

The Revd David Hopkin writes:

MARY ULLYOT, who died on 17 October, aged 87, had spent almost 20 years of her life as a missionary with the USPG (known as the SPG at that time) in India.

In the 1940s, she embarked on a legal career in Barnsley. By all accounts, she had a successful career before her until she decided to enter the teaching profession instead. She trained in Manchester on an emergency scheme set up to address the shortage of teachers after the war, and taught there.

Mary offered for missionary service in 1951, and trained at the College of the Ascension in Birmingham in 1952-53. She left Britain for the Indian diocese of Chota Nagpur, and arrived at Ranchi at the end of 1953. She spent most of 1954 at St Agnes's Middle School, Itki, before returning to Ranchi, where she remained for the rest of her time in India.

She was warden of St Margaret's High School Hostel for Girls from 1954 to 1971, and was involved administratively and in teaching at both St Margaret's and St Agnes's schools. She managed the diocesan bookshop for a time, and her final work was to superintend the Ranchi School for the Blind.

In 1972, after almost 20 years in India, she was forced by ill-health to return to the UK. She settled in Godalming, in Surrey, where she busied herself in the life of the Church, as well as ecumenically holding different voluntary and paid positions.

Mary showed her missionary zeal until the day before she died. She was not, however, a "hard-sell" evangelist, but spent much time working quietly behind the scenes to involve

MARY ULLYOT

people in the structures, services, and rhythms of church life. It is fitting that her last service was a eucharist at St James's, Midhopestones, which she loved, on the Sunday before she died.

Involvement in church life was for her the recipe for the best kind of living. As part of that life, she gave out endless leaflets, made countless posters to advertise events — including things going on at Mirfield (which was also a significant part of her life) — and distributed hundreds, if not thousands, of parish magazines.

Throughout her life, she was devoted to the eucharist and to daily morning and evening Prayer, and always fasted on Fridays. Her devotion at times put others to shame, including the clergy in the Penistone parish and Team Ministry. She would quietly and yet pointedly ask parishioners where they had been when they had not recently been to church — often pricking a conscience, at the price of annoying them. But Mary was often irritatingly right on many different issues. Sometimes incumbents just had to eat humble pie.

Mary did not, however, see ritual as an end in itself. She worked tirelessly for others' good, more often than not outside the church and in the community. She took the final words of the mass, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord," as a personal mandate for mission.

She lived simply, almost monastically, and unquestionably denied herself a different lifestyle because of

her deep commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus. Her days were spent visiting the elderly. To do this, she was always hopping on and off buses all over the place throughout her early, mid-, and late 80s. Not a minute was ever wasted.

Mary was an intensely private person. She never revealed much about her life as a missionary in India, or spoke about her family. If you asked her how she was, she would always answer: "Getting on." She meant "getting on" in terms of having plenty to do, getting on with it, and making the most of every minute of every day.

I have a lasting image of Mary with a neat pair of trainers, a walking stick, a white hat, and a rucksack on her back, always ready to go somewhere or do something, a woman "on a mission", as it were. She was practical through and through. She travelled lightly and sensibly, and yet

somehow, like Mary Poppins, had everything she and others needed in her rucksack.

In all of this, there was a thread of holiness, of God's active presence in the world shining through. She was special. Yes, she annoyed and irritated; but she was deeply spiritual and firmly engaged with what she believed to be God's mission through the work of his Church.

On the day Mary died, her bag was packed, and she was all ready to go on holiday to Morecambe. Her breakfast was ready, prepared the night before on her kitchen table. But, in another sense, she was always ready to go. She went about with a firm, unshakeable faith, and believed that she was working this out by the way she lived. In a sense, she lived each day as if it were her last, because she packed so much into it.

Unquestionably, she was a woman who took up her cross and followed the Lord in whatever she did and wherever she went.

May she rest in peace and rise in glory.