

Kathleen Sutton – Reflections on her life and Mothers' Union

I was born in India, 16th December 1904, daughter of the late Reverend and Mrs Edward Walker. Eldest of 10 children, eight of whom are still living. I married the Reverend L.N. Sutton, 30th of August 1930, at which time my husband was Precentor of St. Andrew's Cathedral, and headmaster of the Choir School. In 1933, we were at The Kings School, Parramatta, where my husband was the Chaplain.

I joined St. John's Parramatta Branch of Mothers' Union on the 25th July, 1933. At that time my daughter Patricia was two years of age. In 1935 we had a son and named him David. My reason for wanting to join was because I had a very happy marriage and wanted to do all I could to be a good wife and mother, also where possible to help others to have the same kind of marriage as mine. From Kings School, we moved to Brighton Grammar School 1937—38. I belonged to St. Andrew's Mothers' Union, Middle Brighton.

In 1939 my husband became Rector of St. John's, Ashfield, New South Wales, and as there was not a Mothers' Union in that Parish, we formed a Fellowship of Marriage Group, which later became Mothers' Union. Whilst in Ashfield, I attended the Leader Training Classes at St. Paul's Rectory, Redfern, the home of the Revd and Mrs Hugh Horden. I was President of the Fellowship of Marriage Group at Ashfield.

In 1949 my husband was appointed Rector of St. John's, Launceston, where there was an active Mothers' Union, and I became the Enrolling Member. Later I was Vice President of the Northern Archdeaconry Mothers' Union and in 1962 I was appointed Diocesan President. My husband died suddenly in November, 1966. In 1967 I resigned and went overseas to visit my daughter, her husband and three small boys, who lived in England, where she was a member of the Mothers' Union Branch in her Parish Church, St. Nicholas, Shepparton. I accompanied her to many meetings and to special Mothers' Union Services in St. Paul's Cathedral, also to visit Mary Sumner House.

One occasion I remember with much gratitude was when, as an invited guest to an Overseas Conference, held in Canterbury, June, 1967, I met many loved members of Mothers' Union. I learned much from our President, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey and Lady Ramsey, and the Bishop, who led our Conference. There I met the delegates from Ireland and Armagh which was of particular interest, as Tasmania is linked with this historical place. I was given a warm invitation to visit this country and its charming people. This I accepted with pleasure. By courtesy of The Bishop, then Dr. R. E. Davies, and with the assistance of Mrs Gwen Wherrett of Tasmania, the Diocesan slides were forwarded to me. During a period of one week, I spoke to over 1000 women on "Church Life and Mothers' Union in Tasmania." This occurred soon after the awful fires in Tasmania. Shortly after my return home, the Mothers' Union in Armagh sent a very beautiful silver Chalice and Paten to be used in the areas destroyed by the fires. Those worst affected were in the Hobart area. The offerings made at the services and meetings on the five weeknights that I was visiting Armagh were used towards the gift. Much love and concern was truly evident in their prayers and thoughts for all Tasmanian people.

Mothers' Union today has the same Christian teachings and ideals of marriage and training of children, but in this day and age The Objects are more elastic. Membership has been altered to embrace more members if desired. In my experience with the branches, I have found that women join Mothers' Union because they are looking for an ideal to look up to, and as a result, are better wives and mothers who are involved in community activities in all humility and compassion for each other. Mothers' Union has an Admission Service, and is not a social club. This mainly depends on the Leaders. It does have a social side, as it brings mothers together in sympathy, worship and friendship. This is necessary and good 'therapy' for a couple of hours while children are at school or kindergarten, or even at the meetings when very young.

An Outstanding Mothers' Union Woman between 1892 1942:

Mrs Mary Greenwood, wife of Canon Greenwood, Rector of St. John's, Launceston for 16 years. She was a much loved woman and mother. A gifted speaker, her interests were Mothers' Union, Girls Friendly Society and Girl Guides as well as many others.