



Mary's

College magazine 2023/2024



MARY'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 4: 2023-2024

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Editors' note



As Journalism Interns, we have liaised with alumni, current students and senior members of staff including Christine Wright, the SCR Membership Secretary; three Vice Principals, Andrew Unwin, Steven Beckett and Kate Morrey; Anne Elliot, the archivist; and Kellie Horrocks, the Alumni Events and Fundraising Coordinator. Each and every person we contacted for advice or contributions was incredibly helpful and we are so grateful to them.



Though each of the Vice Principals working in college this year were excellent and as helpful as they could be, not having a single individual in charge of the project was a significant challenge. Through support from Marians such as Christine Wright, we have set, met and managed deadlines between ourselves, ensuring the magazine would be completed on time and to a high standard. Though it was challenging, the experience fostered our initiative and independence and opened the door for us to shape this magazine into what we wanted it to be. We have sought to celebrate all that Mary's is whilst also thinking about all the unique voices in our community – both within the university and outside of it.

Mary's is a unique and beautiful college, so it has been incredibly rewarding to take part in creating this souvenir of our time here. We hope that you enjoy reading the final product and that it captures all the brilliance of our college community.

Principal



Adrian Simpson

On 22nd April, 1899, 33 Claypath was advertised as being open for applicants to The Women's Hostel, giving the first opportunity for women to study for degrees on the same residential basis as men. 125 years later, having changed name to St. Mary's College in 1919, a now mixed group of students are following in the footsteps of those pioneers.

This past year has shown Mary's students, staff and friends at their best. This magazine highlights just some of the many activities we've taken part in over the past 12 months and all I can do in reflecting back on this past year, is pick out some of the most memorable moments for me.

In September, the college welcomed around 350 new students – a mixture of undergraduates and postgraduates – and they have joined the existing members of the college in bringing life to the music, arts, drama, sports and volunteering activity which makes Mary's so vibrant. Across the year, we held a number of poetry and music nights which supplemented the regular performances by Basement Jazz, Mary's Mixed Voices, the Chapel Choir, Orchestral Society and all the other musical groups in the college.

Among all the arts activity, we had a wonderful and challenging exhibition of the work of Martin Kinnear, called Regeneration. These works reminded us of the industrial revolution which fuelled and was itself fuelled by the North-East region and which profoundly changed the nature of working class life. Martin gifted one of his most powerful paintings, *The Pit Road*, and has loaned us the spectacular *Pandemonium* which now hangs behind high table in Mary's spectacular dining room.

As ever, our drama groups put on a wide range of shows. For example, my expectations for a production of *Footloose* were far exceeded by amazing performances from actors, singers and dancers. I am delighted that some of our regular theatre members are now off to the Edinburgh Fringe with an original musical. Our chapel choir are also off on a tour to the Scottish capital with the chance to sing in St. Giles Cathedral – if they perform only a fraction as well as they sung at our carol concert, Edinburgh will be dazzled. Mary's held a first Sports and Societies formal dinner in the third term. This gave us the opportunity to thank those who have led much of this activity in college and celebrate the success on and off the sports field.

In May, we held our first alumni reunion in London for a number of years – and my first as Mary's Principal. We had graduates from 1960 through to 2023 and it was wonderful to listen to so many people with warm memories of their time in college and find that even fifty or more years later, the friendships they made are as strong as ever. We have spent much of the latter half of the year planning for the 125th Anniversary Year, celebrating everything that came since the Women's Hostel opened its doors. Alumni, friends, staff and students will all have an opportunity in 24/25 to commemorate our foundation and remember the part that St. Mary's College played in their lives.

Finally, the end of the year came with the sad news of the death of Joan Kenworthy, who so many alumnae will remember as their Principal over the 22 years of her leadership of the College. There is a longer piece remembering her role later in this magazine, but it is fair to say she played the most critical role in shaping Mary's, both as a physical space and as a community.

Vice Principal



Kate Morrey

In December, Mary's said goodbye to our Vice Principal Andrew Unwin and now welcomes our new Vice Principal – Kate Morrey! Special thanks should also go to our interim VP, Steven Beckett, who cared for the College and its students very well in the intervening time.

I came to Durham from Yorkshire as an undergraduate in 1998. I remember stepping off the train on my offer holder visit and falling instantly in love with the city and the atmosphere. I completed my undergraduate degree in History at University College (Floreat Castellum!) and then went on to do an MA in Modern History and my PGCE in Secondary History as a postgraduate. I met my husband the day after my last undergraduate final exam - on the dancefloor of Klute! We decided to stay in Durham and I have lived in the area ever since.

I have spent the last 20 years working in schools in the Northeast, teaching History and Politics and holding a variety of leadership positions. A lot of my teaching career was spent working with Sixth Form students - raising aspirations that universities like Durham can be an ambition for everyone in addition to developing student enrichment programmes. When I saw the position of Vice Principal of St. Mary's advertised, it seemed like a natural progression of the work I had already been involved in and a chance to bring my experiences and skills to a Higher Education setting. I have always felt a part of the University by living and working so close to it since I graduated - the opportunity to give back to the University that helped me develop from a nervous 18-year-old to a fully functioning adult was really appealing.

Mary's is such a friendly and welcoming community. There are so many fantastic events going on to be a part of, and I am honestly looking forward to them all. I am especially excited about the 125th anniversary celebration events - to be able to celebrate a milestone birthday of Mary's and all it has done to pioneer education at Durham is truly special.

As Vice Principal, I would really like to further develop the work that has been done to make Durham and St. Mary's accessible to students from lower income backgrounds or who are the first in their family to go to university. A Durham University degree and the collegiate experience are life changing and as many students as possible should have that opportunity.

I also want to develop our volunteering work at college - to both develop the skills and experiences of our current students and develop links with and enrich the local community. There are so many interesting projects offered by the Student Enrichment Directorate that we can be involved with and contribute to.

JCR President

JCR President is a unique and fulfilling position. No two days are the same, and it's precisely for that reason that I've come to truly love this role. At the start of my final year as an English Literature student, I had no idea this is where I'd be. I was all ready to start a Masters in Marketing, yet I came to realise that this job was one I simply couldn't pass up, and I'm so glad I didn't.

Mary's may be the prettiest college, but it's so much more, for beneath this surface lies an incredible community that I'll forever be grateful to have been a part of. From the belting of Angels at the end of a ball, to the packed-out bar after a floodlit, there actually is something about Mary's.



Maddie Combes

The staff and students here have made my year as President more than I ever could have hoped. I've loved each and every interaction I've had with students, particularly with the freshers who I've had the pleasure of watching settle into university life. Some personal highlights include Freshers Week with a brilliant team of Freps, all the events, and even the Christmas stash collection, which featured fort building and a lot of festive bangers! I've had the opportunity to not just represent but continually get involved: I've read at the College Carol Service, performed with Basement Jazz and Mary's Dance, sung with the chapel choir at Beamish Museum, and even waxed the football captain's legs for charity! My gratitude extends to all the alumni, SCR and friends of the college who I've had the pleasure of meeting along the way; it's been incredibly humbling to be reminded of the intellect and prestige which resides within the Durham community.

Personally, my most significant sense of achievement this year has stemmed from the reincarnation of enthusiasm for college life and activity. It's no secret that all colleges across Durham (like many universities across the country) suffered in the aftermath of the pandemic, as involvement plummeted, and events struggled to sell out. It's been such a joy to operate balls and events at full capacity, to see clubs and societies bursting with new members and to have first year students showing interest in JCR committees and positions. I really feel like we've finally returned to the Mary's we once were, or more, that we've returned home, after a period of such uncertainty. Having started my university journey in the midst of lockdown, studying from the confines of my bedroom and only leaving to eat meals in our 'households', my time as JCR President has allowed me the gift of time and through this, the opportunity to give back to a community which, even through a global pandemic, has consistently provided me with comfort, reassurance, memories and friends for life.

Wishing you all the very best for the future ahead, and a huge thank you.

*Pres love,
Mads x*

MCR President



Matthew Richardson

I was new to the MCR this year, having studied as an undergrad for three years at Mary's, and it has been an incredibly exciting adventure to explore the opportunities that the Mary's PG community affords. I have met so many new people and seen a completely different side to the college that I have fallen in love with. My experiences as MCR President have been a highlight of the year, truly encapsulating what Mary's means to me.

At the start of this year, I was thrown into a very hectic deep end: fresher's week. We ran several successful events such as a quiz night and a welcome dinner followed by karaoke. It was a delight to introduce many people, who I now consider friends, to Mary's. The community spirit and camaraderie are what makes the Mary's experience so special.

My incredible executive committee this year require a special thank you for the amazing work they have put in to deliver the most engaging and varied offering of events to our members. Of particular note is that we managed to revive a Mary's tradition of hosting academic discussions evenings, where our members had a chance to gather and discuss their areas of research interest. These events were lost due to covid and to see them return with such popularity is something I am overjoyed to have made possible. I would be remiss to not mention the invaluable assistance that has been offered by the JCR and SCR this year. The interconnectedness of the common rooms is a massive boon to Mary's and opens opportunities that would otherwise be impossible. Another thank you must go to the incredible Mary's staff, not only for helping facilitate events but for putting up with my constant strange and potentially crazy requests!

There have been many inter-collegiate events run this year, from formal dinners to language cafes, boat parties and movie nights. The MCR is not just limited to Mary's and working with the other colleges this year has been rewarding both personally and professionally, there are many unexpected challenges facing an MCR and having other presidents to call helps strengthen the bonds between colleges and helps us deliver a better experience to students.

At the end of February, we ran our own inter-MCR formal this year, continuing the tradition set last year. The 'leaping animals' leap day formal was incredibly fun to theme and set up. The entirety of the MCR executive committee and some incredibly helpful MCR members (thank you once again) all pitched in to make a special night that was topped off by a performance by Mary's own Basement Jazz.

My main goal this year has been engagement. Coming to a new university and being new to the collegiate system can be an unfamiliar and daunting prospect. It has been my aim to provide a place where people feel welcome and where they can make friends. Many MCR members only get one year in Durham and I have tried to make it the best year possible for them. My favourite part of the year has been engaging with the Mary's PG community and I cannot wait to see where the MCR will go next year and beyond.

SCR President

I have been associated with St Mary's College for the better part of my life - 'better' both metaphorically and in terms of length. I came up to read Theology in 1965 when Mary's was a small, all women's institution. I simply loved the place from day one. I was lucky enough to meet good friends, who are still good friends after all these years, and even luckier to meet my future husband, Peter, who was a Chadsian. In my final year, I was elected to be the JCR treasurer, though the budgets I had to deal with were not on the scale of today's JCR.



Elizabeth Fisher

As an alumna, I have always felt a sense of belonging whenever I enter the College grounds; this was deepened by the 9 years I spent as president of the alumni society (SMCS) in which capacity I sat on many college committees, chairing the Travel Bursaries Committee. SMCS in my time gave book grants to undergraduates and offered bursaries to postgraduates to attend conferences, and for other forms of practical assistance to the student body. It was always interesting to hear how beneficial the grants were to the recipients.

In my professional life I was on the faculty of a theological college in Nottingham, preparing women and men for life and work as clergy in the Church of England. I spent 20 years as a member of the Church's parliament (the General Synod) at a time when we were debating women entering the priesthood - now just taken for granted. I even found myself chairing debates in the synod. For 10 years, I was vice chair of the National Council of Christian Unity and became moderator of a European Commission of Churches. This took me to places like Armenia, Finland, Cyprus and Italy, to name only a few, as well as to the assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Brazil.

I am honoured to have been elected President of the SCR of my college, succeeding highly esteemed scholars in the university and beyond. I have enjoyed getting to know members of the student common rooms and doing more things together so that we make a reality of belonging to the institution we love. Mary's was founded 125 years ago for women in those years before they could vote; it was a pioneering place. I feel excited to have a voice as the Principal steers the college, now rightly for women and men, into the next phase of its life. All of us who call ourselves Mary's people have much to celebrate by belonging to this wonderful community of learning and friendship.

SMCS president



Sandra Ward

As College commemorates its 125th Anniversary, St Mary's College Society (SMCS) can reflect with pride on 104 years of bringing alumni back to College, supporting its students, and funding the development of Mary's community. This year we are financing the creation of a St Mary's College history wallboard. This will highlight key dates in Mary's development and will be positioned prominently in the Williamson Entrance Lobby so will be the first thing all visitors see. We are also contributing with the SCR and College to commission two outstanding portraits of College Principals (Maggie Dawn and Adrian Simpson).

At our 2023 AGM, we re-affirmed our commitment to support the academic and social development of current students, including providing financial help. Towards the end of Michaelmas term, we launched the SMCS Learning Resources Fund, succeeding a well-established Book Fund. Recognising the evolution to e-resources, applicants could request support not just for books but for software licenses, recordings, subscriptions to private collections and print credits. 6 of the 7 applications were approved and nearly £1000 awarded, based on criteria developed in advance and a Judging Panel of SMCS committee members and the JCR and MCR Presidents. Though most requests were still for printed materials, this is a good start!

SMCS has always created opportunities for alumni to revisit Mary's. Today, our role in fostering links between fellow alumni and with College is delivered principally through the Annual SMCS reunion. The 2023 Reunion followed a gap since 2019. Attendance captured alumni from all decades from the '60s through to 2021 graduates finally celebrating getting together following their Covid impaired departure from College. Reunion highlights included a testing quiz, run by the President of the JCR Quiz Society, an excellent Grand reunion dinner followed by sessions delivered by Kiddar's Luck, a very special local Folk Band which compelled audience toe tapping and joining in, accompanied by the cheese course.

Invitations for 2024 were sent out in May and, if you haven't booked yet, I can promise a very special weekend to celebrate the start of Mary's 125th year: a superb band, space to reconnect with fellow alumni, College, and Durham City too. Do tell all your Alumni contacts especially graduates of the years of the '4s'. And do consider volunteering for the SMCS Committee; the 2024 AGM is particularly special as it will include the election of a new President, to fill a gap since 2021 plus other vacancies for members. With College, we are considering new approaches for attracting sufficient and regular income to deliver our ongoing activities; do look out for our plans in coming months.

To our objective to assist in the promotion of St Mary's College, SMCS added 'and to sustain its unique ethos' in 2023. In writing this welcome, I've been reflecting on what this means. Other interpretations suggest ethos as the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterise a community. I left Mary's in 1965 and with my degree, took with me long-lasting friendships, influenced by principles of a society without class boundaries; an environment that encouraged involvement in so many activities that it was difficult to choose but encouraged the widening of my horizons and a willingness to take on responsibility. The sense of connection the college environment provides is a strong factor in drawing me back as is a responsibility to give something back in exchange for career success. I'm sure that fellow alumni and students can expand this list and will value your views.

Intern Insights

The tasks for the project split quite neatly into magazine design and editing. Lizzy took the lead on the former, working to create the layout; page design; colouring and overall look of the magazine. Meanwhile, Joss ensured that everything progressed by emailing alumni, editing pieces that people so kindly contributed as well as organising meetings and interviews. We supported each other in these roles, forming a great professional and personal friendship.

Favourite moments:

Joss – My favourite moment was definitely interviewing Martin Kinnear. He spoke so passionately about his art and the potential of the industrial North (two things very close to my heart). His perspective that art is a conversation with a subject which doesn't end, was refreshing and revealed a lot about the permanency traditionally associated with art, a permanency which does not reflect real life. He also talked us through a beautiful painting called Lethe, which remains one of my favourite pieces.

Lizzy – Given that it is Mary's 125th Anniversary, the archives and looking at our College's history inevitably was involved with our work. This rabbit hole was one I loved exploring, particularly thinking about how our physical growth through the buildings constructed mirrored the social growth Mary's symbolises in its work pioneering women's education. Looking through the photos and seeing all who have gone before me was a pivotal moment for me in this magazine and stuck with me as I designed it, the final product, hopefully, a suitable testament to all the lives Mary's has and will continue to shape.

What we learned:

Joss – This internship has been invaluable in developing my technical skills as a writer and editor but also my interpersonal skills. Additionally, the internship has allowed me to explore various aspects of the Mary's community, including engaging with our lovely alumni and working with heads of Sports and Societies such as Foot of the Hill and SMCRFC. I have also learnt much about Mary's history, which has been particularly relevant with the upcoming 125th anniversary but also the sad passing of our previous Principal, Joan Kenworthy, who I have had the pleasure of hearing so many lovely stories about.

Joss Greenfield



Journalism

Interns



Lizzy Holden

Lizzy – While I have always been artistically inclined, this internship gave me the opportunity to learn more about graphic design while using Canva. This was a new platform for me, so was originally tricky to get to grips with, but ultimately I came to love it and have used my experience with the magazine in designing things for the Balls. Furthermore, I enjoyed getting to see more of the behind-the-scenes of college and the opportunity to meet new people this internship provided – particularly with the alumni and college societies. It has been an amazing experience, and one I will carry forward into my future work.

Izzy Mitchell



Library Intern

As Library Intern, I had the pleasure of getting to further my love of reading whilst improving the library in college. Studying English Literature means that reading and creativity are already central to my university life, developing this interest further, in a working environment, has been great fun!

My responsibilities in my internship ranged widely; from liaising with the Library Team Leader (the amazing Lilli) to organising events to further the use of the library space. It has been a great opportunity for me to develop my skills of communication, organisation, and creativity. I have worked alongside Lilli and our wonderful library team over the year to better our facilities and hold events for our students to generate more excitement around reading and the library space.

Lilli has been a great support, advising me throughout the year when queries arise and always being a helpful, friendly face with lots of library knowledge! Working together has helped me to settle into the role and work efficiently, particularly on the larger projects. In March we organised and hosted a 'Blind Date with a Book' event for World Book Day, a personal favourite moment for me. Students were able to choose a book based on its description which helped to bring more exciting reading opportunities to Mary's and show what brilliant books we have available in our library. Additionally, we have been working to redistribute our extra stock in the library through the sale of excess books, thus decluttering and reorganising our space in college. From these opportunities, I have developed valuable organisation and problem-solving skills.

I have loved being this year's Library Intern for the brilliant opportunities it has brought me. The skills I have honed can be taken forward into workplace environments, so it has also been a good chance to see how communication and development work on a larger scale. I've really appreciated the opportunity to give back to college this year, and I hope the library continues to be a space of growth and creativity for everyone!

Staff Spotlight: the Catering Team

As a catered college, the kitchen team are the beating heart of St Mary's. The staff are friendly, reliable and ensure that students are provided with 3 meals a day - roughly 1000 meals in total.

The kitchens are managed by Mustafa Gun, our Food and Beverages Head, and Richard Cooke, our new Senior Head Chef. Mustafa is familiar face not only to the staff but to the students as well, he coordinates with University Catering to set the menu, ensuring their plenty of options regardless of dietary requirements. This extends to halal, vegan, gluten free - whatever a students' dietary requirements, there is always something available. Mustafa also takes care of the bar, working with the bar team to supply us with drinks, particularly around Balls and Formals when we have drinks receptions as well!



Behind Richard and Mustafa, however, is a team of workers including our chefs, food service assistants and supervisors who are the daily faces of Mary's catering. These are the people who ensure that food is out on time, to a high standard, and that the salad bar, yoghurt stands and bread remain filled up for the two hour meal slots. They keep the Dining Hall looking pristine and do so with extreme patience and efficiency. Comprised of both contract workers from around Durham as well as students hired by the University, the catering team are a defining part of student experience at Marys.

Without them Mary's would not be what it is and so we wanted to draw attention to the work they do through an interview with Tracey Cummings, the Food Service Supervisor, who recently was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the JCR by the students in thanks for her endless commitment and kindness. Over the page we hear from her about her journey with Durham University and her standout moments while working at Mary's...



An Interview with Tracey Cummings

Tracey is a beloved member of the St Mary's catering staff. She joined the college in 2019, following 4 years at St Cuthbert's Society and 4 years at Trevelyan College. Soon after she joined, the pandemic began, so her second year at Mary's involved the significant challenge of providing meals for over 200 students in a safe and efficient manner. Though Tracey said that she didn't find this as difficult as some of her colleagues who had to care for elderly parents or young children, she explained how difficult it was to see students in that situation. Despite the difficult circumstances, Tracey still managed to get to know the students - her favourite part of her job. However, as one of the only members of staff who could identify students and which bubbles in college they belonged to, that did mean she was the one that had to identify rulebreakers!

Tracey prides herself on providing a high standard of customer service. She knows many students by name and the students pride themselves on this fact. She endeavours to notice individuals, making students feel seen and cared for. In recognition of this, Tracey was recently awarded honorary life membership for the St Mary's JCR at President's Guest Night, as well as winning an award for her excellent customer service. This recognition comes from Tracey's personal relationship with students but also her kindness and attempts to help students where she can, such as with take away meals. Though she was invited to attend the PGN formal dinner, Tracey chose to work that evening instead, in order to support her colleagues.

While we were interviewing Tracey she was in the process of polishing all the silverware for the Midsummer Ball formal meal. She explained that this preparation has to be started a week in advance because of the sheer amount that has to be done - over 2000 pieces of cutlery, hundreds of glasses and plates, and table runners. This year, Tracey was one of the only members of staff who had catered a Mary's Midsummer ball, so her institutional knowledge about the mechanics of this specific event, such as the extra tables in Kenworthy, was invaluable.

While all formals provide a break from the norm, Tracey's favourite is the Christmas formal. Not only does she love the festive decorations and mince pies, but also it's the end of the freshers' first term, when they have begun to truly solidify friendships and settle into life in Durham.

Tracey hopes that she will stay with St Mary's until her retirement; we hope so too - and hope it will be a long time coming - because it wouldn't be the same without her! Thank you Tracey, and all of the phenomenal Catering Staff, you help to make Mary's what it is and your hard work does not go unappreciated - we are so lucky to have you!

CAROL SERVICE

We were ushered into the festive spirit by the beautiful voices of Mary's Choir and reading from members of our community with our annual Carol Service in Durham Cathedral. It was a moment of great unity as we sang together, favourites like 'Once in Royal David's City' and 'O Come All ye Faithful' encouraging even the tone deaf among us to join in.



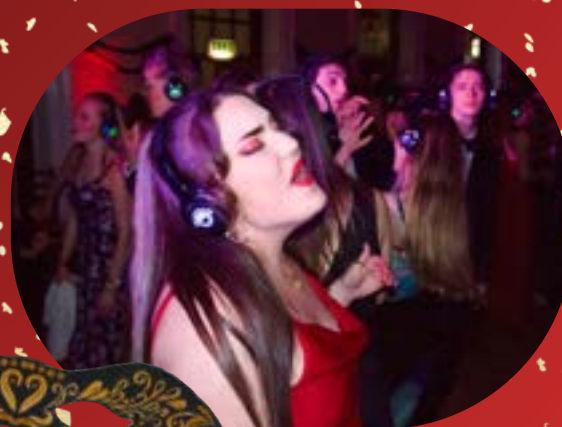
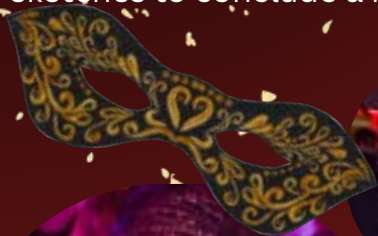
WINTER BALL

This winter we stepped into Narnia, the Ball Exec transforming Mary's into a frosty world of magic. We got to enjoy a night of music featuring Mary's Mixed voices, the Orchard Theives and the Arrows as well as performances from Mary's Dance and the obligatory Silent Disco.



Masquerade Ball

The Masquerade Ball took us to the Opera this year, without any run ins with Phantoms thankfully! It was a night of music and dancing with Mary's Orchestra, Basement Jazz, the Quays and Mary's Dance treating us to brilliant performances before the classic Silent Disco. Attendees also got to try their luck at Roulette Tables, a Caricaturist treating people to entertaining sketches to conclude a memorable night of revelry!



Martin Kinnear: 'Regeneration'

A show about the transformative power of change



(Martin Kinnear, 2024)

Looking beyond ourselves...

This year at Mary's, we have been lucky enough to display some of Martin Kinnear's collection Regeneration, which focuses on the transformative power of change. The display featured pieces such as 'The Pit Road' and 'Pandemonium', intended to contextualise our experience at Durham with the industrial history of the Northeast and inspire us to embrace and explore the untapped potential of the North.

Regeneration highlights the potential of repressed areas in the North, such as Durham. Kinnear explained that if we overlook these places and the people that live there, we do them and ourselves a disservice. Our privilege as Durham students, in accessing higher education, qualifications and opportunities, inherently relies on that privilege not being extended to most people. Kinnear hopes to encourage us to remember this and to focus on what people are capable of, rather than where they came from or what qualifications they have.

St Mary's' Pioneering legacy

Mary's has a history of progressivism, being founded as a women's college in the 1890s, a time when women were not able to take university degrees. However, there is a significant problem with diversity in Durham University more broadly. With this installation, Kinnear hopes to tell a story of social inclusivity we, as future leaders, can learn from.

A key element of this installation is that they truly became a part of college life this year. Kinnear emphasised the importance of 'living with' the art pieces, rather than simply going to see them in an exhibition. The extended installation at St Mary's allowed the students to do just this, engaging with the subjects of the paintings regularly and hopefully learning from them.



The Paintings

The subject of 'Pandemonium', which is displayed in the dining hall, is the mills of the North. They appear cathedral-like, suggesting how central industry was and continues to be, almost like a religion. Kinnear grew up in Lancashire, surrounded by mill chimneys and is profoundly concerned with the 'ongoing tragedy' of cheap houses and poor opportunities in the North, which he associates with the industrial history. He compared the overlooking of the working-class North to burning a Bible, in that there is so much wasted potential. In light of this focus in his work, one of Kinnear's pieces was taken into the Government Art Collection to hang in Downing Street to provide a constant reminder of the North and Boris Johnson's commitment to levelling-up.

Kinnear also spoke to us about a piece called 'Lethe', which focuses on how the lives and actions of people we have never met shape us. The painting conveys memories echoing through time. While this wasn't displayed in college, the notion that we are shaped by those before us is a potent message for St Mary's and as we near the 150th anniversary of St Mary's, we ought not to forget the college's proud progressive origins and should continue to push for diversity and reform today.

The Process

Much of his work is painted from memory rather than directly from images. Kinnear believes that in painting from memory, you highlight the most important things, rather than just replicating an image. He also frequently paints over and reworks previous pieces. He believes that each piece is an ongoing conversation with the subject and just like a conversation or a memory that never truly finishes. Similarly, paintings are never finished but might be enjoyed at various stages throughout their process. When asked, Kinnear said he was almost certain that the pieces at Mary's would eventually be reworked and recontextualised.



'Council House Days', 2021



'Pandemonium', 2021 (part of a triptych)



'Lethe', 2021 (part of a triptych)

The paintings themselves are quite rich and darkly coloured, heavily featuring the red of the mills. Kinnear explained that when we look at art, seven tenths of the brain focuses on contrast, light and - dark, and the rest on colour, so these contrasts are of primary importance. Indeed, Kinnear's work contrasts quite significantly with most of St Mary's interior. He hopes that Mary's continues to have bold installations, so that our students can live alongside powerful art and be inspired to be bold and to create.

MIDSUMMER BALL

This year we returned to Ancient Greece beginning with a three course meal with canapés. Afterwards there were rides, student bands and a Basement Boiler Room! For those who made it through the Silent Disco, we watched the sunrise on Observatory Hill and had a Survivors Breakfast!



Mary's Day!

Mary's Day featured the music of Basement Jazz, Ivies, The GrAle, Big Ears and The Fellows. We also had Adele and Elton John tribute acts, as well as various rides and activities for people to enjoy, fresh donuts, pizza and yorkshire pudding wraps!



Celebrating 125

Established as the Women's Hostel in 1899, St Mary's College's history is intrinsically linked with that of women's education at Durham. About to celebrate its 125th year, we can look back and celebrate Mary's growth, from only 6 students in 1899 to 750 undergraduates and 350 postgraduates today. Our history is rich, complicated and a testament to the pioneering, determined spirit of its students. Over the next couple pages Anne Elliott remembers this history by guiding us through the different houses of St Mary's...



ABBHEY HOUSE 1901-1919

“By the Easter term of 1901 we were in a bigger house. It was a wonderful change, as we were now in the centre of everything and had much pleasanter quarters. The next year we took in the tiny house next door (Abbey House Cottage) as our numbers had grown,” wrote Bessie Callender, the first Senior Student.

Rachel Elinor Duff Donaldson, the College's longest-serving Principal, records: “It is a long, rambling, late Georgian building and very popular with students. The rooms with their quaint windows and oak beams, recall rooms on the old staircases in Oxford colleges – and an old cottage which is incorporated in the house possesses a very beautiful staircase of the Renaissance period. For many years the students in Abbey House literally burned the midnight oil until lamps gave place to electricity and modern comforts were installed”.



For a picture of life in Abbey House we depend mainly on her comments, one of the most notable being about World War One. Evenings were spent in the common room where they “knitted feverishly, and sang patriotic songs, and frequently beat a hurried retreat to Abbey House kitchen while aircraft whirred over our heads. We blacked out too in those days and carried our sugar about in tins too, and boasted that we had only consumed two and a half pounds of bread per week. As for butter we were lucky if sometimes we had a little dripping. We managed to keep fairly warm in spite of coal strikes, though curiously enough the winters of the Great War too were very cold.”

“We organised mixed hockey and football matches for the soldiers billeted in Hatfield...and if an army lorry carried away our shutters and part of the wall in Dun Cow Lane, it was all in the day's work. We occasionally entertained the few men who were left or had come back invalided from the war, when my bedroom and sitting-room with folding doors were camouflaged and rolled into one.”

years of history

8 THE COLLEGE 1919-1952

Miss Donaldson was in her fifth year as Principal, having seen the Women's Hostel through the First World War. Imagine her excitement in 1919 not only at the new collegiate status and new name but a new main residence, 8 The College, on the Cathedral Close. She acknowledges these with infectious enthusiasm in her 1919-1920 Report to the Old Students at their first reunion since before the war: "To begin with we have reached the status of which we used in my first year in Durham to talk longingly but rather hopelessly – the status of a fully-fledged college. This year we have come of age, are known as St Mary's College, are represented on the Council, possess a Common Room into which we can all get, as well as a spacious garden and a boat. We are soon going to have a crest on our notepaper, and we want suggestions for a motto. During the year we attained to thirty students and to judge from the number of applicants for October, will easily surpass that record next year."

A NAMING

Prior to May 1920, the College did not hold official College status and was known as the Women's Hostel. However as numbers grew, there was a move to amend this. There were many suggestions for a name "but eventually it was generally agreed that we could not do better than place the College under the protection of Mary herself, and I think that the choice is one that, as time goes on, we shall not regret." (Donaldson) St Mary's College was thus born.



THE NEW HOME

Principal Donaldson proudly described the new home: "The prebendal house.....stands on the site of the former granaries of the monks. It is approached from the Cathedral College (the name given to the Close in Durham) through a beautiful arch which leads into a large dignified, cobbled courtyard. Over the entrance are the arms of Shute Barrington, a former Bishop of Durham who added an east wing to the house. In the rear of the house, which faces South, lies a large, sunny, rectangular garden with a lily-pond in the middle and a cedar tree – the only one in Durham. A very high wall on the line of the ancient city wall (of which there remains a twelfth century buttress) encloses the garden, the wall of which eventually joins the only remaining gate to the city.....The interior of the building is remarkable for a very lofty ceiling and a handsome staircase of two flights. The spacious public rooms provide a dining-hall capable of seating eighty students, and two very large rooms which serve as library and common room respectively".

Life at the New Home (1913-1940)

THE CHAPEL WITH THE GREEN ROOF

Chapel attendance was compulsory and at first the Women's Hostel students attended the Galilee Chapel in the Cathedral. From 1913 colleges held their own services so prayers were said in the Hostel. In 1919 the Dean, Bishop Welldon, offered the use of the Deanery Chapel to the newly named St Mary's during his time as Dean. After he died in 1933, St Mary's very own new chapel called Welldon House was built in their garden at 8 The College. It was a temporary wooden structure with a green roof. Principal Donaldson said, "The green roof harmonises with nature, the interior is well proportioned and the exterior is particularly pleasing". Furnishings were donated by Alumnae and others including an altar from Dean Alington. The Chapel has now gone. When St Mary's left the site and the Chorister School took over, the Chapel became a games room and was eventually replaced by a sports hall and the yard extended in 1987. There have been other alterations over the years such as the space under the verandah has been enclosed and the basements modernized.

THE LILY-POND AND THE CEDAR TREE

The lily-pond in the middle of the garden dated from the early 1700s. When the yard was extended the planners insisted that the pond be restored where it was. In 2016 the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the Chorister School included the stone creation of a St Cuthbert's cross on the site of the pond. The cedar tree remained minus the swing. However, the tradition of cedar trees continued when St Mary's new 1952 buildings acquired a splendid cedar tree on the SCR lawn.



THE WAR YEARS

The War meant changes in the garden, where all the ground between the cedar and the Chapel was laid out in neat rows of vegetables organised by Miss Daldy "with most gratifying success in spite of all that weather and pests could do in opposition...Miss Hamilton Thompson, [History lecturer and University Librarian] has been shedding a benign influence over the flower gardens, and in her wake have sprung up tulips and primroses, and later peonies and snapdragons and poppies." Friends donated cuttings and student volunteers "spent many strenuous hours with hoe and dibber and spade". The College had a greenhouse, which, it is said, the Principal mindful of food shortages declined to share with other residents of the Close.

The most difficult part of a college in war-time was the domestic side and "this year in addition to problems of catering and rationing we have had to cope with the very serious shortage of domestic servants. St Mary's was the first Durham college to introduce student waitresses at dinner....The Bursar has also started a self-help or cafeteria system at breakfast and lunch - a system which works like clockwork".

During the war, food and clothing were strictly rationed. Menus included rabbit and whalemeat, one banana per head per term and one egg per head per week. Bread and cakes were rationed. Post-war rationing continued to affect staple commodities such as milk, bacon, butter, sugar, jam, bread, flour and soap.



Muriel Hood, a don in 1929-39, recorded, "the cathedral seen against a pale blue sky through the entrance archway on a winter's morning: the river eternally roaring over the weir outside the windows; the long old-fashioned garden, green and cool at the back, where the grey nun's ghost walked at night".

NO SHORT CUTS

The new home had its drawbacks. One was a ban on using the Cathedral Close as a tempting shortcut to Palace Green for lectures and the walk back for meals. The Canon's house was leased to the University for the use of St Mary's by the Dean and Chapter under certain conditions that were meant to safeguard the privacy of residents such as the neighbouring Archdeacon. It was agreed with the Chapter that St Mary's students should not walk through the Cathedral Close to reach Palace Green and lectures. It could be used only by the Principal "and the students...on their arrival and departure in vehicles with their luggage at the beginning and end of each University term or after the back entry to the college and the further gate are closed at night or when going to and from the Cathedral for worship or when visiting any of the residents in the College or in case of sickness or other grave emergency or tradespeople and others bringing or delivering goods to the Women's Students Hostel."

Students had to go through the gate in their walled garden leading to steps often slippery, going down to the river banks or by way of 13 South Bailey. This was an annexe taken in 1932 known as College House "with its charming garden, already accessible by steps leading from the bottom of the College garden". However, they were allowed to take the short cut in deep snow and also during the War because they helped to fire-watch the Cathedral and streets were blacked out. But in September 1945, the unreasonable rules were enforced again despite Principal Fergusson's requests pointing out the slur the rules cast on the students' good behaviour.

In 1947 an agreement ending the archaic ruling signed by Dean Alington included: 'Students are asked to be specially careful to avoid noise when coming through the College after dark' and 'Standing about in the College, especially near St Mary's gate is definitely forbidden.' The agreement was just as well because the winter of 1947 was exceptionally harsh.

A New Building and a Royal Visit

From 1919-1952 St Mary's also had the use of many different houses. Yearly leases did not foster continuity. By 1940, in addition to Abbey House and Cottage, 8 The College, 8 & 13 South Bailey, they occupied various other houses on South and North Bailey and in 1945 a St John's building, Cruddas House. The College remained the headquarters but obviously a purpose-built College was essential.



Planning began in 1936 under Rachel Donaldson and the foundation stone was laid by Princess Elizabeth in 1947. To have such an influential lady and leader lay the foundation of Mary's captures its dedication to fostering an environment where women (and now men) can access education and take charge of their future.





The new St Mary's, on the Elvet Hill site was completed and fully occupied in 1952, under Margaret Fergusson, to whom the building's name is attributed. Abbey House became the Theology Department and 8 The College was taken over by the Chorister School.



In the words of Principal Donaldson: "We have lost nothing as a college by having difficulties to overcome and have achieved the union which is strength in spite of our limitations.....After all, a walk before breakfast and dinner never did anyone any harm."



The Question of Graduation

Kellie Horrocks' investigation into

During my time working at Durham University, I have volunteered to marshal at congregation in Durham Cathedral. It truly is a privilege to be part of thousands of Durham student's graduation ceremonies. But it did raise the question, why don't graduates wear caps, or mortar boards as they are known?

Whilst thinking of ways to promote the 125th Anniversary, I remembered the story I heard whilst marshalling at the winter congregation. This raised the question – is there a link to St Mary's? Did men protest because St Mary's College allowed women to study for a degree? I decided to find out.

First, I asked our archivist, Ann Elliot who had not heard the tale. But she did point me in the direction of Palace Green. There were people in the department at Palace Green who had heard the tale but could not tell me if it was fact or fiction. I was however sent this interesting snippet from a Durham University journal dating back to 1897 (see photo).



I asked the question, first in January of 2023. This is the first time I heard the legend. Legend has it, that once upon a time, men protested at women graduating and threw their mortar boards into the River Wear. Since then, mortar boards have not been part of the graduation attire.

Fast forward, although not that far, to January 2024 where I am now in my new post at St. Mary's College as Alumni Events and Fundraising Coordinator. My post has been specifically created to organise and promote the 125th Anniversary of St Mary's, which happened to be one of the first colleges in the UK for women only, established in 1899.

Caps: Mary's in the '60s

Durham's graduation myths



As I was first told the story at congregation, although I couldn't recall who told me, I asked the Ceremonies team at Durham. They had also heard the story about men throwing their caps into the River Wear, protesting at women being allowed the right to study and work towards a degree. I asked College colleagues, the alumni team, and colleagues from former departments where I had worked during my years at the University. Most had heard the story, but I was still no further to finding out the truth.

But there was a name that came up a couple of times; Marnie. Marnie works for Gray and Sons, the company who make robes for congregation ceremonies. I went straight to Google to find an email address and hopefully learn the truth. The reply I received soon shed light on the mystery:

"Sorry to disappoint but it really is just a myth. mortar boards were compulsory up to the 1960's but then were made optional and went out of fashion, probably because of the hairstyles in that era!" So there you have it, the urban legend of the men of Durham University protesting to woman graduates is just that, an urban legend. More to do with fashion of the times.

This does raise another question, should we bring them back?



Kellie Horrocks
St Mary's Alumni Events and Fundraising Coordinator

How we continue to grow...

In 1962, the Williamson buildings were built to increase accommodation.



In 1993, Kenworthy Hall and atrium were built and named after Joan Kenworthy, who was principal at the time.



A partnership with Teikyo University in Japan necessitated the construction of the Etsuko and Suichi buildings where home and Japanese students live together. These buildings testament not only to St Mary's connections with Durham but with the world.



In our buildings we therefore see the history of our college, its beautiful, diverse and determined student body brimming with potential for the future. We carry the legacy of our many Principals as well as the men and women who have, and continue to, advocate for accessibility to higher education, regardless of gender, race or class.

Mary's Then and Now



Then: JCR and Library



Now: Dining Hall



Now: Mary's Gardens



Now: Reading Room

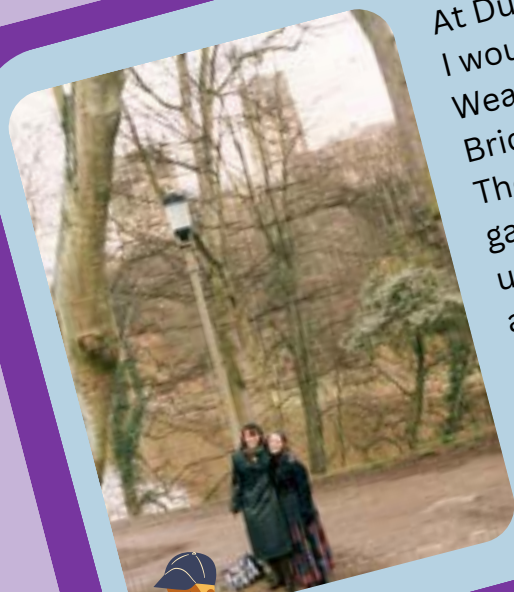
Mary's students:

Postcard from Victoria Kowarick:

When I started at Mary's 30 years ago there were baskets of letters in the JCR with the payphones across the hallway and another phone halfway up that only received calls. It sounds like a long time ago - before mobiles, when most people shared TVs and queued to use computers. It was a different era, but not without its pressures and business.



where are they now?



At Durham, Sundays were sacred. I would take long walks by the Wear and stand on Prebends Bridge gazing up at the Cathedral. These days restored my soul and gave strength for the week. After university, I lived in India, Africa and then America. The intense workload I undertook in New York eventually forced me to slow down and reconnect with nature, just as I had done in Durham.



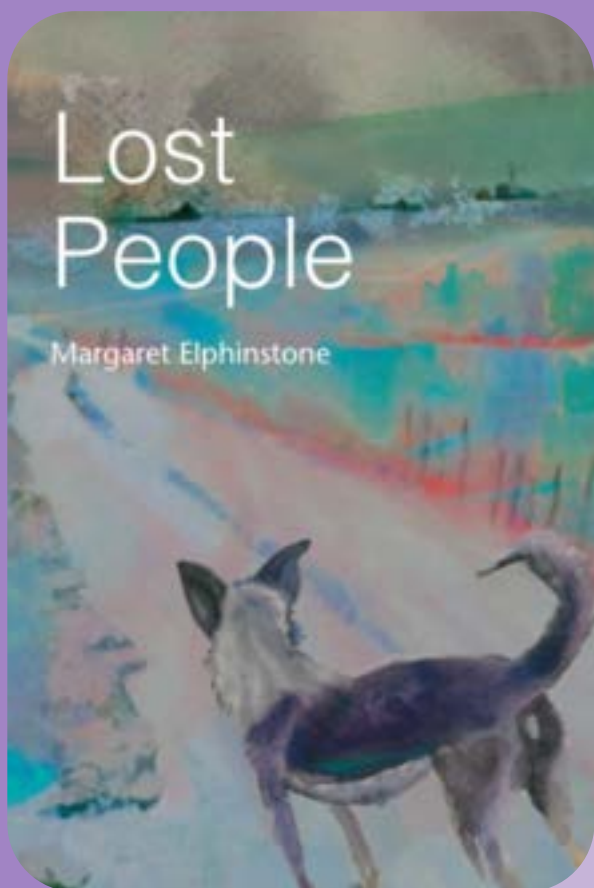
Now I sit looking out as palm leaves sway and the sea expands to the horizon at Arandu Sagi Inn in the northeast of Brazil. "Arandu" is a tribal word meaning "experiencing time." This place is a visible reminder to slow down enough to celebrate the wonder of today. I am an innkeeper with my husband. The cool waters of the River Wear are replaced by the power of the Atlantic Ocean and the cobbled streets give way to warm sands. May you too have eyes to see today's treasure and a heart open to receive it!

Victoria Kowarick
2/25/2024



Lost People by Margaret Elphinstone

An Alumna's review of an Alumna's book!



Angela Braga and Margaret Elphinstone were both Mary's students from 1967-1970 reading English. Elphinstone is now a successful author and Braga has written the below review on her latest work 'Lost People'

In this short novella, Elphinstone's eleventh work of fiction, the narrative pulls in its readers from page one. We are introduced to the minutely-observed world of the central character Rue, an abandoned refugee child whose gender remains unspecified and who slides warily through the first section like a small animal, never speaking, simply seeking warmth, safety and survival. It becomes evident that we are in a post-war period. Civilisation has been laid waste and people are reduced to finding ways to survive by grouping together. Is this the future, or the past? Rue's place of sanctuary in a semi-monastic community is timeless, and the scene-setting descriptions of ruined towns and shattered lives seem simultaneously historic and contemporary. Traumatic memories lie beneath the surface both for Rue and for other characters, lightly hinted at to begin with and skilfully developed as the story unfolds.

Encouraged by the kindly Sister Angela, Rue takes on the planting and nurturing of the community's neglected knot garden - the symmetry and order of its design presented as a healing contrast to the chaos and destruction left by the war. Here the author uses wonderful sensory images of plants, smells, birdsong, colours and textures. The traditional pattern of the knot garden, with its four distinctive quadrants, is echoed in the four-part structure of the book.

In one sense this is a coming-of-age novel, since the adult Rue must eventually leave the garden (Eden?) and go out into the world to seek meaning and redemption. Along the way there is loyal support from a small stray dog named Cosette - the name a clear reference to 'Les Mis'. Other minor characters are convincingly rounded even when briefly described: the orphan Basil, the cook Dennis, spice merchant Luisa, the enigmatic Elena. In the tradition of the quest saga, Rue journeys through hardships and setbacks, receiving hospitality and help, rebuilding memory fragment by fragment and finally arriving at a crisis and resolution of sorts. This is a search for identity, origins, wholeness. The author strongly suggests that healing - both personal and societal - can be found through a return to reliance on the natural world, on the cycle of growth of crops, the use of medicinal herbs and a simpler subsistence lifestyle.

By refusing to specify places or periods, Elphinstone distils the timeless essence of what our species must do to survive after catastrophe. Despite the distant violence and danger of its setting, this is by no means a depressing book. Lucidly written and ultimately positive, it shows how time heals and how cooperation with our fellow-travellers can bring restoration, peace and security. The constant detailed references to plants and their properties give the narrative great strength. As the story comes full circle, Rue is back in the knot garden, planting the fourth quadrant 'with the kindest plants I knew', for the benefit of others.

Squiggly Student Journey; Squiggly Career

Looking back at life at and after Mary's with Kate Fox Robinson

You can never predict how an environment will shape more than your learning. Walking into St Mary's College in 2004, the final year of all female in-take, I was taken aback, having never been in an all female environment before. The previous year I had worked to save and then volunteered overseas, as many of my peers did at that time, but mid-year I changed my mind about my life trajectory and applied to Durham, the only University in the country offering a vocational Youth and Community Work course. There was no time to pick a college and I was dubious about the set up, initially finding the social sphere completely different to my inner-city Bristol state school experience and thought formal dinners a foreign entity.

I was equally clueless about Durham and indeed the North East, having never ventured here previously. The cross country journey became familiar as I travelled home to work each vacation. Little did I know at the time how I would fall in love with the area, stay for a further 5 years after graduating and then return again in 2020 to settle here with my family.

As was the pattern in those days, everyone moved room term by term, taking it in turns to share. Looking back it sounds more disruptive than it actually felt at the time. The image of chequered flooring in the hallway, the long wooden tables in the dining hall and carbs with carbs for meals is seared in my memory. That and the walkway under my accommodation to get to early morning rowing, a new venture that coincided with my love of water. Coming from Somerset it was noticeable how the summer light was longer, how on a night out it was dark only between midnight to 2am before the sky started to brighten again.

My course meant it was easy to get out of the Durham bubble, travelling by public transport to placements in Newcastle and Sunderland. My course mates were a mix of young adults like myself and more mature students looking for a career change. Of the cohort about half were new to the area, arriving to study, the other half comprising of local students. I relished the rich experience this diversity brought to learning and socialising. I could never have foreseen the path that coming to St. Mary's would take me on; from the charity sector to the NHS and back to education. Later I studied at Masters level elsewhere, distance learning, part-time around caring responsibilities. Each educational experience offering engagement as best suits the life stage and needs of those who undertake it. Each one valuable for the role it plays in a person's life.

St. Mary's has been many things for many people. For me it was a steady place to find my feet, a safe home to try new things, an altogether unique environment, the likes of which are unrepeatable and so all the more precious for it.



Joan Margaret Kenworthy: 10th



Miss Joan Kenworthy, Principal of St Mary's College for 22 years, 1977-1999, was the second longest-serving Principal, second only to Rachel Donaldson, 1915-1940. She was the ninth Principal out of the present fourteen. On October 13th 2017 College hosted a celebration lunch to mark her 40 years association with St Mary's in, appropriately, the Kenworthy Conference Hall.

After graduating from St Hilda's College, Oxford, Joan had an interesting career starting at Makerere College Uganda and Kenya, then posts in St Hugh's College Oxford and Bedford College, London. She joined Liverpool University in 1960 as Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Geography then was promoted to Lecturer and Senior Lecturer. She served as Warden of Salisbury Hall. Liverpool shaped her career.

She said of her motivation for becoming St Mary's Principal, "I had experience of a mix of academic, administrative, pastoral and social responsibilities in Liverpool University. I had experienced college life at Oxford. I am a northerner. What better way to continue this mix than as Principal of a Durham College?"

She combined her role as Principal with a part-time position in the Geography Department, lecturing on climatology and East Africa and was renowned for her valuable contributions to the history of meteorology. She became an honorary founder member of the Association of British Climatologists. She was elected to the council of the Royal Meteorological Society 1985-87; in 1995 came an Award from the Leverhulme Trust; from 2009 to 2015 she held an Honorary Research Fellowship in Durham's Geography Department. In 2015 Joan was awarded the Jehuda Neumann Memorial Prize of the Royal Meteorological Society. She continued her association with the Department after retirement, delivering lectures on climatology and publishing papers on weather and climate well into her eighties.

Of impending retirement she wrote, "I have been unable to envisage leaving the North East which I have grown to love best, despite the many attractions of the North West where I was born and brought up. I have found a new house on the edge of the North Pennines and, at the time of writing, I am busy in spare moments choosing kitchen fittings!..I shall miss College, in particular the continuing sense of community with students, graduates, resident and non-resident SCR and the very special staff with whom I have been fortunate to work...I shall miss the international atmosphere of College.



December 1933 - 18th May 2024



I first met her shortly after she became Principal, at a Durham University Society lunch, held after Convocation at a different Durham college each year and by chance sat beside her. Her vivacity, enthusiasm and interesting views made her a great conversationalist – and I was a good listener. At various subsequent events we were similarly drawn into contact.

She was a keen participant in St Mary's College Society meetings. In 1980, she handed over the position of SMCS President to alumna Louise Chapman. However, she remained an enthusiastic supporter of reunion events and celebrations.

In October 1995, Mike Daly, as the new Bursar at Teikyo University of Japan, was very warmly welcomed to the St Mary's SCR community by Miss Kenworthy. She had the vision to allow two Teikyo Halls of Residence to be built on land adjacent to her College; even the precise architecture of the buildings closely match. In April 1990 she had welcomed the forty Japanese students of Teikyo University who dined in College and participated in all aspects of College life as JCR members. They would spend one year in Durham studying for a degree of Teikyo University with their own teachers but take an additional English language course. She recognised the great benefits of encouraging an international student body and fully supported their staff.

Her enduring legacy includes major extensions to the College itself in 1993. The Williamson Building gained three new blocks connecting east and west wings, to create a quadrangle and projecting at either side, providing 52 study bedrooms. The entrance has a pediment echoing that on the portico of the main building. A conference hall, named Kenworthy in 2003 in her honour, was built and connected to the Dining Hall by a glass-roofed atrium. The Holdsworth and Donaldson seminar rooms were converted from storage rooms in the kitchen block.

Joan made lasting friendships; for example, "I am hugely indebted to her for over 32 years of professional assistance and personal friendship", says Professor Françoise Deconinck-Brossard. "I first met her in the early 1990s when the director of the Society of Fellows advised me that St. Mary's was the most suitable college for me to apply for a fellowship. I was indeed fortunate to be granted a 'visiting Fellowship' in the School of English with residency in St. Mary's in 1992, followed three years later by a 'College Fellowship' for which Joan suggested that I apply."

Long-serving College staff have paid tribute. Helen Davies, the current College Operations Manager says, "she was an immaculately dressed lady. She kept the College in a very traditional, family orientated order that staff warmed to. She was well respected and was always greeted by staff with 'Miss Kenworthy' and 'Joan' to those who worked closely with her. She was very generous and thoughtful, remembering anniversary dates and events both personally and with the wider staff community and this continued after she retired from St Mary's. She would always remember you and look out for you at calendar College events."

Karen Fisher, former College Administrator, writes, "she was proud to be the Principal of St Mary's College and she loved to entertain overseas guests, colleagues, students past and present at High Table. A gracious host, she invited all of the College staff to her home at Elvet Garth annually for drinks and nibbles to mark the New Year. She made time to talk to everyone she came into contact with; it really did not matter who they were. A lady with a remarkable memory for facts, names and faces".

Another loyal staff member recalls, “She cared about the students and saw each individually about their exam results (no Senior Tutor or student support in those days). She was extremely compassionate if anyone was in distress. She modernised high table. When she was appointed there was a big gong which had to be sounded for dinner and the joint was brought to Joan to carve for each guest. Eventually Joan decided this process was taking too long and much to the dinner ladies’ relief, the decision was made to bring plated meals from the kitchen!”

After retiring she attended many College events such as the garden parties, whatever the weather and where staff and their families had always been welcome. She kept many College friends, reciprocating the loyalty of many including the late Pam Aynesworth Bursar, 1971-98, and long-serving catering staff, four of whom were remarkable sisters.

She has played an indelible role in the life of St. Mary’s and will be much remembered personally for her charm and professionally for her style of leadership. Now as part of the College history, she will be much missed.

Anne Elliott, St Mary’s College Archivist.

Contributions from friends and colleagues are gratefully acknowledged
Obituaries of the Universities of Liverpool (1) and Durham (3)
SMCS Newsletter Reports 2011-2012 (2); 1999 (4); 1991 (5)

A Personal Memory - Christine Wright

I was a second year when Joan arrived to replace Miss Calvert as Principal in 1976-7. She was a no nonsense, sensible woman, quite forthright, and with a pleasant manner. She seemed to establish herself quickly at Mary's, and she made quite a few changes in her first couple of years.

Some of these changes were necessary because the age of majority was lowered to 18 from 21 in 1974. Those of us who arrived in 1975 and 1976 were legally adults; many had voted in a General Election and/or the Referendum on continued EU membership, and yet we arrived to a residential College where staff still acted as if they were “in loco parentis”. There was a slightly uneasy transition where the younger students stood sometimes vociferously for their rights as legal adults while the oldest saw less reason for that to happen. In 1976 there was still a “curfew” of sorts, though it did not appear to be taken very seriously.

Joan smoothed the passage between the College's “in loco parentis” role and the new order where students were legally adults, with pragmatism, minimum fuss and great common sense. Door keys were provided, curfews vanished, and so did other rules about male visitors (we were a women only college at this point). She acknowledged our independence but, as it was the first time away from home for many of us, there was plenty of support available for anyone who needed it. Much like the ethos that Mary's has retained to this day.

Her work put Mary's in the vanguard of responding to this change in the legal status of undergraduates, among the women’s’ Colleges at any rate. She had a wry sense of humour and was well respected by students and staff. When I graduated in 1978, and accepted a place on a PGCE course, she was helpful in recommending me for a room at Parsons Field Court, for which I was always grateful.

I lost touch with College during the 80s and 90s but I used to read the annual SMCS newsletters The newsletters always contained a piece by Joan and it was clear that she enjoyed being Principal and was there for the long term; in the end she served for 22 years until her retirement so obviously she was happy at Mary's.

Joan was a character: a respected academic, a strong leader and a great benefit to Mary's. She will be sadly missed.



YOGA



Mary's Yoga Society is a beginner-level, student-run society for those interested in yoga! The society is run by Yoga Soc President, Annika; our trusty treasurer, Will; and Social Secretary, Olivia. We run weekly yoga and meditation sessions aimed at boosting the physical and mental well-being of Mary's students.

This has been quite the year for Yoga - with our membership quadrupling and, with Olivia's help, we hosted our first ever social (a de-stress café social at Treats Café).

We are proud to have collaborated with Welfare at Mary's (WAM). This has included Wednesday sessions, with a focus on destressing mid-week during summative seasons and teaching students some healthy coping mechanisms.

SMC Yoga is also collaborating with the International Society, to help run a yoga session during International Week to help Mary's international students destress with regards to issues such as homesickness. As well as this, we are collaborating with Revival Charity Fashion, to help models unwind before the show.

One of the highlights of this year would definitely be winning Society of the Month! There are also lots of exciting things in the works such as couples' yoga and puppy yoga! We hope everyone has enjoyed attending the sessions as much as we love putting them on!



Yoga love
and
Namste!



MIXED LACROSSE

This year Mary's Mixed Lacrosse (MML) has excelled in a multitude of ways, which has made the Exec particularly proud of our progress as a club. For the first time, the club has two teams which have both competed at a high level. Our A team has had an unbeaten season, meaning that we will be promoted to the Premiership League for next season. This is a huge achievement which the Co-Club Captains, Mollie Matthews and Hannah Tunnicliffe, have been working towards for the past 2 years! They are extremely proud of the club and everyone who is a part of it.

MML's greatest challenges have been in matches against Collingwood, Hatfield, and our rivals - St. Aidan's (bit of a rogue choice). It is in these moments that the spirit of Mary's Lax really shines. There is no doubt that they are competitive, and have a very strong fire in their bellies, but they also never fail to have fun.

Mollie and Hannah are both graduating this year so will unfortunately be leaving Mary's Lax but they're taking lots of special memories with them from their time with the club. Particularly entertaining occasions have to be when someone falls over - it happens a lot but it never gets old. The sideline running commentary from our social secretary Cerys Chadd is also unique, yet highly motivating and entertaining.



Everyone in the club deserves a mention and a massive thank you - they are all amazing and have put so much time and effort into, let's face it, a rather odd sport! Special thanks to Mollie and Hannah for being the best Co-Captains and Co-Presidents and but also to the 'Founding Fathers' - Marcus King and Tom Morton. Without them the club definitely wouldn't have been in as much debt, but also wouldn't have been inspired to carry on their legacy. A final thanks goes to everyone who has been, or will be, part of the Mary Lax Exec - your passion, motivation and efforts are what make the club so special and have enabled the club's unstoppable success. Long may it last...



Live Laugh Lax!

SMCRFC



SMCRFC was founded in 2005 when gentlemen first began studying at Mary's. We pride ourselves on our sporting ability, with notable success previously in the 2022 Floodlit Plate victory. In addition to this, we have managed to achieve promotion this year, moving from the third to second tier of college rugby.

Off the pitch, the club has a strong social and charitable scene, with the latter being a particular point of pride for the college.



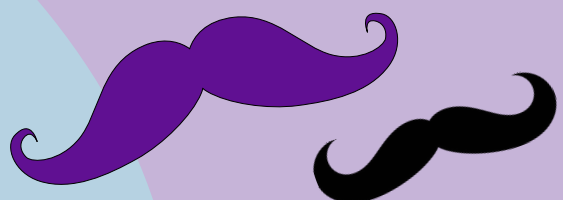
In November, as part of our Movember campaign, the club led a bake sale and leg-waxing event, resulting in over £250 being raised for the men's health charity. Many of our members also took part in Movember by growing moustaches to help raise awareness about men's mental health.



College rugby is a fantastic way to rekindle one's love for team sports. For example, our Co-Club Captain, Callum Goddard, gave up playing rugby back in year 9 and only started again in second year of university. The close bonds made with members of this club will last a lifetime and is really what makes college sport so special.

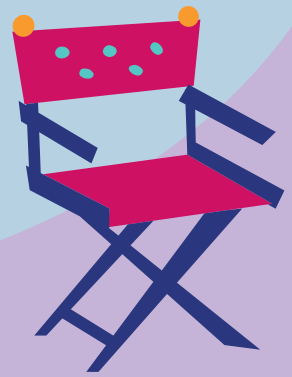


Up the Mares x



FOOT OF THE HILL

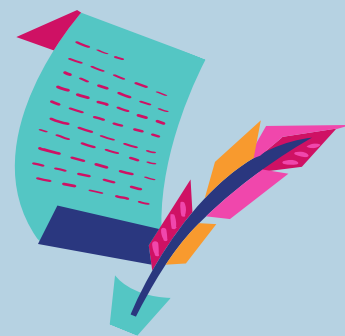
This year has been full of nonstop fun for FHTC! We kicked off this year during Fresher's Week with our student-written production of 'Horrible Histories: Freaky Freshers', the first DST show of the academic year! We then jumped straight into our first full-length play of the year, Oscar Wilde's 'A Woman of No Importance'. We were delighted to produce a sell-out performance, with so many enthusiastic freshers involved in the cast and crew!



We are also so proud to have pioneered the first ever intercollegiate charity showcase in aid of the Graham Martin Bursary Appeal. 'Heaven and Hell' made its debut in the Assembly Rooms Theatre in late November. The show consisted of ten colleges with more than 40 students making up our fantastic cast and crew. The showcase consisted of two acts with contrasting themes, with each college having a ten-minute slot to display their chosen piece. And, to top off our evening of success, we managed to raise more than £400 for the bursary appeal in one night! The evening was full of fun and variety, and we hope for it to become an annual tradition.



On the subject of annual traditions, the FHTC panto returned this year with 'Peter Panto', a pan-tastic student written take on J. M. Barrie's classic fairytale. Centring around Durham life, our panto is always a massive hit and makes for the perfect free event to end the year with a bang! This year, we even had the pleasure of inviting Mary's Principal, Adrian Simpson, onto the stage as Captain Hook's assistant Smee. He was a standout star of the evening and we hope to see him return to our stage soon.



Epiphany term started with our rendition of the musical 'Footloose', the perfect pick-me-up during summative season to get your toes tapping and hands clapping! We have some incredible talent involved in the show, including our very own JCR President Maddie as choreographer, and the talent of Mary's dance bringing the show to life.



THEATRE

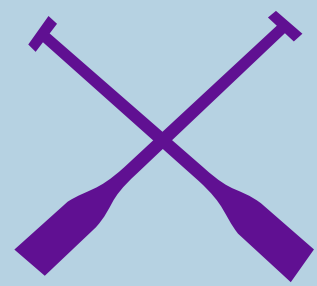


FHTC is also proud to be sponsoring 'Technically: A Musical', a new show which was featured in the renowned Durham Drama Festival in February and will be going to Durham and Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the Summer! This show has been written entirely by Mary's students and celebrates the hard work of the behind the scenes crew of any beloved show. If you're looking for some fun-filled, comedic chaos, this is definitely a show for you!

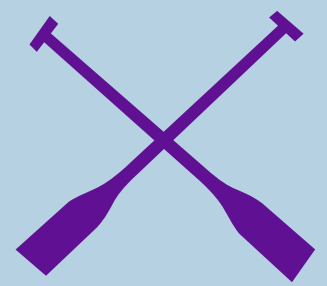


We can't wait to see even more talented Mary's students take to the stage (or backstage) and produce further stellar performances for all to enjoy! Make sure you keep a keen eye out on the [fhtc.durham](https://www.instagram.com/fhtc.durham) Instagram page for helpful information on how to get involved with future shows and show your support to fellow Marians!





BOAT CLUB



This past year has been really successful for the Boat Club here at Mary's! There has been high attendance at races and the club has seen a significant growth in members.

At the start of this year, the weather was definitely a challenge, but heavy rain and strong winds did not keep the club from putting in a good graft. Kicking off the head race season was Durham Autumn Small Boats. This was many rowers' first head race and both the Men and Women's squad put in some solid effort. Our Novices also put on a fantastic debut race in Nov Cup despite only being out a few times. Unfortunately, the Novice Head was cancelled due to the weather, but that's just part of outdoors sports in the Northeast! Finishing 2023, we had the Women's VIII take to the ice cold waters of the Tyne racing in the snow. We were unfortunately unable to compete in WEHoRR but enjoyed a very strong pedalo race on the Thames!

Heading into regatta season, the Mary's Women's 4+ defended their Durham City Sprints title, knocking out South and Cuths, before coming from behind to take the win over Butler. We had strong performances at Hexham, debuting a few of our novices and securing 2nd place in the double. As ever, Durham Regatta was a fantastic weekend for Mary's. We debuted our Men's double, a novice Women's 4+ and a bucket rigged VIII, along with 7 other crews. Everyone worked incredibly hard and we're so proud of them!



Aside from a really strong race season, the club came together to raise money through an ergathon to hopefully add to our fleet so the club can continue progressing in the coming years. Members from all squads, all took part in a 24 hour row on an erg which came to just under 9 marathons worth in distance.

Overall, it's been a really strong year for SMCBC. We've had so many exciting races and made so much progress as a club!

Yeah Mary's!

Catherine James (Women's Captain)

Sports and Societies Formal

This year we hosted our first Sports and Societies formal to celebrate everything our clubs have accomplished this year. Below are the awards that were given out, aimed at celebrating our societies beyond what is accomplished on the sporting field including socials and charity work!



Charity Champions

Netball with a special mention to SMCRFC for their Rugby X Netball Tournament which raised £105 for Harbour, a charity working with victims of abuse. The two clubs also did a sports switch, coaching the netball team in rugby and vice versa, the two events raising £220 in total.

Freshers Under Pressure

Badminton
Basketball
Boat Club
Mary's Dance
Frisbee
Hockey
Lacrosse
Netball
Pool and Game Soc
Rugby
Women's Football
Bake Soc

Dylan Chetcuti
Nicolas Restrepo
Joss Greenfield
Grace Pawson
Jackie Gonzales
Evie Weston
Johnathan Allen
Anna Antakly
Matt Finch
Finn Knight
Katie Reader
Daisy Norris and
Amy Moore
Carlos Davis
Katherine Fenton-Smith
Rose Laird

Foot of the Hill
Mary's Mixed Voices
Basement Jazz

Caspar the Ghost

For the best spirit!

Lacrosse

Social Butterfly

For weekly engaging and creative socials.

Netball

Pioneer Prize

For achieving success in their debut year.

Just Dance

Lego Award

For collaboration between club, for example in their charity endeavours.

Rugby and Bake Soc

Individual awards for those who have contributed greatly to their club or society. Golden Cone for excellence in Sport and the Golden Palate for excellence in Arts.

Golden Cone

Callum Goddard

Golden Palate

Luke Mallon



Poetry Competition Winner!

+ Durham City is a Star - Catriona Eke

Durham City is a star –
Just look north-east of England's sky
And see it shining from afar;
A point of navigation
In Britain's constellations,
Quick to miss – a glimpse of ancient greatness
Now faded, ghost-light, just a lie.

Yet no other shines so gold,
Illuminating cobbled streets
With tales, epics, legends from old.
See the stars rise up the Wear:
Within your eyes is where
They shine – all-present, scattered light
In water, pupil, sky, till night retreats.

Bow before the Grey Towers
And see its looming moon-crowned head
And hear its bells command the hours!
Spires pierce the sky, beyond
Historic streets by river rond
To eternity, reflecting still
In our eyes, on maps, in stories read.



Photography Competition

For our annual Photo Competition we had lots of entries! Our winner was Toby Crewe, whose winning photo is featured on the page over with two others of his on the inside covers of the magazine. Runners up were Ruibin Fan, Abigail Boye and Anna Gallagher Gill, who we feature here. Johnathon Allen came second place and is featured on the front covers.



Anna Gallagher-Gill



Abigail Boye



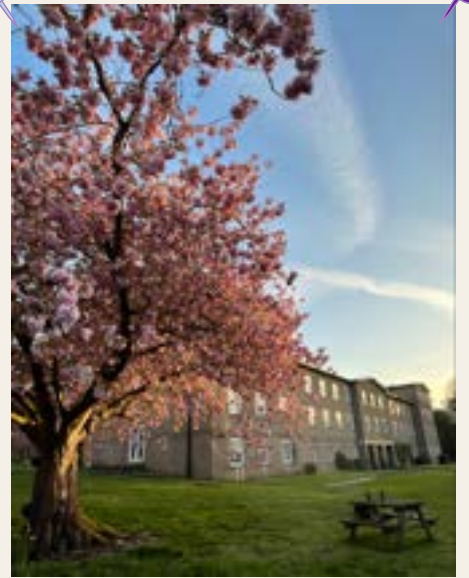
Second place: Johnathon Allen



Ruibin Fan



Anna Gallagher -Gill



Ruibin Fan



Winner: Toby Crewe





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