



MU Australia  
Part of the World Wide  
Mothers' Union  
Diocese of Bunbury



Reach Out

## The Mustard Tree Summer 2011 (Supplement to the Mia Mia)

### PRESIDENT MARGARET'S REPORT

How wonderful it was to read the Spring edition of The Mustard Tree and so many ways our branches have REACHED OUT. This has been a very positive theme for us to pick up on this year and the creativity of the various branches continues to inspire.

I did not have time to comment on the Country Rally in the last edition of our magazine but what a wonderful day it turned out to be. Pinjarra Branch is to be commended on their organization and wasn't the food just so delicious? Our thanks to Rev'd Karon, to the branch members, and to other parishioners who put in the hard yards. The guest speaker on the day, Rob Davies, explained how he and his fellow Rotarians have reached out to help the people of East Timor and we thank him for his presentation. Congratulations to Olive Overheu of Williams Branch who received a badge and certificate to acknowledge her 25 years of service to MU.

It was my pleasure to visit Busselton Branch in September as they celebrated their 95<sup>th</sup> birthday with a fine birthday cake and balloons. So good to meet their members, many of whom I have know since I arrived in Bunbury some 13 years ago. They have a strong branch which is most encouraging. I was also pleased to note that many branches had a special service to celebrate Mary Sumner Day. If you have it on your computer you may like to forward it to me and I can send it on to our branches for future use. No sense in re-inventing the wheel!!

I heard a lovely story from a branch that has recently enrolled a new member. The lady concerned had been attending for several months and made the decision to become a full member and thanked the branch for reaching out to her. This branch has a late afternoon meeting followed by a bring-and-share dinner and it was the sharing of the dinner that made her life so much better. When you are alone for your meals you appreciate the opportunity to meet and dine with others. Just a simple story that shows that it can be the small things in life that can bring so much joy.

As Christmas approaches, I send you all this prayer by RL Stevenson.

#### **Christmas Prayer**

Loving God, Help us remember  
The birth of Jesus  
That we may share in the song of the angels  
The gladness of the shepherds  
And worship of the wise men  
Close the door of hate and open the  
Door of love all over the world.  
Let kindness come with every gift  
And good desires with every blessing  
Deliver us from evil by the blessing  
Which Christ brings  
And teach us to be merry with clear hearts  
May the Christmas morning  
Make us happy to be thy children, and  
Christmas evening bring us to our beds with  
Grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,  
For Jesus' sake.....Amen

Love and blessings *Margaret*

## **BUSY MEETINGS**

On 8<sup>th</sup> November executive members met in the Diocesan Board Room with a very full agenda. The following items may be of interest to you.

Our Secretary, Beth, will forward to your branch the important dates for 2012 as we follow our new theme of *Discover and Celebrate*. She will also provide you with the words of our theme song for 2012 – *Give Me Oil in M Lamp* – plus the words of 3 other songs which fit in with our new theme.

The first diocesan event for next year will be Lady Day which will be held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March with the Eucharist at St Boniface Cathedral followed by a meal and a guest speaker at the Parade Hotel. Beth and I plan to meet with the new management of the hotel with a view to having a meal more in line with that presented to us at the Country Rally in Pinjarra. This would speed up the process no end.

Our Synod reps for the next three years were elected as follows: President Margaret and Maureen Lenson with two reserves: Marie Woodward and Tom Spicer.

We are still looking at someone to take on the position of Archivist. It is not a very onerous task so please let one of our executive members know if you would be interested in this position.

Marie Woodward has been in contact with the Diocesan webmaster, Lee-Anne Cotton of Mandurah, as we hope to have this page up and working in the near future.

We thank Fr Ian our Chaplain for organizing to have a stand made for our diocesan travel banner. He advises that, with the co-operation of the members of the Collie Men's Shed members, we now have a banner stand to be proud of.

Along with all the caravans at the Busselton site, our MU caravan is no longer. There may be an opportunity for MU to provide another van sometime into the future when negotiations with the Busselton Shire are completed. In the meantime the balance of the caravan account has been placed in an income-bearing account.

And this was just part of our meeting!

On 9<sup>th</sup> November our Annual Meeting was held and we thank Bishop Allan for chairing the meeting and for keeping a timekeeper's eye on us!

It was so good to see most branches represented and special congratulations to Busselton and Carey Park members whose numbers swelled our ranks. Busselton was in fine voice also, leading us in the singing of our theme song, *Colours of Day*. And didn't they look so smart in their MU scarves?

Our thanks to Alison Hamilton and Jean Brennan from the Bunbury branch, who along with Tom Spicer from Katanning, worked so hard in the kitchen.

Our guest speaker on the day was Marcia Loder who gave an excellent talk on the work of the Mission to Seafarers. Marcia encouraged us to REACH OUT to these seafarers who spend many hours at sea, often working in extreme conditions, and far from their families.

*Margaret Rennick*



## NEWS FROM ALBANY

In September we had a talk from one of the Anglicare counsellors on marriage breakdown, effects on children etc.

October was our Annual Meeting and sharing of wedding photos or other memorabilia, this was a particularly good fun day.

November 16<sup>th</sup> we are all looking forward with great anticipation to a visit from an MU member from Swaziland, be sure to look for the follow up on this in the Autumn Issue of Mustard Tree.

December 14<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating Holy Communion, followed by a boat trip on the Kalgan Queen, this will be a lot of fun as the captain has a reputation to be full of "good stories". On this day we will be sharing with our prayer partners and taking gifts for St John's emergency relief.

*Jill Havercroft*     **President**

## NEWS FROM BOYUP BROOK

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Boyup Brook branch of MU visited Collie Branch.

Following a Eucharist service in All Saints' Church, lunch was enjoyed at Kath Heil's home.

Marie Woodward gave a very informative talk on her journeys to India and a lovely display of Indian products made the afternoon very interesting.

We have been "reaching out" and have had a most enjoyable year.



*Betty Knapp*     **President**

## NEWS FROM BUNBURY

At our September meeting our theme was Reach Out with Forgiveness and we were privileged to hear Lee and Jenny speak to us about how they have reached out to each other with forgiveness. It was a very emotional experience for us all. We visited the residents of Bethanie Elanora and Roy Hansen and his friends provided us with toe tapping entertainment.

In October we had planned to have our Big Day Out, visiting the Lavender Farm in the Ferguson Valley. Unfortunately this area was hit by a freak storm and our visit had to be cancelled. However, our trip has been re-programmed for the 24<sup>th</sup> November. We joined with members of other churches for Community Day and, even though it was a public holiday, over 50 people were present at the service.

Our November meeting was a practical session where June Francis showed us how to make cards or where other members were busy preparing items for our Joy Boxes. In December we will have our Christmas meeting and our exchange of prayer partners. And so will end a busy and productive year.

*Margaret Rennick*     **President**

## NEWS FROM BUSSELTON

The Country Rally in August which was held in Pinjarra was very well attended with members making an early departure from Busselton and stopping in Bunbury to pick up some more passengers. Fr Wayne drove the Buz Bus which enabled members to travel in comfort and safety to enjoy their day. Another great day of fellowship, good food together with lots of talking and laughing, all made possible with thanks to Pinjarra Branch.

In September we celebrated our 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, a day of great jubilation, using "The World Around Us" from our service book. Our Diocesan President Margaret Rennick visited and gave a presentation on her "Vision" for MU. The local press took photos and reported on the afternoon in the weekly newspaper, a lovely afternoon tea, complete with birthday cake was enjoyed by a very good attendance including some of our "New Friends of MU".

In October three of our members attended Synod (as representatives from Saint Mary's and GMAS). Synod was held at St Nicholas' in Australind where everyone was very well looked after during a most successful weekend of discernment and fellowship along with much laughter and enjoyment.

Following our Annual Meeting in October and due to the cancellation of the combined churches service for Community Day we celebrated this special day at our October meeting using the service booklet which had been sent to us. We had been collecting "the smallest coin" for some past months and this together with a retiring collection on the Sunday morning at Saint Mary's was sent to Perth as our contribution.

In November we celebrated the end of year with a Eucharist at Saint Mary's followed by lunch at The Equinox restaurant down by the foreshore. Fr Ian Bailey, our MU Chaplain joined us for the day and celebrated the Eucharist with us. Fr Ian's wife Robyne together with his sister Megan and her husband Michael who were visiting from Queensland also joined us. Another wonderful day was had by everyone.

I am pleased to say we have had a very happy year with many baptisms being held on Saturday and Sunday mornings, it is always a great privilege for MU members to attend these occasions. It is a delight to be present at what is often the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> child to be baptised here at Saint Mary's and often the mother will comment how touched she was to have a visit from a member while in hospital.

Members continue to make hospital visits each week, taking kind words, flowers, a printed message but most importantly their time to those who may not have any visitors at all.

We are looking forward to 2012 as we follow our theme of "Discover and Celebrate"



*Eleanor Lewin*

President

## **NEWS FROM KATANNING**

I recently visited Denmark Branch with my husband Tom as my annual visit to the Branch as Area President. They made us most welcome and the rector Rev'd Sue Lodge-Calvert led us in the MU Communion Service.

After this we shared a lovely afternoon tea and I was able to speak about Choose Respect as an option for members who wish to reach out to the community in which they live. This can be as simple as encouraging all people to treat each other with respect.

I also told them about the Country Rally and the interesting speaker we had about East Timor and the work they achieved there in teaching English.

Members present were Marj, Olive, Laura, Gloria, Evelyn, Marie, Muriel, President Ruth Price, Rev'd Sue and Marj's little dog Marcus. (He seemed to really enjoy the company – especially the titbits.)

It is always a pleasure to visit the Branch at Denmark.



*Sylvia Spicer*                      **Area President**

## **NEWS FROM PINJARRA**

We have a lovely lady of ninety nine in the parish, who has been a member of MU for a number of years. Her daughter will be sending me details of her life in MU soon. She receives audio copies of Mia Mia from her previous branch. I have been a bit slack here, only recently learning she was MU, when I receive the story I will let you all know.....so watch this space from Pinjarra Branch.

We have settled down again after the Country Rally which we enjoyed greatly. We are a very mobile branch, very seldom at full strength, either visiting family or enjoying our retirement. This year we put in the best orders for Christmas cards for a long time.

We still meet even with only a couple, just alter our programme to suit. I find it much more interesting without all the formal meetings. We still keep minutes of the meeting with attendances etc. All members receive their minutes before the meeting so that any queries can be discussed over a cuppa, not when we have guest speakers.

*Margaret Broad*                      **President**

## **DISCOVER AND CELEBRATE**

Our theme for 2012, what a challenge to us all. I would be delighted to hear from branches on how they plan to Discover and Celebrate, perhaps as individuals or as a branch as a group. Now that has given you some food for thought hasn't it?

One suggestion is that we put to good use the Bible Study material that is supplied by Wendy Mayer, our Prayer and Spirituality Coordinator for the Australian Executive. Wendy produces some excellent material which can be accessed from the MU Website, just follow the prompts and you will have it all laid out for you.

*Eleanor*

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Considered a symbol of peace, red-breasted robins were frequently featured on Victorian Christmas cards. While the giving and sending of Christmas greetings in the form of cards is a common occurrence today, it was not always the case. In 1843, London businessman Henry Cole was so pre-occupied he didn't have time to write letters that Christmas, so he asked an artist to paint a picture. He then printed a thousand copies of the image, which he signed and sent to friends. Henry Cole's card is thought to be the first ever Christmas card. By the late 1860's the mailing of Christmas cards was extensive. The custom of sending Christmas cards escalated with the 1870's introduction of the halfpenny post for unsealed letters and the decreased cost of colour printing.

*A bit of trivia from The Editor*

## **ESTELLE KENNON 100 YEARS YOUNG**

The following article was submitted by Mrs Lyn Rossell, daughter of Estelle Kennon.

"A lot of details are lost in the mists of time but these are some that I have managed to get from my mother.

Estelle was involved with the MU for 25 years before being enrolled. As she was a second wife to a divorced man she could not, under Church Rules, be enrolled as a member. Even so she was allowed to participate and join in the usual meetings without being enrolled. Amazingly, and it shows her dedication to MU, it took 25 years before she could do all the things she was doing, as an official member. How many people today would stick to a movement which officially had rejected them?

Estelle was eventually enrolled a member and for 35 years she was a member with St Peter's and St Mark's in Palmyra and East Fremantle. She now lives in Pam Corker house Waroona as her sight has deteriorated to such an extent that she requires help in daily living.

Estelle still attends St Mark's Church in Waroona and regularly receives the audio Mia Mia from her old branch.

***On 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011 Estelle reaches the grand age of 100 years young."***

Members of the Executive together with all members of the Diocese wish Estelle a wonderful day and may God Bless Her.





## A HEAVENLY CHORUS



Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

At the beginning of the 1900's, in a cold corner of Scandinavia, Selma Lagerlof penned a tale of a man who ventured out into the snow in the hope of finding coal to kindle a fire for his wife and newborn child. The enchanting Christmas story, entitled 'The Holy Night', offered many parallels between this ordinary, everyday birth and one that occurred nearly two thousand years earlier on the very first Christmas night.

In Lagerlof's tale, the man went from door to door in search of coal but all were asleep and no one responded to his earnest knocking. He walked and walked until he saw a glow far off in the distance, in the middle of an open field. Around the fire slept a flock of sheep, their shepherd, and three ferocious dogs who awoke on the man's approach and attacked. But supernaturally their teeth did not tear his flesh, their growls and barks could not be heard.

The man approached closer to the fire, walking on the backs of the sleeping sheep to reach the warmth. Just then the surly, unfriendly shepherd awoke, seized his staff and hurled it at the man. But, supernaturally again, the staff changed direction mid flight and caused him no harm. And so the man asked the shepherd for a little flame. Reluctantly the shepherd agreed, bewildered that the dogs had not successfully attacked, the sheep had not woken when the man walked on their backs and the staff had careered off course.

But by this time the fire was nearly out – just a heap of live coals, however, the man bent down, and with bare hands picked up coals, putting them in his coat. The shepherd was amazed and began to wonder : "what kind of man is this, what kind of night is this?" The man responded, saying "I cannot tell you if you yourself do not see it". He then left, and the shepherd, confused yet intrigued, followed.

Arriving at the place where the man's child had been born, the shepherd saw that the place was nothing more than a mountain grotto, his hardened heart was moved to see the baby. He took from his knapsack a sheepskin to wrap the child in, and at this moment the shepherd could suddenly see what he was not able to see before, and hear what he was not able to hear before – silver winged angels standing in a ring, each holding a stringed instrument and singing of the great event of the birth of a Saviour. There were angels outside on the mountain too, others that flew under the heavens, marching in great companies and singing choruses of jubilation.

"What that shepherd saw, we might also see, for the angels fly down from heaven every Christmas Eve, if only we could see them. You must remember this, for it is as true, as true as I see you and you see me," concludes Lagerlof's delightful tale.



## **NEVER GIVE UP**

Following is an extract of a message from Beverley Ovens, our Australian Executive *Overseas and Northern Outreach* coordinator.

Beverley uses the passage from Luke 8: 1-15, the parable about different ways seed is sown. Jesus sees a farmer sowing seed as he is walking along the road. He teaches on the way, because the synagogues were not open to him, allowing him to enter and teach as he once did. This parable encourages us never to give up or be overcome with despair. We have to keep on sowing the seed as it ultimately becomes the harvest of God.

“Mothers’ Union members in Nigeria are actively involved in Bible study, evangelism, prayer and worship services, seminars, retreats, conferences, training, visitation and care for the less privileged. Participation in the program has enabled them to develop a lifestyle that is necessary for spiritual growth.

In some of the Anglican dioceses in Nigeria, persecution is a reality as there is tension between Muslims and Christians. Many Christians have died for their faith and others have been tortured.

The word of God is being sown. The Christians have not given up in a part of Nigeria where the persecution of Christians is a reality. The challenge for us is great. We also are not to give up. We are not to give up praying for those we know who have received God’s word and who have resisted, because some time later, even years afterwards, they may come to believe.”

## **CHRISTMAS WISHES FROM THE EDITOR**

As I prepare the final edition of The Mustard Tree for 2011 I am aware we are approaching Advent, that glorious time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.

“In England, the first Sunday of Advent is often called ‘Stir-up Sunday’. This is believed to have stemmed from a special prayer always said in churches on the day which started with the words “Stir up, O Lord, your power.....” as Christians asked for divine help to acknowledge their sins and sought forgiveness. The name of the day soon also came to signify the time when the Christmas Plum Pudding was started, with each member of the family taking a turn to ‘stir up’ the ingredients and make a special Christmas wish as they did.”

I wish you, all my fellow members together with your loved ones a wonderfully happy and blessed Christmas. I do hope you enjoy being with your families, friends or perhaps travelling somewhere. Whatever you do keep safe in the knowledge that our Heavenly Father watches over you.



**Closing date for the Autumn Edition of the Mustard Tree is 14 February 2012**

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN 2012**

**9 March RSVP Lady Day**  
**21 March : Executive Meeting**  
**22 March : Lady Day Festival**  
**30 April : Membership Fees Due**