Rosalind Bloomfield sees at first hand the value of the baby clothes knitted by MU members for

premature baby units in hospitals.

Then I was Action They received outstanding Turkington and I carried in generously supplying all matinee jackets, hats, bootees premature babies need. My and blankets - along with handmade snugglies - to really tell you from my heart the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital in Belfast. Never to have these small, knitted once did I think that anyone in my family would ever be in need of any of these items, so mind grandparents.

generously made and given. On Sunday morning, 25th October 2015, our daughter, Clare, gave birth to a baby boy, Conor, at 32 weeks. His daddy, Graham, was in a state blue blanket covering him. of shock, as we all were - the Grandparents are allowed one baby's due date was not until 16th December 2015. Three when we visited, he was only but each and every item hours after he was born, Conor wearing a turquoise blue hat daily makes a difference to he is there. was sent by ambulance to an and matching bootees, as he someone's life. intensive care unit. Thankfully, was having some light therapy. The MU Prayer Circles have girls!! mummy followed several I can only imagine who knitted also been a source of strength

care and attention at both hospitals. Added to this was Diocese, Barbara the support given by MU lovingly-knitted the little knitted articles that sincere thanks to you all. I can what a difference it makes clothes at what is a stressful time for new parents, never

In photos I have seen, Conor was wearing a little, blue matinee jacket, with a blanket him. In another, he had a visit to see the new baby and know whose lives we touch,

Members and friends of St Columba's, Derryvolgie, MU branch marked the branch's 50th

anniversary last October with a special service of thanksgiving, at which Helen Clarke gave

the address, followed by a celebratory meal with an anniversary cake made by a branch

member, Maureen Hughes. Connor MU Diocesan President, Valerie Ash, presented longservice certificates to a number of branch members, including one to a founder-member, Olive Courtney (pictured, right). Derryvolgie MU branch members are pictured (above) following

the 50th anniversary celebrations, accompanied by the rector, the Revd Stephen McElhinney.

Derryvolgie MU branch celebrates 50th anniversary



whoever you are, your work in a lovely shade of aqua over was, and remains, very much

In giving all these so very useful items, we may never

all these little items, but at a worrying and anxious time. thriving.

Clare and Conor are doing very well, but, as I write, it will be a little while vet before he is ready to leave the Neonatal being well looked after while

Sooooo, keeeeep knitting,

PS: 12 weeks later ... Conor is



Connor MU Diocesan Festival Service, Belfast Cathedral,

North Connor Area Spring Service, Dunseverick, 7.30pm

Young Members' Committee Fashion Show and Marketplace, St Patrick's, Ballymena, 7.30pm

All Ireland Unit meetings: Action & Outreach and Fundraising & Communications

All Ireland Unit meetings: Finance & Central Services

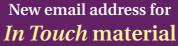
(see above)

and Faith & Policy MU General Meeting Winchester

All Ireland Trustees (DPs) All Ireland Council (VPs, Unit Coordinators and invited

North Connor Area Service, St Patrick's, Ballymoney,

Mid Connor Area Service, St Catherine's, Killead, 8.00pm



The Young Members Committee

of Connor Diocese invites you to:

Here Come

George's Girls!

FASHION SHOW AND MARKETPLACE

in St Patricks, Ballymena,

on Tuesday 24th May, at 7.30pm

Fashion by George at Asda

Come and bring a friend!

Cost £5, inc. supper

(all profits to Mothers Union projects)

lyngraham@talktalk.net by 14th May.

Please note that, from now on, all material for *In Touch* should be sent to:

The Editor, Alison Skillen. 25 Berkeley Hall Square, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT27 5TB at: revcskillen25@gmail.com

(Please DO NOT use the email address which has appeared in previous issues of *In Touch*)

The telephone number remains the same: 028 9267 0257

Closing date for material for next issue: **12th August 2016**

The love of a FAMILY is life's greatest blessing





Spring 2016

MU Ireland website: www.mothersunion.ie



The Diocesan President writes

MU-optical illusions, images and body

Hello members.

his year, Mothers' Union is celebrating its 140th **1** anniversary. How much city. While visiting the Castle, I the organisation has developed since it was founded by Mary Sumner in Winchester in 1876!! In September, the General Meeting will be held in Winchester as part of the anniversary celebrations. Do consider going - the General Meeting is great fun.

A SPECIAL **BIRTHDAY**

Last November, I celebrated a special birthday at the Diocesan Council meeting in Crumlin. As I was saying Grace, the lights went out, the fire alarm went off and in walked some members with the most beautiful birthday cake (see don't know - we only see the photograph below). I was also presented with a planter, which is still blooming.

remembering my birthday and making it special.

I also went to Edinburgh for four days. It is a really beautiful went into Camera Obscura, a building full of optical illusions, which is beside the Castle.

expression 'Seeing is believing'. Well, the optical illusions that I saw certainly gave me food for thought. The photograph of my head on a plate without a body can't be true (see photograph

Of course, we know that a head can't exist without a body, so there must be a body, but we have no idea what that body is like. Is it complete? Are there parts missing or damaged? We Do visit Camera Obscura if you

I would like to thank you all for how images can be distorted by

The Diocesan President's birthday cake marking her special birthday

You have all heard the

part is not active, then the whole from members? I do hope so.

are in Edinburgh; it is amazing mirrors and yet appear to be so to hear some of the ideas which

It started me thinking about

what members and the public see when they look at images of MU. Are the images true or distorted? Everyone sees the head, but what about the body which supports the head? The Bible tells us that every part of MU in the Diocese and need the the body is important and if one

How is the body in your branch? Are all the members supporting the branch and playing their receiving the support they need

Our Worldwide President, Lynne Tembey, believes that every part of the MU's body is important and values each member's input, so I hope that every member had the opportunity to complete the Membership Survey.

As we are a grassroots membership organisation, it is very important that members' ideas are known. I would love were sent to Lynne.

I hope to see many members at the senior members' parties.

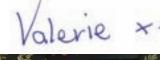
The invitation is for everyone, especially those who can no longer attend branch meetings, as they are part of the body of support of the rest of the body.

SUMMER SUNS

Summer is on the way we hope! Has your branch considered a social event in come to Whitehead and walk the coastal path - or take the train or bus somewhere for shopping. It all helps to grow the branch.

I hope that you all will have a good summer and that each will feel part of the body of MU. God loves each part, whether it is a toe or the heart, and you are all valuable to our great organisation.

With all my love,





'Seeing is believing'



Happy birthday to Mothers' Union!

MU Communications Manager

his year will see MU mark 140 years of faithful L Christian witness, service and outreach to families of all faiths and none.

Since 1876, when Mary Sumner first brought together mothers in the rectory of her husband's parish of Old Alresford, Hampshire, to build their confidence in bringing up their children in the Christian faith, we have grown to an organisation of over four million women - and men - in over 80 countries throughout the world.

Why celebrate our 140th anniversary rather than wait for the 150th? In 1 Samuel, there is the story of Samuel marking an unlooked-for victory against the mighty Philistines by erecting a stone between Mizpah and Shen and naming it 'Ebenezer', meet the challenges they faced. leading and guidance of God: our minds. "Thus far the Lord has helped



are meeting these challenges society as a whole. and say, like Samuel: "Thus far the Lord has helped us".

The same chapter in 1 Samuel recounts how, throughout Samuel's lifetime, the Lord helped both him and Israel to meaning 'stone of help', as a As we mark our 140th year, the but also in their daily lives our permanent reminder of the future of MU is very much on members support families in

both marking how God has practical support. Over the past 140 years, MU hitherto led and blessed our has faced, and will continue mission and how he is leading challenging or exciting time or email: communications@ to face in the future, many us into our future ministry to be part of MU - to be part challenges. Family life is under and guiding us as we discern of bringing positive change to increasing pressure and the call the needs in our communities family life. Our hope is to train

will benefit from MU's support for family life. Many more will know the support of our membership without any tally being taken - because not only through our programme work prayer, in voicing their support Our celebrations are about for policy changes and in their

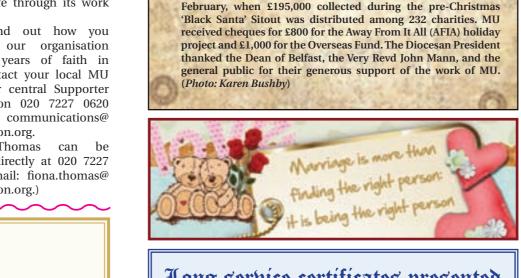
ever, but we can look at how we stability for both families and families and to encourage greater mothersunion.org.)

outreach across those countries This year, over 500,000 people and communities where family life is under greatest threat.

To do this, we need the help of all our members to support MU in bringing positive change to family life through its work

 To find out how you can help our organisation mark 140 years of faith in action, contact your local MU branch, our central Supporter There has never been a more Care line on 020 7227 0620

(Fiona Thomas can be contacted directly at 020 7227 on our resources is higher than that are necessary for more members to help more 9734 or email: fiona.thomas@



Long-service certificates presented at St Mark's, Ballymacash

Cheques presented to MU

at 'Good Samaritan' service

Connor MU Diocesan President, Valerie Ash, is pictured receiving

two cheques from the comedian, Jimmy Cricket, at the annual

'Good Samaritan' service held in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, in

ast year, a number of MU members of St Mark's, Ballymacash, Lisburn, received long-service certificates.

Dorrie were (pictured), 62 Christy years' membership; Isobel Stevenson, 55 years; Maud Fair, 51 years; Pat Jackson and Jean Morrison, both 45 years; Edith Patton, 40 years; Jean Dunn, 38 years; and Kaye Beck, 35 years.

Sadly, Dorrie Christy, the oldest member, died at the end of October, shortly after celebrating her 97th birthday. She had a long and healthy life and was a faithful MU



missed by her family and her many friends in MU.



By Lynne Colman Connor Fundraising & Communications Unit Coordinator

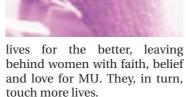
or some time now, I have sat in NHS waiting rooms - too many to name looking to take my mind off things. I looked through my MU diary and, for some reason, I kept going back to the personal prayer of MU's founder, Mary Sumner, written in 1876.

I kept asking myself: Where did she write it? What was going through her mind at the time? Is her prayer still relevant today?

With MU celebrating its 140th birthday this year, I thought it would be interesting to see how the prayer matches up today, so here goes, ladies:

All this day, O Lord, *let me touch as many lives* as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy Spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen

We touch many, many lives as we reach out to over 80 countries worldwide. We change women's some things never change.



Our prayers breathe life into many, especially the vulnerable and the sick. In return, our lives are enriched because we know that we are prayed for worldwide. We live with the knowledge that what we do at home and overseas makes us strong as an organisation, with faith woven through all we do and say.

Mary, may I call you that? I feel that your personal prayer is as relevant today as it was when you wrote it 140 years ago; it leaves us with a sense of belonging. I think I understand you a little bit better now - your struggle to touch and pray, strengthened by the Spirit, is now our struggle. Many things have changed, but





Woods; Ann Hill, Branch Chair of St George's, Belfast, MU branch; and Carol Bingham, Honorary Treasurer of Women's Forum Northern Ireland.

It would be great if a Connor MU member announced at a dinner on Saturday 9th April their names to go forward for nomination: Connor MU is very fortunate to have Festival Service in St Anne's Cathedral on nomination next year. a number of ladies who could have been Sunday 10th April.

The Iris Colvin
Lifetime Achievement Award

and Roberta McKelvey; the winner will be best wishes and thank them for allowing Diocese.

and we will have the result at the Diocesan perhaps you might like to think of others for

We are also delighted with this opportunity We send Paddy and Roberta our very for publicity for the work of MU in Connor

Derriaghy MU branch activities 3 By Margaret Hanthorne Derriaghy MU branch member



. Connor MU Diocesan President

voluntary sector in Northern Ireland.

between voluntary organisations.

were to be honoured with this award.

award in her memory.

contribution to society and so set up this

nominated. We nominated Paddy Wallace

organisations.

has been a member of Derriaghy MU branch since 📍 1986, recently celebrated her 90th birthday. A faithful parishioner of Christ Church, Derriaghy, Mona spent her early vears in the Mossley area of Glengormley, but since then, she has lived in the same house in Dunmurry. She worked for 25 years n the Inglis Bakery and atterly served for 20 years as a volunteer in the War on Want shop in Dunmurry. as well as being a member



of St John Ambulance. Derriaghy MU branch members came together during last year to knit a Mona received a bouquet nativity scene for Christ Church. They thoroughly enjoyed it and would like of flowers from branch to thank Dr Brian Neagle, the son-in-law of the branch's Enrolling Member, members and everyone Irene Graham, for making a stable to display their work. The scene was in the enjoyed a special celebratory 📍 church over Advent and right through to the Epiphany and was much admired supper and birthday cake. and appreciated by members of the congregation and visitors to the church, Congratulations, Mona. • especially over the Christmas season.

When sending photos...

please note that the preferred format is from a digital camera, 300dpi and a good size (this would be one of the highest pixel settings on your camera). Alternatively, we can accept hard copy photographs, but we cannot guarantee that they will be returned.

Barbara Turkington (left), on behalf of the Connor MU Diocesan Trustees, presents Alberta Miskimmin with a planter in recognition of her nine years' faithful and dedicated service as Connor MU Honorary Secretary in view of her impending retirement from office.

