SOME GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

The Mothers' Union Office, at Diocesan House, 109 Dereham Road, Easton NR9 5ES is open on **Wednesdays from 9.00 - 4.00** and MU Administrator, **Sonia Turner,** can be contacted there by email: munorwich@googlemail.com or Tel: 01603 882 330

Key contacts:

Andy Turner, Trustee: turner.a8@sky.com Tel: 07825 354 142
Barbara Lashley, Finance Officer &Treasurer: mund@thelashleys.com Tel: 01603 466 007
Jean Steward, Area Leader for Cromer: Tel: 01263 511 639
Jenny Holcombe, Area Leader for Norwich: jenny.juniper17@outlook.com Tel: 01603 452 429
Katherine Gray, Area Leader for Wymondham thegrays1989@gmail.com Tel: 01953 604954
Marie-Lyse Numuhoza, Trustee & Social Policy and campaigns co-ordinator. marielyse2021@gmail.com Tel: 07940 767 786
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Pam Gardener, Trustee and Communications co-ordinator: munorwichcomms@hotmail.com 07851019 964
Revd James Stewart, Diocesan Chaplain: jstewart1971@gmail.com Tel: 01603 439 160
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Sheila Tuffield, Finance and Central Services co-ordinator and MU Enterprise Rep.: sheila.tuffield@btinternet.com Tel:01603 419 896
Sue Cobb, Area Leader for Broadland: ssue.cobb@icloud.com Tel: 01603 783 387

There are currently vacancies for **Diocesan President**, **Project Co-ordinator** and **Faith and Prayer Co-ordinator** also **Area Leaders** for Mid Norfolk and West Norfolk.
If you want to know more, please do get in touch.

First Edition

MU Matters — Mothers' Union — Christian care for families

Summer 2026

CELEBRATION

MOVING FORWARD TO NEW BEGINNINGS

is always challenging but this 150th year seems a good time to start something new in the way of communication amongst MU members, friends and the wider community. The "Angles" publication, now renamed "MU Matters" has been a part of the communication network in Norwich and Waveney for quite sometime and Eunice Norwood has faithfully been producing it for many years. Our thanks go to her for all her hard work and commitment; it is now time for her to be on the receiving end of all the news and views rather than doing the work.

As Editor I would like to thank all those previous readers of Angles who have sent in their thoughts about this publication: its name, its content and its purpose. All ideas and suggestions have been collated and I hope that, with your feedback on this initial publication and overall support, future editions can be created that demonstrate what MU is all about and what is going on across Norfolk and Waveney and beyond.

I have put together a group email list of contacts across the diocese who will hopefully be a link with their branches and areas. If you would like to be added to this list of people, who will be alerted as to when the time is right to send contributions for the next edition, then please contact me.

If you do not use email but would like to contribute please let me know an alternative form of contact and I will keep you in the loop also. It is important that Diocesan members are represented as well as those who belong to a local branch and contributions are welcome from everyone.

This first edition is, unsurprisingly, on the theme of "Celebration". There is much to celebrate in our 150th year.

Katherine Gray *(contact details on back page)*

UNDERPINNING ALL THAT MU DOES IS PRAYER

MU is built on Faith and Divine Guidance and each Diocese has its own Chaplain. Here **Revd James Stewart**, Chaplain for the Norwich Diocese, writes to the MU members he serves, on the theme of celebration:

The Act of Celebration

As I write this the World Cup has begun in USA, Canada and Mexico, with people gathering from all around the world to celebrate sporting achievement and the sense of togetherness which team sports bring. More locally I have been present at our local High School's prize giving event with over 1000 children present. Each child was celebrating their own personal achievements but also the accomplishments of the school as a whole. Added to this we, in Mothers' Union, have been celebrating our vital work achieved over 150 years.

The Mothers' Union is known for its commitment to prayer, outreach, and practical support. Each of you in your own way dedicate your time and talents to strengthening family life, supporting vulnerable people, promoting stable relationships, and responding to local needs with compassion and care. As a team together you make a real difference to many lives.

Your dedication reflects Christ's love in action, bringing hope, comfort, and encouragement to those who need it most. Their work reminds us that small acts of kindness and faithfulness can have a lasting impact on families, churches, and communities.

As we celebrate this year, let us honour our own achievements, but also the work of those who came before us, and let us pray for God's continued blessing upon us all as we serve the world with faith, love, and hope.

At the time of going to print, James is leading the 150th anniversary retreat at Walsingham; News about that next time, perhaps.(Editor)

RECENTLY, A LETTER PUBLISHED IN THE TIMES

was circulated amongst those members who are on our administrator, Sonia Turner's group email list; you may have seen it. It was written by The Right Rev Dr Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells and co-convenor of the Anglican Health and Community Network. He was responding to a letter about Tackling Ebola.

Amongst other issues, that we can perhaps return to in a future editions of MU Matters, he highlights the importance of locally-based people within communities. He writes about local churches and their organisations, (such as Mothers' Union) as trusted, permanent neighbours who are uniquely equipped to be involved. As Jenny Holcombe from **Eaton** Branch comments *"This letter is a celebration and encouragement for MU members in our relationships and grassroots work - a reminder of what we can achieve with awareness, correct information and involvement"*

The power of the media should not be overlooked and with so much going on in this 150th year there is more scope to tell the world what we are up to "you in your small corner and I in mine", as the song goes.

As previously mentioned, at the Celebration in St Paul's Cathedral and also in our own cathedral, MU members were described as salt and light. As Archbishop Sarah Mullaly said *"You are salt and light and we are grateful"*. But lights should not be hidden under a bushel but used to light the way for generations to come.

Kathleen Snow, Worldwide President of MU, is quoted as saying:

"Mothers' Union has always been about connection; the belief that it takes a village to support communities, and that we are that village, a global one." She continues: *"As we mark 150 years, we give thanks for the impact of Mothers' Union today, standing alongside families, and campaigning on serious issues."*

EARLIER IN THE YEAR

members and friends attended the launch of the MU book "Grassroots" that was contributed to by all 23 branches across the Diocese as a well as Diocesan Members and MU partners. The book continues to make its way into the wider community as well as amongst MU members.

Amanda Hart from **Fakenham** Branch, who illustrated the book, contributed the following, sent from her daughter who lives in Newbury, Berkshire. Amanda thought it such a lovely picture she sent it in to be shared. This is what was said ....



"I've lent your book to my work-friend as her dad was a pastor. He passed away years ago but her mum is still very involved in the church. She has been reading through it tonight and said it's such a lovely book and the illustrations are so wonderful, it warms her heart"

Copies have gone to some of our MU leaders beyond our boundaries and books are available, at £12 per copy, from Wymondham Abbey shop or directly from Katherine Gray - johngrayotc@gmail.com Tel 01953 604954. Norwich Cathedral Shop also has some copies priced £13.

Please note that copies are NOT available from Amazon although it seems to have got a mention there! Interestingly Amazon says that it is currently unavailable and it does not know when it will be back in stock. Cheeky that, when it never has been in stock: Fake News!

LEADING THE WAY

The 150th events committee and board of trustees have been steering MU through this busy year. Future Trustee meetings are scheduled for Wednesdays 9th September and 4th November and Diocesan Council will be on 18th November at St Luke's Church, Aylsham Road Norwich.

MARY SUMNER, FOUNDER OF MOTHERS' UNION

is celebrated on August 9th each year on what is known as "Mary Sumner Day" During this year of celebrations Mary Sumner Day will see a number of events going on, not least a picnic in Norwich Cathedral Close from 2.00 to 5.00 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday 9th.

Members and Friends are asked to bring their own picnics and Jenny Holcombe, Norwich Area leader, would like to know the number of people planning to come. Her contact details can be found on the back page of this edition.

Attleborough branch plans to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Mothers' Union by putting a display of MU past and present in St Mary's church, Attleborough, over the weekend of 8th & 9th August.



The town's heritage group is helping with photos of members in the past and members are going to highlight the current work of MU locally, nationally and globally.

On the Sunday, at the 10am service, MU members are doing the readings and prayers and Mary Dark will be giving a talk about Mary Sumner and the MU today.

The new publicity banner, pictured here, is available to borrow for events. Please contact Sonia in the office (see the back page).

AROUND THE DIOCESE, 150TH CELEBRATIONS

have already been taking place and there are more to come. Each event reflects different aspects of the life of MU.

On May 7th the Diocese celebrated with its annual Festival Service in Norwich Cathedral. This began by a gathering in the cloisters with welcome refreshments served by Sheila Hanmer and Mary Dark and their team. Copies of the "Grassroots" book and some cards made by Amanda Hart from her book-illustrations were on sale.

The service began at 12 noon - the worldwide time for midday prayers in MU circles - and, as usual, banners were paraded and displayed.



The Guest speaker was Rt Revd. Graham Usher, MU Patron and Bishop of Norwich who gave an entertaining and thought-provoking talk on the themes of salt and light. Mothers' Union members were celebrated as being both salt and light in our communities; making big differences in small ways to the lives of others, supporting family life and local communities.

After the service some groups shared a picnic or a meal before setting off for home.

If you were unable to be there, the event was live-streamed and displayed on You tube so others unable to attend could watch this historic occasion. There is still time to watch it as it should be available for a while,

https://youtube.com/live/K1ThTAZSIro?feature=share





More recently. several local members travelled to London to be part of the 150th celebration service in St Paul's Cathedral, London. Sheila, Jo and Jan from **Pulham Market** branch tell us their experience of the day:

From Pulham Market to St Paul's Cathedral:

Our journey to London went smoothly and we were soon joining a very long queue of MU members outside St Paul's Cathedral. Once inside we were full of awe and wonder; such a beautiful place, already filled with so many people, a really moving and spiritual experience. We soon found seats together, sitting under the magnificent dome near to all that was happening.

The procession was led by the Diocese of London banner followed by the provincial banners, clergy, choir and last but not least The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally, our patron – she gave us a very special welcome, thanking us for always rolling up our sleeves and getting on with things!



The Procession at St Paul's

The sound of us singing the lovely hymns filled the entire Cathedral and was just amazing.

During the service of Holy Communion, we heard from the Worldwide President, Kathleen Snow, emphasising how powerful MU is when we gather together supporting and encouraging one another. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave an inspiring sermon based on salt and light, and praising all that MU has achieved since Mary Sumner's first vision.

We left the Cathedral singing "Tell out my soul ……" and feeling uplifted, joyful and proud on a beautiful evening hearing the cathedral bells ringing out.

Being united in Christ together is always a wonderful experience. It was a truly memorable day.

Other groups in the area and the Trustees were invited.

Sara Wills, Area leader for Waveney and Yare that includes **Bradwell, Great Yarmouth Lowestoft** and **Pakefield** tells us that, as well as the Bradwell celebrations, **Pakefield** Branch held a local celebration in June and **Lowestoft** Branch is hoping to hold an event later in the summer. Mary Carr reports a busy summer sharing the celebrations with the branches in her area,

Later in the year, **High Oak** branch is planting a commemorative Oak Tree in Wicklewood Churchyard. There will be a special service at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 22nd November when the High Oak Music Group will be playing and leading the singing and there will be hot refreshments to beat off the inevitable cold (unimaginable in a heatwave at the time of writing). It would be extra special if members and friends from other branches would be able to come along and swell the throng.

THERE HAVE BEEN CELEBRATIONS TAKING PLACE

beyond our boundaries too.



To mark Mothering Sunday, TV presenter Claire McCollum was in Liverpool celebrating 150 years of the Mothers' Union and meeting mums inspired by faith to show God's love and care to those in need. Members were featured in the Mothering Sunday Songs of Praise.

If you missed seeing the programme there are still eight months left to watch it if you have access to iplayer (perhaps it could be shared at an MU meeting). The link to the programme is https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002sv8k/songs-of-praise-mothering-Sunday

If anyone recorded it and has a copy please let me know as it would be good to keep a copy for the archive (Editor)



Four members of **North and South Wootton MU** had their picture taken with Paddington Bear prior to attending the Festival service with their Rector.

Other events at the Woottons included a New Year's party with entertainment by the local U3A's Ukulele group, followed by bring and share refreshments described by Joan Woodard as a "Positive Feast". As well as celebrating Lady Day with a Communion Service, members were invited to contribute to the Mothering Sunday service at All Saints' Church North Wootton when Angela explained how and why the Mothers' Union came into being 150 years ago, how it worked originally and what it does today. She highlighted what members in the Woottons do to support MU projects

Following on, in May, Chaplain James Stewart led a short service and then gave a talk about his journey to Priesthood; members from **Swaffham** MU were welcomed to that event also.

Other activities have included a visit to St Andrew's Church, Congham to see the collection of 40 embroidered hassocks using the text from the proverb of the virtuous woman in the Bible and a "Left Right" game that was said to be "hilarious".

In July a Strawberry Tea is planned and in September a service of thanksgiving for Mothers' Union.

Elsewhere, another celebratory tea is being arranged by **Spixworth** branch on 26th September.

WELCOME

In this 150th year a special welcome to all those who have joined MU recently. Attleborough, High Oak, Little Melton and North and South Wootton report new members and interest shown.
New members and friends are of course always greatly valued.



Members of **Fakenham** Branch enjoyed a celebration day out at Hunstanton and Kay Hathway has written a sonnet that captured their celebration day by the sea and reminds us of the reason we meet so that we can support the work of the MU.

Mothers' Union 150th year anniversary outing

Is someone missing from our trip today?
As we head to Hunstanton for some fun.
The clouds look full enough, if slightly grey,
Yet in-house fish and chips brings out the sun.

When all at last are gathered, eyes are closed
In thanks to God. Then that haunting smell
we've longed for opens mouths as food comes close,
then chatter turns to hush, as hunger's quelled.

The seaside stirs memories of projects
We support, but today, it's us that we please.
We watch waves, livelier than we'd expect,
And spume is misted, fragrant in the breeze.

Was someone missing from our trip today?
No, Mary Sumner's been with us all the way.

Bell ringing has been another way of celebrating the special year, with bell ringers at the Church of St. Faith, Gaywood, completing a quarter peal back in May. Some of the **N&S Wootton** members were able to witness this (very impressive) musical and skilful accomplishment and it was agreed that the participants must have been exhausted after 45 minutes of intense concentration and non-stop ringing!



At St. Margaret's Church, **Lowestoft** the Tower Captain is having their bells rung for the 150th year too.

Lowestoft also reports a special celebration in their branch when member John Worsfield celebrated his 85th birthday. MU Friend and supporter Kevin Hill was the speaker at that gathering which was in National Volunteers' week and he spoke about all the campaigns that he is involved in to improve community life in and around Lowestoft.

TREE PLANTING IS ANOTHER WAY

in which MU is commemorating its special year. Sue Head from **Little Melton** branch is masterminding a project linking Shelfanger Community Tree Nursery with branches across the diocese and there is still time to get involved. Please contact Sue if you are interested to learn more: sjrc.sjrc00@gmail.com Tel: 07963572760.

Meanwhile, on 31st March, **Bradwell Mothers' Union** planted a Bramley apple tree in the churchyard to commemorate the 150 years. It was planted by the vicar, Revd. Steve Deall with the committee in attendance. A Bramley apple was requested as Bradwell Church is about to have beehives in the churchyard and this was the choice of tree for the bees.





By the time you read this, **Bradwell** MU will also have had its usual Strawberry Tea but with some extra surprises as a 150th celebration.