

Nickie's Notes No. 12

Autumn is well on its way, but what a lovely summer we've had. Praise the Lord.

Dates and events:-

Monday / Tuesday September 17th-18th – General Meeting and service Swansea.

FRIDAY 28th SEPTEMBER– Cathedral Prayers by Aylesbeare & Christianity Deaneries

TUESDAY 2nd OCTOBER – Unit Co-ordinators Day

FRIDAY 12th October – Speakers' Day

TUESDAY 6th NOVEMBER – AUTUMN COUNCIL – ST. MATTHEW'S EXETER

FRIDAY 30th NOVEMBER – St. Stephen's Fair

Programme planning. In a previous copy of NN's I outlined what **MULOA** was all about. In the coming months and into next year (and the next!), we will be holding **workshops** to help you get to grips with this new initiative, and 'invigorate' your branches and membership! To that end I would ask you to leave at least one free date in your programme (but preferably two) so that, once some of you have experienced the workshop (which is fun!), you will be able to discuss and plan with your branch what you do next. For many of you I hope this will be what you are doing anyway.

We **STILL** need some help in the **shop** – contact Bridget Vinton if you think you could spare a morning or two! It is warm and friendly, and free coffee or tea! Some members who volunteered have disappeared off the radar!

A really big THANK YOU to all those who have donated **postage stamps** in the past. Please continue to do so, and if you haven't yet we do need them to help keep the costs down. We could ask every branch to pay a little extra each year for postage, but I really don't think it should be necessary! Perhaps you could bring them with you to Council OR BETTER STILL, do drop into the MU Centre where you may even get a free cup of tea or coffee!!

*You will notice that we are **not** entertaining a group of MU members from the Solomon Islands originally due to be here now – this visit has been postponed until June next year – watch this space!*

AFIA needs your help! Because there has been such a demand for holidays this year Dora Petty tells me that she has overspent on the budget. In a way that's good because it means lots of families are benefitting! However, one or two extremely needy cases have turned up for further holidays this year – if you think you could possibly help by donating (even more) funds so that we needn't dip into next year's budget so much it would be a tremendous help! I know how generous so many of you have been, so I do feel a bit guilty about asking, but....

The dreaded DATABASE! Most of you have been tremendous in getting all the members' information to Nicky Over. However, there are still a few branches who haven't quite managed to get it all in – MSH NEEDS THIS, ASAP! I am hoping to speak to those who are having difficulty.... **ALSO, if there are any changes to data already submitted – change of address/email/death – then please let Nicky know.** And, incidentally, we need to know when a member dies for our records, and so that I can put them in the Memorial Book.

FINALLY, and VERY IMPORTANT! Overleaf is information that concerns everyone, so please make sure that you receive it. It is entitled **DIOCESAN RESTRUCTURING.**

With my continuing thanks for all your support, and every blessing in all you do for the Lord,

Nickie

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RESTRUCTURING THE DIOCESE

For some time I have been very concerned that the present means of dividing the diocese into Archdeaconries and Deaneries no longer works for Mothers' Union. There are some branches that are 'falling through the gaps' because of their geographical positions. The whole system is clumsy and not really fit for purpose any more. Let me explain:-

- We have only one Archdeaconry President
- Several Deaneries consist of only one or two branches
- In some cases two branches that are 'next door' to each other are in different deaneries
- We need a new structure whereby all the branches feel cared for and can relate to others
- Some deaneries are struggling with finding officers

So I have (with the help of the Trustees) come up with possible solutions looking at the map of Devon and the location of branches:-

- The branches fall roughly into 6 'clusters' (the in word) – with the exception of one.
- These clusters would contain 6 or 7 branches each
- Each cluster would need someone to be a coordinator – for want of a better word – for special events, passing on information etc. etc.
- We would dispense with Archdeaconries and Deaneries and THERE COULD BE NO NEED FOR DEANERY SECRETARIES OR TREASURERS! (*A branch in the cluster could use their bank account for any funds before sending it to the MU Centre*)
- With fluid boundaries there would be plenty of scope for new branches to join, and for Diocesan Members to be more involved in their local cluster.

Obviously all this would take a lot of working out; a lot of thought and understanding; a lot of patience and explaining; a lot of respect for others' feelings and traditions; in fact a lot of changes and a lot of work, let alone changing our constitution! But everyone whom I have consulted has, without exception, agreed that this is the best way forward, and should have been done ages ago. I am very, very excited about this, and I hope you all will be in due course.

Please come back to **me** with queries and suggestions and I will do my best to deal with them. There will be the opportunity for discussion at Council before we vote on this restructuring.

Nickie

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