Hello Kathleen,

Firstly, a huge welcome to Cumbria from a fellow Canadian.

I’ve been asked to explain why I wanted to become a member of Mothers Union, and as I think back remembering all those ‘goings on’ with the local branch in my church, the fund raising, the fellowship, the social times and all the love given in so many ways to our community and beyond.. ... and then spoke to Carole Gardner about becoming a member, and there was no turning back. It was a ‘hook, line and sinker’ moment.

A new member since 2013, a stint as Deanery Treasurer, the involvement just keeps going ... just keeps giving. Making crosses in pockets, knitting, sewing fiddle lap quilts for Dementia patients, bereavement bags... and so much more.

But there was one thing back in December of 2022, when Carole, our Penrith branch leader asked the members of our evening group to research other branches from around the world, to see if we could gather information on how they celebrated their run up to Christmas season. Outings, crafts or projects ? .... and of course I decided on Canada, my home country. My research took me to contact Genny McEwan, Canadian MU Historian, explained my mission in an email, she passed my email onto Mary Stone, Canadian President (at that time) who passed the request onto every MU branch in the country…. at that time there being 32 branches in all. Well, I received replies from 15 branches, and I was well chuffed.

I loved reading all about their amazing Christmas projects, but I was totally blown away to find that members in some of the Nova Scotia branches (where my mum was born) knew my mum, her sister, and some of the members and their husbands actually worked along side of two of her brothers.

So now, I’ve not only connected with distant Mothers Union members, but with friends of those family members. That connection solidified my love for Mothers Union even more, both here and across the pond. It couldn’t get any more of a family feel than that. One Wednesday evening, we had a Mothers Union meeting at Carole’s home…. The meeting finished, we stood, held hands and said the Grace together. Then very quietly I said to everyone: ‘Who we are is God’s gift to us, who we become is our gift to God’.

What’’s important to me in the Mothers Union? ... The fact that we always work as a family to help the family, and with God’s blessing it will continue for a long time.

Tess Wallace

Mothers Union Penrith Branch, Cumbria