education Classes

The past year was an extremely challenging time in the delivery of adult education classes at YMCA Neath. **Fewer classes were offered by Neath Port Talbot's Lifelong Learning Service (NPTLLS) at the centre**, while Swansea University (DACE) increased their portfolio of classes. The classes included Psychology, English, History, Confidence Building, Assertiveness Training, and Welsh. The future will see a further decline in the delivery of educational based classes as significant budget cuts are seen across adult education services.

Private classes are slowly increasing in numbers and subjects. More people are joining these classes where the focus is on enjoyment rather than accreditation. This is where YMCA Neath will see the direction of adult community learning going in the future.

Sian Smart

Centre Manager

5.2 Partnerships and Support

YMCA Neath is fortunate to be part of many positive partnerships. We continue to have strong links with individuals, groups, and the private and voluntary sectors across Neath Port Talbot. Our future will see us strive to strengthen these partnerships and build new ones to ensure the future development of YMCA Neath; and to maintain its drive in delivering a quality service to the community of Neath and its surrounding areas.

Positive partnerships remain fundamental to successful outcomes, especially as services within Neath Port Talbot are going through many changes, with many more planned in the near future. New partnerships allowed for the addition of new programmes and supported the increase of existing ones **to it's** already diverse portfolio of activities.

Collaborative working with others maximised our resources delivering a wide range of quality educational, recreational and sporting activities for people of all ages from pre-school children through to senior citizens.

YMCA Neath's annual footfall for the year remains steady at over 27,000 people. The importance of continuing our work in partnership with our service users, groups and organisations will support us to continue to deliver inclusive and robust programmes of education and activities appropriate for everyone.

Sian Smart

Centre Manager

5.3 Fundraising

Like many other third sector organisations securing funding for core activities and new services is always a challenge, particularly in the current economic climate. Despite these challenges, we are very pleased with the progress we have made in our local fund raising endeavours. The following are some examples of our fundraising activity over the past year:

We are very pleased to continue our positive working partnership with Swansea City Football Club Community Trust. They have a solid presence at YMCA Neath and we are working together to deliver a wide range of activities.

Communities Chest grants to the value of just over £1,400 with the support of District Sports Council has enabled YMCA Neath to provide additional sports related activities safely for young people.

Our Poppy Factory grant came to fruition during last year. This enabled us to train an ex veteran to support activities in the gym. We are pleased to say that we have been able to continue with his employment through our fundraising activities during the year.

Continuous support from Barclays Bank and Neath Sportsman's Club is overwhelming and very much appreciated to support the continuation of many activities at YMCA Neath. Their kind generosity has ensured our ability to deliver an excellent service for people of all ages to have access to educational and recreational facilities at YMCA Neath, and to sponsor training kit for various youth teams in Neath Port Talbot.

We received funding of £100 from the Neath Town Council grant, which supported the general utilities for the building.

YMCA Neath held its inaugural charity golf day at Carmarthen Golf Club on the 7th June. 13 teams participated in a highly competitive afternoon of golf. The event raised £1,500

YMCA staff, trustees and 12 volunteers did a Sponsored Walk on August 13th up Pen Y Fan. Over £1,200 was raised to help replace broken gym equipment.

Staff and volunteers held a table top sale on Saturday August 19th. The £215 raised on the day went to support the general maintenance of the building.

A Welsh Assembly Initiative 'Flying Start' funded turning an unused room into a vital store room for the bi lingual playgroup.

The Lodge of St Illtyd raised £750 at one of their events towards new equipment.

Western Power supported the safe play of young people with a grant of £1200 towards safety mats. These mats are currently being used most evenings where young people participate in various forms of dance and gymnastics.

Our fundraising activities are not always financial. Various organisations support the upkeep and maintenance of the building in various ways.

The Probation Service provided practical support both inside and outside the building throughout the year. We are very grateful to everyone for their support in making the building more aesthetically pleasing for people to use the facilities.

Neath Port Talbot Council provided tarmac scalpings to fill in the car park pot holes. Vital maintenance work to ensure the safety of everyone using the facilities of the YMCA.

Behind the scenes, our dedicated fundraising team are constantly looking for new sources of funding that will help the Management Board meet their strategic objectives.

As we celebrate the achievements of the past year and look ahead to the year to come we firmly believe that together we will achieve great things and YMCA Neath will continue to be the pride of our community. Already 4 of our loyal fundraisers have secured 4 places for the London Marathon 2018. Watch this spot!

Clive Ball

Chairman of the fundraising committee

6.0 135th Good Friday Breakfast

6.1 Patrons of YMCA Neath

Five years ago, due to the increasing costs of running and maintaining the YMCA building and the decreasing amount of support from the Local Authority due to the financial restraints, the Board decided to invite people to become Patrons of the YMCA to try to ensure the financial viability of the YMCA.

All members pay an annual subscription and we have dedicated employed staff, who are essential for the organization of all the activities, and these are ably assisted by the many volunteers and are overseen by the Board of Management who are all unpaid volunteers and meet monthly.

The Board YMCA Neath is very grateful to those who have become Patrons and hope that the number will be expanded in the forthcoming years. Old and new Patrons will have the satisfaction of being part of an Organization that has served the people of Neath for almost 150 years and ensure that Neath YMCA will survive in the future.

Please consider becoming a Patron. This can be done by asking any staff member – the minimum cost is £30 per year for individuals, £100 for corporate bodies.

6.2 Good Friday Breakfast

This year YMCA Neath held its 136th Good Friday Breakfast - this is a unique event and we believe it is the oldest such event in Wales and possibly the UK.

It was a very enjoyable morning and if you have never attended the event before we would love to welcome you to **next year's** 137th Good Friday Breakfast. The breakfast – which consists of ham & turkey salad (there is a fish option for non-meat eaters by prior arrangement) with boiled potatoes, followed by a hot cross bun and tea/coffee – is preceded by a prayer and a rousing Easter Hymn.

There is then an address by an invited speaker.

This year the speaker was Rev. Dr Karen E Smith, the Pastor of Orchard Street Baptist Church and the soloist was Miss Annie Phillips, a very accomplished local vocalist. Kevin Lewis, Chairman of YMCA Neath gave a short update of the progress and activities held in the YMCA over the last year the breakfast concluded with another Easter Hymn and final blessing.

Next year's Good Friday Breakfast is being held at 8.30am on Good Friday 30th March 2018.

All are welcome – just let any staff member know or email info@neathymca.org.uk so that we can cater for all.

Dr Bryn John

Chair Good Friday Breakfast Committee

7.0 Section Reports

7.1 Fitness Factory

Funding from the Poppy Factory came to fruition during this financial year, although we are proud to announce that our Instructor Brett Jones will remain with us as an employee.

New classes and programs were introduced to an already diverse programme of activities. This ensured that we catered to **everyone's tastes and abilities, and also supported** the professional development of our Instructor.

Some new equipment was purchased during the year to replace ones that had come to the end of their life in the gym. This was an exciting time for us and our members, as it saw a large amount of funding raised by our members being ploughed back into one of the most used areas of the YMCA.

The gym was accessed almost 8,000 times during last year. Some of our members have continually supported us for several years. This year we welcomed an increase in new members into the fold, and look forward to supporting them in their quest to become more active.

Sian Smart

Centre Manager

7.2 Cylch Chwarae Castell Nedd

Cylch Chwarae Castell-Nedd are a welsh playgroup for children 2 years of age until they have a space in nursery in Primary school. The Cylch sessions are for 2 and half hours, 9:30 – 12:00pm Monday to Friday for 39 weeks of the year for private customers and for 42 weeks of the year for Flying Start

children as required by Flying Start.

Flying Start have currently bought 8 spaces from the Cylch and the other spaces are for private customers. The Cylch is registered to provide sessional childcare for up to 28 children but are currently only accepting 16 children per session, an increase of 4 children per session from January 2017 due to demand. There are 21 children on the register currently with only 6 spaces left over the week until January 2018. The Cylch have had 211 children attend the setting since it was relaunched under the new management in 2009.

The Cylch employs 4 staff all of who are NVQ Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 3 qualified, First Aid qualified, Child Protection and Safeguarding Qualified and Food Hygiene trained. The Deputy Manager is currently undertaking his Level 5 NVQ CCLD Qualification and the Manager is NVQ Children's Care Learning and Development Level 5 qualified. All staff are required in their job role to attend regular training sessions run by Flying Start to maintain their professional development. The Cylch staff worked together to implement the following changes in the past 12 months:

- Staff have daily meetings to discuss the sessions, planning, training and any other business this is supported by monthly planning and evaluation meetings.
- We introduced meetings with potential parents and all staff prior to the children starting if the child has any health or development concerns so staff can fully prepare to meet the children's needs.
- The introduction of the Well-Comm communication observation and planning.
- The re-introduction of the Healthy Snack menu
- Changing the order of the setting routine with carrying out brushing teeth and snack time at the beginning of the setting as we understand that a lot of the children have breakfast early as they have other siblings parents going to work etc. so are ready for snack early and carrying it out in this way has also promoted them eating their dinner when they go home from the setting.

Staff found that these changes have helped the setting feel more relaxed as the children have completely free-time without disruption to set up games and activities and play them out into their entirety rather than being stopped to brush teeth or stopped to have a snack. Staff take more responsibility and ownership of their roles in the setting due to their increased involvement in planning and talking with parents. All of this has promoted the professionalism of the setting further. We have also benefited from the introduction of another secure storage area added to keep our resources secure that has helped the setting reach expected standards.

Future Plans: We are planning to include a gardening session at least twice every half term, it is an activity that the children and the families really enjoy. We are also planning to attend further local events such as the Heini show we attended in the Gwyn Hall. Staff are continuing to develop professionally by attending training courses to ensure that staff are maintaining the best standards possible. There is also the possibility of the Cylch introducing some afternoon sessions in the future to comply with the proposed 30 hour childcare offer but this scheme is just in the piloting phase with no decisions yet being made by Welsh Government so it is just an ongoing discussion at the moment.

We would like to thank all the staff at the YMCA in their continued support that enables us to grow and flourish in providing our service to the local and wider community.

Stephanie Law

Cylch Playgroup Manager

7.3 Dance Wales UK



We have had a very busy year with more competitions for our Western Warriors cheerleaders and taken on so many new members for next season. From competitions from ICC CHEER, BCA SPRING SENSATION EXETER, LEGACY CHEER AND DANCE AND CHEER SPORT WALES. I can happily report we have achieved many trophies but too many to count. Our soloists and duets were winners too. We are very proud and wish our new squads all the **best in next season's competitions.**

We then had our Christmas show called 'Happy Holidays' and our warrior team captains were awarded and every child had a medal. Our team captains for season 2016-2017;

- Mini dance – Lillie Evans
- Mini cheer – Maddison Allen
- Youth dance – Erin Turner
- Youth cheer – Chloe Mullan
- Junior dance – Georgia Roberts
- Junior cheer – Chloe Williams.



We then started our new street Tap classes run by our lovely teacher Beth Richards and appeared on 'Up Next' show at the Princess Royal Theatre. Also some of our children attended 'Can You Dance' workshop in Bristol and enjoyed various styles of dance. Our annual summer show this July was called 'Legends' and all pupils who had full attendance in each class were awarded trophies.

After a long summer break we started back with a competition for our Reflex Acrobatic girls winning solos from Hannah Edwards and Eva Morgan and winning duets were Hannah Edwards and Alana Cooper and Carys Copp and Eva Morgan and our reflex group came 4th out of 23 acts of all different styles of dance. Also Hannah Edwards was awarded highest solo mark in her age category for the 3rd year running. Amazing.

Kerry Dale

Dance Wales UK Instructor

7.4 Neath Shotokan Karate Club

First of all, a big thank you to the staff at the YMCA Neath for their ongoing support this year. This year has been another good year, seeing new members join and existing members grow in skill and confidence. A big 'Thank You' this year to Sensei Ellie as she officially took up her role as an instructor and is doing a brilliant job.



It's great to see Karateka passing on what they have learnt; this is what Karate is all about.

Sensei Dave Hazard payed the Welsh Karate Union a visit again this year and as usual it was the highlight of the year. As an organisation the Welsh Karate Union has seen great success in local and National Karate championships. This year promises to be just as good.

Sensei Andrew Richards

Neath Shotokan Karate Instructor

7.5 Kung Fu

This was a year of change and success for the Neath Lau Gar Kung Fu Club. Early in the year a number of club members took part in the British Kung Fu Associations Open National Championships. Adam Mainwaring, our lead instructor, came away with a bronze medal in the Seniors Sets Competition; Alun Morgan won gold in the traditional fighting Chi Sau Tournament and Edmund Shum won silver in this. Others from within the Lau Gar Wales club (that the YMCA Neath Kung Fu class is a part of) came away with a gold in the Juniors Sets Competition and a silver in the Intermediate Weapons Sets competition. This was an excellent outcome for our club, with everyone who entered coming away with a trophy or a medal.

During the Sash gradings this year, two of the juniors gained their orange sashes, two their blue, and one their white.



Later in the year a significant change in the club was made as Adam moved the class from the YMCA Neath to the Aberavon Leisure and Fitness Centre in Port Talbot, and the classes at the YMCA ceased for a short time. After this break, Alun Morgan restarted the junior class while Jules Payne took over the adult class. The junior class started slowly but has now grown to the size it was before it was moved, and it is hoped that this growth will continue in the year to come. The students are training well and are getting ready for their upcoming grading. Caitlin is also training hard to enter next month's BKFA Open Nationals Championship and we hope she will enjoy this experience. The adult class has been more difficult to restart, and so the Junior class has been extended into this timeslot. It may well be that the adult class will take off in the future as students from the junior class mature and progress through their grades.

Recently, Grand Master Yau and Master Russell from the British Lau Gar Association visited South Wales and ran a Kung Fu workshop that Adam Mainwaring and Alun Morgan attended and thoroughly enjoyed. Coach Xia from Foshan, China visited the UK this year to teach at the Lau Gar Summer Course in Llandudno which some of our club members were privileged to attend and experience a more acrobatic style of Kung Fu for a week.

Alun Morgan

7.6 Ju-Jutsu

It has been another good year for the YMCA Neath Jujutsu section. The junior class is running well, although we have noticed a slight drop off in numbers following the summer break. If this continues until after the October half term we will allow some of the new starters on the waiting list to join.

The senior class has also shown a good level of stability with a few new members coming and going throughout the year. It's pleasing to see the core of regulars still making the effort to train on a regular basis. This commitment is showing as students progress through their grades.

The club has also been involved in, and hosted, some very good seminars this year with senior master level instructors (6th Dan and above) attending from all over the country. This is very good for the club but also helps to put YMCA Neath on the map as a martial arts centre of excellence. Members of the club have also travelled to various seminars around the country to train with some top national and international instructors. One of the high points of the year being an attendance at a week-long seminar in Germany to teach members of the German Jujitsu Federation (DJJV) including groups of German police officers.



The club has also run a number of self-protection courses for mixed groups and ladies only throughout the year. It is hoped that this can be developed further in the future with bespoke courses being offered for different groups in addition to more general courses covering the basic, but most important, elements of self-protection. If anyone is interesting in this type of course please let Sian know or contact the club directly at combatjujutsu@hotmail.co.uk.

Unfortunately due to work and personal reasons my attendance at the club has been more limited over the last year than I would have liked. I would like to thank Rob Thomas and Paul Davies for keeping things going in my absence. I would also like to thank Sian and the YMCA for their continued support of the martial arts sections. *Domo arigatogozaimashita* (thank you very much).

Ian East

YMCA Neath Jujutsu / Neath Valley Martial Arts (NVMA)

7.7 Neath Judo Kwai

The club has again shown a healthy membership with a flourishing junior section and a slowly growing senior section. Again this year members have been successful in gaining promotion along their Judo grades and indeed at competitions at other venues.

Members gaining promotion this year are:-

Osian Morgan – 2nd Dragon
Lili Powell – 3rd Mon
Freyu Powell – 3rd Mon
Jac Roberts – 5th Mon
Jac McAteer – 4th Mon
Jack Bradley Barnes – 4th Mon
Laurie Isaac – Purple Dragon
Leo Isaac – 4th Mon
Tegan – Purple Dragon
Liam Rhys Davies – Purple Dragon
Dan Evans – 3rd Kyu (Green)
Gary Evans – 2nd Kyu (Blue)



The most important promotion we have seen in 2017 is that of Mr Alan Morgan who has succeeded in gaining the required number of points in order to receive his 1st Dan – Black belt. This has, no doubt, added to the overall quality of the club and has enriched the membership greatly. We are now hoping that other members will be inspired to follow in Alans footsteps and work towards gaining the Dan grades.

During the competitions this year we have seen the following members being successful in gaining medals at several venues throughout South Wales:-

Newport Judo Club

Jack McAteer – Silver
Sian Morgan – Bronze
Ellis Jones – Bronze & Gold
Osian Morgan – Bronze

Treorchy Judo Club

Osian Morgan – Bronze
Menna Woolcock – Bronze

The club has also finally arrived in the twenty first century – we now have our own website and/or facebook account. Now parents and anyone who may take an interest in us can see photos of the members and their achievements. The site has also been boosted by other clubs accessing it and sharing information and knowledge of new techniques which we are more than happy to take on board and use to our great advantage. We also have an active Judo Club committee comprising of parents and YMCA staff to help develop the club morally and financially. We are now actively raising our own funds and promoting our own sportswear.

Ian Cardy 3rd Dan

Club Coach Neath Judo Kwai

7.8 Ninjutsu

We have had a quiet, but productive year at the Dojo. We have travelled across the UK teaching our martial art and have been asked to go abroad next year to teach at seminar.

We have promoted a student to 初段 (Shodan – First Degree Blackbelt) during 2017. This is a great achievement for David Jones who has studied for many years in order to attain this rank.

We have recently had several new members start that travel from as far away as Swindon and Pembroke in order to study with us.

We hope to be able to promote the art further through 2018 and encourage a new generation of students to start studying this fascinating Japanese martial art.

The YMCA have always been very supportive of the Dojo and I would like to thank Sian, Jessica and Sarah for all their help and professionalism in ensuring we move forward.

Merlyn

Ninjutsu Instructor

7.9 Kendo

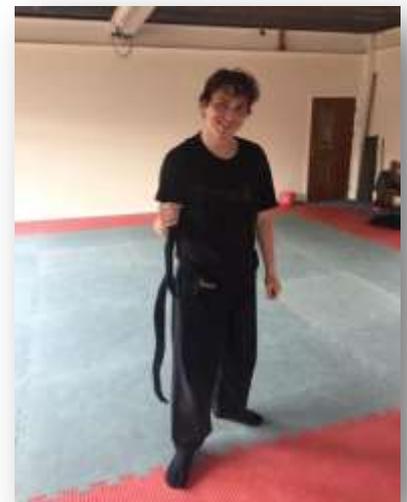
Hakuchou Kendo Club

Kendo meaning 'Way of the Sword' is a modern Japanese art of sword fencing based on traditional Japanese swordsmanship. Kendo is a physically and mentally challenging activity that combines strong martial arts values with sport like physical elements.

Hakuchou Kendo Club has recently moved to the YMCA in Neath, current members are young adults and seniors. The club welcomes those of all abilities to join a beginner's course and explore the fundamental skills required to progress.

Tony Cashmore

Kendo Instructor



7.10 Gymnastics

The Gymnastics section remains extremely popular and is held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for 3 hour sessions per evening – 3 to 5 years olds in 1st session, 6 to 9 year olds in 2nd session and 9 above in 3rd session. We provide tuition to approximately 150 children over the 6 **hour sessions, an increase again from last year's** children. We deliver recreational, fun, non-competitive gymnastics, encouraging the development of good basic skills and a love of physical activity for life. We have recently been awarded a grant towards the purchase of some new tumbling mats which will enable us to teach our more advanced gymnasts higher skills and also funding for four of our young assistant coaches to attend a Sports Leaders award in Gymnastics, which they will be attending as soon as a local course is available. We still have excellent links with Neath Afan Gymnastics Club where our gymnasts can further develop their skills. All gymnasts undertook their next BG Award last July successfully and will be undertaking their next badge in December which will be awarded before Christmas.



Karen Phillips

Neath Gymnastics Coach

7.11 Yoga

Yoga has been running at YMCA Neath for many years and has a solid base of regular students. The class concentrates on a variety of yoga and breathing techniques, both of which are beneficial to health and wellbeing.

All age groups are welcome, with or without experience and a friendly welcome await all newcomers. The class encourages new students and have had a few new attendees this year and hope more will join in the future.

Doreen Bassett

Yoga Instructor

7.12 Music Club

YMCA Neath music club continues to be popular with the local community. The club offers the opportunity to learn different instruments, namely piano and ukulele. The well-equipped rooms at YMCA Neath are easily accessible for adults and children alike who wish to pursue music as a leisure or 'out of school' activity.

Practical piano lessons, from beginner to advanced level, are available along with music theory & musicianship skills. Professional qualifications offered by The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music can be studied and examinations taken, or alternatively, students can learn music for

pleasure. Students sitting practical and theory examinations have reached excellent standards in recent years and valuable UCAS points can be earned by taking the examinations.

Community Ukulele Group



The success and popularity of Kool Hand Ukes continues to grow. The non-profit making community ukulele group took part at the Ukulele Festival at St. David's Hall in Cardiff in April and recently performed at the Made It Markets craft fayre in St David's Church, Neath.

We have been invited to perform again on 30th September at the next craft fayre. Other performances have taken place at Cwrt Clwydi Gwyn residential home in Skewen and a similar gig

will be at a care home in Port Talbot on the 18th October and on 27th October the group will be performing at St Mary's Church in Clydach alongside the Osprey's Choir at a fundraising event for Cancer Research.

An enjoyable Samba Drumming workshop was a recent highlight for the group. This was provided by Sarah Taylor-Shaw and we hope to arrange a Cajon workshop with her in the near future.

The Junior consists of half a dozen children who use their instruments during school music lessons and for assessments in school ensemble groups. The juniors took part in the craft fayre at St David's Church earlier this year and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Following several requests I now run an evening session in the YMCA Coffee Bar on Tuesday evenings from 6.30-8.30pm. Taking part at the very first Upton Ukulele Festival is in the pipeline for next June and we are looking forward to making a musical contribution.



Judith Randall

Music Tutor

7.13 The Joanies

'The Joanies' are a group of women of various ages who meet at YMCA Neath every Monday afternoon. We have different activities each week which include speakers, music, crafts and trips away. We enjoy quizzes and members are always keen to enjoy afternoon tea. We are a very friendly group and offer support to each other. It's an outlook for senior citizens to meet and socialise on a weekly basis. Transport can be arranged through 'Community Transport' and refreshments are provided.

We would also like to express our thanks to Carol Thomas who after many years has recently stepped down as leader of The Joanies Club. We thank you for the love, patience and kindness that you have shown throughout the years.

Moira Davies

7.14 POBL

POBL (meaning PEOPLE in our Welsh language) is a mental health charity that has been formed to make a difference to the people of Wales and their families, who are either now, or will at some future point, find themselves suffering from a mental health condition. We are called POBL because **that's exactly what we are all about. People helping people! We aim to be as bi-lingual as possible** in all of our dealings, as we feel that this is of vital importance to be able to discuss issues in your native tongue if that assists you better.

We are not about big strategies and grandiose ideas. We are about providing real 'hands on' advice and support at grassroots level to the ordinary man and woman in their own communities. We will primarily do this via education, workshops and support groups. This is where we feel help is most needed.

Basing ourselves within YMCA Neath will ensure easy accessibility to the people and Neath and surrounding areas.

David Bentley-Miller

7.15 Swans Community Trust

The Community Trust is Swansea City AFC's registered charity and is the heart of the Club. It gives the Club the opportunity to work where we are needed, and that is in South West Wales' communities. The Club's registered charity since 2008, the Community Trust has successfully developed sport, educational and health projects, all designed to improve the lifestyles of individuals and neighbourhoods across the area.

The opening of the 2013 – 14 season has also seen the Trust launching SwansAid, a small grants scheme to which other charities and community organisations can apply.

As a charity, the Trust's finances are kept completely separate from the Club's so if you are interested in donating you need not fear that your money will be spent on player wages!

7.16 Police Youth Volunteers

The Neath Hub of the Police Youth Volunteers meet every Thursday between 6pm-8pm at Neath YMCA during the school term. We have 20 PYVs and 2 adult leaders.

Over the course of this year we have used the facility to invite many partner agencies in to give inputs to the PYVs. This has given the PYVs a broader range of knowledge and responsibility and developed skills that they can take forward.

These inputs have included –

Digital Hero Training - This has enabled the PYVs to go out to local community centres and teach elderly people to be confident with basic computer skills. Setting up email accounts, online shopping, **getting information etc....**

Road Safety input from Fire Service – The fire service attended with a VR set up and the youths watched a scenario when irresponsible driving ended in a fatal Road Traffic Collision. They also brought a driving simulator which portrayed driving a vehicle under the influence. With some of the **PYVs fast approaching the driver's age this was fantastic.**

School Liaison Officers - We have had numerous inputs from the schools police officers in the relation to internet safety, child sexual exploitation, substance misuse and domestic violence to name a few.

High Sheriff of West Glamorgan – We have had a couple of visits from the High Sheriff. She has given out certificates for work we have done with her and also gave an input on her role and what she does.

Stuart Morgan, Melincryddan Community Centre – Stuart came and spoke about the possibilities of volunteering in the community and what they could offer. As a result a few volunteering projects have been undertaken, such as the painting of the Melin Tech Centre.

Victim Support – Victim Support attended to explain to the PYVs the consequences of being a victim of crime and what issues that could bring as well as what they can do to help.

Dementia Friends – We had a representative from Dementia Friends attend a meeting to discuss the pitfalls of living with dementia. This was either as a sufferer or if it was effecting a family member or friend. The input was based around what you could do to help and make life easier for sufferers.

Neath CVS – Neath CVS attended and explained about the Millennium Award with is based around hours of volunteering. There are 3 targets they can work towards in terms of hours worked with certificates given out when the targets are hit.



Dogs Trust – Dogs Trust attended to teach the PYVs about dog safety and dog law. Also how to be a responsible dog owner and what issues you can expect to encounter as a dog owner.

This is just a selection of inputs we have received over the past year. Before the year ends we will also be having inputs from Blood Bikes Wales, Road Safety from NPT Council and Prevent to name a few.

We very much appreciate the space we have at Neath YMCA and the opportunities it provides.

PCSD 53937 Mark Thomas

Neath Police Station

7.17 Relate Cymru

Relate Cymru is the national charity for relationship support in Wales. We're part of the national Relate charity founded in London in 1983.

Relate has been providing relationship support throughout Wales for a number of years. Relate Cymru was incorporated in 2002 as the first step to establishing one single all Wales Relate organisation. This progressed further in 2005 when the trustees of Relate Mid and West Wales agreed to become part of the new charity.

In 2008 we were successful in our grant application to the Welsh Assembly Government enabling us to establish Relate Cymru as an all Wales organisation. In 2010 we merged with Relate North Wales.

We are a growing organisation building on the skills and expertise of our experienced staff, counsellors, practitioners and Trustees. We now operate throughout Wales and our network of independent licensed counsellors work in areas not covered by a Centre. Last year we supported over 4,000 families in Wales.

We're committed to delivering high quality services and developing more ways that give the best relationship support to people who need it.

7.18 Community Connecting Team

As part of my role within the Community Connecting Team I was asked to organize a craft group within the local community. This would be for our service users and members of the Public.

We are a Pan Disability Service offering support to the elderly, people with learning disabilities and persons with mental health issues.



Our sessions promote confidence by planning projects which encourages and promotes friendship building. It helps reduce Social Isolation.

We are lucky enough to be part of the YMCA family in Neath and have been made to feel very welcome.

Debra Clarke

7.19 Stop Smoking Wales

Stop Smoking Wales is funded by the Welsh Government and is an integral part of Public Health Wales where it forms a central element of the Tobacco Control programme.

Stop Smoking Wales is a specialist health service that provides sessions for smokers who want help to give up.

The service plays an important role in reducing the impact of tobacco on the health of people in Wales and values the contribution it can make towards reaching the Welsh Government target of reducing smoking prevalence in Wales to 16 per cent by 2020.

Research has shown that smokers are four times more likely to give up with a support programme like Stop Smoking Wales.

Stop Smoking Wales offers clients a seven week treatment programme based on the withdrawal oriented treatment model.

The programme provides:

- Weekly appointments at the same time and same place each week
- Appointments available during the day and early evening in local community venues
- Expert behavioural support delivered by a trained Stop Smoking Advisor
- Encouragement, support and guidance throughout the quitting process
- Information on pharmacological aids
- Follow-up at four weeks and 12 months

The service offers free, half day **Brief Intervention Training**. Brief intervention is a method of discussing smoking and quitting in a positive, non-confrontational way to encourage smokers to think about giving up and enable them to access specialist support when they are ready.

This training is suitable for all professionals who come into contact with smokers on a regular basis. The weekly sessions are held every Friday 2:00 – 4:30pm at YMCA Neath.