

# YMCA NEATH

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## Annual Report 2018

# YMCA



# 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
	Cllr Alan Lockyer
	Mr Brian Warlow

### 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
Evening Receptionist	Hayley Barnes
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, six 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

**It gives me great pleasure to present YMCA Neath's latest Annual Report. It provides an** overview of some of the important work we do in our community. Used by tens of thousands of people each year, YMCA Neath is most definitely a community facility; one of which I am extremely proud.

Much about this year has been excellent. Here are some of the highlights:

Staff, volunteers, and a selection of four legged friends, carried out a fund-raising walk to the top of Pen Y Fan. Together with the sum raised in 2017 they have brought in over two thousand pounds for YMCA Neath.

Our staff and volunteers work hard to benefit YMCA Neath. As well as carrying out their day to day work duties, they give freely of their time outside work. I am proud of each and every one of them.

A successful Community Safety Fund application allowed us to carry out safety work in the dojo. The funding paid for new mat edging strips, benches, and radiator covers. Four members of staff and a volunteer carried out the work, again in their own time.

**A band of three intrepid Barclays Bank runners took part in this summer's London Marathon.** Their dedication raised nearly £3,752.03 for YMCA Neath. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their support.

A very successful charity social evening at Neath Rugby Club also raised money. I want to place on record my thanks to Well Seasoned, Sam Stephens, and Lloyd John for entertaining us free of charge. I must also thank the rugby club for their free hospitality and complimentary chicken

and chips in the basket. Together they ensured that every penny of the £1157 collected from sales went to YMCA Neath.

Finally, I must mention the fund-raising efforts of local BTEC Level 3 Information Technology students. The students who are studying Welsh Bacculaureate Advanced at Neath College raised nearly £400 for YMCA Neath as part of their Community Challenge of fundraising activities.

The fundraising section of this report will give a more in depth view of our fundraising activities, and of how it has made an impact to the delivery of our activities.

The year has also brought significant challenges including personal challenges. One, which could never have been imagined, came as a huge surprise in November 2017 - a hole appeared in our car park. Fortunately, the hole was made safe without incident, albeit after many months. I would like to thank everyone who used our facilities during that time for the inconvenience caused by the heras fencing we were forced to erect around what we now know to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century water well.

That brings me to the topic of the history of YMCA Neath. Having been founded in Neath in 1875 we have a long and proud history including during the First World War. We continue to research and try to capture information about our history and would love to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of any records of interest.

We continue to be assisted by a group of dedicated volunteers. They make a huge difference to our day to day lives. Between them they run IT sessions; lead walking groups; support with day to day cleaning and office tasks; provide gym induction sessions; support with maintenance issues; and deliver top quality martial arts classes.

We also receive support from a range of organisations and individuals including local and national politicians; AMCOMM; Barclays Bank; Dragon Training and Recruitment; the Kool Hand **Ukes; the National Probation Service; Neath Sportsmen's Society; Neath Port Talbot Adult** Community Learning; Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service; NPTC Group of Colleges; the mental health charity POBL; Rotary; Round Table; South Wales Police; Swansea City Football Club Community Trust; our YMCA Cymru colleagues; and YMCA England and Wales.

The list is an extensive one. It certainly reminds me that **without them YMCA Neath's role as a** wholly self-funded, not-profit making organisation, would be much more difficult.

I must also pay tribute to my Board of Management colleagues: Rev Patrick John Baker (Chaplain); Clive Ball; Pauline Buselli; Roger Draper; Martin Evans (Treasurer); Alun James; Joanna Jenkins MBE JP DL (Vice Chairman); Dr Bryn John OStJ DL; Cllr Alan Lockyer, Dr Don Thomas; and Carolyn Wheeler JP DL. They are a fantastic group of people. A new colleague, Brian Warlow, joined us in the last 12 months. He has brought with him a wealth of experience and contacts and will formally join the board this month.

I should add that we are always on the look-out for new board members. Please contact us if **you would like to be part of the 'all inclusive' ethos that is at the very heart of YMCA Neath.**

Our financial position continues to be tight. Although currently not a cause for great concern we can never be complacent. Nothing is taken for granted as it is imperative that we retain and build upon our excellent services. It is also imperative that YMCA Neath, which was established in 1875, thrives.

I am assisted in my role as chairman by our Treasurer, Martin Evans; and by Philip Hunkin, our Independent Examiner, and Robert Williams, our Honorary Solicitor. I owe each of them a debt of gratitude.

It would be remiss of me not to thank one key individual: my Vice Chair, Jo Jenkins. **Jo's support** has been invaluable in moving the organisation forward.

If you are able to support this valuable local resource: by becoming a patron; or by joining one of our very many classes please ring us on 01639 769315, email us at [info@neathymca.org.uk](mailto:info@neathymca.org.uk) or drop in to see us. Sian, Jess and the team would love to tell you more about what we do.

I cannot conclude without thanking our dedicated members of staff: our full-time staff Sian Smart; and Jessica Kennedy; our part-time staff Craig Bourne; Hayley Barnes; Sarah Elias; and our long term volunteer Jason Hitchmough. They are the reason why YMCA Neath flourishes and continues to make a difference in our community. Sian Smart deserves my special thanks. She works tirelessly and is an excellent and devoted Centre Manager.

Finally, thank you for your ongoing support.

Kevin Lewis  
Chairman of the Board of Management  
October 2018

## 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 delivered by Neath Port Talbot's Lifelong Learning Service** (NPTLLS) at the centre. The future will see a further decline in the delivery of educational based classes as significant budget cuts are seen across adult education services.

Although, Swansea University (DACE) increased their portfolio of classes delivered at YMCA Neath. These included Psychology, English, History, Confidence Building, Assertiveness Training, and Welsh. We have seen an influx of welsh students across all ages and at all levels.

Private classes remain steady 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 in 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:

Our positive working partnership with Swansea City Football Club Community Trust continues to grow from strength to strength. They have a solid presence at YMCA Neath and we have been working together delivering a wide range of activities and training opportunities throughout the year.

We were extremely fortunate to have 3 runners participating in the Virgin Money London Marathon 2018. Donna, Adrian and Gary work for Barclays Bank, and have given so much to YMCA Neath. We cannot thank them enough for time and commitment which spanned over several months of training, fundraising and the achievement of running the Marathon itself. **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 have already secured places in next year's London Marathon, where we hope to also make the Guinness Book of Records, so watch this space!**

A Communities Chest grant with the support of District Sports Council enabled YMCA Neath to provide additional sports related activities and training opportunities safely for young people.

YMCA staff and 8 volunteers did a Sponsored Walk on September 2<sup>nd</sup> up Pen Y Fan. Over £700 was raised to help maintain the building.

Cambrian Lodge, Neath raised £200 at one of their events which was used towards new equipment.

A Community Safety Fund grant enabled us to improve a safe area for over 3,174 people annually to train and enjoy five different disciplines of martial arts whilst promoting physical activity.



NPTC Group (Neath College) students fundraised as part of their BTEC Level 3 Information Technology course. They raised nearly £400 which was used to support the martial arts activities at the centre.

An evening of entertainment took place at Neath Rugby Club which raised over £1,157. Local entertainers sang and played music, and Neath Rugby Club provided a fantastic venue. This was all given free of charge, and the proceeds went directly to the YMCA to support the delivery of future activities and classes.

We are grateful to several groups last year for choosing to give their fundraising proceeds to the YMCA.

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

The Working Links Programme 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 our facilities.

Our car park is now fully open thanks to the support of YMCA members and their families. Several volunteer days have ensured that the car park is fit for purpose, and is now used by members of the public whilst they use our facilities.

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.

Clive Ball  
Chairman of the fundraising committee

## 6.0 138th Good Friday Breakfast

### 6.1 Patrons of YMCA Neath

Six 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 YMCA members who use our services pay an annual subscription. In addition to this Neath YMCA charges very competitive rates for the use of the various rooms to any organization that uses the facilities. To support them we have dedicated employed staff, who are essential for the organization of all the activities, and these are ably assisted by the many volunteers who give freely of their time. Board of Management, who are all unpaid volunteers and meet monthly, oversees the efficient management of the organization.

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 137th 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 the 138th Good Friday Breakfast which will be held at the YMCA on Friday 19th April 2019. 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. Canon Jeffrey Gainer, Vicar of Cwmbach and the soloist was Miss Grace Adams, 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 19th April 2019.**

All are welcome – just let any staff member know or email [info@neathymca.org.uk](mailto: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

Our Fitness Instructor left for new pastures during this year. We wish him well in his new ventures.

New funding was sourced to train one of our volunteers in Level 2 Gym Instruction. This has been an exciting time seeing one of our volunteers become more confident and training in a new career path.

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.**

The gym area has been the focus of some maintenance and changes during the year, where some of our funding raised by our members has been utilised to maintain 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 have had another successful year. Our numbers have stayed the same at 25 children on the register and continue to have a steady waiting list. We accept a total of 16 children per day of which 7 children are paid spaces for Flying Start.



We continue to develop as a setting and are currently involved in a Welsh language promotion scheme to aid childrens transition in to Welsh medium education.

Future plans – if the 30 hour childcare offer gets rolled out in to more areas of Neath (currently the only area is Bryncoch) then we will be offering an afternoon session (twice a week at first) to children aged 3 to 4 who are eligible.

Our growth and success are all down to the continued support of the staff and the YMCA.

Stephanie Law  
Cylch Playgroup Manager

## 7.3 Dance Wales UK

Dance wales UK had a very busy 2017-2018. Starting with the September St **David's dance** festival in the Princess Royal Theatre Port Talbot. Our Reflex came 3<sup>rd</sup> in a massive group competition and our soloist and duets came away with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places, Hannah receiving highest solo mark in her age group for the 2nd year running. We then had a fabulous time with **our Christmas show 'Our Snowman'**. We also found out that Reflex our acrobatic group, soloists **Hannah Edwards and Tia Mitchell** and our duets **Hannah Edwards & Chloe miller, Cary's Copp & Eva Morgan, Emily Dye & Eleri Copp** Acrobatic duets all qualified for the World dance Cup finals in Barcelona June/July 2018.

February we started competing with our Western Warriors cheer squad. They did three competitions starting with ICC In February **then ICE In March and Cheer city in May. I've lost** count on how many trophies we won in groups, solos and duets. They did amazing as always and make us coaches proud every year.



Dance world Cup June-July Barcelona. An amazing experience with amazing results. Hope we can do it all again in 2019 in Portugal! (Fingers crossed)

**Lastly to end our year we performed our ‘Superhero’ annual show at the Princess royal Theatre.**

I would like to thank all children and parents for all their support and to my coaches Beth Richards, Hazel Davies & Hannah Davies for all their hard work and support.

Kerry Dale

Dance Wales UK Instructor

## 7.4 Neath Shotokan Karate Club

2018 has seen numbers holding steady. We have welcomed some new students this year who have been new to Karate and some who have been training for some time. We have seen our students grow in their ability, maturity and height. It's only when you look back at old photographs that you realise how some of your students have grown from the little shy boy/girl into the confident teenager/young adult they are today.

I am proud to say that the standards we boast of are constantly upheld by our Chief instructor Sensei Paul Watson who himself has been awarded his 7th Dan by Sensei Dave Hazard. We feel proud that our students are achieving their grades under such watchful eyes.

Sensei Ellie is now into her second year of instructing and is doing a fantastic job. We have had students dipping their toes into the world of sport Karate and as well as enjoying the experience are doing really well. With the Karate Wales Team just back from European championships in Malta, picking up an impressive score of medals, we could realistically see some of our own succeeding in future events.

Looking forward to next year we are hoping to see some new black belts, Bethany and Jodie. Real examples of what hard work and determination can achieve, an example to all those working to achieve their goals.

Thanks again to the YMCA for supporting us with such a wonderful venue in which to train, we look forward to 2019.

**Andrew, Rob & Ellie**

Neath Shotokan Karate Instructors

## 7.5 Kung Fu

This was a good year for the Neath Lau Gar Wales Kung Fu Club. Early in the year two of our members took part in the British Kung Fu Associations Open National Championships. Catlin, one of our younger members came away with a silver medal in the light and continuous sparring for age group 9-12, and Adam (AJ) who entered for the first time also came away with a silver medal in the heavyweight sparring competition. Other members of Lau Gar Wales also took part in the competition and came away with a series of medals making this a successful year at our national event.

We had one main grading session this year, five of our new juniors gained their white sashes, one their blue sash, and one more experienced junior their green sash. We gained a few new junior members during the year, while a few decided kung fu was not for them and so the class

size has remained about the same size. The adult class has restarted and we now regularly have three to five adults attending and hope this growth will continue in the next year. Adam and Tom gained their white sashes in their first grading, while Adam (AJ) who also trains at one of the other clubs gained his orange sash. Alun and Justin recently went to Birmingham to grade, passing their second and first degree black sashes, respectively. The new sashes attained and hard work during the year show that all students are progressing well with their skills in our style of kung fu.



The Chinese New Year brought a week of celebrations with club members taking part in Lion Dances in restaurants in the local area at this time of the year. The club gained two additional lions before this so we were able to attend two different venues on popular nights. At the Pontadawe festival, both lions were out in the parade and later performed the more traditional lion dance in the square. While the lion dance is not part of our main kung fu syllabus, this dance is usually undertaken by kung fu clubs as the level of fitness required and the low stances needed align with the training we do. At the festival the club also took part in a kung fu demonstration with hand techniques and a range of weapon displays performed, both beginners and experienced members took part and this has become a good social event for the club.

The Neath YMCA also hosted our annual juniors Christmas party where three of our kung fu tigers clubs met for a crowded kung fu lesson in the dojo followed by plenty of food and fun downstairs. We would like to thank the YMCA and staff that helped make this a successful night for everyone.

Alun Morgan  
Kung Fu Instructor

## 7.6 Ju-Jutsu

It has been another busy year for Neath Valley Martial Arts with members of the club grading and attending courses throughout the UK and Europe.

One of the main events of the year has been the grading of long standing club member and assistant instructor, Rob Thomas, to 1st Dan black belt. Rob has in many ways kept the club **going over the last few years and it was a great pleasure to see Rob's hard** work and dedication rewarded. Rob gave an excellent account of himself during his grading and demonstrated not only some excellent jujutsu but also the spirit, humility and attitude that should be seen in anyone wearing a martial arts black belt.

The club has also run a series of charity seminars to raise money for the Welsh Kidney Charity, Ronald McDonald House Charity and Neath YMCA. These seminars included a weekend of walking stick self defence (Tsue Gei Jutsu) with Renshi Steve Clara from Belgium. This was a very enjoyable, if somewhat painful, experience for all that attended.

I would like to thank everyone that has continued to support the club throughout the year. I would also like to thank Neath YMCA, all the staff at Neath YMCA, and in particular Sian for all their support throughout the last year.

Ian East

YMCA Neath Jujutsu / Neath Valley Martial Arts (NVMA)

## 7.7 Neath Judo Kwai

The club has been very active both in our home Dojo and visiting venues for competitions. To list all would certainly increase the size of this report, so the club will list the venues and competitors as simply as it can. Over the previous year we have taken our Junior members to the following competition venues:

- Pontardulais – Red/White belt rumble and Dragons
- Pontardulais – Mon grade competition – yellow – green
- Maesteg – Mon grade competition and Dragons
- Bridgend – Mon grade competition/Dragon
- Newport – Mon and Dragon competition

Members competing and indeed gaining medals in the above include:

- Jack Barnes
- Jack Macattee
- Laurie Isaac
- Leo Isaac
- Freya Powell
- Caleb Matson
- Jared Matson
- Harry Burton
- Sion Morgan
- Osion Morgan
- Sam Jordan
- Rhys Jordan
- Joe Davies

Included in the above were bronze, silver and gold winners. This is very pleasing as the opposition at these competitions came from larger clubs but our Juniors have held their own and put the club itself on the map.

The junior section has seen most of its members gain promotion. Newly arrived Judoka will undoubtedly follow in the coming year. Juniors successful in these **grading's** include

- Jac Roberts 6<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Jack Macattee 5<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Jack Barnes 5<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Lauri Isaac 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Leo Isaac 5<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Cai Kelly 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon
- Jared Matson 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Caleb Matson Purple Dragon
- Joe Davies 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Keziah Wapshot 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Freya Powell 5<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Sion Morgan 5<sup>th</sup> Mon
- Osion Morgan Purple Dragon
- Jack Morris Purple Dragon
- Sam 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Rhys 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Hari 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Gethin 1<sup>st</sup> Mon
- Scarlett Evans 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon

Even though the club has been very active at a pleasingly high standard over the last year we continue to welcome and promote Judoka who need special coaching requirement. Needless to say we feel such Judoka are equally as valuable to our club as our top medal winners and are actively encouraged to develop their Judo, social and physical skills. Hopefully the new membership will also be successful in club promotions and perhaps become actively involved in competitions the club attends over the year.

The Senior section has seen some growth which it is hoped will continue in to the next year. Several members have been promoted having made regular attendances and shown improvement to reach their grade. These include:

- Gary Evans 1<sup>st</sup> Kyu (brown)
- Dan Evans 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu (blue)
- Andrew Thomas 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu (orange)
- Alex Thomas 3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu (yellow)
- Shaun Watkins 3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu (green)
- John Wapshot 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu (yellow)
- Cory Sutton 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu (yellow)

Top cap this Alun Morgan completed his theory to a very high standard in order to compete his 1<sup>st</sup> Dan and register himself on the BJA Dan Grade Register.

The seniors also undertook an afternoon Kata course led by Ian in March. The YMCA kindly allowed us the use of the Dojo and splendid afternoon of Kata and Randori was experienced by the senior section. We would very much like to do this again in the near future to give our members the experience of this traditional form of Judo which would hopefully help them in

their future Judo careers. This year has seen us set up a committee of interested parents/relatives to oversee our affairs and gain a little fundraising which goes back 100% to the members. We are always looking for interested people to help in this area and develop the club.

Ian Cardy 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan  
Club Coach Neath Judo Kwai

## 7.8 Ninjutsu

Mahoutsukai Dojo – Classical Japanese Martial Arts

2018 has been a quiet yet productive year for the Mahoutsukai Dojo. We have had a steady stream of members attend the Dojo, although we are always looking for members.

We have promoted classical Japanese martial arts using Neath YMCA as a base.

As always the facilities at the YMCA are second to none and the staff are exceptionally helpful and have built strong working relationships with the Dojo and its goals.

We are hoping that 2018/ 2019 will allow us to continue to practice and grow. We look forward to our training sessions and hope to support the YMCA in any future events.

Merlyn  
Ninjutsu Instructor



## 7.9 Kendo

Kendo is a modern Japanese art of sword fencing based on traditional Japanese Swordsmanship. It is a physically and mentally challenging activity that combines strong martial arts values with sport like physical elements.

Hakuchou Kendo club continues to practice at the YMCA in Neath weekly and the young adults and senior sections of the club continue to expand their knowledge and build on their skills.

The club has recently run a beginners course and welcomes those of all abilities to join future courses and explore the fundamental skills required to progress in Kendo.

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 the first session, 6 to 9 year olds



in the second session and 9 and above in the third session. We provide tuition to approximately 120 children over the 6 hour sessions, and are currently taking on new members from our waiting list. We deliver recreational, fun, non-competitive gymnastics, encouraging the development of good basic skills and a love of physical activity for life. We have purchased tumbling mats from a grant awarded to us which will enable us to teach our more advanced gymnasts higher skills and four of our young assistant coaches attended a Sports Leaders award in Gymnastics which they all passed. 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. We will be completing another grant application in the near future for the purchase of more equipment and further coach education.

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

Music at YMCA Neath has changed in recent months. Practical piano lessons and music theory are now run on a smaller scale but are still available for children and adults alike, however, there has been a marked expansion with regards to the community ukulele group!

### Kool Hand Ukes



There are now 33 adult and 6 teenage students in the group, it has been a very busy year! We have performed at several craft fayres in St. David's Church, Neath. Other venues have included

nursing and residential homes within a 10 mile radius and we took part in the Maesteg's very first Ukulele Festival in July. We have been invited to perform for a second time at another fundraising event for Cancer Research, (the last one raised over £700), which will be held in St. **Mary's Church**, Clydach on October 12<sup>th</sup>. At a recent Macmillan Coffee Morning, held at Ty Twyn Teg, Caewern, just over £400 was raised and the group were very proud to be a part of it.

A local percussion teacher, Sarah Taylor-Shaw, was invited back to deliver a Cajon workshop in June. Another enjoyable evening was spent with Sarah together with a fellow ukulele players from other groups. We hope to hold a follow up workshop in the New Year at Neath YM as it continues to be a great venue for such events!



During August I held a ukulele Restringing Workshop. This was a worthwhile event & was open to other groups. Another will be held in due course.



The Junior section, who have been busy developing their musicianship skills over the past 3 years, now join the adult section during the Tuesday evening session, which has proven to be very popular, so popular, in fact, that numbers have to be capped for the time being.

The diary is filling up for the coming year and the group are looking forward to continuing its support for YMCA Neath. Thanks to all who keep the centre ticking over ☺

Judith Randall DipABRSM  
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.



Moiria 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 Swans, working in your Community*

As Swansea **City AFC's registered charity, the Swans Community Trust is at the heart of the club** and at the heart of our local communities.

Giving the Club the opportunity to work where we are needed – **within South West Wales'** communities – the Community Trust has successfully developed a range of sport, educational and health projects since its inception in 2008.

Designed to improve the lifestyle of individuals and neighbourhoods from Bridgend down to Haverford west – and everywhere in between – the Community Trust not only does this through **the delivery of projects and sessions designed to improve peoples’ health and fitness, but by** helping to educate within schools and helping people to break down barriers to finding employment.



Additionally, the opening of the 2013-14 season witnessed the Trust launch SwansAid, a grant giving scheme to which sports clubs, charities and organisations can apply to for funding. Making numerous grants of up to £10,000 throughout the season, SwansAid aims to help these organisations to improve opportunities for young people and those with a disability to take part in sport. Since its launch, SwansAid has donated over £130,000 worth of grants to a variety of different clubs and teams, promoting healthy lifestyles through an array of different sports, from football to surfing.

As a charity, the Trust relies on a combination of grants, funding and donations to continue our vital work at a grassroots level across the area. With finances kept completely separate from **the Club’s, you need not fear therefore, that if you make a donation, it will be spent on players’** wages.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to the Community Trust, please use JustGiving.

To stay up to date with our work within the community, please follow @SwansCommunity on Twitter.

## 7.16 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 **counsellor's** 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.

## 7.17 Community Connecting Team

We, the Community Connecting Team have been facilitating a craft group since August 2017; the group has grown from 7 attendees to around 15.

We support people with Learning disabilities, the Elderly, the general public and people with Mental Health issues. Our group is an ideal opportunity and location for some of our attendees to meet up with others and maintain and forge friendships.



We have been made to feel very welcome and feel a part of the lovely YMCA Neath and appreciate all they do for us.

Debra Clarke

## 7.18 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 Tuesday 4:30 – 7:00pm and Friday 2:00 – 4:30pm at YMCA Neath.

## 7.19 Barnardos

**Barnardo's transforms the lives of the** most vulnerable children across the UK through the work of our services, campaigning and research expertise.

**Barnardo's** believe we can bring out the very best in every child whether the issue is child poverty, sexual exploitation, disability or domestic violence.

As one of the UK's leading children's charities, Barnardo's works directly with 301,100 children, young people, parents and carers every year. We run over 1000 vital services across the UK, including counselling for children who have been abused, fostering and adoption services, vocational training and disability inclusion groups.

Every Barnardo's service is different but each believes in the potential in every child and young person, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through.

## 7.20 Rugby Tots

Our fun, structured play sessions take children on a journey of sporting imagination with engaging and energetic coaches supporting them every step of the way whilst teaching how to catch, pass, kick, run with the ball and play as part of a team.



Our motto is simple; "make it more fun". We do this by delivering our specifically designed programme for each age group with energy, enthusiasm and excitement. This creates an atmosphere in the class that is totally unique and engaging for parents and children alike.

"Be prepared to run across the jungle, wade through the quick sand or sprint through Rugby Tots Valley avoiding all the smoking boulders. Get ready to protect your egg, launch a missile or attack the pirates and seize the ship, all this of course, whilst trying to avoid the evil side lines!"

## 7.21 Italian

*Ciao tutti (Hi everyone)*

Italiano Vivo is a group of people that meet during term time at the YMCA every Wednesday evening at 6:30 to 8:30. We are a not for profit community group. The group has a friendly and relaxed but structured approach to learning the Italian language under the guidance of our tutor Gina Cirillo who is from an Italian family. We are a friendly group and support each other throughout the learning process. Many of our group have visited Italy and their basic knowledge of the language has always been well received by the local people.



Many of the group members have been taught by Gina for many years. We are a mixed ability group from intermediate to advanced (one tried and passed her GCSE!). We have tried to get a beginners group for Monday nights from 6:00 to 8:00, but unfortunately from the initial interest there has not been enough people signing up to start so watch this space it may still happen in the future. If you are interested in joining our group or would like to put your name down for a **beginner's** class then please feel free to contact us on [italiano.vivo2@gmail.com](mailto:italiano.vivo2@gmail.com).

We learn about many aspects of Italian life and culture through reading, writing, listening and speaking. Our tutor finds very interesting topics for us and she is also flexible to any suggestions we put forward. We have learned about the films of Vittorio De Sica, neo realism films and watched the films in class and also went to Pontardawe cinema to see an Italian film. We have also learned about Sophia Loren, Anna Mangano, Mussolini and about one of the worst murders in Italy. One year we learned about Italian gastronomy. Our learning resources are wide which is due to the different outside interests of the group and each week through our oral diaries in Italian, we add new words to our vocabulary, whether it is vocabulary from fishing, vintage cars, theatre, music, Italian family ties, running or swimming, we enjoy building our vocabulary this way.

Twice a year, at Christmas and end of summer term, the group goes out for an evening meal.

We went on a trip to Henllan where there was an Italian prisoner of war camp and the church the prisoners made themselves out of what they could find, eg corned beef tins, food dyes, sacks and has survived to this day due to the land owner protecting it and surrounding it with white roses. It still in use as a Catholic Church. After visiting



Henllan and hearing all its fascinating history, we went to La Calabria, an Italian restaurant in Ffostrasol, Llandysul. The Italian owners were direct descendants of a man who was a prisoner in the camp.

The altar was painted by one prisoner by candle light. He came back in 1977 to see his work **and the inscription below are the words he said when he arrived, it translates to 'Through the rainbow of my tears I saw the days of my youth take place as if from the pages of a book'.**

Ciao  
June Moses