**Bedlington Deanery**

As numbers decrease Bedlington Deanery are looking to share our meetings and activities.

We continue to support the Northumberland Women’s Refuge whenever possible but mainly at Easter with Easter eggs and outdoor toys and Christmas with toys, dressing gowns for the ladies and Christmas treats. St Bede’s continue to make and fill toiletry bags. St Paul’s continue to knit for the Premature baby unit and local Care homes have received knitted and crochet blankets. St Bede’s and St Cuthbert’s have given blankets and crochets hearts for the Chaplaincy Unit at Wansbeck Hospital. St Cuthbert’s members and congregation knitted ducks for local school children for an Easter visit.

Members are still very active in our own churches helping with Messy Church, Toddler groups, coffee mornings, cleaning, serving, flowers and much more.

Some of us travelled to meet up with our Worldwide President at Benwell on that scorching hot day in July! We joined up to celebrate Mary Sumner Day in Ridley Park, Blyth Pavillion where we had tea, cake and prayers in honour of our founder.

***Jennifer Snowdon (Deanery contact)***

**CORBRIDGE AND HEXHAM DEANERY REPORT**

**September 2025**

Members of the combined Deaneries of Corbridge and Hexham enjoyed a coach outing, along with friends, to Howick Hall in August to celebrate our founder, Mary Sumner.

We visited “our tree “and it is thriving.

We also viewed the kneelers in St Michael and All Angels Church and had an interesting and entertaining talk about them by Helen Cooper.

In July, Wylam held a Strawberry Afternoon tea which was very well supported by members from branches in the Deanery. They raised a substantial sum which was given to the Diocese to support Projects, there was also a raffle run by the Deanery, the proceeds of which will go to the Deanery.

Early in September, Haydon Bridge with Beltingham and Henshaw branch gave “Gift bags of Love” to Henshaw Church of England School to distribute to mothers leaving their children at Reception class for the first time. These were very much appreciated.

Holy Cross, Haltwhistle has a reduced membership but meet regularly and they report good support from the Vicar and Church. A former branch leader, Nellie Alderson, died in July, we are grateful for all the Service she has given to Mothers’ Union.

Our Deanery members value meeting and sharing time together and look forward to our annual Advent Service in Hexham Abbey when we can all worship together in that special place.

**Sheila Walker - Deanery Leader**

**West Deanery Report September ‘25**

**ST JOHN’S** Branch are hit by age and health catching up on everyone. They are without a Vicar and some members are trying to carry out Church work. They are pleased to be able to meet as a branch and look forward to celebrating 130years working for MU next year as we all celebrate 150 years of MU. They have little to report other than they have had a few speakers this year and they celebrate their togetherness always trying to support Deanery and Diocesan events and projects.

**HOLY CROSS** Fenham again smaller and older members. They host Advent Praise in December, look after members at home. Sadly their eldest member Dorothy Hollier 98 died this year, however on a brighter note they welcome a toddler with a young grandma to their meetings and support Deanery Projects. They have a variety of speakers and “Do it yourself meetings”. They also supported with monetary donations to Bags for prisoners, Christmas bags, prem babies and the Literacy campaign, also supporting Benwell.

**VENERABLE BEDE** has 2 groups an evening which is based on Food and friendship with study of Bible or film etc and the morning for reflection followed by prayer and a simple craft session. They recently had 2 new members (1 their vicar) plus a returning member. They support Something Wonderful in Benwell and one of their members met with our WWDOP. They hosted a Cheese and wine plus a Service for Lady Day.

**HOLY NATIVITY** again hit by age but manage to host a very successful Deanery Afternoon Tea with folks from neighbouring churches and their own church enjoying a good afternoon. They contributed in time etc towards the Hospital Bags and passed on a gift of 60 Hospital Bags from a local businessman. They support the Benwell Project and also take part in the Rise Up Campaign gaining awards. They aim to follow the MU aims and objectives and offer Christian fellowship to any who support or join them helping to develop their Community in Chapel House.

**ST MARY’S** Ponteland had their annual plant and coffee morning sale for Harbour Refuge continuing the contribution to them that they made at Christmas towards Christmas lunches. At present they are thinking about providing baby packages for women in the Refuge facing childbirth. They also provided comfort bags for the Mums at their local C of E infant school. One of the Members helps with children struggling to read in this school too.

**Anne Blight, West Deanery Leade**r

**Report for Northern Deaneries September 2025**

**Alnwick**

4 new members. A very well attended Summer Afternoon Tea was supported by members from Amble and Uppercoquetdale and Barrie and I. It was hosted by a lady from church but not an MU member! Donations, by way of entrance, were for Baby Basics Appeal and this was also very well supported. Planning to be done ASAP with the vicar to make the Advent Service more appealing since numbers attending this service are falling each year. MU are leading the church's Wednesday Worship service in October (I will be leading Intercessions). The September meeting was cancelled; so many people were away. November meeting will be a talk from the vicar’s father-in-law on his role within Air-Sea Rescue.

Safeguarding Training has been delivered by me.

**Amble**

I think the opening of their report is typical of other Branches; they have a membership of 17, but the average attendance is 8/9.

They are therefore not booking speakers but asking members of the congregation and friends to talk at meetings on subjects relevant to MU’s aims and objectives. Although members from other localities (closed branches: Alnmouth, Lesbury) are invited, the problem of travelling is becoming a huge problem for many of our elderly members.

Those members who are mobile are very supportive of events such as Benwell to meet WW President and York to meet new PP. There are plans to go to London for the 2026 celebrations. There is frustration that 1 of the members is no longer able to volunteer at the visitors center at the prison. New safeguarding rules: she was born in the USA and does not have a dual passport. Another madness.

Highlight was admitting Anthony Reay to the Amble branch of MU during the Kneeler Dedication Service at Newcastle Cathedral at the Mary Sumner Day Service.

Safeguarding Training completed, delivered by me.

**Ashington.**

Ongoing repairs to church following traffic accidents mean the Branch meet in the church hall while church is closed. There was a Full House turn out for my talk on Howick Kneelers and an opportunity to talk about other MU issues.

**Morpeth**

A well attended Strawberry Tea in July with profits divided between Branch and Church. In August, 14 members went to Eshott Hall for Afternoon tea.

Invited speaker, Chris, talked about the wonderful work of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Pauline is sure he would be willing to come to other Branches and she highly recommends him.

**Seaton Hirst**

Down to 8 members. Members choose topics they would like to hear speakers talk about. Support from their clergy who speak at meetings and take them though preparations for Easter and Christmas. Members attended a New Year’s lunch in February and a Summer Afternoon Tea in a local cafe. Barrie and I were glad to support and attend.

**Uppercoquetdale.**

After much planning and many meetings…the new Uppercoquetdale MU Banner is about to be started. It is hoped that all the Branch members will contribute and that it will be in the Cathedral for the Mary Sumner Day celebrations, when other members will be encouraged to “Add a Stitch”.

MU hosted a very successful coffee morning which coincided with a visit from Rev. Canon Thomas Woodhouse, Chaplin for the Duchy of Lancaster. Uppercoquetdale still comes under this jurisdiction when appointing a new vicar!

A very worthwhile Summer Quiet Day was held in Barrowburn. The day was led by Alison and followed the theme of psalm 23.

Safeguarding Training was delivered by me.

Tom Rippon has yet to be formally admitted. This will be done at a service in his home church of Longhoughton, when he is next home!!

**I was due to deliver Safeguarding Training to Wideopen MU. However, we cancelled this the day before since there were going to be no more than 5/6 ladies attending and it was deemed a long way to go for this. I feel this is probably going to get worse.**

**Helen Cooper – Deanery Leader**

**Central and East Deanery Report September 2025**

All six branches have been busy over the last few months.

Some highlights (although this is not an exhaustive list!)

• In May 1st Internet held their 3rd Annual Fund-Raising Quiz Night to support ongoing project work with Harbour Refuges. Alongside the quarterly “Big Shop” which provides essentials for residents, we also bought a large outdoor bike shed so that the children’s toys can be stored securely.

• Several branches held Afternoon Teas- St Barts helped by the addition of some very nice prosecco!.

• Mary Sumner Fellowship Meal in August was enjoyed both those who attended, although it is not clear that there is the support for this event next year, given that we had less than 40 people there from the whole diocese.

What has been particularly encouraging is that branches are coming together to support project work either by attending events, making financial donations or in more hands-on approaches:

• Within the Deanery St Barts, St Columbas and All Saints, all produced Gifts of Love bags for parents of new nursery/ school starters.

• St Barts have begun their own project supporting Harbour Refuge by providing school coats to the children based in North Tyneside.

Looking Forward

• 1st Internet are hosting another Music Afternoon on Saturday 11th October. Please come and spread the word!

• The Christmas Food Parcel Project will happen again this year, covering both refuges. This is a mammoth task, needing a lot of co-ordination but we want to make sure that everyone has the resources to have a good Christmas dinner again this year.

• We still hope to hold an awareness session with Age UK in 2026 but will need funding to pay for room rental.

**Karoline Wellborne – Deanery Leader**

**TYNEMOUTH DEANERY REPORT OCTOBER 2025**

Our seven Deanery  branches continue to work together and as is usual after each Diocesan Meeting we had a Deanery meeting in April. The meeting was very well attended by all of our branches and once again it was kindly hosted by Holy Saviours, Tynemouth. This year as a Deanery we have already enjoyed together our Quiet Day at Christchurch, North Shields. a trip to Paxton House, Berwick, our Deanery Festival at Holy Saviours, Tynemouth and are now looking forward to our Advent Service which is to be held in December at St Albans Church in Earsdon.

There have been lots of interesting meetings in our branches since April and these are just a few:

**Christchurch North Shields**

We continue to meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

On Tues April 21st ( which was not our usual day but was the only one Anne could do!) we were lucky enough to have a visit from our chaplain Anne and her husband Derek who spoke about their work through movement and dance.

On May 4th Jean gave a talk on modern day slavery and on the 20th I asked each member to share a favourite bible reading, prayer and hymn - both very interesting meetings.

On June 3rd, Alison our Associate Lay Minister ( and newly admitted MU member ) talked about her travels relating to countries where MU has influence.

In July, Dawn, a previous branch leader took a service and at the next meeting we shared favourite readings and had strawberries and cream (a tradition we all enjoy)

In August we met for Afternoon Tea at The Grand and as only two of us had been able to attend the Mary Sumner Day service at the cathedral, we then held our own service at our first meeting in Sep and this month our Rector Dan is to give us his perspective on life as a parish priest and all that involves.

We also continue to support AFIA and Overseas funds.

**Holy Saviours Tynemouth**

Since April we have had:

A fascinating talk from a retired Vicar whose wife is on our Committee.  A talk on the history of our church.

Afternoon Tea at Tynemouth Golf Club. Filled Hospital Bags. Mary Sumner Day Service followed by fish and chips, and hosted the Tynemouth Deanery Festival.

This was a most convivial event.

**Earsdon/Backworth**

Since April one of our dearest members June Johnson who had been in Mothers Union for 63 years has died and she will be sadly missed by us all.

At our meetings each month we enjoy good attendance of approximately 25 members and in September we celebrated 7 of them who are in their ninetieth year and are regular attenders!

We have had very interesting  visits since March from Canon Helen Brunton, Bishop John Packer and his wife Barbara and Daft as a Brush. We also enjoyed in July our annual trip for our members to Paxton House in Berwick and it was lovely that friends and members from our other Deanery branches joined us.

We are now planning the Deanery Advent Service to be held at our church of St Albans, Earsdon  on the 1st December.

We also continue to support as much as we can Diocesan projects and this year will once again give Greggs vouchers for the People Kitchen Christmas Gift Bags.

Our next  Deanery Meeting is scheduled for October 23rd at Holy  Saviour, Tynemouth at 2pm.

**Christine Birrell – Deanery Contact**