



Windows

The Newsletter of Mothers' Union
in the Diocese of Salisbury
Registered Charity No. 249696

Spring 2024

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Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Mothers' Union has a vision of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.

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A Message From Our President - Sandra Gamble



As I sit down in the cold days of January to write my Spring Window's 2024 Update to you all, the subject most in my mind and of concern, as we head toward the 2025-2027 Triennium, is Diocese of Salisbury's future. You'll be aware of the new projects and pilots, emerging from Mary Sumner House, of which I wrote in the autumn and which are aimed at encouraging new membership. However, I am now needing to highlight a potential risk to MU Salisbury's sustainability into the next Triennium.

Having had the benefit of a full trustee board for the six years before Rosie stepped down and her Board agreeing to support me going into this triennium – for which I am very much indebted – 2024 will now need to focus on the next Triennium. Most of our Diocesan Board members who served under Rosie and now during my first Triennium are no longer able to commit to another Triennium. Not surprisingly! They have volunteered and have all served for two triennia at least. In addition, Suzanne, after 10 years as our volunteer Diocesan Treasurer, and Jenny, after 14 years as our Diocesan Secretary, will be stepping down, as will our Diocesan Chaplain Jayne who, with her husband, will be retiring to Cumbria.

This means that our diocesan elections in 2024 for the next Triennium, for which you will be receiving nomination papers, will be crucial - as will finding treasury and secretarial and pastoral support. Of course, when you read this from me in April/May, things will have moved on and I very much hope produced some additional names and talents to help lead us into 2025 at Diocesan level.

You will also, since my writing this Update, have no doubt been hearing more about the Southwest Cluster Pilot, in which we in Salisbury, as a diocese, are participating along with the 7 other southwest dioceses. It has emerged as a result of the seriously increasing difficulty for MU to recruit full trustee boards in all dioceses, including diocesan presidents (5 dioceses are currently without DPs), and the risk confronting some dioceses of fast becoming inoperable.

What the SW Cluster Pilot means, if finally adopted by the dioceses involved and rolled out, is this very important feature: members will continue to view themselves as members of their own dioceses and dioceses will remain very much as they are now. But finding trustees to carry out the extra governance, administration and financial responsibilities that go with dioceses being charities in their own individual right (as Salisbury and others in the southwest currently are) is seen as presenting a problem.

The direction Mary Sumner House has suggested is to form a Cluster charity that will be able to take on many of the legal burdens and accountabilities currently required of the dioceses, while the dioceses relinquish these legal responsibilities to become committees of the new Cluster legal entity. Significantly, dioceses will each appoint

onerous accountabilities, to focus principally on their diocesan ministry of fellowship, worship and action in the community. Specialist volunteer trustees, with relevant expertise, will also be sought to join the Cluster Board to give leadership on governance issues while providing support to the dioceses. Nevertheless, although no longer charities in their own right, it is envisaged that dioceses will still need volunteers within their dioceses to co-ordinate initiatives and activities at diocesan level - for example, in relation to action and outreach, increasing membership, liaising with the Diocese and dealing with income and expenditure. The aim ultimately, after a period of settling in, however, is to decrease the level of volunteering and legal expertise required.

But PLEASE let's also not forget what has been achieved in 2023 – even if I repeat a little! A successful office move to St Thomas's Parish Office, Salisbury, was completed in July. The AFIA project at our 6-bed holiday home at Rockley Park, Poole, welcomed, over 21 weeks, 45 adults and 40 children needing a break and without the means to have one, following a very successful revised and enhanced promotional advertising campaign.

In September, Salisbury was delighted to add Lavington School, with 40 pupils from Years 10 and 11, to the list of 7 other schools participating in our Virtual Babies Life Skills project.

The annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence communion service held in November in the Cathedral, with guest speaker Shelley Ridell, a Counsellor with Salisbury Women's Refuge, was attended by The Mayor of Salisbury, the Chair of Salisbury Refuge and approximately 90 MU members. The Cathedral service also focused once more on our continuing support for Salisbury Women's Refuge as MU members brought donations of items of all sorts on the day to the Cathedral for delivery to the Refuge.

Our MU "Souls of our Shoes" display in November/December, a first, began in the Cathedral for five days during the period of our Eucharist service. You will be able to read more about it and our partnering with the Salisbury Soroptimists elsewhere here in our spring edition of Windows.

Remembering the children of prisoners at Christmas, we again partnered in the Christian charity Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree project to fund, purchase, wrap and post Christmas presents to children of prisoners serving time in HMP Erlestoke. Christmas 2023 saw 28 children of 20 parents receive presents and hand-written messages from their fathers.



Crafting is still on the go. Baby blankets, newborn knitted hats, baby sweaters, twiddle muffs and the like, during the year, have found their way regularly to the office, and then to Salisbury District Hospital and elsewhere for families in need. And we continue to promote Baby Bundles with the children's charity Spurgeons. 3

To seek to address the serious decline in MU membership, we have participated in MSH's Church- based Membership Pilot. The project has reached an evaluation stage and MSH has invited us to participate in that.

In October 2023, our Diocesan Autumn Gathering of members took place with approximately 50 attendees. It ensured an update of all that had been happening in the Diocese and at MSH and coming events. What then for 2024? A busy year in view of all of the above! It is also intended that we will see the launch in the Diocese of the Rise Up Campaign against domestic abuse. And please be assured that Trustees appreciate greatly the hard work you do and the contributions you make in your Branches and Prayer and Fellowship Groups - that together make MU Diocese of Salisbury what it is and of which to be so very proud.

Thanking of you all with my love and prayers – **Sandra**



Chaplain's Chat

When I sat down to write this piece the country was in the midst of the storms Isha and Jocelyn; these being the ninth and tenth named storms of the current season. Our hearts go out to all those who have been badly affected by the damage these storms bring. They need our sympathy and support and I know in many communities Mothers' Union members will be active in providing such support.

Those of us who have been able to evade such devastation, as the severe weather can bring, nevertheless, feel affected by it.

It can be frightening simply to imagine what might happen and for many, who live alone and cannot get around, as easily as they once did, there can be a great sense of isolation when such bad weather keeps you indoors. And of course there is the overriding fear, contained in this increasing pattern of weather that we are witnessing, that our world is not as it should be. That Climate change is having a profound effect on lives, all across our world, cannot be denied. In the poorest parts crops fail, or homes and villages are lost completely. In other places there are those who fear every time it rains for their belongings or their livelihood and then there are many who simply lament the widespread destruction of the natural world.

All of us, as members of the Church and as part of the Mothers' Union family, are aware of our role as stewards of God's Creation and we know there is a responsibility to respond in a practical way to help combat climate change. No doubt many of us have already made such practical changes as using lower energy bulbs, using recycled or sustainably sourced products and using environmentally friendly cleaning products. We may have decided to reduce our travel footprint. A number of groups are working regularly in their local churchyards to improve the space for the benefit of people and native wildlife through tree and wildflower planting and providing such things as bird feeders and bug hotels. are fundamentally, a people of hope. A few weeks ago I heard

4 a data scientist, talking on the radio. She was saying that her studies show that we have made much progress on these problems, and that we could be on track to

achieve true sustainability, in our world, if we focus on the things that really work. Undoubtedly these problems are big but they can be solvable and we can build a better future for everyone if we really try.

The spring season is always a time for renewed hope as we see, in all around us, the reality of that hope as we observe the return of life in our gardens and countryside. We see it in the buds on the trees, the flowers that begin to bloom, the birds building their nests for their anticipated brood and in the lengthening of each day. Most of all our hope is in the Easter story, for the Easter message is simply one of new life and hope. In Jesus Christ rising from the grave, we are given the assurance of life everlasting. Let us rejoice in the springtime and as we do so pray for our creation.

With my good wishes and blessings - **Jayne**

Treasurer's Notes

In the Spring 2023 edition I wrote that I had served you, as your treasurer for 10 years and that I would like to hand over the role to another willing member during 2024. I received no replies so I wrote again in the Autumn edition and asked you to spread this further in your parishes, that there might be someone in your congregation who might consider this role. Sadly, still no enquirers. We are putting an advert in the diocesan Grapevine newsletter and I am praying that someone will come forward. I dearly wish to hand this very important role over and not walk away and leave you without a treasurer. It is a privilege to serve you all but I feel that for my personal life I need to step down.

As I write this I am beginning to close the 2023 Accounts, as predicted, we will show an overspend in our working income and expenditure. Thank you branches for all your fund raising and also thanks to the sterling work Alison Oakes does in collecting gift aid annually. Don't forget, if you pay the Inland Revenue tax on your earnings, pensions, savings, by completing a Gift Aid form (obtainable from the office, Jenny or myself), we are able to collect 25p in the pound from your annual subscription and any donations you make. Branch treasurers, please remember to check with your members when you are completing the annual subscription forms.

Our 2023 membership was 713 a reduction of 48 members. Twenty-one pounds per member has been sent to MSH and for 2024 this has been increased to £25. Our diocesan subscription for 2024 is £35 per member and £60 for joint membership. Can I remind branch leaders and treasurers that if you are having to consider closing a branch or moving to Prayer & Fellowship group, please in the first instance contact Jenny Harrison, our secretary to be guided on the correct steps to take.

Standing Orders: More important than ever, there are still standing orders that have not been amended to reflect the increase in subscription. Many are still at £26, £27, £28, £30, £32. Please, please can you check that your standing order is up to date? I have been reporting this for several years and still they remain. Our office move was a great success and we are settled in our new office, we kept the expense for this to a minimum £1,328, we are fortunate that we have reserves that we can use for these unexpected events.

- **Suzanne Waters**

A thriving Mothers Union in South Sudan

It is hard to imagine living in a country with some of the worst health indicators in the world, where you can't access basic paracetamol and antibiotics or have an opportunity to ask a doctor "what is wrong with me?" A country where 75% of all child deaths are due to preventable diseases like diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia and one in ten children die before the age of five. Where preventable maternal deaths are sadly accepted as a way of life. After surviving years of conflict, South Sudan is a country where little progress has been made in terms of healthcare but there is faith and hope

for the future which we discovered when three members of the Sudan Medical Link (SML) Team travelled across Western Equatoria in South Sudan in November 2022.



We (Dr Robin Sadler, Dr Karen Mounce and Mrs Anne Salter) arrived in Yambio to an effusive welcome where we were made aware of how people wanted to share with us the hope of God that is found in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. The spirituality and faith they shared with us was dynamic, sometimes overwhelming, and helped us to understand their meaning and purpose in life as well as their hope for tomorrow. It was humbling to discover that the Salisbury Sudan Medical Link was so highly regarded.

Dr Karen Mounce and Anne Salter

We found that the 16 health clinics provided by the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) and supported by SML are truly making a difference. Medicines are reaching their destinations and lives are being saved as a result. Students who SML are supporting to become clinical officers, nurses, midwives or laboratory assistants recognise that they have a God given opportunity to train and serve in their communities.



Yambio guest house kitchen

We were incredibly impressed with the vital role that the thriving Mothers Union were playing in terms of health prevention, care of the sick and family support. A social care network of committed Christians empowering other women with practical skills and



Students pictured above

(many of you may have met her when she visited Salisbury with her husband Archbishop Samuel Peni) is the National President of the Girls Friendly Society for South Sudan and she is providing strong leadership with the Mothers Union to combat gender-based violence by providing workshops and bringing women together to meet and discuss.

We were buoyed up by the faith and hope that we saw of the Mothers Union who were ambitious for their communities. We were able to immediately provide some funding "in country" to support their work

with young people as well as beginning a sewing and knitting project which brought in much needed funds to continue their work. We made friendships with the Mothers Union of South Sudan that continue long after our return to the UK.

We learnt that total number of MU members registered and licensed in the Diocese of Yambio are 2,054. And the total number of the women who attend the church services each Sunday is three times the total number of men attending Church Services at a time. Even the total number of young women in the youth choirs are more than the boys. So, women are committed to their God, and it is their happiness to serve their God, even if they face many challenges. Mothers Union in the Diocese of Yambio are carrying out a lot of activities in order to keep the Church alive.

The following are the activities of Mothers Union in the Diocese of Yambio:

1. Weekly prayers every Tuesday.
2. Monthly special prayers for peace in South and the world at large
3. Visiting the Hospitals, prisoners, and pray with them.
4. Counselling the conflicted families and reconcile them.
5. Marriage counselling for young people.
6. Feeding the elderly, and the sick people in the Hospitals.
7. Buying soap and washing the clothes of those who cannot help themselves.
8. Cleaning the Churches and its compound, decorating the Church, cooking in the Church, and taking care of the visitors.
9. Every Tuesday after their prayer, members divide themselves to agree how to meet the various needs of the families and elderly.



Purpose of the Project: When we asked for a business case/project which could support the Mothers Union they proposed the following: -

To seek financial support that could help the ministry of the MU to be able to serve the need people well. One of the ways is to acquire items that we can hire out to raise funds. We would also like to open a restaurant/cafeteria to serve our schools with meals. This could help us raise funds for our activities.

Objectives:

1. To raise funds to be able to run MU ministries,
2. To look after the sick, elderly, and people with disabilities.
3. It will also allow them to look after themselves and their families as Mothers Unions.
4. It will raise the capacity of Mothers Union to contribute towards the development of the Church.
5. The contribution of the Mothers Union will lead to the good health of our people.
6. It will help them to raise their Children to School.

Beneficiaries:

Mothers Union, Tiimbiro All Saints Cathedral, sick, elderly, people with disability and the entire community will be the beneficiaries. We returned from South Sudan determined and better informed about what the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) needs from us as partners in faith and by working together how healthcare can be improved in South Sudan.

If you would like to support this Mothers Union project or would like more information then please contact Anne Salter (Volunteer for the SML) on info.sudanmedicallink@gmail.com or on mobile 07985509732.

STOLES FOR SUDAN

This is a Mothers' Union project that has been running for many years and recently we have been able to deliver ten stoles to the Bishop of Salisbury's office. They will be taken to the Sudan by anyone visiting there in the coming months. By the time you read this an eleventh stole will have already reached its destination, the Diocese of Cuibiet, hand delivered by the Reverend Ali Alexander, curate from St Thomas's Church, Salisbury who has gone out to run workshops for the local people.

If you would like to make a stole, please contact the office. They are not difficult to sew and, as you can see from the photo, the more elaborate the decoration, the better. The Annual Garden Party in the South Canonry, The Close, Salisbury is on Sunday, 9 June 2024 in aid of the Sudan Medical Link and we hope you will visit our stand there and perhaps purchase a stole pack.



The Wriggle Valley Prayer and Fellowship Group

OUR AUTUMN SOUP FEST! 20 September 2023

We are a small elderly prayer group with a combined age of several hundreds! We like to raise a little bit of money each year to support local MU charities as well as the wonderful international initiatives sponsored by the world-wide MU. Our usual coffee mornings make about £200+ but we wanted to try something different which would appeal to a wider variety of people in our village, so the idea of a SOUP FEST was born! (We've added quite a lot of detail just in case it's of help for anyone wanting to do something similar).

First mooted in June, we immediately booked our local Church Hall. Only two dates were available even then for September. A booking was made and we immediately started to "chat up" local chaps to keep the date free to help with the physical effort of setting up and taking down tables! Advertisements were put in the village and Benefice magazines; on websites; fliers were handed out and left in strategic places; posters made. As for the soups: Of course our elderly ladies are all excellent cooks and offered their specialities but we also asked several men whom we knew to be good chefs to help. And to our delight, people offered to make for us and to help in any way. Bread, butter and chunks of cheese were also to be available.

We decided on donations plus a really good raffle with about 6 good prizes. Jolly tablecloths and pretty bunches of flowers were put on each table. To get people to mix and talk to each other we used the long tables in our hall, each seating 6-8. We were asked for the soups to include vegan, vegetarian, saltless and gluten free! We ended up with vegan cauliflower saltless (amazingly delicious!), leek and potato, courgette and mint, curried parsnip and apple, butternut squash, tomato carrot and onion, lentil and thyme, carrot and parsnip, and gluten free chicken soup with GF scones. Someone arrived with a big thermos of home-made tomato soup on the day! Many soups were finished but there were two which were made fresh, in large quantities, just in case they were needed and which could be frozen afterwards. People were encouraged to help themselves to water and then later to tea and coffee.

What we had not been able to organise was THE WEATHER! It was absolutely shocking with heavy rain all morning easing just as we finished at 2pm! About 50 people bravely came to the hall like drowned rats with clothes streaming with water. Hot soup was just what they needed and with the weather being so awful, they stayed and chatted and met new people and sampled the different soups! It was hard physical work with our more able waitresses taking orders from each table so that the team in the kitchen could fill mugs with the delectable soups. We could not have done this without the full and happy support from people in the village of Yetminster and we were particularly grateful to the team of chaps who did much of the hard work of moving furniture!

And the wonderful result was that we made £400 which is being shared between The Women's refuge, the MU literacy programme and the caravan holidays.

Crafting Matters



One of the good things about being forced to have a clear-out is that you come across things you had forgotten existed. This happened when we were forced to move our MU Office. One of the things that Rosemary came across was a box of patterns for craft items, ranging from teddy bears, twiddle mitts and crib figures, to prayer shawls. There are also ideas and patterns on the MU website. If your branch is short of something to fill the programme, why not have a craft evening that can be linked to a church season (Christmas or Easter), maybe learn a new skill, and that might lead to members making items that could be sold to raise money towards our MU projects. At my branch we have made

greeting cards, diamond craft key rings, beaded netted baubles and beaded bells on evenings led by members of the congregation, members themselves or their relatives. I have also received lovely, knitted baby clothes from our church knit and natter, and the flower ladies' group, which have been greatly appreciated by our partners Spurgeons for the children's centres they run. Then Salisbury Hospital is always in need of baby blankets for the maternity unit (60cm by 80cm). So there are plenty of ideas and opportunities to use the skills God has given us to raise awareness of what MU does best, supporting families in need.

Elizabeth Bowler

16 Days of Activism Cathedral Service- 21st November

Mothers' Union Diocese of Salisbury held their 16 Days of Activism Service in the Trinity Chapel, Salisbury Cathedral on 21st November (slightly earlier than the Activism dates due to Cathedral requirements). Our Diocesan Chaplain Revd Jayne Tyler led the Service, which was attended by The Mayor of Salisbury, Cllr Atiquil Hoque, Mrs Caroline Probert, Chair of Salisbury Refuge, about 90 MU members and a few Soroptimists. The address was given by Mrs Shelley Ridell a Counsellor with the Refuge who gave a fascinating insight into the work of the Counselling Team and the Refuge. Fifty guests and members then adjourned for lunch at Sarum College and a chance to catch up with. We had a display of Souls of our Shoes in the Trinity Chapel for five days and this also caught the attention of many Cathedral visitors. The Mayor was most impressed with the work of MU and we understand he spoke briefly with HM The Queen and later to the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton about MU at a dinner he attended a week later at Tidworth Garrison.



The Soroptimists arranged for the Clock Tower and the Chapel Night Club to be lit in orange, had two stunning post box toppers, created artwork and signs, wrote press releases and handled publicity.

We had a big display at St Thomas' Church in the city until 4th December and replaced that with a display at the foot of the Soroptimist "Orange the World" Christmas Tree ready for the Christmas Tree Festival starting on 5th December. The footfall at St Thomas' was estimated at 11,000 over Festival period and many people took photographs.

It has been a marathon collaborative effort. MU members covered umpteen shoe boxes in purple and orange and prepared labels, signs and posters. Alabare kindly donated 53 mixed pairs of shoes.

Our local Soroptimists are deeply involved in the "Safer Salisbury" Project and this campaign against Domestic Abuse will also tie in with their future work and the MU "Rise Up" Campaign. It has been a very good experience working together. Our recent campaign review confirmed we will collaborate again in November 2024. Carrie Walsh Trustee (Project Lead)



Branch Reports on 16 Days of Activism Campaign 25 November - 10 December 2023, Trowbridge

Here in Trowbridge, we launched the Rise Up! Initiative with the cooperation of our rector, by putting posters around our church and the church hall, and a Souls of our Shoes display in church for 11 days (there wasn't room to leave it up during our Christmas Tree Festival). I explained to the congregation at our main Sunday service what it was all about and promoted our MU Advent service, when we collected gifts for Salisbury Women's Refuge and took a cash collection for the refuge. The service was attended by members of other MU branches in our deanery as well as members of our congregation. All has been well received by members of our congregation. I'm sure that we will build on this next year.

Photo - Souls of our Feet





St Mary's



West Moors

Sherborne

Our Branch will not have been as active as some. Two of us attended the Service in the Cathedral on November 21st bearing gifts for the Women's Refuge in Salisbury. At our meeting on Nov 24th I reported on the day and used appropriate prayers. We are considering for next year a display on our MU board in the Abbey to highlight domestic abuse. You might be interested to know that the Soroptimists had a good display of "Souls of our Shoes" in Yeovil.



St Francis & St Lawrence

A small display was placed in the benefice church of St Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle and appropriate prayers were included in the Sunday Intercessions.



27th November to 10th December

In the early part of the first week, MU placed "Souls of our Shoes" displays of varying sizes in shop and business windows around the City of Salisbury: Boots, Howdens (an Insurance Company), Jordan & Mason (Estate Agent), The Hat Shop, "Sharp Practice" (Tattoo Parlour), The Works, B&R Textiles, Salisbury Library, three Charity shops: SW Mencap, Cancer Research, Alabare.

St James Trowbridge

Christmas Tree Festival. This is not a Mothers' Union event but the chief organiser Dilys Becket is a committee member, as are her "elves" Dorothy McNeish, Cath Senior and Wendy Darwin. It ran for 5 days from 5 -9 December. Many MU members were on Steward duty or selling refreshments. It is a free event but donations are encouraged. Just over £2500 was raised to be split evenly between 3 charities; the local food bank, "Stand by me" and the Mothers' Union Literacy and Financial programme.



Dilton Marsh

In November the Dilton Marsh MU, alongside Westbury branch collected donations to send to the Women's Refuge in Salisbury.

BABY BLANKET APPEAL FOR SALISBURY DISTRICT HOSPITAL

The Neonatal Unit at Salisbury District Hospital sent a letter of thanks to all members for their donations of the beautiful handmade baby blankets which are much appreciated. We are still accepting baby blankets in the Mothers' Union Office and a reminder that the blankets need to be 80 cm x 60 cm - no bigger and no smaller as they have to fit to cots - but other than this, any colour or pattern of your choice. Before being delivered to the Hospital the blankets will be labelled as being made by a member of the Mothers' Union.

If you have any questions please contact either Liz Bowler at lizmikeb@btinternet.com or Jenny Harrison, MU Diocesan Secretary at mothers.union@btconnect.com



December Christingle - Ladies from the Dilton MU branch made Christingles for the service, held on 3rd December which was enjoyed by all. A collection was held during the service which raised a great £50 but this will grow bigger, by Epiphany, when collection 'candle' boxes, handed out during the service, will be returned.

Full reports can be seen on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064793950490



West Lavington An Ending and Beginning

West Lavington Mothers' Union Branch marked its first meeting of 2024 with a momentous event – the handover by Janet Hodges, following upwards of three decades as Leader of the Branch, to Jackie Knipe.

Janet has not only been a mainstay of MU's Branch life for these many years but also a pillar of our church and village life - participating and leading so many village initiatives. Jackie is fairly new to our village but is fast making her own mark - from church involvement to participation in a number of community activities. For us in Mothers' Union, we are delighted she has offered to take on the MU Branch leadership role, encouraged and supported in transition by Janet, and, of course, all of us.

And so, while conducting AGM business as well, we entered the New Year, celebrating the past and welcoming in the future. Janet was presented with flowers together with a blue scarf and vase from, appropriately, the Mothers' Union shop, embossed with the Mothers' Union iconic logo. Revd Marion led a communion service and we finished our first 2024 meeting with cake and tea to commemorate our former secretary Val's birthday.

(Photo Jackie and Janet West Lavington)



Harnham

During our service in **All Saints** in January we welcomed and enrolled 4 new members, Mary, Isabel, Jeanne and Ann. This was followed by the AGM, refreshment and time to get to know our new friends.

A Summer Day at All Saints'

What could only be described as a most wonderful occasion was West Lavington's Open Church Day at All Saints' last summer. It was one of those stifling sunny days we experience from time to time in summer and on the agenda was Bell Ringing – West Lavington has for many years had a dedicated team – Flower Arranging, Visits to the Church Tower, a Guided Tour of the Church itself and then, to cap it all off with tea served throughout the afternoon in the cool of the Church, Children's Fun. They came with their parents, in numbers and excitement, to witness their teddies parachute from the Church Tower and to participate in a treasure hunt through the Church Yard to discover tiny hidden knitted biblical artifacts.



Mothers' Union was not to be left out when invited to have a display in the Church. Pictured below, it featured our Virtual Baby, Rockley Park Holiday Home and Angel Tree projects. Even one of our real Virtual Babies attended – to the left of the photo – and my children's Teddy from their now long-ago childhood, on the right of the photo, was the first to make it off the teddies' leap from the Church Tower – so large it needed two parachutes but landed safely. Certainly a day to remember and to cherish!



Wilton

Wilton branch was pleased to see Christine Stott being presented at our meeting in November 2023 with her certificate to mark the 50th year of Mothers' Union membership by leader Monica Gale. Some members may remember when Christine was the MU Diocesan Secretary. After she retired from that job, she was for many years on the Wilton branch committee and still comes up with excellent ideas for our meetings and visits. She volunteers to read prayers at our services and occasionally opens her home for smaller more informal meetings.

Even at over 90, Christine still throws herself enthusiastically into everything we do, including knitting pretty strips to be sewn into small sized baby blankets for Salisbury Hospital's maternity unit, and as seen here at our Coronation 'Street Party' tea, really enters into the spirit of things with a smile!



Mothers' Union teams up with WI and Knit & Natter and friends

In September 2023, Mothers' Union's West Lavington Branch welcomed members of the WI and Knit & Natter along with a few additional local friends to join them for a really good natter and

delicious tea. The cause? An Afternoon of Crafting for Charity inspired by Leslie (a West Lavington MU Branch member) who very much wanted it to be a mix of members from our various village groups. Whether we were sure we couldn't sew or knit, Leslie assured us we could - the aim being to produce several hand-sewn quilts for residents of Salisbury Women's Refuge and knitted baby blankets for mothers-in-need leaving Salisbury District Hospital's maternity ward with their newborn.

A very busy and enjoyable afternoon ensued. Leslie provided colourful materials for us to choose for our quilts, after viewing beautiful quilted works of art previously created by Leslie herself. Those on the knitting team readied themselves to start work on woollen squares essential for their blankets.

Many thanks to Leslie for bringing us all together to make this happen! Results expected within the next 6 months! But even sooner, as one of the quilting groups (two members with their quilt and friends pictured below) completed their project in record time!

Orchard Bank 50 - Our Rockley Holiday Home

In 2023 lots of families enjoyed a wonderful break away at Rockley Park, Poole, in our lovely Holiday Home. The comments in the visitor book confirm that families, couples and all our guests have been able to relax & enjoy a few days respite to boost their energy and make wonderful memories. For some of our guests, this was the first holiday they had ever had. It is a wonderful resource. We have a lovely cleaner who looks after the Holiday Home, cleaning, changing and washing the bedding etc.

Thanks go to the MU branches who have taken a welcome pack for the guests, and to those who live a long way away, have sent donations for the packs for us to deliver. We are looking forward to another season, possibly in a new Holiday Home. Please advertise this wonderful facility particularly during term time. School holidays are already nearly all booked. Can you recommend someone who could do with a break? If so, please give them this link: murockleyholidayhome@gmail.com

AFIA Finance is in a very healthy position. We have received several very generous donations, two from the Tindall Trust, these donations will be used for the replacement of our caravan at Rockley Park. The caravan is now over 6 years old **16** and beginning to show serious signs of wear and tear. We are currently exploring the

purchase of a replacement. We urgently need a strong team of volunteers to help Sheila with the organising and overseeing of the holiday home at Rockley Park. Please, can you help?

For more information please contact Sheila or Suzanne
suzannewaters785@btinternet.com



VIRTUAL BABIES

The babies spent a quiet summer holiday in the new office. At the start of the new school year the babies went to a new school, the Lavington School. The babies were welcomed by the pupils and staff, 45 pupils took part in the project. Many thanks to the school who made us extremely welcome and thanks to Sandra, Anne and the team who helped run the project. After the October half term the babies travelled to the Matravers School, again we were welcomed and thanks to Jocelyn and her team who helped. They arrived back at the office in time to spend Christmas there. The babies will next go to Moyles Court School and Stonehenge School after the February half term.

Since our CDC left in 2023 and because I believe this is one of the best projects we the Mothers' Union in the Salisbury diocese run, I have taken on coordinating the VB's. I have prepared the paperwork and contacted the schools for this academic school year. I will be delivering the babies to schools and at some of the schools delivering the Introduction and De-brief sessions. As much as I enjoy doing it I very much feel that we need a team, to take the pressure off just one person, please is there anyone who would like to join this team. We are also about to put an article in the diocesan Grapevine newsletter.

Suzanne Waters

Choral Evensong with the Presentation of St Aldhelm Crosses Sunday 5 November 2023 at 16.30

The Cross of St Aldhelm

In 2005, on the 1300th Anniversary of the consecration of St Aldhelm as the first Bishop in this part of Wessex, Bishop David Stancliffe established a diocesan award, the Cross of St Aldhelm, to give to people whose contribution to the life of the Church and the Diocese goes far beyond the normal call of duty.

This award is presented to a small number of Church members who have made an especially significant contribution to our shared life. This year, Crosses are being awarded to the following.

Rosemary Allen

Rosemary has held many positions with Mothers' Union both at branch and Diocesan level and has forged personal links with the Sudans.

Rosemary has now taken on praying for and visiting Guernsey Deanery within the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer. Having grown up in Salisbury, Rosemary has a talent for linking people together and discreetly suggesting their suitability in various roles.

Rosemary is a dedicated member of the cathedral and was active in the Community Forum, the food bank collection, the education team, and Holy dusters. She held a strong voice maintaining ecumenical exchange amongst churches. Rosemary was married in the cathedral and is a faithful member of the congregation and maintains a weekly bible study prayer group online with women in Abu Dhabi, where she goes to visit family.

Rosemary is a caring visitor to elderly and infirm and often does so on her splendid bike! Rosemary is a worthy recipient of the St. Aldhems cross for her devoted dedication to work in the diocese and services to the Church.





Westbury All Saints and Dilton Marsh

This year we joined together to have a tree at All Saints Church Christmas Tree Festival at the beginning of December. We decided to publicise the AGV campaign by decorating our tree with doves and displaying a poster about the "Souls of our Shoes", with quotes from survivors of abuse forming part of the 16 days of Activism. Some shoes were placed on a table nearby, please see photo. We hope to raise awareness of the worldwide abuse of women. Our members and congregations gave generously items and gifts for the Refuge which were taken to the AGV Service at Salisbury Cathedral.



All Saints Westbury

We were delighted that our rector Rev. Rebecca Harris was able to admit Lily Munday to become a member of Mothers' Union, All Saints Westbury at our meeting in January. This was held at Holy Saviour (a sister church to All Saints) in Westbury Leigh.

IN MEMORIAM -

We give thanks for the lives and dedication of the following members, all remembered with love.

Molly Hawksworth

Harnham

Ann James

Harnham

Anne Robinson

Ferndown

Sheila Kamp

Ferndown

Marion Thwaite

St James Trowbridge

Mavis Courtney

West Moors

Patricia Eley

Diocesan Member from Burbage

Joan Forrester

ex-Member of Alderbury P&F Group

Linda Rowe

Sherborne MU

Stuart Rowe

Sherborne MU

Beatrice Smith

Diocesan Member from Wareham

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Diocese of Salisbury AGM/Autumn Gathering

Saturday 19th October 2024 (venue tba)

Activism Service Against Gender Based Violence

November 2024 (date tba)

Canterbury Provincial Gathering 22nd June 2024 in Oxford.

The current venue in Oxford which Antonia is looking at hosts 500 and is within walking distance of the station, has parking and is on a bus route. Possible accommodation could be in the Premier Inn at Oxford Crowley or Botley. Rough timing - 10am for coffee. 11am start. The programme may include 'hymns we love', there could be stalls and a local Christian bookshop. The afternoon may include entertainment such as a Christian Comedian. The day will end about 4.30pm. An evening buffet or meet up in another venue could be arranged. More information will be on the Mothers Union Website. www.mothersunion.org

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL MU COMMUNION SERVICES MAY - NOVEMBER 2024

All Services take place in the Trinity Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral starting at 12 noon. Members will be notified if there is any change to these details.

Tuesday 28th May	Canon Nigel Davies	Vicar of The Close
Tuesday 25th June	tba	
Tuesday 23rd July	Canon Jeremy & Mrs Alison Oakes	Diocesan Members from Wimborne Deanery
Aug	No service	
Tuesday 24th Sept	Canon Michael Goater	Salisbury Deanery
Tuesday 22nd Oct	Revd Lisa Rodrigues	Alderbury Deanery
Nov	Date TBC	Revd Jayne Tyrer MU Chaplain

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR. If you wish to send a photograph or picture with your article, please send it in a separate photo file and not as part of the article.

Please send news for the Autumn edition of Windows to Mrs Elizabeth Goater,
17 Chiselbury Grove, Salisbury SP2 8EP, Tel: 01722 433855,
Or best by Email: lizgoater@hotmail.com
Before 1 August 2024