

# Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

## DIOCESE OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY



## NEWSLINK Autumn 2013

Scottish Charity SC023885

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you all in good spirits.

The Glenesk household like many of you is experiencing the highs and the lows of family life, at present – an impending family wedding and the knowledge that significant members of the family will miss the event due to reduced mobility and deteriorating health. However, like you our faith and love for one another seems to grow at these times. Your prayers are a great source of strength, thank you.

Over the summer I had experiences that reminded me of how privileged I am to be a member of Mothers' Union in Glasgow & Galloway Diocese. First there was an Indoor member's Wheels Appeal Event hosted in her home. A total of 16 people representing 8 churches prayed, sang hymns, heard of MU mission, then tested our brains with a variety of activities. We were also treated to poetry and interactive songs, before enjoying a sumptuous feast and wonderful fellowship.

Then I had a telephone call from Mrs B Akinde the Diocesan President of our linked diocese Lagos Mainland. She was visiting the UK and called to remind me that she and the members in Lagos hold us all and all with whom we engage in their prayers. It was a delight for me to be able to assure Mrs Akinde and the members in Lagos of all our prayers for them and their mission.

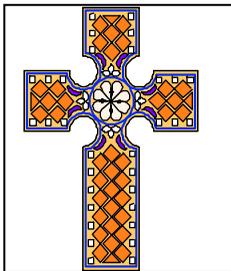
In June at our Festival Service in St James members came to the front of the church to describe the mission cloth they had designed. All the cloths were blessed by +Gregor. These cloths were sown together to form a wall-hanging for HMP Low Moss by a member of the Community Church in Bishopbriggs. Catherine was so thrilled with the wall-hanging she asked if she could take it to a prayer meeting where she and others offered prayers for all at Low Moss for 1.5 hours. Your contributions

are now displayed at the entrance of the Multi-faith Centre of HMP Low Moss as a potent symbol of God's unconditional and transformative love. The staff of Low Moss send you all their sincere thanks and later this year an invitation will be extended asking members to attend a dedication service of the Multi-Faith Centre.

As a new session begins the experiences above fill me with much optimism. We have much to celebrate and much to offer God thanks. As Christians we have the joy of being in a supportive diocese, with +Gregor our patron, Peter our Chaplain, clergy and laity. The staff of Mary Sumner House provides us with wonderful resources and keep us informed of the work going on across the world.

And then there are ourselves, the members, each with the desire like Mary Sumner to touch as many lives as possible for God whether through the words we speak, the prayers we breathe or the lives we live.

With love and my prayers  
Ann X



Dear M.U.'ers,

Time can sometimes run away and where does it go? Yet the moons pass and the seasons only take a year to pass. We are still thinking about "growth" this Session. We have the Spring-times and the Harvests. The weeds thrive with such lushness and fecundity and we wait with bated breath for that flower to open; for that shrub to blossom.

It is interesting to see how the natural world inevitably keeps affirming life - and "keeps on going along". Yet our own efforts can seem so hard and need such tenacity and hard work. Sometimes we feel we are

winning but a slight diminution in effort can lead to plans ruined and projects overrun We wage war against the world (nature, weather, others, ), sin (our indolence, wrong motivation & intention, sapping of strength) and the devil (discouraging accusations, deceitful goals/ horizons, sapping of vision).

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As Christians we have to be wilful (except where the Holy Spirit reveals that we are being wilful against God). Man’s will can be very strong but with God alongside us as the Holy Spirit is promised, we should be unafraid. In the Old Testament we see that picture of God not forsaking those who will to be his people :

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1.6)*

The realisation of time can very much be our friend here ; We know that after such a time the operation will be over, the exam will have been taken, the job will be finished. Sure, we have to go through that time, suffer the journey to happen and the Lord being our helper, we will manage to hold on and still remain “Christ’s soldiers and servants”. With His strength :

*8Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. 10And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5.8-10).*

Note that Peter says God himself will RESTORE, SUPPORT, STRENGTHEN and ESTABLISH us. We should never

feel that we are on our own.

Yes, I need to prune, feed and dead-head that beautifully-scented ‘Marigold’ rose I have and then, amidst its thorny branches, I spy a more thorny bramble branch coming forth. It had been quietly, imperceptibly germinating, gaining strength and thriving ‘til I have now noticed it and boy! is it strong and thorny!! I could leave it and it would finally strangle and weaken the nearby rose, camellia and all the other shrubs around it.

Experience has taught me that I will inadvertently gain some lacerations as I contort myself among all the branches and tug the thug out and appear from it sweaty, bloody but victorious.

However I should be very wise to look at where it came from over the next year in case a root remains ! It appears similar to me when I have to take on a habit, a be-setting sin, a weakness. However, if I spend all my time and effort on sins and not the strengths and gifts I have, and have been given, I would be more like the man who had the single talent of money in the Parable of the Talents. {Go on, and get out your Bible and read Matthew chapter 25 verses 14 - 30 !}.

Sometimes it seems impossible! However, remember what Jesus said, *“For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19.26).*

May we use the time well and enjoy our Lord forever.  
Enjoy your growth and harvest and be fruitful !

Love from Peter

### **Provincial President, Jean McPherson Richardson**

**Jean McPherson Richardson was commissioned as Provincial President during a service at St Ninian’s Cathedral in Perth on Saturday 20th April 2013.**

It was a beautiful service during which the Primus, the Most Revd. David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane formally commissioned Jean to her role.

Front cover photo shows Jean with the Primus, and Rt Rev.d Mark Strange. A full gallery of photographs of the event can be found on the website  
<http://www.muscotland.org.uk/events.htm>

### **So - what exactly do I do?**

That is the question many people asked me after I had been elected as Head of the Mother's Union in Scotland. I am known as the Provincial President.

I thought perhaps it might be a good idea to explain a bit about it but as it involves quite a lot, perhaps I'll keep it brief and tell you some more at another time. So, here goes!

There is an all-Scotland committee made up of the Diocesan Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary and myself. We are called the Provincial Trustees as a Province is a church "country", headed by an Archbishop or in the case of Scotland, a Primus. We meet twice a year.

Our first meeting was in March and it was held in Perth as it is the most accessible place for people as they travel from the dioceses of Moray, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

This time the meeting was open to others who have roles and responsibilities within their diocese so there was a good number there altogether. This meeting had several purposes:-

It was the AGM so we had to formally approve newly nominated OSCR people

Hear the latest information from the world-wide headquarters in London

Start to put into practice the ideas which came from our all-Scotland residential conference ( The Gathering), last October

We drew up a Development Plan and people volunteered to pursue an area of it which interested them or which they felt was relevant to their area or situation. The underlying theme is to equip the Scottish MU for the 21st century - so - we are being bold and thinking big!! The next meeting will be in September.

As well as co-ordinating all the dioceses another role I have is to visit churches , MU branches and dioceses (when asked). So far I have been to Kirkaldy, Glasgow, Burntisland and Elgin.

I was invited by the Provost of Perth Council to participate in the "Kirking of the Council" service and ceremony. This was held in June and I was accompanied by Rosemary Stirling from the St Andrew's Diocesan Trustees. We were thrilled to have been asked as it is the first time we have been included; it means we have been recognised as an organization which serves our community, which we do in so many ways.

Currently we are in discussion with the P&K Council, at their request, to see if we can be of help in their forthcoming plans to alleviate family difficulties which they anticipate may arise from new welfare reforms - this is such an exciting challenge!

Again - I'll keep you posted and another time I'll tell you about my role on the world-wide committee (called The General Trustees).

I hope this gives you an insight into some aspects of

my new life as Provincial President and helps to clarify how the MU works and what we do.

Thank you for all your support and good wishes - it has been so encouraging.

Jean (McPherson-Richardson)  
July 2013

28<sup>th</sup> May 2013

**Mothers' Union's response to the Stocktake of progress towards the recommendations of the Bailey Review, *Letting Children be Children***

As the UK Government launched its "Stocktake" today on progress made towards implementing the recommendations of *Letting Children Be Children* [Reg Bailey:2011], to reduce the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood, Mothers' Union warmly welcomed the Government's commitment to making the protection of children "part of everyday business practice and family life".

Speaking of the progress report Reg Bailey said "It is almost two years since the publication of my report, and I have been pleased to see that many parts of industry have risen to the challenge, with good progress made against my recommendations. As to the future, I want to see this Stocktake reinforce that there is a need for a cultural change in how businesses and regulatory bodies put the protection of children at the heart of what they do. It is early days but I believe this is now underway."

Mothers' Union began campaigning for greater protection for children from the pressures of commercialisation and sexualisation in 2010, following the launch of

its own report, *Bye Buy Childhood*.

The report's author, Rachel Aston, today welcomed the significant progress made on the issues Mothers' Union has long campaigned for. "Achieving a balance whereby government and industry consulted with, and worked with parents to better protect children has always been the desired outcome of our campaign. Mothers' Union is delighted that Government will revise the current legislation to ensure that age ratings will be given to video content, such as music videos, thereby equipping parents to better judge what material their children may or may not watch. The filtering of public Wifi will also be a significant step forward in ensuring the protection of children in the public space."

Alongside these new measures, progress has also been made in the two years since the publication of the Bailey Review in the areas of children's clothing, outdoor advertising and in making parents' voices heard through the launch of the excellent ParentPort website. The charity also acknowledged the progress made by internet service providers in ensuring that parental controls are easy to implement from point of purchase and in the home.

However, Rachel Aston went on to say that Mothers' Union members had also expressed concern that some regulations were still not being adhered to.

"Our members and other parents continue to report to us that pre-Watershed television, particularly soap operas, is still featuring inappropriate levels of sex and violence"

Mothers' Union is continuing its Bye Buy Childhood campaign and equipping parents to make sense of the commercial world through a new booklet, *Labelled for Life: Managing the Commercial World as a Family*.

## The Sum of the Parts

The St John's Mother's Union have a real sense of playing a small part in an international movement for change in the world. **Ruth McLellan** and **Margaret Bone** spoke to Steve



Butler about how membership of the MU is a way of trying to live out Christian faith both locally and globally.

If you were looking for groups of local activists, working for social change and justice in every corner of the world, you might not think to check out the Mothers' Union. On the face of it, you might just think it's a friendship club for older women who meet in the church hall every other week, to listen to a range of interesting visiting speakers, have a good chinwag and a cup of tea. 'Nothing wrong with that', we would all agree, but talking with St John's branch organisers Ruth McLellan and Margaret Bone, it's soon obvious that this is an organisation that is not to be underestimated.

The movement was founded in 1876 by Mary Sumner, the wife of an Anglican clergyman in Winchester, to inspire women in the practical and spiritual upbringing of their children. Mary's connections within the Anglican Communion led to MU branches quickly being established elsewhere in the UK and abroad.

Astonishingly, by 1900 the MU had nearly 170,000 members. These days the MU's range and depth of work far exceeds Mary Sumner's original vision of a circle of prayer upholding family life, and it now has 4 million members in 83 countries. The organisation describes its work as having three strands:

**Programmes** - a diverse range of programmes meet the needs of people within local communities - from entrepreneur training, health education, parenting and relationship education provision, to teddies for children experiencing stress or trauma – all designed to meet the needs of

people at the local level.

**Policy** - internationally, nationally and at the local level, policy work challenges root causes of injustice and works for better conditions in society for children and families.

**Faith** - all of our work is underpinned by the Christian faith of our members

*Ruth* – It was only when I went to Rwanda with the MU a few years ago that I realised how important our work is for the women there, particularly their vegetable growing co-operatives, and literacy projects – I met so many women who were desperate to learn to read, because that is so empowering. It was a glimpse of how big the MU is ... and that what we do in Dumfries is a small way of contributing to all of that.

*Margaret* - In the same way, locally, we do a whole range of small things that add up to something bigger. For example, one of our members makes up toiletry bags for women who find themselves in hospital, for one reason or another and don't have any belongings with them – a small unseen need that St John's people contribute to and which makes a huge difference. We work with Women's Aid, making up parcels of toiletries for women who have suffered domestic violence and are in refuges – we've delivered hundreds of these over the past 12 years, thanks to the generosity of the congregation. As well as the toiletry bags we also take along household items such as towels and curtains. A small gift of things you need and maybe a little luxury can be hugely important when you've got nothing. This is especially true at Christmas, so we're asking again for donations towards this just now.

Collaborating with other small groups of women around the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, the MU has specific local projects, including: making and knitting special baby garments, welcomed by maternity units, and parents of miscarried and stillborn babies; sending Christmas cards to every prisoner in Kilmarnock Prison; writing and printing recipe books for 'Skint Singles', aimed at new students and included in the boxes prepared by 'Starter Packs Glasgow', which helps people

who are living in their own homes for the first time; and supporting Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme – helping families who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a holiday.

As well as contributing to all of these initiatives, the regular meetings of the St John's group is a long-established way of women supporting each other in their faith commitment:

*Ruth* – A lot is done, but at Branch level MU also provides a sense of spiritual solidarity and support for the women who meet regularly – a tangible connection between what we believe and what we do. That can involve feeling connected to the wider movement too, by representing the region at national level. Going to national gatherings gives you a sense of having something in common with a huge number of women [and men!] – we all want to do something in the world, even if it's in a small way. Certainly the trip to Rwanda changed my whole perspective about the importance of education – about how important it is to the women in that country.

*Margaret* – Yes, it makes me feel more part of things spiritually – and that faith has a purpose.

*Everyone is welcome to the St John's MU group (including men!), which meets twice-monthly – the programme is updated regularly in the monthly Church Diary (always available at the back of church and on the church website). If you'd like more information about meetings or about joining the group, please contact Margaret, on 01387 255575 or e-mail: [margaret.bone2@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.bone2@btinternet.com).*

*There is lots of information about the MU at [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org)*

## **Mothers' Union in HMP Greenock**

It all started from a phone call as a prison officer had heard that the Mothers' Union help out in prisons, then an appeal to the local church for volunteers. Since then we have been providing a play area for visiting children

for more than two years. As the prisoner officer Paul Shelton says, "The crèche has had a positive effect on prisoners, their partners and children. It has allowed adults time to discuss issues that should not be discussed in front of children and it has also given the children some positive interactions with an adult in a play scenario that sometimes may be lacking."

Isabel Cameron responded to God's call to be the organiser and has gone on to help with the very popular Family Days, when they painted some faces and stuck on tattoos. As Paul says "The assistance from the Mothers Union at our family days is invaluable as the prisoners really appreciate the opportunity to play games with their children and see them with painted faces. Every prisoner who responded to our survey on the family day gave very positive feedback. We had comments like "the best visit I have ever had", "I wish all the visits could be like this" and "I have never seen my child so happy at a visit" .

We have also been providing a Christmas card to all the prisoners and have wondered how they are received, but Paul say, "the prisoners do appreciate it though they may not always articulate getting a Xmas card as this may be the only card that they receive and it lets them know that someone other than their families are thinking of them at this time of the year."

Isabel is keen to develop the invitation to provide a 'Book bug' session with some of the female prisoners, this is the latest initiative and we pray that this will work out.

Hilary Moran  
Communications and Fundraising  
Rep  
Glasgow & Galloway Diocese



## **Together We Grow. All Unit Conference**

This was my first visit to the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick and I loved the beautiful and peaceful surroundings. Inside the buildings were attractive and comfortable to be in.

What was amazing was the number of delegates, all so friendly, well, MU members of course! I felt that being together we certainly grew in fellowship and for myself, in learning. So much to absorb, but I did my best. So here are some memories to share with you.

MSH, built of stone,  
members gave,  
standing together,  
now,  
MSH,  
a spiritual building,  
as we stand together.

Lynne, our World Wide President, told us she brought back a little of each person she met on her overseas visits, I felt that I too brought back a little of all I met back with me from Swanwick.

Like bricks in a building we are the living stones that will support each other as we grow. Developing loving, respectful, flourishing relationships, being excellent to one another. Our foundation for growth, scripture and prayer and as we grow we will have more effect on society.

Words from a time of reflection during our unit time. A gentle breeze,  
stirring,  
moving,  
breathing new life,  
into hands and hearts,  
open,

to the Son of Man.

So many more stories to share, but they will be for another time.

Sue Brough,  
Bishopbriggs.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DAIRY**

**Saturday 22nd March 2014**

at **St Ninians, Prestwick**

10.30 am Welcome, tea and Coffee.

**Lady Day Service** begins at 11am,  
followed by **Spring Council**.

**Saturday 10th May 2014**

at **St John's, Dumfries**

10.30 am Welcome, tea and Coffee.

**Festival Service** begins at 11am  
The World Wide President, Lynne Tembey,  
will be attending this service  
and Dumfries branch celebrating their  
65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Thanks to all the contributors.

All articles for the Spring edition of Newslink should be sent by  
**20<sup>th</sup> February 2014** to me: Wendy Petrie, 120 Meadowburn,  
Bishopbriggs, G64 3LX or by e mail to [petriec@talktalk.net](mailto:petriec@talktalk.net)

*Provincial President,  
Jean McPherson Richardson  
and  
Past Provincial President,  
Hilary Moran  
At  
St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth  
on Saturday 20th April 2013*



*Wall-hanging for HMP  
Low Moss*