



RESEARCH GUIDE: MOTHERS' UNION BADGES

1. Introduction

The [central archive of the Mothers' Union \(MU\)](#) was acquired in 2008 and is available for research at the Church of England Record Centre. It includes a series of badges produced by the MU (ref: MU/EPHEM/3). This document is not an exhaustive guide to the badges, but provides some information about them gathered while the archive was being catalogued.

2. Chronology

These notes are from the Central Council and Executive Council minutes within the archive, and may give information about the dating or history of different badges.

1898 some sort of badge in existence – resolved that it should be adopted by Central Council

1902 Army branch asked to be allowed to wear badges; Mary Sumner paid for 500 to be cast

1903 Central Council decided badges should be confined to the Army branch rather than allow all dioceses to have them. Badges already in existence in Jamaica

1909 Central Council petitioned for badges/'medals' to be allowed to be worn in other branches; 1903 resolution rescinded and medallions of white metal with Mother & Child on them made; bronze medals not approved

1910 members allowed to dip their badges in gold or silver but central council still issued them in white metal, even once Incorporated

1911 resolved that the next issue should have the date on – 1886 (rather than 1876); bronze suggested, as the white had not worn well

1912 begin to make some in the form of a brooch with a pin; the MU was Incorporated, which is sometimes mentioned on the reverse

1920 a new design was adopted (suggestion of having an inset with the Sistine Madonna rejected)

1921 Southwark branch granted permission to have badges with the MU monogram on them. White on blue background

1922 monogram brooch recognised as an alternative

1923 'new badge' for the fellowship of nurses approved – the first such?

1924 adopted badge depicting the Sistine Madonna (the proof of this badge was used on stationery from 1927)



1930 request for Speaker's badge. Central Speakers to have a bar; diocesan Speakers to have a bar on a ribbon of the diocesan colours

1935 decided that the bronze badge should no longer be produced, as sales of the enamel one were higher

1942 investigated woven badge, as, due to the war, manufacturing of badges that were not part of a recognisable uniform had been prohibited; but no examples were found in the MU archive



3. Designs and dating

This is not an exhaustive set of pictures of badges, but a selective set based on badges which could be approximately dated.

Note that any badge that has the word 'Incorporated' on the back must be after the MU was Incorporated in 1912.

Design A



It is likely that this was the earliest, on the grounds that examples of it appear without the date on the back, which the minutes suggest was added in 1911. The inscription on Design A - 'train up a child' – is the exact wording of Proverbs whereas Design B seems to have been modernised 'bring up a child...'. Designs B & C seem more closely related – both of the Virgin & Child – whereas A simply looks like a mother & baby. It is not possible to tell from the metal as all three designs were produced in cheap white metal and bronze.

Design B



The fact that it has the date on the back suggests that this particular example was an edition which was made after the 1911 resolution, and it is more similar to C than A is, both in terms of design on the front and the method of fixing the chain.



Design C



This is the Sistine Madonna design, which was eventually approved in 1924. Evidently not produced much later than 1935 when the stocks of bronze badges were reported to be running out.

Design D



Central Speaker badge





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Fellowship of Marriage badges



Fellowship of Nurses badges

