

newsline

A publication about Mothers' Union
in the Diocese of Sheffield



Pictured above, left to right:

Back: Secretary: Steve Bisby, Treasurer: Phill Jackson, Chaplain: Canon Richard Parker.

Front: VP Sheffield & Rotherham: Angela Parker, President: Jo-Anne Van Levesley,

VP Doncaster: Tanis Cockerham, Hon VP Doncaster: Pat Simpson

Unfortunately, Hon VP Sheff Roth: Norma Priest was unable to be with us

Jo-Anne, our new President writes...

As I write this letter, we are experiencing a very cold snap, following the disruptive snow of January, that iced, causing treacherous roads and pavements, to welcome in the New Year... It always amazes me how everything seems to grind to a halt, me included, as the car likes to go sideways rather than straight! Schools, activities, and appointments cancelled as risks are assessed.



Spring however continues its cycle, with the first sight of little snowdrops and the bright yellow daffodils dancing in the breeze! The welcome of spring, expected, 'new' growth, reminding us of seasons and new beginnings – just like our Triennium, and the invite to 'Join Us Join In', our challenge for going forward together! I am looking forward to the next three years as President with the team of Trustees, Deaneries and Branches and YOU! As it is your commitment, passion, engagement, and support that has truly strengthened and enriched the Mothers' Union. So, eyes fixed firmly on our goal of growing, developing and maintaining our membership we look to secure our wonderful organisation, we step out with the call to our theme.

Wearing our badge is a friendly way of inviting others into our shared story! But we remain grounded in our shared mission, prayers and values, as we try new things – stronger together! We know this makes a lasting positive impact in the lives of those we serve, by the actions and activities of MU projects, like AFIA.

We not only have a new triennium, but we are also going to embark on the 150th Celebratory year in 2026, how wonderful would it be if we could enrol 150 new members! As for me and Mothers' Union, I initially belonged to Harley and Wentworth Branch, which then joined with Wath, which is still my branch today.

Now a little window and a little further insight into me; I have been a member of Mothers' Union now for 25 years, a Trustee for fifteen, holding the offices of Training Co-ordinator and Membership Development Officer since the structure changes, transforming our local and worldwide organisation. I was born in 1961, to Patrica and Graham, I spent my early years growing up and attending Church at St Hilda's in Wincobank, Sheffield, with Reverend Ron Thompson. We then moved as a family to Worsborough, Barnsley, and I attended St Mary's, getting married to Steven there. We moved to Abbeydale to start our life together, then to Grenoside, where we attended St Marks, and where our children Rachel and Ross were born. Moving back to Worsborough, 2000! We are delighted

to have Hannah and Scott as our honorary children and family. We are Grandparents to our two granddaughters, Millie and Grace and 'Nellie' our Grand Dog!

I have held numerous working positions in Social Care, Education and started a Church based Charity in 1999, The Family

look at how we engage and transform the communities in which we live and work. We will be supporting and engaging churches and clergy where there is no branch. The new tools for doing this are the Clergy packs and Church based Membership, but there will be more on this to follow. Our main aim is rising to the challenge of slowing our

Our challenge is a fresh look at how we engage and transform the communities in which we live and work.

Development Project, in Darnall Sheffield. I currently work part time supporting a Health and Well Being charity as a Senior Health and Well Being Lead for clients and carers supporting them with Dementia.

So, as we plan and go forward together, I invite you to save the date of 10th May 2025, to come along to the Commissioning Service for this triennium. Meet and greet our Trustees and my family, we would be delighted to see you! Our challenge is a fresh

declining membership. We will do this by continuing and encouraging new members through widening our friendly, caring approach, following the vision of our founder, Mary Sumner, making MU fit for the future, supported in addressing this at local levels in our branches and Deaneries, after all we know our areas, and the needs.

Much love and blessings
Jo-Anne

Thoughts from our Chaplain

As I write this, we are just on the threshold of Lent. Even so, I am mindful that by the time this edition of Newsline is published it will probably be quite close to Easter. Fortunately, I can anticipate Easter, since the days are already getting longer, and the first signs of spring seem to be all around.



I always find it helpful to remember that the original meaning of the word "Lent" was "spring". Just as the spring is a time of lighter days and new growth, so Lent is for us a time of grace and renewal.

This serves as something of a tonic during quite unsettled and troubling times in our world. A lot of things that we were able to take for granted do not seem so certain anymore. I'm sure it is worth remembering that our faith is not based on things that are already fully revealed but on a deep trust in God's providence.

I find it a great encouragement when I follow the daily prayers of Mothers' Union, that we are united with believers throughout the world. We are not alone, and our prayer, witness and work make a difference to other people's lives.

For the first disciples, the first Easter was not a time when everything fell neatly into place. It was a time of uncertainty, loss, confusion and fear. The crucifixion and the burial of Jesus must have seemed like the end of everything that had been hoped for or believed. The original version of Mark's gospel ends with a visit to the empty tomb and with the visitors running away "for they were afraid."

There are always reasons why we could feel afraid or anxious, but God's love always speaks through our fears. It compels us to arise and to allow the joyful message of Easter to re-shape our faith and our lives.

It is always a great joy to see the various ways in which our branches and the Mothers' Union, as a whole in our Diocese transforms the lives of other people. Families under strain, people on the streets and prisoners are finding that they are loved and that someone believes in them.

In John's gospel, when the risen Christ appeared to his disciples, he said to Thomas: "You believe because you have seen me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29). I read this not so much as a rebuke for a lack of faith, but as an invitation to witness the new life of Easter at work in the Church and in the wider world.

I pray that you may have a joyful Easter. May the blessings of this season extend throughout the year and continue to be revealed through our faithful witness.

Richard

Theme for 2025-2027

2025-2027
JOIN US and JOIN IN!
MU is changing lives.

Diocesan Officers

President:

Jo-Anne Van Levesley

Vice President for the Archdeaconry of Sheffield and Rotherham:

Angela Parker

Fundraising & Communications run by Deaneries.

Action & Outreach run by Deaneries.

Senior Safeguarding Leader:

Jo-Anne Van Levesley

Safeguarding Officer:

Pat Simpson

Diocesan Chaplain:

Canon Richard Parker

Secretary:

Steve Bisby

Treasurer:

Phill Jackson

Training Officer:

Jo-Anne Van Levesley

Honorary Vice Presidents:

Norma Priest, Pat Simpson

Deanery Leaders

Tankersley:

Anne Balme:

Wath: Run by Committee

Officers who have already served and will continue for a further 3 years.

Vice President for the Archdeaconry of Doncaster:

Tanis Cockerham

Data & Media Coordinator:

Elizabeth Dean

Faith & Policy Co-ordinator:

Margaret Vivian

Finance & Central Services:

Tanis Cockerham

IMPC Representative:

Lesley Harpham

Ecclesall & Attercliffe:

Sally Wood

Ecclesfield:

Margaret Vivian

Doncaster, Adwick, Snaith & Hatfield:

Margaret Culloden

Rotherham and Laughton:

Annette Walker

Thanks, from our past President

For the past six years I have done an article for Newsline in my capacity as President. But not now. This is me writing from a different angle. It is early days, for me, in my time of retirement and 'relaxation' (whatever that may be.) I don't get Mothers' Union emails any more (thank you Elizabeth) and so there are fewer missives to read, inwardly digest and then respond to.

I have begun to wonder just what the future will look like for me. Shall I spend time baking or knitting or crocheting? (Geoff says he can guarantee that it won't be any of those!) I will still be involved in Wath All Saints Branch and Sheffield Diocese Mothers' Union in some form or another so I will have some meetings, coffee mornings etc. to attend but not as many reports to read or write!

When I reflect on my time as President, I can still feel the enormous feeling of pride and almost overwhelming emotions that I had every time I was representing Sheffield

Diocese at a meeting or part of a procession in a service or merely 'at the front.' When I think about what has been achieved in Sheffield Diocese through the wonders of Mothers' Union, I feel so immensely grateful to each and every member. I have travelled around the Diocese attending meetings, services or fundraising events. I have always been made welcome, and I don't think that there have been many people who have fallen asleep while I have been talking. Unfortunately, I know that I have not managed to visit every branch. This was usually because

the date clashed with other events. So, I apologise to the members who have not seen me, though some might think that they are the lucky ones!

I have met and mixed with many wonderful people from members, Presidents, and Bishops in Great Britain to members, Bishops and Presidents from Guyana, Bongo, the Solomon Islands and elsewhere. The experiences have all been incredible, as we shared information about Mothers' Union in a variety of locations but all with the same vision: Mary Sumner's vision.

I suppose that the downside of being President is that reports must be written, and emails and texts have to be responded to. Sometimes I felt that I had been glued to my laptop solidly for several days, though that is probably me being slow or indecisive. Fortunately, having a team of friends to advise

me certainly helped me to complete the reports.

I enjoy meeting people, supporting those less fortunate than myself, telling people what a wonderful organisation Mothers' Union is and 'bragging' about what a difference we make to families both here and throughout the world. I have certainly enjoyed my six years. I must say an enormous 'Thank you' to the Trustees and the members of Sheffield Diocese Mothers' Union for all your help and support and for my incredible gifts of a cheque, flowers and a Mothers' Union scarf. I will still be around, so I hope to see you at Cathedral Coffee Mornings, AGM and Spring Council or Commissioning service and Mary Sumner Day service.

Until then, keep smiling and wear your badge with pride.

Love Gill



Thank you very much, Sarah

Sarah Rogerson has been a very loyal and extremely hard-working member of Sheffield Diocese MU for many years.

She and her husband, Dave (also a member) have now moved to York Diocese, where she is also a very active MU member!!!

Sarah has been our President, Vice President, Deanery Leader, Branch Leader, Choir member, Rep for Finance and Central Services and Newsline Editor, for many years, just to mention some of her hard work!!!!

Sarah was instrumental in introducing the present format of Newsline after many years

of a black and white issue. We are so very grateful to Sarah for all she has done for our members in Sheffield Diocese for many years. We will miss her input at editorial meetings for Newsline and all her hard work getting the magazine ready and printed for all members.

So, to Sarah and Dave, we wish you happiness in your new home in York Diocese, many new friends in York MU and our very grateful thanks to you Sarah for all you have done over many years for Sheffield Diocese MU.



Thoughts from VP Doncaster Archdeaconry, **Tanis Cockerham**

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG



I was prompted to write this piece on a cold morning in January when our part of the world was a white wonderland, the ground was hard as iron and the heating was on full, as I sat with a comfy blanket on my knees and was enjoying a warming cup of tea.

Browsing through my prayer diary for 2025, I came across some wonderful stories and heartfelt prayers. As we continue as members of the worldwide Christian organisation, I ponder over the loss of so many members as branches decide to close. We lost quite a few branches in 2024, and on reflection, I wondered what the motivation was or need to close.

Many of us are in our autumn years, not least me! But don't we still want to feel useful, carrying on our Christian duty to help and love one another?

So why close a branch and abandon Mothers' Union membership; perhaps it's because:-

1. There is no one willing to take over as Branch Coordinator or take on other duties
2. Disagreements and lack of motivation
3. Subscriptions seen as expensive
4. Some see rules and regulations as restrictive
5. Lack of vision and negotiation

It is sad and disappointing to discard all our values because we are in our autumn years; there are alternative ways of running our branches, we need discussion along with encouragement, so please don't abandon your membership because you find it a burden, or too expensive!

We only have to look around and read the stories of hope in our prayer diary and 'Connected' magazine to understand the difference Mothers' Union is making in the world; do we want it to stop? I certainly don't, and I am a fairly new member compared to some of you.

Alright our increased subscription this year raised a few eyebrows but look what Mothers' Union does with it! We touch lives daily all over the world. Our literacy project brings hope to many communities, our prayer life encompasses everyone.

So why do we despair? We have fellowship, all the comforts of home, our blessed church community, and family and friends. We live in a troubled world, yet we are reasonably safe and sound in our small corner.

There is great need in our world today, so we are even more necessary now. Can we be strong and thank God for all our blessings and ask that we also enrich others by showing that Mothers' Union has hope and demonstrates God's love through all our actions. We are blest with many assets; experience, talents and not least the fellowship we share. So let us nurture one another, forever encouraging and caring, and showing by example to the wider community that there is strength in what we do, and when we do it together, there is synergy.

As I write this, the ground is hard and white with frost, and yet I can see snowdrops making their way through the snow, so don't abandon hope. Mothers' Union, together we are strong.

Romans 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us

Bishop Steven's Sermon at the Commissioning 2016 (abridged)

Don't worry about your membership numbers and recruitment to the Mothers' Union.

I say that not because Pauline is particularly concerned about this but because the Mothers' Union generally, in my experience, can be more concerned about numbers and recruitment than about fulfilling its objectives. This is understandable. But I believe it is mistaken.

A smaller, active Mothers' Union working towards the five objectives is worth more in a parish or in a deanery or in a diocese than a large Mothers' Union which has a lot of people at meetings but does very little. A Mothers' Union, which is outwardly focused, and working on these five objectives together will attract far more of the right kind of members than a Mothers' Union which exists simply to hold monthly meetings. A Mothers' Union which is outwardly focused and working on these five objectives together may not need to hold many meetings at all. The meetings they did hold would be focused very tightly on these aims. But they may do a power of good in all kinds of ways. So what are your objectives? What is your reason for existing?

In different language what is your mission?

You are committing yourselves today:

- To promote and support married life
- To encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children
- To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children and
- To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

This is your mission if you choose to accept it.

I hope these five objectives are read regularly at Branch meetings and Committee Meetings and special events. I hope they shape your work.

The Mothers' Union has a vital mission. Focus on what God has called you to do. May God bless you in all your service in the coming years".

How ARE we fulfilling our Mission in Sheffield Diocese and beyond?

AFIA

Members raise money for AFIA (Away From It All) which provides a much-needed break for families who need to get away but don't have the means to do so and have not had a holiday for 4 years or more.

Sheffield MU uses caravans on the east coast for holidays as well as offering donations of up to £200 for apts to use to take members on day outings. AFIA is NOT supported by any other organisation apart from the Mothers' Union.

Last year we had a focus on raising funds for this worthwhile project by launching a 'Presidents Challenge' where branches were given £24 at the Spring Council to increase and return at Autumn Council. Altogether we raised over £6,936. Well done everyone!



Away From It All

'I never thought that Mothers' Union would consider me but they gave me the chance to see my first grandchild and that meant so much to me. It has changed my view on what I thought was a group of 'God-ladies' to a group of ladies that show God cares for people like me.'

During 2024 we organised and paid for ten caravan holidays, which included 8 food hampers, for those who have not had a holiday for 4 years or more. There were nineteen adults and twenty-three children who benefitted from these holidays. Keep this up so we can send more families away in 2025.



Clewer Initiative

This is a project to end Modern Slavery and we work with South Yorkshire Police Trafficking Dept to provide clothing & toiletries for victims of slavery, and they contact us with any urgent needs.



We try to keep up to date with the Clewer Initiative informing members and we continue to encourage the use of the online resources regarding Trafficking and the County Lines online sessions. We received an award from South Yorkshire Police for the help we have given them over the years.

Rise UP

Our VP, Tanis Cockerham is a speaker who talks about Domestic Abuse entitled 'Walking In Their Footsteps' and has made 4 bookings this year.

She sent a letter to Queen Camilla following her documentary 'Behind Closed Doors' which was shown on television before Christmas. Queen Camilla was interested to hear about the work MU does with the Refuges.



26th November, 2024

Dear Tanis,

Many thanks for your thoughtful letter about my recent documentary, "Behind Closed Doors". I was deeply touched by your kind words and very much hope that it has opened the eyes of many people who knew little about this appalling crime.

Thank you also for telling me about the wonderful work that Mothers' Union does to support refuges in this country - what an enormous difference you must make to so many people...

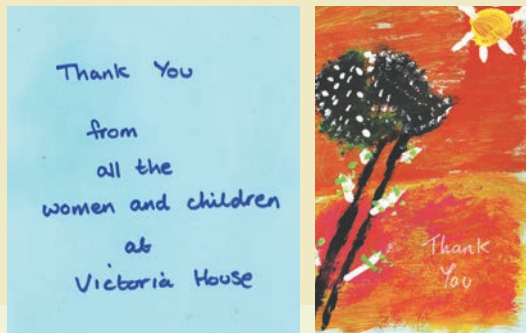
With best wishes
Camilla

How ARE we fulfilling our Mission in Sheffield Diocese and beyond?

Women's Refuges

We support Refuges across the Diocese in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and two in Sheffield.

The different refuges require different things as some have no storage facilities. We have supplied items for their food cupboard and dry foods as requested. We have delivered numerous bags of toiletries, moving on baskets, bedding, clothing, books, toys, Easter eggs and Advent calendars for the children.



Hi Sheffield MU

I would like to thank everyone for the lovely donations you have gifted for our women and children for Christmas. This is so much appreciated and always shows the women and children that people care.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all

Thank you

Julie O'Rourke

Lead Practitioner



Vigils were held across the Diocese at Sheffield Cathedral, Doncaster Minster and Harley Mission. Banners were displayed and leaflets given out to raise awareness of Gender based Violence.



Defence Minister John Healey MP joined the Rise Up Vigil at Harley in Wath Deanery

How ARE we fulfilling our Mission in Sheffield Diocese and beyond?

Read Aloud Project



A project we started last year to improve the reading across South Yorkshire and is an ongoing project, we endeavour to pass new or used books on to places where we know families and children will use them.

We had a request from Dr N Ennis from Children, Young People Alliance (CYP) in South Yorkshire if we could crochet/knit Worry Worms to support children with their everyday worries. We supplied 50 of these worms.



HMP Moorlands Prison

Back in October I requested from Mary Sumner House the Christmas cards for Moorlands prison ready for writing. Mothers' Union has a choice of card designs to choose from at a special price, being part of our outreach as Mothers' Union in Sheffield Diocese.

Last year after finding the numbers of prisoners had increased, I ordered 1100 cards to be on the safe side! They duly arrived at my house and were distributed between Warmsworth and Sprotbrough Mothers' Union plus other very willing folk in the congregation. I phoned Moorlands to organise a delivery date at the beginning of December. Everyone receives a card, and it was absolutely wonderful to have the letter printed. If we can make a difference to one, we are very well blessed and thank God for that difference. How many more lives has the Mothers' Union touched who may not have put pen to paper but still appreciate what we do?

Issy Mears (St Mary's Sprotbrough)

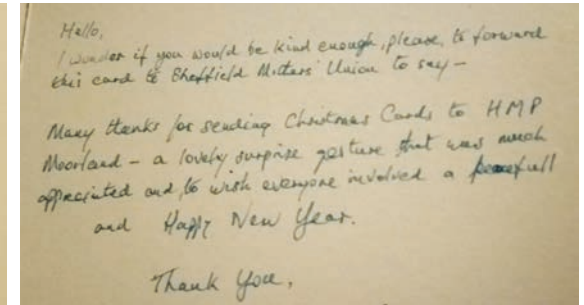


I have kept it in my journal to show me daily, kindness is still evident in the world.



Editor's Note: Christmas cards were first sent to inmates of HMP Moorland in 2016 and have continued ever since. A team of about a dozen MU members from Sprotbrough St Mary and Warmsworth St Peter write the cards - now over 1000!

We send our thanks. This year we have had thank you letters from some of the inmates by card and messenger.



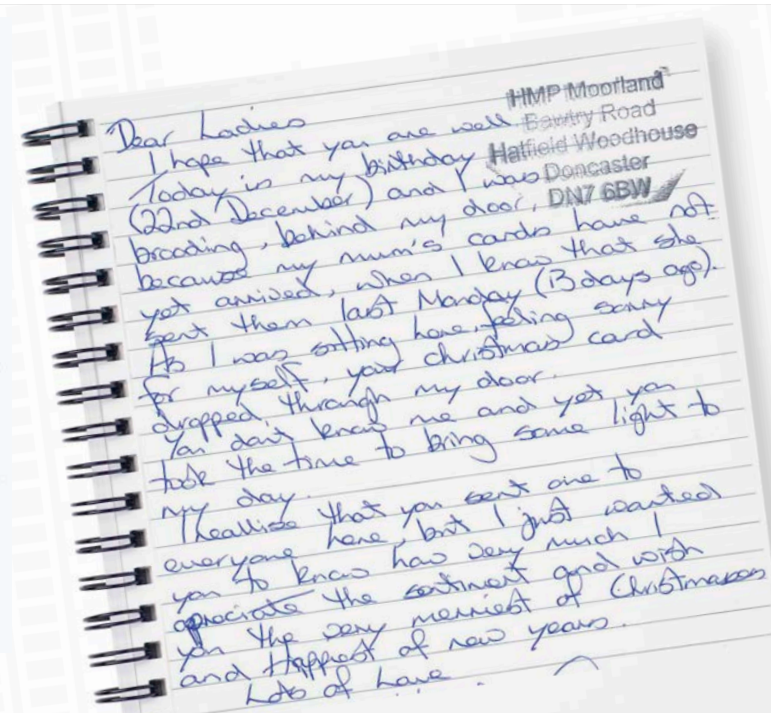
I just quickly wanted to reach out and say that as an inmate who has just left HMP Moorland to rebuild their life anew.. I was incredibly touched to receive a Christmas card from you on our wing on 1B.

From the bottom of my heart - thank you to you all!

It's those little moments of random kindness that got me through 3 years of pain, grief and sadness/loss.

Thank you 🙏

Yours with loving grace and respect.



How ARE we fulfilling our Mission in Sheffield Diocese and beyond?

We also support **Baby Basics, Families First, Carver St Parish Nurses, CART**

We provide knitted jumpers, hats, gloves, scarves, blankets and baby supplies. We recently bought 4 new Cot beds for Baby Basics.



'We left the refuge with nothing and moved into a shell of a house, but at least my daughter and I were safe at last. A teacher from my local school came forward and suggested she may be able to help us. We cannot thank her enough. We got a good start to a new life. Household items, bedding, towels, even a new toaster and kettle just what we needed. It is so lovely that you were able to help 'Rotherham Families First' Thank you so much.'

'Our worker brought us a bag of gifts for our children, they were so special who made them up really thought about it and our children. It was so nice to know someone cared.'

We took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at Sheffield Cathedral, decorating the tree with trimmings showing the work we do...

Our very special **Christmas tree**

I noticed that there was a Christmas Tree festival at our Cathedral and mentioned it to Gill our past President. Good idea - get on with it and so I did.

We felt that we had so much to share about who we are and what we do. Branches were encouraged to make decorations relative to Mothers' Union. Not as easy as it sounds but we managed to collect some by the deadline. One week before it opened to the public. At that stage we were unsure if we had enough to decorate our tree. Bearing in mind we hadn't any idea of the size of it!

You will see from the photo our completed effort which we were delighted with. We had baubles, gold hearts depicting some of the countries where there is a Mothers' Union. Circles with caravan pictures about AFIA, needles with knitting attached, praying hands and bar codes to scan for further information about us. Angels of various designs, decorated hearts, stars and items made from felt. Our wiggle worms which we are making for small children to help as comforters were of interest both to adults and children.

Thanks go to all who made the things to add to the tree and Susan who helped physically and is such a good encourager. I have to say we had fun and much

laughter.

So here I am unpacking it all and ask will we do it again? Of course we will.

Pauline Reynolds



An invitation to join our IMPC Group

JOIN US, JOIN IN

In the year 1918 an experimental group was set up in Birmingham Diocese under the title of 'Prisoners of God'. From then on, it spread to other dioceses and in 1921 was officially incorporated in the MU as the Invalid Members' Prayer Circle.



Edith Lucy Mosse, a Minister's wife began this group and was for any member who, for any reason, couldn't attend their Branch meetings but still wished to support and pray for their leaders and the work of the organisation. It was at this time in her life that Edith really became aware of the importance of prayer and worship with other women.

for others, it helped her with her own suffering, and this gave her great comfort.

The Invalid Members' Prayer Circle is now known as Indoor Members' Prayer Circle. In our Sheffield Diocese we have over eighty members.

We have unfortunately had several branch closures and have welcomed some of the members to our IMPC group.

You are very important to us and as we know that everything is underpinned by prayer.

Her husband, Rev. William Mosse, would take Edith to visit a neighbour who was crippled with arthritis and they prayed and received Communion together. Edith realised that as she prayed

Lots have been MU Branch members for many years and it is rewarding to keep in touch with them and support them for all the wonderful work they have done. Please don't give up

because your Branch has closed, or you are unable to visit your Branch. You will be made very welcome and receive telephone calls, letters, Newsline and information of all that is happening in our Diocese.

WE NEED YOU TO PRAY FOR THE WORK OF THE MOTHERS' UNION in all our projects both here and around the world.

Lesley Harpham

OUTREACH

at the Cathedral Coffee mornings

We hold a Coffee morning at the cathedral on the first Friday of every month. Sheffield Cathedral is easily reached from most places as the Supertram stops right outside the Cathedral and the starting time of 10.15 allows you to use your bus pass.



The Deaneries take turns hosting the coffee morning-providing milk, scones, butter, napkins. Also, some homemade cakes or preserves to sell on the 'Produce' stall. Someone from the Deanery says Midday Prayers around 12noon.

It is a great opportunity to meet other people and spread the word about MU. Why don't you come along and bring a friend?

Mothers' Union NEWS

Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh, has accepted the invitation to become our Royal Patron.

"We are honoured that Her Royal Highness has chosen to join us as patron," says Mothers' Union Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow. "The Duchess will bring strength and inspiration for the work we all do. We are especially grateful for Her Royal Highness's experience and commitment to championing the most marginalised, particularly those who are impacted by violence and abuse in conflict, a cause we are passionate about, because conflict



disproportionately affects women and children. As a woman-led movement, we also greatly welcome The Duchess's commitment to promoting the development of women into leadership."

Mothers' Union Worldwide



Our Overseas Correspondent, Barbara Green continues to write to our Overseas links in Diocese of Central Zimbabwe, Lango in Uganda, Kebbi in Nigeria, Tamale in Ghana, and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands sending Easter & Christmas cards with a letter.

We also continue links with our Link Diocese in Bongo. We fundraise for the Summer of Hope Appeal, Make a Mothers' Day, and the Christmas Appeal and send money raised from the Diocese so that it is doubled in the match funding. All of these helps fund our Literacy and Financial Support programmes. More information can be found on our national website www.mothersunion.org.

Sheila Wood: Wath Deanery writes...

I still receive some news from Mary de Vries in Brisbane. This includes her local news magazine and the Australia publication which are available for anyone to see.

She has told me that her Branch is also growing with some younger members. She enjoys reading Newsline and I also send her copies of all our special services which are shown to all her members and one of the MU bible/Prayer diary bags I made. Their Christmas party took place under the trees in a temperature of 31 degrees! Projects that they are involved in at the moment, include 'Hope in a Suitcase', they provide children who have been caught up in a domestic violence situation with something special that they can take when they move to foster care which belongs to them. They are collecting Bibles and dictionaries to send to Papua New Guinea.

Our members work at grassroots level in over 84 countries around the world. They bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes.



♡ 11 💬 📍

officialmothersunion A huge thank you for your generosity with our Christmas Appeal. We've raised over £100,000 and still going to help bring a brighter, lasting future to families in Burundi.

If you made a donation, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks. Our next campaign will be coming soon, so follow and like for more details 💙 🙏

#christmasappeal #mothersunion #burundi

Diocesan News



Ahead of the MU Board of Trustees meeting, Pamela Abana, Zone C Trustee, engaged with members in Canterbury at their provincial conference at High Leigh.

Pamela then travelled to Sheffield where she stayed with Gill & Geoff Fellows.

In the evening she spoke with members at All Saints Wath Branch meeting where the theme was 'Dementia Friends'. The next day Pamela attended a Trustees' Meeting at Sheffield Cathedral, sharing experiences. Our then President Elect, Jo-Anne made up a bag of goodies with items from MU for Pamela to take home with her.

The Solomon Islands where Pamela is from has links with the Diocese of Sheffield and this was a wonderful opportunity to come together.



In November a service was held for York Province in Blackburn Cathedral for all members across the province. Sheffield MU took a minibus of 24 members. A lovely time was had by all, and it was good to meet up with past Provincial Presidents, particularly Barbara Taylor and Lynne Tembey.

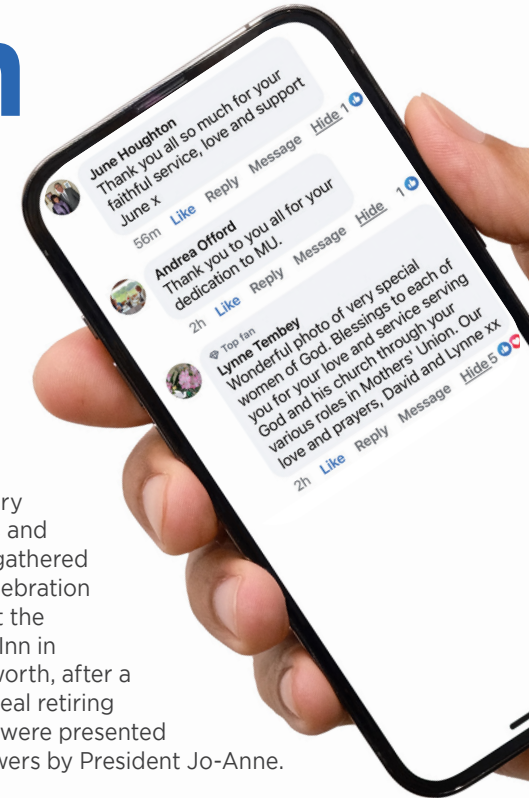


End of Triennium

In December we had our own service in Doncaster Minster which combined with DASH Deanery Advent service. Canon Richard Parker, our Chaplain led the service, and President Gill was presented with a MU scarf and some flowers. MU members brought gifts for the Refuges.



In January Trustees and friends gathered for a Celebration Lunch at the Holiday Inn in Warmsworth, after a lovely meal retiring officials were presented with flowers by President Jo-Anne.





BISHOP SOPHIE

reflects on her 5 years
in Sheffield Diocese

"I have absolutely loved my time in the Diocese of Sheffield. It will be a big wrench to leave Sheffield, but I am confident that in accepting this new role, I am following God's call."

When asked what advice she would give to her successor, Bishop Sophie said:

"I would say the Diocese of Sheffield has been an absolutely brilliant place to work. If you want to work somewhere where you're well supported, where you're energised, challenged, and have opportunity - I'd say it's right up there. There are some great things going on.

"It is the people here who I will miss the most and that sense of family, but it is my prayer and expectation that this doesn't finish here. There will be a different family

and more lovely people along the way. God calls us to love. I absolutely see the good news of Jesus being able to transform human lives, as brightly as I ever have done."

There was a farewell service at Sheffield Cathedral attended by some of our MU members.

Gill and Sheila went to the Sheffield Cathedral to bid farewell to Bishop Sophie before she takes up her position as Bishop of Coventry. This was a very moving service; we were pleased to see her wearing her MU badge and had the opportunity to chat to her as we left the service.



The Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox, said:

"The news of Sophie's appointment to Coventry is both a delight and a distress to me. She has been an outstanding Bishop of Doncaster and I have no doubt she will be an outstanding Bishop of Coventry."

What we have been doing in our Deaneries & Branches



Barnburgh MU made Christmas Decorations



Barnby Dun MU held an annual lunch in Jan 2025. 28 Members waiting to be served at Whitby's fish restaurant.

Some members celebrate big birthdays June Gallagher 93 in March. Pat Parker 93 in August.



Bramley MU held a Deanery Advent service.



Diocesan Member, Margaret Wood took these photos of the beautifully embroidered MU banner and inside of All Saints Cathedral in Somerset West, in the Diocese of False Bay Western Cape, South Africa. Margaret and her husband visit regularly and attended their MU thanksgiving service last year - much noisier than ours!!



Hexthorpe St Jude

On 5th March 2025 St Jude's Hexthorpe Mothers' Union Branch celebrated their 25th Anniversary with fellowship & a cream cake. They only have 4 Branch Members now but between them have more than 130 years membership of the Mothers' Union.



St Francis Bessacarr MU

Every month we hold a Soup Lunch in our Church Café Theo on the fourth Monday from 12-30pm. We serve a choice of three soups (one is Gluten Free) with bread and butter, followed by scones (more Gluten Free) with jam and cream, tea and coffee. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge, but many people give generous donations for MU projects both locally and in Sheffield Diocese. One of the projects being AFIA (Away From It All), a week's caravan holiday for families who haven't been able to have a holiday for a few years.

There is always lively chatter and lovely friendships and members serve everyone with beautiful smiles.

St Catherine of Siena

Susan Sayles visited the stunning Salisbury Cathedral and cloisters which are well worth a visit and the best- preserved original 1215 Magna Carta is on display in the Chapter House.

The Diocesan Mothers' Union banner was beautifully made of shimmering embroidery and is displayed in the Chapel of St Margaret in Salisbury Cathedral.

Margaret grew up in Wessex before marrying King Malcolm the Third of Scotland. She was renowned for her acts of piety and charity. The chapel has, for many years, been the focus of prayer for the Mothers' Union.



Wath All Saints MU

Mary Carr gave a very interesting talk about how Guiding began in 1910 and the history of guiding including how things have changed in this technical world.

Mary joined Guiding as a Brownie in 1946, and except for a short break when there was not a senior section in Wath to move to, she became the assistant

at Wath and retired in the 1990's! She then became involved in Barnsley Central Trefoil Guild and is still a member. Through Guiding Mary has visited world centres in Switzerland and Mexico, representing Barnsley in 1970 at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. The talk was enjoyed by all and brought back many memories.



Gill and Mary were presented with flowers acknowledging their time spent as President/ Deanery leader by Wath MU members at our post-Christmas/New Year party. The party took place late as the snow prevented this in January.



St Francis MU hosted a packed hall for their Annual Quiz Night. Pam presented the Wayne Page Memorial Trophy to the winning team in memory of her late husband, Wayne, who loved Quizzes. £400 was raised for MU Projects and a great time was had by all.

Whiston St Mary Magdalene,

On Sunday Oct 27th, 2024, Canon Richard Parker, our Chaplain, presided and preached at the Parish Communion and together with Margaret Tupling, Branch Leader and Annette Walker, Deanery Leader enrolled two new members. Jean Young from our parish and Sally Dunkley from Treeton who has been attending our branch meetings for some time were both admitted, and a good number of our members attended the service. Just before Advent one of our members delivered a box of 18 Advent Calendars and one of 30 Angels with booklet for the 33 children at the Rotherham

Women's Refuge at that time. The younger ones had a calendar and a booklet and the older ones 2 angels and a poster each which all were well received. Our January meeting was cancelled due to the weather conditions and several members being unwell. At the February branch meeting, each member talked about "a situation when they had been awestruck" which led to an interesting afternoon. We praised God for the variety of experiences we shared from a visit to the Passion Play at Oberammergau to Niagara Falls, Northern Lights to an enormous catch while on a fishing trip.



Thurlstone, St Saviour,

In March we held a fundraiser for AFIA and raised in region of £280. We had a display of these gorgeous gowns made by local lady Kay Heely who has a business locally called Angel Couture. We had coffees and scones and light lunches and after a slow start a good morning.

Worsbrough St. Mary

We held our Advent Worship for Tankersley Deanery and this was followed by food and fellowship.

Following the closure of the Tankersley and Pilley branch three members have transferred to St. Mary, Worsbrough. Plans are now in place for the Lent "Soup and Sandwich Lunch". This is followed by a time of quiet and meditation.

All monies raised go to the Mothers' Union "Make a Mother's Day" appeal.

Plans are in hand for the summer afternoon tea followed by worship.

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS



Barnburgh: Our President Gill enrolled Sue Gowens

Bessacarr: Pauline Guest, Geraldine Kaill

Doncaster Minster: Thelma Dove

Whiston: Sally Dunkley and Jean Young

Birthday Congratulations MEMBERS TURNING 90

Abbeydale

Elizabeth Ranson 90 in November 2024

Grenoside

Sheila Schofield 90 in March 2025

High Green Mortomley

Sheila Payne 90 in April 2025

Ryecroft

Jean Goodall 90 in April 2025

Sprotbrough

Sheila Long 90 in April 2025

IMPC MEMBERS

DASH Deanery

Pamela Heathcote

Mary Brown

Ruth Gomersall

Wath Deanery

Anne Eastwood

Diane McAleavy

Joan Greaves

IMPC MEMBERS OF 90 YEARS AND OVER

DASH Deanery

Wendy Shand

91 years

Ecclesall & Attercliffe Deanery

Winifred Flower

94 years

Mary Roberts

94 years

Sheila Wenninger

95 years

Claudine Murrell

90 Years

Audrey Russell

91 years

Dorothy Scarratt

90 years

Joan Wragg

95 years

Bridget Williams

95 years

Jean Froggatt

97 years

Rotherham & Laughton Deanery

Connie Shepherd MBE

93 years

Wath Deanery

Ellie Curtis

92 years

Regrets & Blessings



MARGARET CHAPMAN

Margaret, a member of Barnby Dun branch was a kind, humble and caring person, a committed Christian all her life. Margaret has a fountain of knowledge, and every day of her life she spent time caring for others visiting the sick and the lonely.

Margaret never sought recognition but did wonderful work within the Church and was a good friend to all. Her prayer life was exemplary praying passionately for the needs of others in the world.

Margaret was passionate about the Mothers' Union and the Aims and Objectives which she lived out in her life every day.

Before Margaret became ill, she sent cards to every member of her branch every month which contained the midday prayers and a poem picked out especially meaningful for that person. Margaret loved poetry and over the last few years had been introduced to some new authors.

Margaret was an ECO warrior encouraging people to use chemical free products giving out free samples for all to try.

Margaret's grandchildren all paid loving tributes to her and this poem by Gideon Heugh was read out at her funeral.

Margaret will be greatly missed by all her friends and family

Susan Cammack

A blessing for troubled times

*May you be given
whatever it is you need
to endure the injuries
of these splintering days—*

*May you be couraged with preludes of
mercy;
may you be kissed by artful hope;
may the love that dawns existence
reveal itself in your blood.*

*May the helpers seek you;
may softenings of grace greet you;
may the tender hands of fellowship
ease your weary shoulders.*

*May you stumble upon wonders;
may you fall into abundance;
may you be held through the dark
and in the face of all evidence
discover breaches of light.*

*May you sow connection;
may you reap liberation;
and amid, through and beyond all
disturbance
may you enter into salvations of peace.*

MARJORIE PEARCE

It is with great sadness we said Goodbye to Marjorie Pearce, age 96, on 26th November 2024. Marjorie was a well-loved and loyal member, our "jewellery lady" whose skill of preparing and presenting used items for fund raising efforts providing considerable results, many going to AFIA

Marjorie joined St. Johns Abbeydale Branch in 2000 from Bury St. Edmunds branch when she moved to Sheffield to be closer to family.

Marjorie was also involved in many other Church activities including helping with the lunch Club and sides duties.

Greatly missed by all.

R.I.P. Marjorie after a life well lived.

OLIVE HINCHCLIFFE

Olive would have been 100 in July but sadly she passed away in January and her funeral, which was held at Barnby Dun church, was a celebration of her life.

She had spent the last year of her life in a nursing home, but a friend often brought her to see us. She was a much-loved member of Barnby Dun Mothers' Union. RIP

GWEN ROSE

We also say Goodbye to a former member of St. Johns Abbeydale Branch Gwen Rose, who passed away in January of this year. Gwen had been in a Home in Chapeltown for a number of years. Gwen was 98 and a member of our branch. Gwen also contributed to many Church activities. A mainstay of the choir, the Lunch Club, and a talented flower arranger to name but a few.

Those who remember Gwen will always do so with a smile on their face.

R.I.P. Gwen after a long and fruitful life.

KATHLEEN WEBSTER

Kathleen was a regular attender at meetings of Ecclesfield St Mary branch since becoming a member in 2015 and we celebrated her 80th birthday last summer with cake before our monthly meeting. She will be missed by all, RIP Kathleen.



JOAN TOLLEY

We are sad to report that Joan Tolley died last September aged 102. Joan was a member of the The Cathedral branch and when it closed became a Sheffield IMPC member and continued as a member when she moved to Surrey. She and her husband, George, were tremendously supportive of the Mothers' Union. Joan was part of the Sewing Group who helped design and sew the Diocesan Banner. The Embroiderers' Guild met in the Cathedral at that time. Joan also edited a quarterly 4-page MU news sheet for 14 years until 1995. This was originally called "Inset" and in 1993 was renamed Newsline. There were two major changes during this time and as editor she had to learn new ways of presenting the material to the printers.

Joan was a small person but had a great deal of energy and always had a beaming smile for everyone.

Joan was known for doing her work in a quiet and sensitive manner and encouraged her contributors to be forward looking.

Her memorial service was attended by family and friends and held in the beautifully illuminated Chapel of the Crypts in the Cathedral. A short but thoughtful service with prayers was led by Revd. Ian Maher who had known Joan since 2012.



Her daughter Jane did the Bible reading and then a moving moment when an urn containing Joan's ashes was tenderly placed in the family vault. Joan's family kindly provided refreshments afterwards which gave those attending the opportunity to share memories of Joan.

Former President Norma Priest writes:

Joan promoted Mothers' Union wherever she went. She rarely missed the Coffee Mornings and would chat easily with most people. One of her skills was sewing and she was involved with the design and the sewing of the banner for the diocese, the one we have today depicting the family. One of her interests was our overseas programme and the way it was helping so many women live more fulfilling lives. She was supported in all she did by her husband Canon Tolley but was often heard to say "O George" when she didn't agree.

Appreciation and Thanks

The Spring issue of Newsline announced that Mrs Joan Tolley was handing over responsibility for editing our quarterly publication to Mrs Rena Dale.

Editorship of any publication is not an easy task and Joan has conscientiously and effectively carried out her duties during the past fourteen years.

During this time there have been two major changes in style of layout. The first in March 1986 and more recently in December 1993 when the name 'Inset' was no longer relevant and the publication was renamed 'Newsline'. Both changes meant that the editor had to learn new ways of presenting the material to the printer.

Joan has encouraged contributors to be forward looking and not simply provide historical reports. Her introduction of articles commissioned from people in the wider church has added to the interest and challenge of the publication.

Being an editor requires careful attention to detail; sometimes re-writing or re-phrasing to emphasise a point; deciding whether articles should or should not be used. Joan has done her work in a quiet and sensitive manner and perhaps has not always been shown the appreciation so greatly deserved.

So on behalf of the membership, may I say a sincere thank you Joan for all your effort and achievement during many years of loyal service.

(Marjorie Hooson)

*Almighty Lord,
we thank you for your presence
as we draw near in prayer.*

*Speak to us, Lord,
as we bow down in prayer.
Still our clamouring voices
and hush our insistent cries.*

*Quieten our spirits
to hear your still small voice.
Open our ears to hear of your love;
open our hearts to perceive your will.*

*Give us your grace to heed your words
and follow where you lead.
Speak to us, Lord,
for your servants are listening.*

*Almighty Lord,
we thank you that you speak to us
as we are united in prayer. Amen*

Editor's Note: we were recently given a copy of Newsline from Summer 1995 and there was a piece entitled Appreciation & Thanks- worth a read! I wonder if anyone else has old copies of Newsline from years ago - get in touch!



FRIEDA WINGFIELD

Frieda Wingfield passed away at the beginning of February aged 99, Frieda was a Sheffield IMPC member in Ecclesfield and Attercliffe Deanery



Former Presidents....

Margaret Cornick, Norma Priest and Pat Simpson remember Frieda Wingfield.

Frieda was a good friend and MU Treasurer to all three of us. She was a lovely lady with a smile for everyone. When Frieda held the role of Treasurer the Secretary was Mary White and they were very good friends. They were also a "Dynamic Duo" who ran the finances and business of the Mothers' Union in Sheffield Diocese very smoothly. Frieda was such a help to us all during our Presidencies and we are very grateful to her for all the help and advice she gave us. Frieda knew all there was to know about finance in the MU and nothing passed her by! She was very organised and always presented excellent reports for Trustees.

Frieda was also a very loyal MU Branch member of The Cathedral, Dore and Ecclesall All Saints branches and was very sad when they all eventually closed. Frieda's daughter Gill tells us that very recently Frieda and Joan Ridgeway met together and reminisced about the fun they had at meetings and the special occasions they enjoyed.

As Presidents we are all very grateful to Frieda for her support and expertise in finance and, of course, for her friendship.

R.I.P. Frieda.

Our love and blessings, Margaret, Norma and Pat.

Note from Hon VP, Norma

"Mary and I wanted a fax machine thinking it was the latest means of getting information to people, so we trotted off to Cole Bros. and the salesman did an excellent job in persuading us it was just the thing. Frieda tore a strip off us and said we couldn't do that without the Trustees permission she said she would put it to them at the next meeting so we had to go through a very embarrassing experience. It was brilliant though and they did approve but we never erred like that again."

Dates for your diary

APRIL

Friday 4th	Cathedral Coffee Morning. 10.15am - 12noon Hosts: Tankersley Deanery.
Friday 4th	A&O/F&C meeting - Sheffield Cathedral 1pm.
Thursday 10th	Trustees Sheffield Cathedral 10.00am.
Saturday 26th	Spring Council Warmsworth St Peters. 9.30am.

MAY

Friday 2nd	Cathedral Coffee morning. 10.15am - 12noon Hosts: Ecclesfield Deanery.
Wednesday 7th	Rotherham & Laughton Deanery Festival, 7pm. Whiston St Mary Magdalene: Canon Richard Parker, Chaplain to officiate.
Saturday 10th	Commissioning Service Sheffield Cathedral. 1pm - 2pm.
Tuesday 13th	Day Apart - Quiet Day, Chapter House, Sheffield Cathedral. 10.30am - 2.30pm led by Rev Captain Ian Maher. Come with a packed lunch and £5 to cover costs. Tea and coffee will be provided.

JUNE

Friday 6th	Cathedral Coffee Morning. 10.15am - 12noon Hosts: DASH Deanery.
Friday 27th	DASH Deanery Coffee morning. 10.30am - 12-30pm Doncaster Minster.

JULY

Friday 4th	Cathedral Coffee Morning 10.15am - 12noon Hosts: Trustees.
Thursday 10th	Trustees Sheffield Cathedral, 10.00am.
Friday 25th	11am Commissioning of Provincial President, Christine Sharp, 11am York Minster.

AUGUST

Friday 1st	Cathedral Coffee Morning 10.15am - 12noon Hosts: Ecclesall & Attercliffe Deanery.
Saturday 9th	Mary Sumner Service Sheffield Cathedral. 2pm - 3pm.
Wed 27th	Sponsored Silence 10.30am - 2.30pm Doncaster Minster.

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Our link Dioceses in the Wave of Prayer:

Diocese of Central Zimbabwe, Lango in Uganda, Kebbi in Nigeria, Tamale in Ghana, and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

Newsline Editorial Team:

Elizabeth Dean, Pat Simpson, Gill Fellows and Janet Howarth.

Editor's Note:

Please can all photos be in 'jpg' and would you send them as attachments.

Please submit contributions for the Summer Newsline by Tuesday 3rd June to Elizabeth, newsline@sheffieldmu.co.uk or send to 177 Allerburn Lea, Alnwick NE66 2QR Please also send dates, items and photos for website.

**Useful websites**

Sheffield Mothers' Union - Our own website

www.sheffieldmu.co.uk

Mothers' Union - Everything about Mothers' Union

www.mothersunion.org

MUeShop - Quote Sheffield when ordering

www.mueshop.org

Sheffield Diocese - Find out what is happening locally

www.sheffield.anglican.org

Editor's note:

The opinion expressed in each article is the opinion of its author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Sheffield Diocese MU.