

West Chiltington and Storrington Branch

Branch Leader: Vacant

Secretary: Mrs Stella Hastings

Treasurer: Mrs Jean Hunt

Regrettably, we have no Branch Leader at the moment and so the Branch is run by Committee.

Committee members are: Mesdames Chrystalle Kersley, Betty Moss, Margaret Taylor, Pauline Turier and Jeannie Watten.

Meetings are held in West Chiltington Church Hall monthly at 2pm except for anuary when we to out for a new Year Lunch, July when we hold a fund-raising Garden Party (weather permitting), and August when we usually have an Outing.

Meetings begin with a short service, generally followed by a speaker covering various subjects.

We support MU Diocesan projects mainly with fundraising events, age and infirmities curtailing physical activities, although in the recent past members helped in the Play Area at Ford Prison and ran Parenting Courses. In the past year proceeds from the Garden Party, Ploughman's Lunch and Christmas Raffle went to *Away From It All* holidays (our 2 caravans at Winchelsea and Selsey); the Eastbourne Contact Centre; and the Big Wheels Appeal which supports projects in the UK and overseas.

Our thriving Branch project is the Prayer Shawl Ministry, part of Action and Outreach. Well over eighty shawls have been knitted, blessed and presented, bringing comfort and joy to people of all ages - some unknown to us personally. Thanks are due to Jeannie Watten for overseeing this Ministry and holding knitting sessions in her home, with Maureen Jewell composing the prayers for each individual, and Stella Hastings writing the gift cards. There is a strong feeling of fellowship between the members, with support being given to each other through difficult times as much as possible.

Our prayer life includes a Wave of Prayer Service in February, attending Women's World Day of Prayer services, remembering Lady Day, holding our own Corporate Communion Service in September, an Advent Service in alternate years, attending a District Festival Service annually, and Quiet Days.

Mary Sumner started Mothers' Union in 1876 and so we celebrated the 140th anniversary this year. Her vision was to encourage young mothers to bring their children up in the Christian faith, to support marriage and Christian family life, and to support those in adversity - still part of our Aims and Objectives today. Many of our publications and projects are aimed at young families, and although our membership in this Branch appears to be elderly, they were young once and are certainly young at heart.

We would be delighted to have younger members join us to carry on the life of this Branch, as in 2018 we will be 100 years old and for them to enjoy the fun, fundraising and fellowship that is part of being a member of the largest world-wide Christian organization which numbers currently some 4 million members spread over 83 countries.

Jean Hunt
11 April 2016