

DP Report to Council 07 March 2018

I hope the past year has been a fruitful time in your Branch and that the Diocesan Members have enjoyed their fellowship. Thank you for inviting me to share in your Advent Services and branch events over the past months. It was a privilege to represent MU Members across the Diocese at the Funeral and Thanksgiving Service at Waldringfield for Mrs Ruth Lubbock. She must have been one of our longest serving members and was clearly loved and valued by her family and community. Her beloved husband, aged 103, walked with her coffin, what a testimony to a lifelong marriage.

It's always a joy to visit when your MU branch is celebrated in the parish or benefice, there is no doubt that collaboration in this way is a blessing to church and branch and consequently MU flourishes, thanks be to God.

Our theme of 'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps' lends itself to inspire us to share her story and ours too. Do place your ideas for activities and fun on the Website, perhaps joining with other branches or organisations would be special for this year.

Fun aside, I need to write seriously about issues around Membership records, Safeguarding, Risk Assessment and Health and Safety. The Reports from Trustees and Officers address the current situation in detail. Current legislation, outside Mothers' Union control and pertaining to all Charities, including the Church, is demanding a revision of many practices around membership record keeping. We are particularly affected as the subscriptions of our members are currently collected by Branch and not centrally i.e. the National Trust. We must comply; MSH are active in planning the best way to do this whilst taking into account how our current systems operate. To enable Trustees to fulfil our responsibilities and keep you in the loop, we are planning three Information days in different localities, when we can share with Branch Leaders and interested members how we are to put in place all that needs to be done to keep our Members and guests safe. Please don't panic – **Keep Calm and Carry On.**

At Council there will be copies of a Risk Assessment form and also Nomination papers. As you will see there are several posts to be filled and to function as we should we shall need to pray for people to come forward. However, we are Anglican and so reluctant to put ourselves forward! Brothers and sisters, you and I are going to need to look for and invite people to fill those vacancies - it's the way most likely to succeed. Please give this your prayerful consideration and action.

You will see from the Agenda that **Mothers' Union Listens, Observes, Acts** is an item. MULOA is a process that has the potential to re-new and inspire our response to God as MU members, to draw us closer in relationship with our Lord and each other. New members are already being interested by this innovative approach in the pilot schemes. Our Diocese is asked to introduce MULOA to three branches or interested groups by the end of June. It is envisaged that a session could take half a day and end or begin with sharing a meal together. Our experiences will be shared with the Team at MSH ready for the MULOA review conference in July. MULOA is happening globally, Uganda, the Americas, Australia and Myarmar – we are all discovering and learning together. At Swanwick the greater part of those attending were sceptical but by the end most of us felt MULOA was transforming, spiritual, practical, useful and FUN. I hope it will be the same for us in Suffolk.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you give to MU and I look forward to our sharing with our World-Wide President both our joys and our concerns in April. *Christine*