



Southwark MU News

No. 216 Winter 2006

Letter from our President

Dear Friends

We had an interesting Council meeting in October, with a presentation from Helen Longworth, the central MU Social Policy Researcher, on the new Flexible Families Campaign (ask your branch leader or Anne Love for a postcard to send to your MP) and updates on MU work around the and world wide. We saw examples from the variety of knitting and sewing projects in our branches – tiny clothes and blankets for premature baby units, teddies for tragedies, and garments and bandages sent to other countries to help families in need. Some of these are done by members in their own homes, whilst others are opportunities to get together to knit and chat. Sample patterns were available, and suggestions for outlets for the finished articles - let Alison Bennett know if you are interested in finding out more about these. We also heard about this year's AFIA holidays and the recent Family Visits Day at Belmarsh Prison: the play area there needs re-equipping, and we are currently collecting money for this in the SCIP Fund. Your practical care, time, money, love and prayer make a real difference to the lives of families who are going through difficult times, and I know it is valued and appreciated – thank you!

You will find notes about our four vice Presidents elsewhere in this issue of Southwark MU News. Denise (our Editor) asked me to include a short biographical note for you as well. After doing a History degree at Durham University I trained as a librarian and worked as a school librarian in Suffolk and then central London. Since moving to Horley, I've done voluntary work in the parish and , some paid research projects and administrative work for a couple of Christian organisations. My husband, Dave, works for British Telecom; and we have two adult sons. I am a Reader at St Mary's Horne (a village in Godstone Deanery), secretary of the Faith in the Countryside Group, a member of the Croydon Zimbabwe Link Group and Evangelism Group and represent the MU on the new Family Life Group. I like jigsaws and crosswords, prefer decorating to cleaning, and wish I had more time for the garden!

I have really enjoyed meeting so many of you and sharing your special branch and deanery events over the last three years - do please continue to invite me to visit you in the next triennial. Southwark is an interesting and diverse and our MU branches and members reflect that variety and draw strength from each other's experiences and fellowship. I would ask for your prayers for those who will be taking new roles in the MU and those who will be moving on to other things next year – especially for our own new Trustee Board and office holders, and for Rosemary Kempself (new World Wide President) and Trish Heywood who has been such an enthusiastic ambassador for the MU over the last six years.

With my love and best wishes

Ann Wright

Your Newsletter is changing ...

to three issues per year commencing 2007. The Marketing Unit have decided that the Newsletter will be published in February, June and October with copy dates approximately six weeks ahead of publication dates. It is hoped that the Newsletters will be ready for collection at Council on 28th February and 13th October and at the Annual Meeting on 13th June. We intend to have the same content and if we have enough material the Newsletter will be larger. In this issue, there are biographical notes about our President Ann and the four Vice Presidents and in February we hope to introduce the new Co-ordinators to you. Please continue to let us know what is going on in your patch, so we can share our news around. Congratulations to you all - most of the material for this issue arrived by the due date! Most of all we would like to hear what is going on in your Branches – you have such a variety, you should share it

Denise Skeet - Editor

CATHEDRAL FUN DAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2006

Unseasonably warm and sunny – a propitious start.

People jam at the registration desk – good (and bad?) news.

Smiling faces from 8:30 am arrival and thereafter – looking good.

'I would like to have gone to a lot of the other workshops.' – sounding good.

The event we had been planning for since March 2005, took place on 23 September 2006 – the Cathedral Fun Day! I felt a certain buzz in the air from early morning. This had been created by a certain, happy anticipation and also by the really upbeat and enthusiastic response from the presenters throughout our planning. Knowing that this side of things was strong, that we (the planning team) had given time to the organization of the day and that the Cathedral staff were working closely with us and were 'for us' must also have contributed to my feeling.



Having made sure that the Library had enough chairs laid out for people to hear about the work of the MU ('Both Martha and Mary')



and that a reel of electric cable was available to the Sacred

Circle Dancing workshop in the Tower space (1st session) and quickly relayed to 'It's Your Call Noah' in the Retrochoir (2nd session), I joined opening worship before making my way to the art workshop (Many Hands Make Light Work) in the Education Centre. On the way, I saw the Head Verger set up a screen and power point projector in the Choir/High Altar area in preparation for the 'Da Vinci Code' workshop. The montage making was good fun and what's more, the montage worked! Next door were the 'Noah' collage and 'Hair dos' workshops (later followed by facepainting). Presenters visited presenters; everybody wanted to see what other people were doing.

We all joined in the Gospel Singing procession at some point and followed it into the nave for a short worship service which included some delightful animal prayers. Off for a bit of drama and dance before lunch. By then, I was starving. The Refectory took care of me nicely and it was back for the 3rd session. I managed to see (and hear!) Circus Skills in the South Transept. There were lots of balls in the air and there was an excitement in the din. How did the 'Lion King' story-teller cope in the



North Transept? By using a very soft voice so you had to sit up and listen, that's how - very clever! Meanwhile, children and parents were 'Making a Joyful Noise' and 'Burning Bushes and Holy Flames' were igniting in the back of the cathedral and outside the Cathedral. By then, I am told, the Scalextrics cars were starting to die.



The final act of worship was a happy climax and injection of new spirit. Antiphonal psalms were not just said; they were shouted! Four workshops made presentations. When asked to guess the tune that the 'had never played before' handbell ringers were playing, the congregation started to hum alongside them, 'Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise'. I felt that this day had truly honoured the Lord and the comments we heard proved that God had really answered our prayers.

We have had a **very** generous response to a request for contributions for the expenses of the Day from our MU branches. Thank you to all.

Jodie Lomax. Photographs Bernard Lockley

THE GOVERNMENT GIVES MONEY TO SOUTHWARK MOTHERS' UNION.

The Southwark M.U. is taking advantage of the Gift Aid Programme. We have now received just over £2,500 from the government for the MU which helps to keep down our subscription. Sadly there are still many members and branches who are not yet helping us to increase our funds in this way. You could help if you pay as little as £3.64 tax pa. This would cover the subscription of £13.00 for branch and deanery members next year. members, who pay £24.00 which includes all the publications they receive, would need to pay at least £6.72 tax. You just need to sign a Gift Aid Declaration Form, which is available from Anne Love. If Branch Treasurers need any help or advice about where to send forms etc., please contact me on 020 8770 7262. email:gbkmwright@hotmail.com

Kathy Wright - Gift Aid Co-ordinator

WANTED – MU ENTERPRISES REP

Perhaps a Job Sharing Opportunity?

REWARD - £££s for MU WORK and a chance to meet many wonderful MU members

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Receive orders from Deanery Reps and send off to MUE at MSH
2. Invoice Deaneries for goods
3. Receive payments, bank proceeds and pay MUE monthly statement
4. Keep careful records of all sales, purchases and stock
5. Hold stock in secure, dry conditions
6. Visit Deaneries/Branches with stock when requested
7. Package and send out smaller orders from stock as required
8. Arrange SOR supplies for larger functions e.g. Festival Services, Council Meetings
9. Calculate annually commission due to each Deanery
10. Check stock at regular intervals and discard damaged or obsolete items
11. Keep Deaneries informed of new items and price changes
12. Enjoy!

Contact Mary Harrison via the MU Office if this is the way you can put your faith into action!

ONE DOOR CLOSSES ...

It's difficult to believe that I am nearing the end of my 6 years as Croydon Area V.P. As I look back over the period I can see highs and lows and God's guidance. Some of the highs - opening 3 new branches at Christ Church Purley, St Matthew's Croydon and the Croydon Parish Church. Renewing a branch at St Stephen's Norbury and opening a young members group at St Mary's Addington. There have been new projects started – helping to run the crèche at the Refugee Day Centre, parenting courses, crocheted clothing and blankets for babies and the elderly. On a trip to Walsingham, seeing a group of MU members Iona was called to go back to her parish and start an MU branch – that was the exciting renewal of St Stephen's branch. A young single mother wanted the MU branch at St Mary's Addington to be more involved with young families. Within a year the young woman had tragically died but she had planted the seeds – the new group is now up and running. God is a God of surprises and he does answer our prayers when we are faithful. He is ever faithful to us. God has called Kathryn Percival to be our new V.P. after only a few weeks in our area! I am confident that God will equip and bless Kathryn and in turn she will be a blessing to us all. Over the past years we have shared every emotion and hopefully grown in love and service to our Lord Jesus Christ. An enormous thank you to all of you - it has been a privilege to be Croydon Area V.P.

... AND ANOTHER OPENS

Next April I shall be representing the MU on the Croydon Episcopal Visit to Zimbabwe. Because of my love for MU, I have long wanted to go to Africa. We have been invited by Bishop Ishmael to be a source of encouragement and support to our fellow Christians but we realise that we shall probably have much to learn from their faith and trust in God. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and I will look forward to sharing my experiences with you on my return.

Cynthia Smith

MARRIAGE AND THE MOTHERS' UNION: MOVING ON

'We need not portray marriage as a demand but as something very exciting. There is something brave and extraordinary in marriage...' Archbishop Rowan Williams. June 2006. This statement gives a flavour of an informative and sharing day on marriage at Mary Sumner House in June. We looked at our first objective – 'to uphold Christ's teaching on marriage' - and what the MU is doing to carry this out.

Reg Bailey, the MU Chief Executive reminded us that in the UK people are marrying much later than in the past. The divorce rate has remained at 40% for the past 25 years, cohabitation continues to increase, and more people are living alone. Jesus' teaching on marriage is centred on transformation – he can transform a marriage if people turn to him. The challenge for the MU is to direct people's attention to Jesus, as we explore and promote the fullest meaning of marriage. Our mission is no less than to bring and share the love of God. Jesus points us to the ideals in marriage; but he also meets us where we are.

Ruth Lee, MU Social Policy Officer, spoke about how the law can / should support marriage. There is a paradox in politics - politicians should not dictate how people choose to live their lives; but they cannot be indifferent to the choices that people make. A legal framework governs the rights and responsibilities of its citizens, based on principles such as fairness, justice and equality for all, and protection for the vulnerable. Financially, tax and benefit systems reallocate resources according to political decisions. Government finds it more difficult to make a positive contribution to matters outside its legal and financial powers, such as affirming good quality relationships which promote stable family life without undermining or devaluing the contribution of those who are not married. The MU urges the Government to 'promote keeping happy couples happy rather than simply helping unhappy couples become less so'.

Rev. Andrew Body, chair of FLAME and best selling author, suggested that there is a difference between marriage and wedding preparation. Christians are encouraged to offer marriage preparation in 'Common Worship'. The Church has considerable expertise and experience in marriage preparation, which is not offered by other organisations to any significant extent. It can help couples to share feelings they have never before communicated and provides a safe space for difficult questions to be discussed. Marriage preparation provides an opportunity to acknowledge that God is interested in a couple's love for each other. Couples comment on the friendliness, openness, wisdom and knowledge of those leading courses and 87% of couples find marriage preparation useful or very useful. Marriage support should also be offered to couples after the wedding.

I encourage you to think about and discuss the points made in the presentations. In the next issue, look out for an innovative initiative in Hereford and other ideas of what to do.

Jodie Lomax, Action & Outreach Coordinator

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2006 and 2007

2006	Monday	4 th December	Croydon Area Worship at St Francis of Assisi, Ravenswood Ave, West Wickham 10.45 for 11am – quiet corner for babies and toddlers – bring lunch – mince pies provided – parking opposite at Sainsbury's
	Saturday	9 th December	St Lawrence Catford – Quiet Morning – 9.30 for 9.45
2007	Friday	26 th January	MU Enterprises meeting Trinity House – 11am to 2pm – Reps and potential Reps – all welcome
	Thursday	1 st February	Commissioning of Rosemary Kempell as Worldwide President in Southwark Cathedral
	Saturday	17 th February	Festival Service in Southwark Cathedral – 11am
	Wednesday	28 th February	Council – Mary Sumner House – 11am-3pm
	Tuesday	17 th April	Provincial Festival Service, St Alban's Cathedral – 11am
	Wednesday	13 th June	Annual Meeting – Mary Sumner House – 11am-3pm. All welcome
	Thursday	21 st June	Central MU Annual Meeting – Liverpool – details to follow
	Saturday	13 th October	Council – venue to be confirmed
	Tues-Thurs	16 th -18 th Oct	Retreat at Wychcroft – early booking advised

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Ann Mitchell writes about her mother Gladys Clayton who became an MU member at St Michael's, South Beddington soon after the War. She later took over the Chairmanship and under her leadership the Branch grew. She was musical and loved playing the piano, so with another musical member an MU choir was formed, which sang at many functions. Later she was elected Deanery President. She continued to be involved in working and raising funds for Overseas until she was quite elderly. She died peacefully on 20th December 2005, a few days after her 101st birthday.

Horley branch were pleased to see Jess, a member of our linked branch at Christchurch New Zealand. Jess was visiting the UK for her daughter's birthday, and flew down from Glasgow for the October branch meeting. It was good to see her and catch up with news from NZ.

Congratulations to **St Augustine's Grove Park** who have enrolled five new mums.

St Giles Camberwell celebrated their first birthday on 30 September with an anniversary service at which they enrolled 15 new members, followed by a splendid party, complete with a birthday cake.

And we are delighted to welcome **St Luke's Peckham** where a new branch was opened on 8 October 2006. Please pray for the branch leader, Gladys, and look out for our new members at meetings and events.

There are several other new branches in the pipeline and existing branches are enrolling new members. Don't forget to tell us about your activities and your forthcoming events so we can advertise them

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS for the spring issue of the News should be received by the Editor not later than 21st January. Please let us know what is happening in your Branches. If you wish to advertise forthcoming events, let the Editor know

TWO OF YOUR VICE PRESIDENTS (the other two will appear next time)

Jodie Lomax – Woolwich Area V.P.

I was born into a Christian home and I have been supported throughout my life by a strong, Christian, extended, Texas family.

It was while studying for at Boston University that I met my husband to be, Roger. We married in 1971 and have two lovely daughters. Qualifying as a barrister I pursued a career as an in house lawyer. I became a Sunday School teacher and coordinator before being asked to join and lead the local Mothers' Union branch because I was neither too young nor too old! I have served as Diocesan Action & Outreach Coordinator for the past five years and very much look forward to taking up the Vice Presidency of the Woolwich Area in January.

To "chill out", I like to play tennis, read, cook (generally, homemade) and sing loudly to recorded show tunes when no one is around.

Kathryn Percival – Croydon Area

I am a relative newcomer to the Mothers' Union, having been enrolled just under three years ago. By the same token, I have all the zeal of the convert, and am very excited about the opportunity to serve you as your new Vice President! Having read Philosophy and Theology at Oxford, I qualified as a barrister I am now a full-time mother to Dominic (5) and Eliza (2 ½) who create joy and exhaustion in equal measure! I am married to James, who was until recently the curate of St. Matthew's Redhill and is now Team Vicar of Sanderstead, with responsibility for St. Mary's...so we are new to Croydon area, although not to the Diocese. I am very much looking forward to getting to know all the members in this area, and I ask for your prayers as I embark on what will undoubtedly be a steep learning curve!

FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW

It doesn't seem possible that we have arrived at our last edition of MU News in this triennial. I really don't know why I'm surprised since we are all travelling on a journey which rolls ever onward and we hope upward!

Our recent Retreat was the success which we have come to expect. The leaders over the last three years have been thought provoking and given those who have attended so much to think about as they journey back to their homes. The following are some of the comments I have received and reflect what others have said:

'Such a happy experience, I returned home rested and refreshed'

'It is for me a time of refreshment and renewal'

'My first retreat, I look forward to next year'

The theme for next year is 'Faith in Action'. If you have wanted to go on a retreat and have hesitated because it may not be for you, why not show your faith in action and come to spend time with our Lord in a peaceful, safe environment amongst your MU friends. You do have to book early to get a place - watch out for the application forms at our Spring council meeting.

My thanks to the members of our P&S team, especially to those who are leaving our group at the end of their time of service - it is the enthusiasm of the members of the group which enabled it to function so well. Those of us who are remaining on the group look forward to welcoming our new members in the New Year.

I pray that during Advent, a time of reflection and preparation, amongst the frenzy of getting things done for Christmas, you will find time to prepare yourself to meet our Lord once again as we celebrate his birth at Christmas.

Lord help us to give ourselves when we are giving presents.

Teach us to give without thought of receiving and to receive without thought of giving.

Teach us not to withhold or withdraw ourselves.

Teach us to hoard nothing – love, money, time, possessions.

Teach us to give even our life if required of us and while we have it, to use it as an instrument of your peace. Amen.

From 'Anthology of Public Prayers'

A prayer for Christmas by Christine McMullen
God bless you all and a peaceful New Year.

Mary Garman

The Wychcroft Retreat

As a first-timer to Wychcroft, someone asked me "What did you learn?" It's not so much learning something as being 'still' and finding God in the stillness. Walking in the beautiful countryside and knowing He is there. Seeing the pheasants flying off, as they are disturbed. Hearing the hooting of the owls as soon as darkness creeps in. Drawing closer, not only to God, but those around us. Most of the Retreat is in silence, but smiles and nods can mean a lot. Being together in the little Chapel. Eating together. Singing 'grace' together. But always the opportunity for 'space'. The house, the food and the unobtrusive staff are wonderful. Just a couple of days, but I felt so rested. I would like to go again.

Joan Read

AWAY FROM IT ALL

We have had a good year having arranged 11 holidays for needy families and made one donation to an adventure holiday for children called Noah's Ark. One family wrote to say how much she and her children had enjoyed their time in Eastbourne and another Mum wrote that this had been a very welcome and needy break and how much her children had enjoyed being able to step out of their caravan and play just outside. She lives in a second floor flat and has very young twins so getting outside is a bit difficult. Already there are two or three families potentially taking holidays next year. I would like to thank you all for the work you do raising money for this worthwhile part of MU work. Please continue to send in donations.

THE MOTHERS' UNION SOUTHWARK

Linked with the s of ABA, BUTERE, CALABAR
NORTHERN TERRITORY, NIGER DELTA NORTH & UYO

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