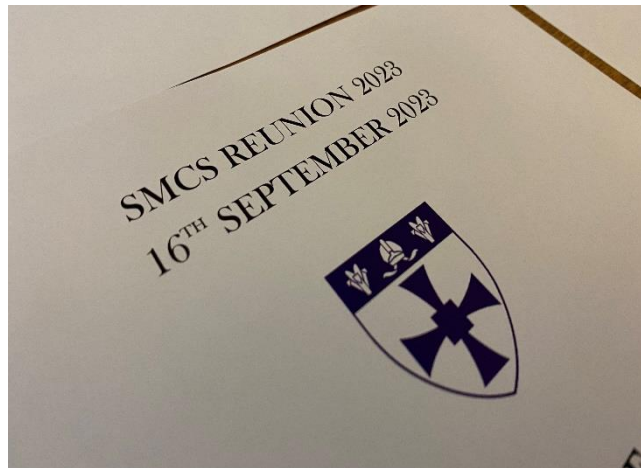


## Great to be back! Mary's Reunion returns.



The weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September this year saw the return of the Mary's Reunion to Durham for the first time since 2019, and was it good to be back!

I helped out at the welcome desk in the SCR entrance on the Friday afternoon; we moved in there because there was an Open Day for prospective students on both the Friday and Saturday, which was very well attended. Some of the future students and their parents showed great interest in the fact that we alumni were still coming to college, some of us after 60 years.

As people arrived to check in and get their room keys and welcome packs, including the first two "Mary's" magazines, we welcomed alumni from all decades from the early 60s to only 2 years ago (2021 graduates); their pleasure at being able to come to Mary's again was evident. The group from 2021 felt that they hadn't had a "proper send off" due to pandemic restrictions, and were all excited to attend their first reunion; they went clubbing on the Friday evening while the rest of us spent a more sedate evening being welcomed back, enjoying a buffet dinner and a glass of wine, and taking part in a quiz run (a first for Mary's) by the President of the JCR Pub Quiz Society. It was an

enjoyable night with varied questions; the picture round was of women called Mary, and I wish my team had stuck to their original answer of Mary Shelley!

Most people stayed overnight on the Friday and enjoyed Saturday breakfast in the dining hall. On Saturday morning some had coffee, tea and a catch up, others went for a local walk, and some of us met in Kenworthy Hall for a lively AGM, with extensive discussion on the new Constitution which reflects Mary's ethos and the ongoing collaborative work between SMCS and College on supporting current students, especially those from poorer backgrounds, to enjoy College life both academic and social to the full.

We had a buffet lunch, with the afternoon free for Heritage Week visits, for which a varied suggested programme had been provided. One participant who went to the Oriental Museum said she had never realised how fascinating it was.

A short Chapel Service, led by former President (now elected Honorary Past President at the AGM) Canon Elizabeth Fisher and Peter Fisher, took place before dinner at the end of the afternoon.

The Reunion Dinner began with a sparkling wine reception, and we were more than 50 for dinner, including past Principals Phil Gilmartin and Simon Hackett, and past Vice Principal Catherine Paine. It was an excellent meal, with great conversation continuing afterwards, and the local folk band Kiddars Luck provided the entertainment in Kenworthy Hall, with many of us joining in the singing.

Principal Professor Adrian Simpson welcomed us all back to a Mary's now returning to its usual warmth and friendliness, and at the AGM outlined the approaching 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, for which planning is starting very soon.

Sunday was a quieter day with people attending the Cathedral, exploring Durham or attending Heritage Week events after breakfast, and a traditional roast Sunday Lunch ending the event as usual.

We all enjoyed ourselves, especially meeting up with old friends and catching up in person, and next year's dates are already set: 14th-16<sup>th</sup> September 2024, when we hope even more alumni will come. This Reunion will mark the beginning of the year in which Mary's celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, with several events being planned throughout the year to culminate in a big celebration in 2025. Watch this space!

Christine Wright (formerly Bryce) 1975-79

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/colleges-and-student-experience/colleges/st-marys/alumni-and-friends/>

