St Mary the Virgin Mother's Union, Sherburn Village.
New members are welcomed by the Rev Stephen Martin.
Left to right on the photograph are Paul Willey, William Oates, Sylvia Oates and the Rev Martin.
Other new members welcomed into St Mary's Mother's Union are Janet Wright and Joan Huntington

Members of Holy Trinity Branch Southwick received Long Service Certificates. From Kathleen Wilson DP.
Barbara Docherty, Kathleen Youern, Marjory Cooper, Valerie Graham and Jean Cooper.

2021 Theme: Rebuilding hope and confidence

Durham Diocese Newsround Autumn 2021

President
Miss Kathleen Wilson (until 31/12/21)
0191 5480334
Mrs Carole Hopkinson (from 01/01/22
01388 527827

Finance
Mrs Janice Hardman
0191 3865497

My Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you and your families are well. It is good we are able to be together again at branch meetings. We still need to be careful and diligent in our daily lives.

My term of Office as President is complete on 31st December. A shorter time for me due to a previous problem within the diocese and not Mary Sumner House.

For me an honour and a privilege, a distinguished position, which I have served with dignity, respect and decorum.

Working with the Trustee Board, always a team effort, within discussion and decision making. A great deal of confidence built up within the board.

What we have achieved together, completed and ongoing during my term of Office:
Update Worldwide MU Constitution. The Diocesan Constitution. MULOA. Data Base system and MU Live. Safeguarding training. Technology progression. Zoom Meetings, within the diocese, overall business meetings- Overseas, Britain and Ireland.
Projects: Young people leaving care, MU branch in local Prison, only diocese to have this. Support to Domestic Violence Bill, and 16days of Activism meet within the Cathedral.
Corona Virus Lockdown: Knitting, sewing gowns and masks for NHS and Care areas. Prayers. Cards. Telephone prayers, Support to school lap top scheme. AFIA. Food Banks and Refuges. Ongoing help.
THANK YOU.

Membership always encouraged, loss and gain.
This intense work, a tremendous legacy in Mothers' Union.
Progression, future, advantageous and meets our aspirations. Always supported through prayer.

Our Founder Mary Sumner's Words "Prayer and Dogged work will win the Day".

Carole Hopkinson- President from 2022. Carole's experience, Care and love for people, a great advantage to the Diocese. Please support Carole as I will, through prayer and friendship. (My thanks to all in a further article).

We look forward to Advent, preparation, reconciliation to include prayers-"Our

We give thanks for the life and witness of those who have died

Judith King	80yrs	All Saints, Monwearmouth
Jennie Dobson	85yrs	Consett
Anne Armstrong	88yrs	Consett
Doreen Clark	86yrs	Consett
Jean Elizabeth Willey	92yrs	St. Clare's Parish of Great Aycliffe
Sandra Taylor	78yrs	Hetton with St Michaels Lyons
Doris Turner	81yrs	Hetton with St Michaels Lyons
May Chapman	98 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Rita Hancock	82 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Margaret Harle	82 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Evelyn Penny		St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Mary Robinson	91 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Doreen Ranmson	97yrs	St. James Burnopfield

We extend a very warm welcome to our newly enrolled members

Joan Huntington	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
Janet Wright	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
William Oates	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
Paul Willey	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
Sylvia Oates	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
Alison Foster has transferred to St Mary's MU Sherburn Village from Isle of Man	
Lynne Broughton	Wolviston St Peter's.

Deadline for next magazine February 25th

Please send entries to:
Joan Parr 01325 487981
joan.parr24@virginmedia.com
4, Walworth Crescent, Darlington DL3 0TX

Members who have celebrated special birthdays

Jean Williamson	90yrs	Barnabas branch, Burnmoor
Greta Stevens	85yrs	All Saints, Monwearmouth
Ann Sinclair	80yrs	All Saints, Lanchester
Susan Storey	70yrs	St. Cuthbert's Darlington.
Pat Williams	80yrs	St. Cuthbert's Darlington.
Mary Parlett	90yrs	St. Cuthbert's Darlington.
Hazel Gaskill	80yrs	All Saints, Lancaster
Margret Burt	90yrs	All Saints, Lancaster
Gillian Hanratty	80yrs	Consett
Wendy Oxley.	75yrs	Consett
Norma Colwell.	85yrs	Consett
Helen Follett.	55yrs	Consett
Iris Baker	90yrs	St Andrew's, Tudhoe Grange,
Joyce Ward	90yrs	St Andrew's, Tudhoe Grange,
Margaret Bott	75yrs	St Andrew's, Tudhoe Grange,
Margaret Valks	80yrs	St Mary's, Coxhoe
Joan Robson	90yrs	St Mary's, Coxhoe
Eileen Taylor	80yrs	St Mary's Cockerton
Anne Hinge	80yrs	St Mary's Cockerton
Anne Lindsley	80yrs	St Mary the Virgin, Whickham
Joan Jameson	80yrs	St Mary the Virgin, Whickham
Elaine Simpson	80yrs	St Mary the Virgin, Whickham
Brenda Crone	85yrs	St Mary's MU Sherburn Village
Edythe Simpson	90yrs	Kimblesworth
Elizabeth (Betty) Wilson	93yrs	Sunderland Minster
Elizabeth (Betty) Mallaugh	84yrs	Sunderland Minster
Jean Carrs	80yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Beryl Witherspoon	80yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert

Hope" for the lonely, the hungry, the Refugee- To Greet the King of Kings.
At this Christmas season, celebrate with those you love, and who love you.
'O come let us adore HIM'

My love and prayers always.

Kathleen Wilson.

Edythe Simpson (on the left) receiving some flowers from Muriel Suddick of Kimblesworth Mothers Union in celebration of her 90th Birthday,

Mothers' Union members from St Mary and St Cuthbert setting out on a sponsored walk for the Summer of Hope

Letter from the treasurer

First the good news! I have just received from Mary Sumner House the refund we get from sales from MUenterprises. You purchased cards and gifts to the amount of £13,707-90, which means that we get a refund of £1,370-79 – well done everyone, and thank you for supporting our work in this way.

Now the not so good news – subscriptions for 2022. In the spring issue of Newsround, I highlighted this and now want to ensure that everyone understands the situation. By the time you get Newsround, you will have received your copy of Connected, which will have included a direct debit form for subscriptions. **Please do not feel that you have to have to take part in this scheme.** If you prefer to pay your subs in the usual way to your branch treasurer, please continue to do so and put the direct debit forms in the recycling bin. You may be surprised at the large increase for 2022, so I hope the following will reassure you. In 2020, the subscription was £18 – comprised of £14.50 for MSH and £3.50 for the diocese. This year, 2021, MSH raised their request to £20 and, as the diocesan trustees felt this was too large an increase to ask in one year, we decided to leave the total subs at £18 and use some of our reserves to make up the difference. The Covid pandemic has affected every part of society, and for MSH it meant at least 50% of their income disappeared, as the vast majority comes from hire of rooms at MSH to outside bodies. Being in the centre of London, it is ideally situated businesses to use for individual meetings, and the income has meant that members' subscription have been able to be kept comparatively low – compared with other national organisation like the WI, National Trust, etc. MU annual subs are very cheap, and yet so much gets done with the money. In addition, MSH staff took pay cuts and sadly had to make some staff redundant. For 2022, MSH has left their request at £20, and so the trustees decided to ask for £2.50, making a total of £22.50.
Members often ask what MSH spends our money on. Partly it is spent on administration and upkeep of the building, as in any organisation, but the vast majority goes on projects around the world – such as the literacy and development programme; helping members with financial advice so that they can start to earn money for themselves; and running awareness schemes on topics such as Gender based violence, which is a very serious issue all around the world, including here in the UK. All these projects make a huge difference to the lives of our members.

The trustees are very aware that we are asking a lot of our members, but it is such a privilege to be a member of Mothers' Union and to follow in the footsteps of Mary Sumner and all the women over the last 146 years who have made such a difference to the lives of women and their families in our communities, that we cannot fail to continue to follow their example.

Carole Hopkinson

Members receiving long service awards

Doreen Clark	50yrs	Consett
Margaret Robson	50yrs	Consett
Anne Hinge	50yrs	St Mary's Cockerton
Jennifer Alps	25yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Joyce Armstrong	25yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Joan Davison	40 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Olive Murray	40 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Joan Thompson	40 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Beryl Wilson	60 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert

Christian care
for families worldwide

Congratulations to all who have celebrated special wedding anniversaries

Mary & John Parlett	60yrs	St. Cuthbert's Darlington.
Margaret & John Kidd	60yrs	St. Cuthbert's Darlington.
Sandy & Peter Jackson	40yrs	All Saints, Lancaster
Valerie & Leslie Page	55yrs	Consett
Margaret & Watson Campbell	65yrs	St Andrew's, Tudhoe Grange,
Shirley & John Cooke	60yrs	St Andrew's, Tudhoe Grange,
Joyce & Neville Ellis	60yrs	St Michael & All Angels Norton
Gillian & Fred Walker	50yrs.	Sunderland Minster
Dawn & Jeff Williams	50yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Leslie &Richard Owen	50yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Lynne & Joe Waterston	50yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert
Beryl & Brian Wilson	60 yrs	St. Mary & St. Cuthbert

Presidents Acknowledgement

After 5 years as your Diocesan president there are so many to say 'Thank You' to.

To my very patient family, who have been a great support through love and care.

To my 'IT' team – Jack, Joe, Miya, and Luke who raised me above basic level!

The Trustee Board, whose confidence is enhanced by teamwork. A special mention – Beryl Wilson, for her great knowledge of Mothers' Union, and I include Eileen Bishop.

To Wearmouth Deanery, MU Branches, especially Holy Trinity, Southwick

For their support, prayers, and acknowledgement:

Past and Present Worldwide Presidents, Lynn Tembey and Sheran Harper.
Provincial – Barbara Taylor, June Houghton, Catherine Hilton and all members of York Province especially Durham Diocese
Bishop of Durham, Bishop of Jarrow, for prayers and understanding.
To the cathedral clergy and staff for good communications.
Bev Jullien and staff at Mary Sumner House, where Durham is now well recognised.
Joan Parr, for her editorial expertise in producing Newsround.
To all interesting speakers.
Thank you to all members and friends who support Mothers' Union.
For your hospitality on my visits to branches and deaneries. A great part of my work.

My work will continue to include prison and cathedral duties.

Thank you to a very 'Special Friend', Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose hand guided and supported me. Gave me health and strength to do his work, through our wonderful Mothers' Union organisation. Thank you God I will work harder for you.

May you all be surrounded with God's love, through prayer, devotion or light a candle -that is 'Hope and Confidence'.

Thank you. My love and prayer Always.

'LET THE LIVING WATER FLOW OVER YOUR SOUL'
Kathleen Wilson
Diocesan President

Shepherd's Dene 2022

As you know, the Annual Retreat at Shepherd's Dene had to be cancelled for 2020 and 2021 due to lockdown, but I can announce that we have booked the date for the retreat next year for 11th and 12th May and booking forms will be out early next year.

Eileen Bishop. (Faith and Policy Co-ordinator).

16 days of activism against gender-based violence

On Friday the 25th November at 11am, we will meet at the Gala Cinema in Durham to start our prayer walk through the city ending at the Cathedral.

On Saturday the 26th, we have been invited to attend the 12:30 Eucharist. At 1pm, Canon Hempel will come and join us at the Shrine of St Cuthbert for prayers, the lighting of a candle and a short vigil.

If you are unable to take part in any of these services, I would like to encourage you to use the 16 Days of Activism prayer diary, which is in your Connected magazine as a way of being involved. If you are having branch meetings, there are many resources on the M.U. Resource website for you to use.

Sue Begg

After many false starts the members of the Sunderland Minster branch met in July for their 1st meeting since March 2020. It was lovely to see everyone (Of course we were socially distanced and wore masks.) We discussed the programme for our future meetings.

In September we held an open meeting for all the branches in Sunderland. Provost Canon Stuart Bain talked about the work with the school children in Lesotho.

Our October meeting was a service entitled 'Build on a Strong Foundation ' This was based on the Bible passage Matthew Ch 7 V 24-27.

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said 'Everyone who listens to my words and acts on them will be like the sensible man who built his house on rock '

A member of our church had drawn a large picture of the 2 houses ,one built on rock and one built on sand . The children who attended our holiday club coloured it. We think it is rather beautiful.

Ann Craig Branch Leader

Diocesan President, Trustees and Members at Deanery Leaders Lunch.
Good to be together again Business and friendship. Went really well.

Photo from Branch meeting at St Saviours Shotton. A very friendly afternoon. Kathleen Wilson DP admitted new Member Jean. Supported by Clergy, Rev's Muriel and Jane, Branch Leader Karen and Treasurer Maureen.

St Luke's Church Hartlepool.
Rev Michelle Delves, Anne Greason and Janine Duxfield. Admitted as Members by Kathleen Wilson, Diocesan President.

St. James Burnopfield

M.U members formed a guard of honour at the funeral of one of their oldest members, Doreen Ranson, who died in August aged 97yrs.
Doreen had been a member of the former Dipton branch before it's closure, and both banners were held up high as the funeral cortège entered the church. The family have since expressed their gratitude at making the funeral so special and Doreen's great grandson is to be baptised at StJames in November, and we look forward to welcoming the family once again

Tribute to Judith King

Its with sadness I write this tribute but aware she is with the Lord she served.

Positions of authority within the Church as treasurer and Mothers' Union are gifts to be in service to God and each other.

Judith was always thinking of others before herself. Devotion to late husband, Alex, during a long illness, family and friends came first.

We are not able to take another's pain, but scripture tells us to bare each other's burdens and love as God loves us. Judith was an active member of the Ladies Fellowship and used her car to give lifts and lend a hand at any time, enjoyed holidays at home and abroad, also spending time with her son Peter.

Unfortunately, illness took her from us with Motor neurone disease. Living with her daughter, Alison, who cared for her in the latter months, where she passed away peacefully with her family around her, August 11th 2021.

Summer-time for Mothers' Union.

It is good to hear that our branches are now beginning to meet again after so many long months in lockdown.

We have all missed our Deanery Events along with the Indoor Members Services and Diocesan Festivals which we were unable to hold in 20/21 at the Cathedral due to lockdowns. However, it was a great joy to be invited by Canon Michael Hampel to join in Evensong for Mary Sumner Day on Monday 9th August and to meet up again with so many friends we have not seen for months.

The service was led by Canon in Residence, Revd Simon Oliver, the first lesson read by David Hunt and the second lesson by Kathleen Wilson, D.P.

The M.U. Diocesan Banner was on display and prayers were said on the 100th anniversary of the death of our founder Mary Sumner.

We offer our thanks also to Neil, the verger, for his help on the day.

Faithful Lord, we thank you for all with whom we share fellowship and service through the Mothers' Union in the places you have called us to live. We thank you for those with whom we have walked the valleys and rejoiced on the mountain tops.
Lord, unite us in love and service in our parishes, in our Diocese, in our country and in the world. Amen.

Eileen Bishop, (Faith and Policy Co-ordinator).

Kathleen DP and Members at Cathedral Service of Evening Prayer and Special Prayers on Mary Sumner Day.

Covid has been a strange time for us all and may be especially for Mothers' Union members. Some of us feel that we have lost touch with the happenings despite valiant efforts by other members, Branch leaders, Vice Presidents, Presidents, Deanery Leaders, Mary Sumner House and the re vamped magazine. In the past we have relied on regular meetings to keep us informed with what was going on then suddenly no 'get togethers' and yet across the diocese, country and the world M.U, members have still been knitting, sewing, baking, writing and telephoning. I did hear of someone who took a folding chair and a flask in order to sit outside while a friend was in the doorway just so they could chat.

So the work has gone on… I'd like to share with you an endeavour to support children in a local school federation. Usually / normally, how many times do you find yourself using these words? Well, school would book an overnight stay for children in year 6 to experience time away. This wasn't possible this year due to restrictions. Staff decided to borrow tents, pitch them on the school field and organise various activities to try to give the children (some of whom have very difficult lives) a feeling of being grown up and away from home.

Of course the weather wasn't brilliant, the children didn't notice but the adults did !

The staff aim was also to keep costs to a minimum because Covid had meant that more money had been spent in school on efforts to abide by rules. The heads husband 'did' the Barbeque, the caretaker helped out with tent pitching and staff generally tried to keep costs down with innovative ideas. As an extra treat it was arranged with our AFIA that a McDonalds lunch be bought , a good discount was agreed for 58 meals. It took some time to organise the food requirements, as I'm sure you can imagine. McDonalds were amazing, the staff so efficient. When I went to collect it other customers became aware of the huge order and began asking questions. It is always with a sense of pride that I explain ALL about M.U. and what we do, of course most of the customers were taken aback that we are willing to do this sort of thing.

The article below has been taken from Mothers Union website

Since 1965 Mothers' Union has run the "*Away From It All*" (AFIA) programme of experiences and holidays across Britain and Ireland and has helped many families rebuild relationships that had become strained, fractured, or even been kept apart.

Most of us had our lives turned upside down in a matter of days due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to come to terms with restrictions on everyday activities, such as seeing family and going to Church and School. Many of us also had to become technology gurus overnight and reinvented our dining tables to be our new offices! It was an adjustment for us all. But while all this was happening, an army of individuals were keeping us all going – from shop workers to care workers, refuse collectors to bus drivers, nurses to delivery drivers. Without them, our lockdown would have been so much harder. They ensured we were as safe as possible, often putting themselves at risk in the process.

We now want to say a huge thank you for all they have done, which is why we have used all our experience from AFIA to launch our *Thank You Key Workers Appeal* in order to recognise those who have continued to go above and beyond to help others. While all the work our key workers have done has been a triumph of compassion and care, it has meant a great deal of personal sacrifice – including the very important quality family time.

We want to provide similar AFIA day experiences and short breaks for key workers to help them rebuild family connections and togetherness. We especially want to provide this for families who have been kept apart or who are on low incomes, so they will be prioritised.

The appeal officially launched on the 5 July, and we have been working hard to increase awareness of it outside the Mothers' Union movement, so that we can not only raise vital funds but also raise the profile of the amazing work we do through AFIA every year! You can find out more about the appeal at www.mothersunion.org/thank-you-keyworker-appeal and we invite you to share this link with anyone you think might also like to say thank you to a key worker. You can also nominate a key worker that you think really deserves an opportunity such as this.

To apply or nominate please visit:
www.mothersunion.org/thank-you-keyworker-appeal

Safeguarding

By now I hope you have all received your copy of CONNECTED with the pocket guide to the safeguarding policy for MU.

It is very concise and informative and could be a useful tool if you have any concerns, however, as each of us is as important as anyone else, one area we must never forget is OUR OWN SAFETY.

There are a few things we can do to safeguard ourselves as we continue our essential work for MU .
VISTING AS REPRESENTATIVE OF MU

- Always phone to make appointment
- Go with someone [if not possible] inform Branch leader of time and date
- Inform Family of visit if person vulnerable [if possible]
- Always issue receipts if taking money for MU /or Church
- Enjoy visit

In the past MU did not have it's own safeguarding policy, but as from last year we have been obliged to appoint our own SGO and display its policy for the Dioceses on our website.

This along with our Whistleblowing Policy Letter and contact Names email and phone numbers.

I would be very happy to visit any Branch and or Deanery to talk to you about this new phase for MU

My name is Ann P Harrison, Safeguarding Officer, Durham Diocese Mothers 'Union
Telephone [0191] 4192775 mobile 0769632065
email harrisonannp@gmail.com

If you have any concerns about any issues regarding SAFEGURDING please do not hesitate to contact me

Love and Prayers Ann Px

The best bit was when I went through the school doors pushing the trolley carrying the lunch boxes and a huge cheer went up. So members I hope you will take a moment to feel the pride I felt, to be happy to be part of an organisation that, no matter what life throws at us, is ready to help a future generation feel cared for. Whether we are aware of it or not our work is going on across the world. Thank you for your part in making AFIA happen.

Jean Carleton

Cleadon Branch Meeting and afternoon tea celebration.
Margaret Robson Branch Leader .Vice President Linda Ferries ,and members .
Speaker Diocesan President Kathleen Wilson.

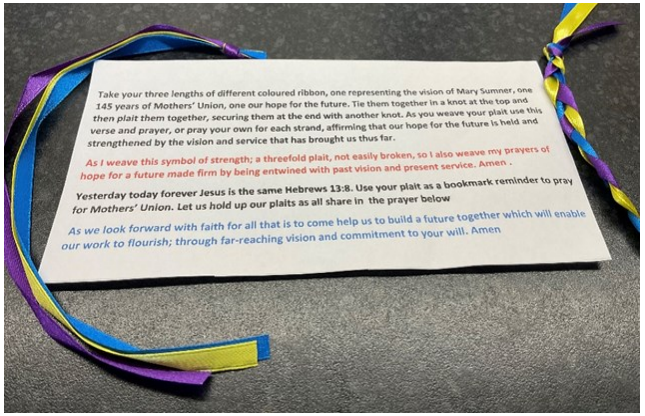
On 12th July we met for our Summer of hope service in Church , using the creative prayer leaflet from Mothers Union we all enjoyed a very uplifting time of fellowship and worship .Everyone was given 3 ribbons to plait as we said the prayer of hope together and there was much relief that we could all remember how to plait ! As it was our last service before the summer break we gave each member " A LITTLE HUG " gift to remind them that although we have not been able to hug in person they were still held close .
Michelle Dundas St. Mary & St. Cuthbert MU

Take three lengths of different coloured ribbon, one representing the vision of Mary Sumner, one 145 years of Mothers' Union, one our hope for the future. Tie them together in a knot at the top and then plait them together, securing them at the end with another knot. As you weave your plait, use this verse and prayer, or pray your own for each strand, affirming that our hope for the future is held and strengthened by the vision and service that has brought us thus far.

As I weave this symbol of strength; a threefold plait, not easily broken, so I also weave my prayers of hope for a future made firm by being entwined with past vision and present service. Amen

Yesterday today forever Jesus is the same, Hebrews 13:8 Use your plait as a bookmark reminder to pray for Mothers' Union. Let us hold up our plaits as all share in the prayer below

As we look forward with faith for all that is to come help us to build a future together which will enable our work to flourish; through far-reaching vision and commitment to your will. Amen



Lynesack 100

Lynesack branch celebrated it's centenary at St John's church, Lynesack on Monday, October 4th. Joan Simpson, branch leader, welcomed guests including Margaret Nesom and Janice Clasper from the diocese and members from Barnard Castle.

Rev'd Lloyd Evans celebrated communion and talked of the important part the Mothers' Union plays in the life of the parish. Over the years members have been involved with many aspects of church work while upholding the aims of the Mothers' Union to support marriage and family life. Lifelong friendships are made as members support each other through good and bad times.

The proceedings continued with afternoon tea, served at the back of the church, and Joan invited 95 year old Jean Redfearn to cut a beautiful commemorative cake.

This was the first time in two years that the deanery, which now consists of only two branches, had been able to meet and was a very happy occasion.

Rev'd John Moore, a good friend and supporter of Mothers' Union in Barnard Castle deanery, brought the afternoon to a close with a vote of thanks to Lynesack members.

The nine members of Lynesack branch are determined to keep their banner flying into their second century and offer a warm welcome to anyone who is interested in joining them.

Susan Lister, Secretary, St Mary's Branch Whickham writes….

On our return in September I suggested that it might be a good opener for members to bring toiletries to our first meeting which were needed for Afghan refugees coming into the Borough. Our Rector, Barry Abbott thought our initiative should be opened up church wide and it was and the MU and wider congregation were very generous with their donations. A card had been circulated with a list of things that had been asked for (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, sanitary pads etc etc) and the CARE packs were being made up by NEST, North East Solidarity and Teaching, part of the Students Union at Newcastle University. We have been overwhelmed by everyone's generosity for such a worthy cause'

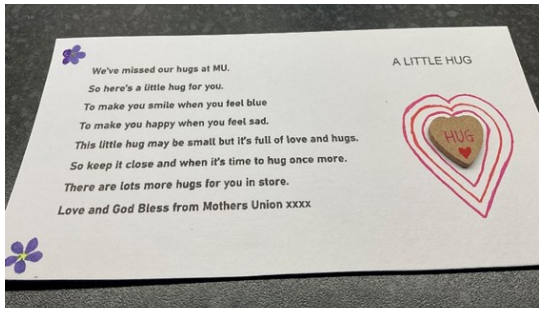
Christ Church Lumley MU met in August for the first time in 18 months. We had a wonderful afternoon at our secretary Carole's home, catching up on news and eating superb scones, cakes and tarts. We were able to sit in the garden surrounded by lovely plants or in the sunroom with the bifold doors wide open.

We were especially pleased to welcome Kathleen, our Diocesan President, and Linda, our Vice President. Kathleen led us in prayers to start.

The rain kindly held off until the end of our afternoon and everyone said how much they had enjoyed being able to meet and talk in person after so long a gap.

A Little Hug

We've missed our hugs at MU,
So here is a little hug for you,
To make you smile when you feel blue.
To make you happy when you feel sad.
This little hug may be small but it's full of love and hugs.
So keep it close and when it's time to hug once more,
There are lots more hugs for you in store
Love and God Bless from Mothers' Union xxxx



Holy Trinity Branch Southwick.
After Celebrating Summer of Hope Service , Afternoon Tea which raised £100.

Hadrian's Wall and sending a message of Hope from Durham to Carlisle MU members

Yes, I had amazing weather - no bogs or lost boots - no fleeces or wet weather gear needed, just tea shirt, overshoot and walking trousers. It was hot and drinks from the honesty fridges en route what a wonderful welcome.

I had amazing views of the Northumberland wilderness and soaked in the stillness. I met many wonderful people. I was walking East to West along the wall, from Wallsend, Newcastle to Bowness on Solway, Cumbria distance of 84 miles. On average I walked 10 miles a day some days more some days less. My longest day was 17 miles from Heddon on the Wall to Collerford. I met some wonderful people some walking the opposite direction West to East and we could relay what to look out for ie bullocks in fields or honesty boxes.

I Presented a signed card from all members of Spennymoor MU branch, along with a presentational St Cuthbert's Cross and a tea towel saying, " I came, I saw, I conquered the washing up!" (Quite apt I thought!). I delivered our message of hope and goodwill after the horrendous year restricted by COVID regulations.

My welcome at the end of the walk by Carlisle MU members was icing on the cake. Barbara was there to meet me right at the end - a wrecked sight! I presented some of June's Special Sherry marmalade (I can't believe I carried it all along the wall!)

The day after finishing I was met by Jane and Susan who gave me a guided tour round Carlisle Cathedral (The blue starred roof is very impressive). We then shared Eucharist at their midday service followed by lunch in their splendid Cathedral Cafe.

I had all my accommodation booked in advanced through a company called 'Maks Adventure', who also transferred my bigger luggage to my different accommodation each day - so I had none of that worry. They provided me with all appropriate maps and essential phonetics should I have needed them. I only had to carry my small ruck sac each day.

It was something I had always wanted to do, and I particularly wanted to walk the wall before my 2nd grandchild was born who was expected the end of July. But

baby Millie had different ideas and was born 9 weeks early at 4lbs. I was about to cancel my trip, but my family supported me and gave me permission to ' go '. Millie was in the safest place in the baby unit in hospital.

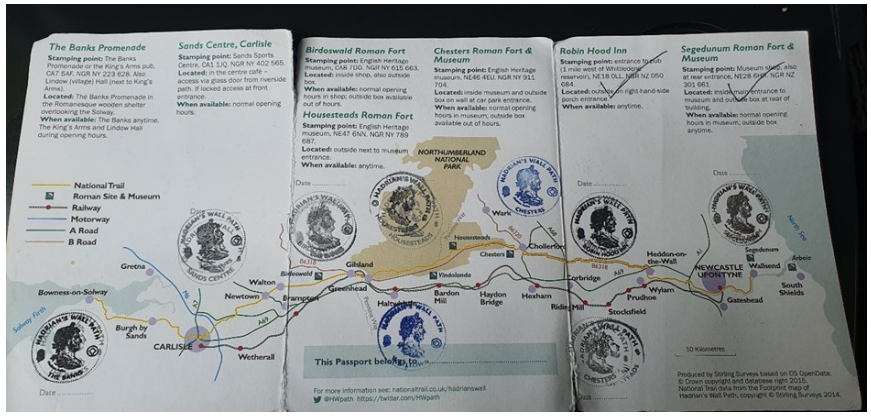
So, I was able to share all this with Barbara Susan and Jane. However, the last 4 miles were tough as I received a message to say Millie was poorly from an infection and needed specialised treatment. I feared the worst. I was in the middle of nowhere but knew on finishing, I could get back to Spennymoor that night if needed.

Again, my daughter Hannah, said Millie was in safest place and to just return as I was going to, the following day. This allowed me to meet MU Carlisle members which I might not have, otherwise. Millie is strong and she responded so well to the antibiotics that she did recover over the next few days. I had feared the worst. I know I had all prayers from Carlisle and Spennymoor. It meant such a lot. Millie did recover.

And Holly's last words to me before I left to complete the Hadrian's Wall Path was ' Be careful , don't fall off, Ra Ra '(my nickname)

It was hard work but in the end .....' I didn't fall off, Holly, but I did conquer Hadrian's Wall!

Lesley Parrott



Hadrian's Wall passport with stamps