

**“If only you knew
your power”**

**The story of Mary
Sumner, founder of
Mothers’ Union**

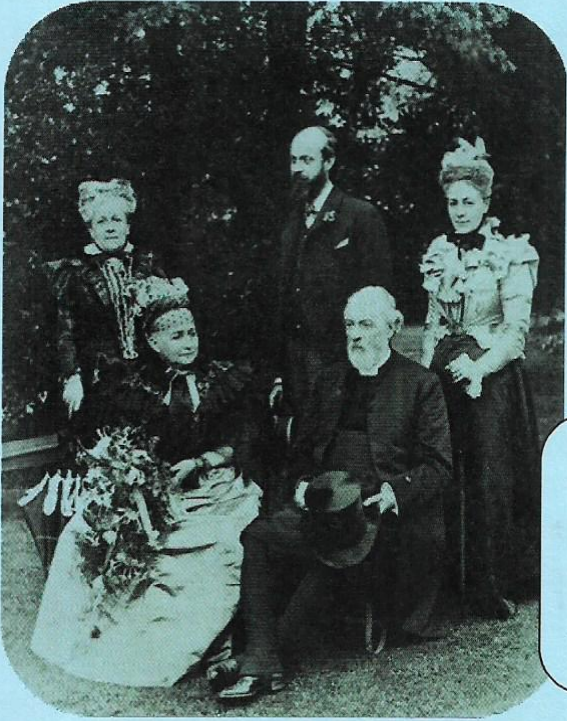
Mothers’ UNION





- Mary Elizabeth Heywood was born on 31 December 1828 in Swinton
- Taught at home, she grew up speaking several languages, and was taught music, developing a remarkable musical talent.
- She was bright, confident, and deeply rooted in her Christian faith.
- Her mother was a woman of faith, charm and sympathy, qualities that Mary inherited. Mrs Heywood held “mothers’ meetings” at Hope End. These may have been some of the inspiration for Mary’s later work.

- Travelled to Rome to complete her musical education.
- In Rome, met her future husband, George Henry Sumner, the son of Charles Richard Sumner, Bishop of Winchester.
- Married in Colwall on 26 July 1848, 18 months after George's ordination as an Anglican cleric.
- Had three children: Margaret, Louise and George; the latter became a well known artist.
- Dedicated herself to raising her children and helping her husband in his ministry by providing music and Bible classes.



*George and Mary Sumner
with their daughters and
son on the occasion of
their Golden Wedding
Anniversary*

- Mary was passionate about transforming the home-lives of parish families, by helping the women to support one another in raising their children.
- Her husband was very supportive: *“just share your heart – God will do the rest.”*
- Was so nervous at the first meeting that she refused to speak, and asked George to take her place. George encouraged her to speak from the heart and it went so well that she found the courage to speak at future meetings. Her talks were inspired by her faith



“Remember, Ladies, to be yourselves what you would have your children be”



- In 1876, founded “the Union of Mothers” – with a membership card and promise: “to be given up, body and soul, to Jesus Christ in Holy Baptism, and that your duty is to train your children for his service”.
- Invited to speak at Church Congress session for women in 1885 as Bishop felt he had no authority to speak to a group of women whose prime concern was to get enough food on the table so that the children would not starve.



“Together, by the Grace of God... we can calm each other when we are afraid; strengthen one another when we are weak, and work together to raise our children to the glory of God. Unity is strength”

Mary Sumner





- Within three years, there were 57 branches
- In 1896, Mary became the first Central President of Mothers' Union
- Helped establish the structures, aims, and objects that still guide Mothers' Union today
- Mary Sumner died in 1921, leaving behind not just an organisation, but a living legacy of faith, courage, and hope.

More Quotes from Mary Sumner

- A true home should be a light-house, shedding its quiet beams far and wide
- Prayer and dogged work will win the day!

Mary Sumner: referring to her campaign to raise the standards of Christian teaching in all schools

- I and a certain number of earnest friends are praying daily for our present government I want to live in prayer for them.
- Our Society is a company of mothers, and good women possessed with motherly hearts, women of all classes, high and humble, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, great ladies of the land and poor mothers in small homes. We have bound ourselves together to love and help one another.



Quotes about Mary Sumner

Her foresight, her wisdom and judgment laid the great foundation stone for us. And as the building grows, and far and wide her early message goes forth – the same message, though to a different generation – we pray that the faith which shone through her every word and thought may illumine ours, that we, with grateful hearts, may build well and truly, as she did.

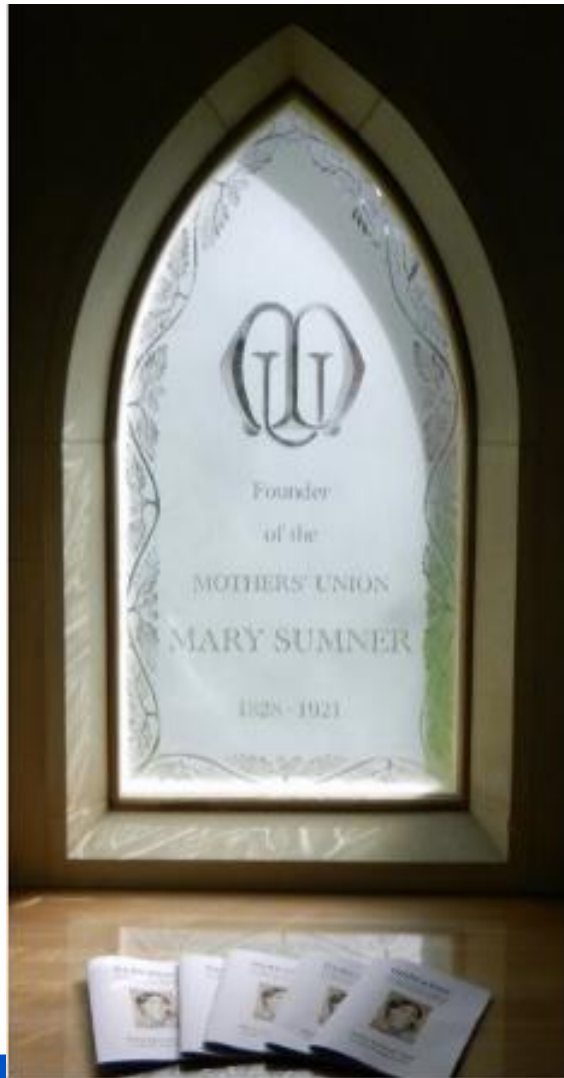
Mrs. Boustead, Central President of Mothers' Union: December 1927

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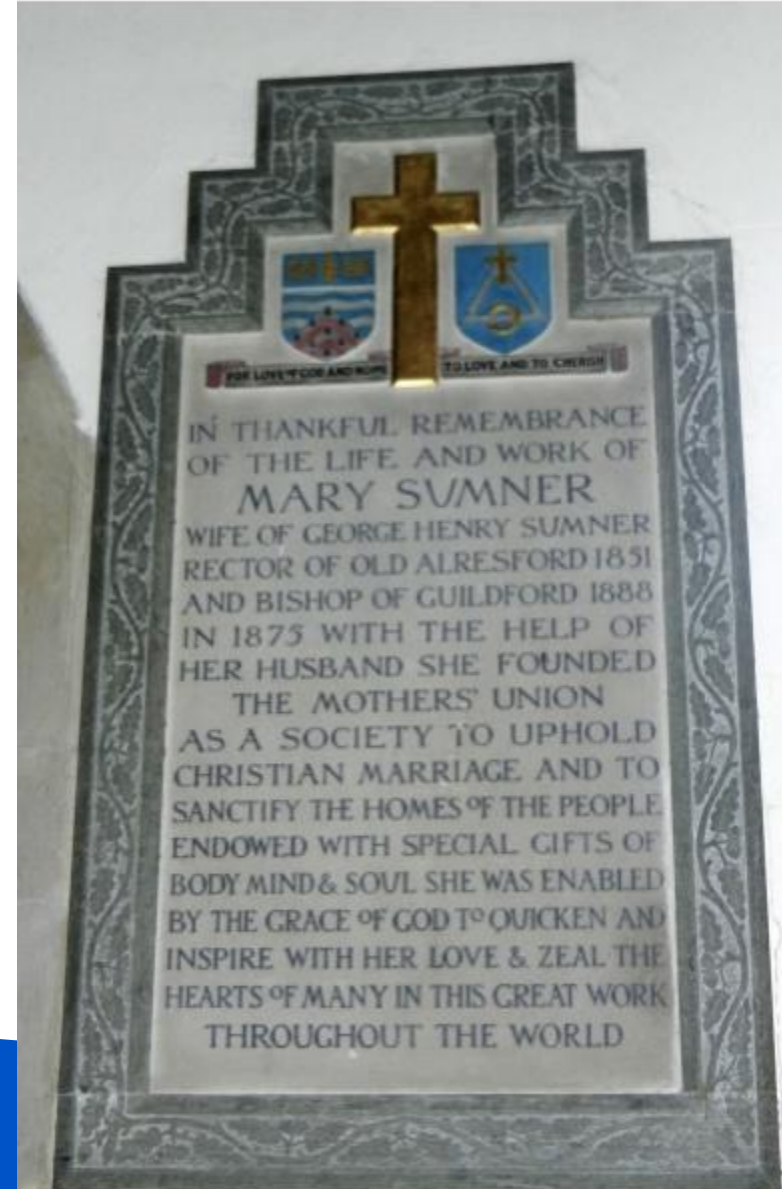
Mrs Sumner's pen was as busy as ever, as the packets of answers to her letters show; some from the Members of Parliament to whom she wrote personally; some from the highest leaders of Church and State.

From Mary Sumner, her life and work: Mrs Horace Porter; 1928





The new chapel window, in
2015





Mary Sumner House

Westminster

Opened on 21 July 1925 by
HRH the Princess Mary
Viscountess Lascelles

Mary Sumner's Personal Prayer

**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**

