

## THREE YEARS OF MORLAN

### April 2005 – April 2008

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*(an article written when Morlan was celebrating its fifth anniversary)*

Lengthy discussions were held as to what the main direction of Morlan should be. A *Peace and Justice Centre* was one possibility, or a continuation of what was happening previously on the site before developing the new resources, namely a *Youth Centre*. Describing the Centre as just a '*Social Centre*' was also discussed. But the one factor that kept arising during all the discussions was the need to be more specific about the unique nature of a centre that grew from church life, and this is how the centre came to be described as a *Faith and Culture Centre*. Such a reference contained all aspects of the other considerations, but with a dimension that integrated and tied together every aspect of our lives – culture in its broad meaning – and the comprehensive nature of the Christian Faith. The first three years have proved that the choice was the right one and, although words alone cannot be enough to describe anything, *seeing* the activities in Morlan develop has clearly shown that there is a need for an open, communal space, to grasp all aspects of our lives in a creative atmosphere if the church is to be open to *all*.

#### A CENTRE AT WORK

Listing all of Morlan's activities would be an impossible task, but giving a *taster* of what Morlan has organised is a way of putting meat on the bones of 'faith and culture'. *These examples do not contain the events of other organisations that use Morlan and that are partners with Morlan.*

#### The Official Opening:

- **Question and Discussion Panel** (broadcast on Radio Cymru) chaired by John Roberts, BBC. Panel: Hywel Teifi Edwards, Elin Royles (the University's Politics Department and a member of Morlan's Board of Management), the vicar and playwright Aled Jones Williams, and Arfon Jones (Beibl.net website and GIG – Hope for Wales).
- **A session at the Marine Hotel** with Chris Sunderland (Agora-space), Dylan Iorwerth and Watcyn James (the Bible Society).
- **John Bell** (Iona Community) on the first of two visits to Morlan.

#### Then ...

- **Exhibition of photographs, paintings and sculptures.** Perhaps the exhibition of the work of the sculptor John Meirion Morris ('The Inner Kingdom') was the most ambitious. There have been other external exhibitions too by local youths and artists to draw attention to the situation in Palestine, to celebrate the bi-centenary of the abolishment of slavery and to celebrate Christmas.
- **Plays.** Riding Lights company with their annual productions of which perhaps the 2008 production (*Salaam Bethlehem*) was the most poignant; Troed y Rhiw Actors' Co-operative; the Morlan Company (e.g. *Dag* about the Secretary of the United Nations); student companies; Theatr Powys.

- **Other events.** Book launches, Holocaust Memorial Day; One World Week, Wales Social Forum, Peace Festival, activities for students by the Students' Christian Union; welcoming foreign students; plans for developing the town centre; plans for the new Assembly building in Aberystwyth, and so on.
- **Regular event.** Science and Religion Group (e.g. a visit by John Polkinghorn and John Houghton); the *Dweud ei Ddweud* discussion evenings (e.e. Rhys Llwyd, Robin Chapman, Enid Morgan, Gareth Wyn Jones); Multi-faith Group; Youth Club.
- **The Quiet Room** which is used regularly for quiet contemplation.

Morlan also regards organisations such as Amnesty, Aberystwyth Peace Group, Hafal, WYFSD and others who meet regularly at Morlan as full partners.

Lists such as these can be boring. But it is a way to refer to 'three years of a centre at work'. Pictures of many of these events can be seen in the past events document, but not all of them by a long way.

The story of the first three years is a very vivid one of growing and developing, of realising and of attracting, of being a centre open to all that is always acknowledged because it has its aim and mission ... a faith and culture centre.

*Pryderi Llwyd Jones*