



St Mary's College Society Newsletter 2010



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Front cover image: 'A Portrait of St Mary's,' by Roar Kjernstad, 2009. This is currently displayed in the SCR.

President's Report

It has been a long-cherished tradition for the St Mary's College Society Newsletter to be sent out by post, but I hope you will agree that, in this electronic age and when environmental issues increasingly predominate, we need to look again at how we distribute it. So, after this edition, we plan to send it out electronically. Those of you who live abroad will already be receiving it this way. Of course, we don't want to discriminate against any of you who don't have access to a computer, or who would prefer still to receive it in hard copy, so we will make sure that those of you who would like it still to arrive through the letter box will continue to do so. We will be saving a great deal of money on postage and this will allow us not only to produce a more substantial publication but to use some of those savings to support students who are currently studying in college. Look too, at the Society website, which has recently been launched (details on page 21). We have done one or two new things this year to raise awareness about the Society to current students, most notably administering the Travel Fund. There is more that we will now be able to do.

With this edition, we welcome a new Editor, Laura Deacon, who graduated from St Mary's in 2006 and who was an officer both in the JCR and the MCR. Laura works in the publishing industry. I would also like to thank Laura Betteridge and Catherine Ross for their work in producing the Newsletter over the past couple of years.

The Committee is beginning to change a little. It is particularly sad to report the death of Val Clark in November, who had been the College Archivist for many years, along with substantial other roles in college. With the retirement of Sylvia Graham (right) as Secretary, I wondered how we would ever manage to maintain the level of support and commitment she put in to making the Society run so efficiently. But with Vicky Lorimer stepping into her shoes, I can see it continuing.



Vicky graduated only two years and we are benefiting from her experience too as a highly effective JCR president.

So what are we working on this year? Well, with the huge support of Phil Gilmartin and his colleagues, we are aiming for a more ambitious (and possibly boozy) reunion in September. If I bump into 'old students,' (I have to be careful in my use of words here!), they often say to me that they are in touch with their contemporaries and don't need to come back to Durham. Try it! Look how much the college has changed. Admire the artwork and new buildings. And see again, how much remains the same as it always was.

A highlight for me this year has been to be put in touch again with my German teacher at school who, I had forgotten, had been a Mary's student. Ruth had recognised my photo in last year's Newsletter (which is a feat in itself after forty or so years). It is thanks to her that I not only pursued German but that I chose to go to St Mary's. I'm sure that your memories are as positive as mine...

On behalf of the Committee, we hope you enjoy reading this latest Newsletter.

Elizabeth Manning
SMCS President



Vicky Lorimer



Outgoing Newsletter Editor Joan Suddes is thanked by Liz Manning

Changes to the Newsletter

The recent meeting of the Society Committee decided that the 2010 newsletter would be the last one to be universally distributed in paper copy by post within the UK. From 2011, the newsletter will be primarily delivered electronically, although members will be able to request a paper copy should this still be required. This decision reflects the reality of high rates of inflation within the printing industry, a growing society membership, and the environmental impact of mass printing.

It was felt that increasing the burden on current students by increasing subscriptions was not a fair option and charging members for the newsletter would be unduly complicated. Electronic distribution has been broadly welcomed in feedback from members (views were requested in the 2009 newsletter) and represents the simplest and most effective method of delivery.

The mechanism will be for members to be contacted by post when the newsletter is available for download. Those members who still require a paper copy will then have a set time period by which they must respond. The Society will then print the required number of paper copies.

A happy side effect of this change will be the increased proportion of funds available to support current students and to support member's activities.

Increases in international postage have dictated that we cannot send paper copies to international members this year. Instead they are available on request with electronic download being the primary method of delivery.

A Message from the Principal

Christmas 2009 marked not only the end of the Michaelmas term, but the end of my second full year as Principal. This has been a busy year and I am delighted to share a few recent developments with you. A grand finale to the term was the college carol service in the Cathedral, followed by a traditional Christmas lunch including the latest version of St Mary's Twelve Days of Christmas! We are the only college to hold its carol service in the Cathedral, and this was arranged by our newly-licensed Chaplain, Jenny Moberly, with carols sung by the Chapel Choir. The occasion attracted over 500 people; a tremendous turnout from a total college population of 700.



Many of you will be aware of Bill Bryson's Afghan Postgraduate Scholarship Appeal. St Mary's will play a major role in receiving the first intake of postgraduate women scholars. The Shepherd Wing places us in a unique position to meet the need for women-only accommodation. There is still a need in 2010 for dedicated provision of facilities to enable equality of opportunity for women's education, and I am delighted that 111 years after its foundation, St Mary's, as a fully-mixed college, is still able to meet this need and continue to fulfil the founding principle of equality of opportunity.

The College Trust is now over a year old and I would like to thank everyone who has helped support fundraising to enhance facilities for current students. Throughout 2009 we continued to increase support for the arts in college. We received a number of gifts, including ten Kiril Sokolov pictures previously on long-term loan to the college, as well as works from Chris Gollon, last year's artist in residence, and Roar Kjernstad, the artist who completed the former Principal's portraits last year. A bequest to the Trust also enabled us to secure a collection of Terence Bennett watercolours.

Over the coming year we will produce a catalogue of college art. The catalogue will enable us to share the growing collection, although of course the best opportunity to see the new developments will be to come back for a reunion weekend. Other gifts to the Trust have enabled us to cover the costs of framing pictures and photographs to enliven the buildings as well as supporting the performing arts through the purchase of music for the choirs and new instruments, including a drum kit, an electric piano, and a PA system for plays, musicals and pantomime performances.

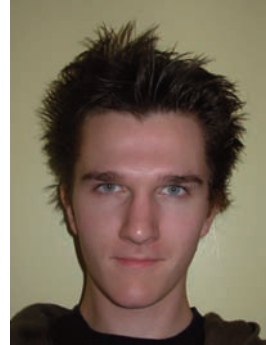
Sports have also benefited from your generosity; not only have we been able to support the Boat Club with the purchase of two new 'fours' and an 'eight', we have also, through the Trust, launched a sports fund to help contribute towards the costs of co-ordinated St Mary's College kit for all our competitive players. This move was in direct response to student recognition that the arts had received a tremendous boost in college and that sports deserved a similarly high-profile status.

Central funds also facilitated the conversion of the East JCR into a Reading Room (expanding the academic provision in college by expansion of the library), and the refurbishment of the West JCR with a new oak floor and leather sofas. We also commissioned an architect to draw up concept plans for the new college bar and have initiated discussions with local planners. Over the course of 2010, we will be launching a large appeal to help raise funds for the new building which will form the first phase of our ambitious plans to create a Centre for Visual and Performing Arts. The new building will hold a bar, create new JCR space, house a gallery for art exhibitions and include a performance space for live music events. 2010 is shaping up to being another exciting year at St Mary's. Do come back and visit.

With all best wishes,
Philip M. Gilmartin
Principal

JCR President's Report

Now is a good time to be a student at St Mary's and there is a vibrant feel to the atmosphere in college this year. It seems not a day goes by without hearing of another achievement, another success, or another club or society going from strength to strength. Our students continue to achieve in all areas of college life. We had a recent success in rugby, beating Aidan's 57-5. Last year saw one of our students captain the University Challenge team, and this year we have improved on this with two of our students going on to represent Durham on the final TV show. A JCR team recently won the Inter-Common Room Pub Quiz. These are only some of the examples of our successes, and suffice to say, we're doing well!



Last year, the JCR saw a great push towards improving the arts, and this side of college life has continued to flourish this year. We have just finished watching this year's pantomime, Cinderella, which saw the poor heroine doomed to working the Toastie Bar, dreaming of going to Klute to meet Prince Charming of Hatfield. The evening was enjoyed by all and was the most professional pantomime of recent years, complete with a microphone and lighting rig. November saw a very successful Arts Weekend with several short plays, a classical concert, live lounge and professional stand-up comedians. We are waiting with baited breath for Arts Week and the Masquerade Ball in Epiphany Term.

This year also sees a huge drive for improvement in sports, in both accessibility and achievement. With new clubs like five-a-side football, badminton and table tennis being set up, and existing clubs gaining more members all the time, the number of people taking part in sport at St Mary's is increasing. It comes as no surprise that Michaelmas Term has seen St Mary's rise in the college league tables from the bottom of the table to the middle, and hopefully the creation of a Sports Fund will see us improve even further. The Development Fund has already spent over £10,000 on new boats for the Boat Club, and it is hoped that the Sports Fund will provide money for kit and

equipment for all competitive sports players in St Mary's for many years to come.

Under the management of our Sabbatical Bars Steward, Ross Clark, the Bar has undergone a transformation. It is now a bright, colourful space with a TV and improved sound and light equipment, and it is not unknown to catch the SCR down there after formals. Social events continue to flourish, and are so popular with both first years and returners that we are having to turn dozens of people away from formals! The Informal Ball this year had the theme of "Heroes and Villains" and was a huge success – the inventiveness of our students when it comes to creating costumes never ceases to astound me! It was great to see so many recent graduates able to come up and share in the festivities.

One of the biggest developments in the last year has been the updating of the JCR Website, which can be found here – <http://www.dur.ac.uk/st-marys.jcr/> It is used to keep students up to date about what is going on in college, advertise events, provide information and much more. I do wonder how we ever survived without it!

More students are getting involved in arts, sports, social and other activities than ever before, but whilst so many areas of college life move forward, I am proud to say that the best traditions of St Mary's still hold true. I was trying to sum up Mary's to alumni at the recent reunion weekend, and they said it better than I could: "People look out for each other without needing to be asked." This approach, coupled with such vibrancy and enthusiasm, is undoubtedly what enables Mary's to continue to be the greatest of all the Durham Colleges.

James Liddell, JCR President, 2009-2010

St Mary's College Chaplaincy

The aims of St Mary's Chaplaincy are threefold. First the services in chapel are there to provide Christian worship for all members of college who would like to take part. These follow traditional Church of England patterns of worship, using the Book of Common Prayer Evensong, and Common Worship Eucharist. These traditional forms are enriched by the beautiful singing of the chapel choir, and the stunning repertoire of sung services composed for these services. The key event to be named here is the Carol Service. Occasionally there are also less traditional styles of worship, such as the 'chapel chill-out' or a Taizé-style service.

Secondly, the chaplaincy provides opportunities for all members of college to explore various issues related to faith and spirituality. Thus there are discussion evenings to engage such topics as 'faith and science', or 'the problem of suffering'. This is an important aspect of the role of the chaplaincy to provide spiritual nurture to meet the needs of college members.

Thirdly, it is important that the chaplaincy offers pastoral care to all members of college, irrespective of their religious adherence. As Chaplain, I am available to anyone in college who would value the opportunity to have a confidential conversation. Therefore I spend a good part of the week in college for people to drop in for a chat. St Mary's College is known as a caring college, and I would like it to remain that way!

Those are the themes which motivate most of my work in chapel. However, I'd like to mention one news item as well: the chapel has recently installed new choir stalls from Mousy Thompson. It is hoped they will add to the beauty of the chapel, and be helpful to the choir.



Jenny Moberly, Chaplain

Carol Service

St Mary's College Carol Service follows the general pattern of Nine Lessons and Carols, using the pattern of readings and carols so well known through King's College, Cambridge.

In this pattern, a story is told which gives an overall picture of a Christian understanding of God's love for all creation, and the Creator's action to bring all of creation into harmony with itself and with the divine. The culmination of this great story is the Christian belief that God so loves the world that the divine became human in the person of Jesus, born in a stable in Bethlehem some 2000 years ago.

The readings and carols used are well-loved and have become a part of English culture and heritage. And even for those who hold other (or no) religious beliefs, there is inspiration to be found in the vision of peace on earth, and goodwill towards all people.

As a service for all members of St Mary's College, we include poems, secular readings, and this year a reading from the Qur'an, as well as traditional readings from the Jewish and Christian Bible(s). My hope and aim is to ensure that the carol service is an expression of hope, peace, and joy for all members of college.

First wedding at St Mary's

Congratulations go to recent Mary's graduates, Heather Tyrer (Modern Languages) and Mark James Royston Lawson (New and Renewable Energy) who married in 2009. The couple very fittingly held their reception at St Mary's. We wish them the very best in their future lives together.

KEY CHANGES TO

FOOD

2009 has seen major changes to food provision in college. The University catering strategy has seen the appointment of a new Head Chef and subsequently a vast improvement in food quality for all meals of the day. As one student put it, "The only problem with Mary's food now is that there are three good meals to choose from!" This follows on from recent years which have seen Mary's used as a testbed for new menus and techniques.

The big revolution however began in Michaelmas Term with the issuing of lunchtime meal tickets. These can be used at any college or in YUM outlets across the University. The idea is to allow much more flexibility for students at this busy time of the day so the need to traverse the length of Durham may be avoided.

It is too early to judge the success of this scheme which is still in the trial stage, but the signs are that it has not led to a mass exodus of Mary's students away from lunchtimes in college.



MARY'S IN 2009

THE EAST JCR

The East JCR has been re-branded as “The Reading Room” and is now an area for group work and discussion. Wi-Fi has been installed and also reaches down to the Bar, allowing students to access the Internet on their laptops. One half of the room has tables and chairs, and the other now has some very nice antique leather furniture which is perfect for lounging around in. The change has not been without its teething difficulties, as we’ve had to find new spaces for groups like the Dance Society to practise, but on the whole the room now has a very nice feel to it. So nice, in fact, that some students now have nightly board game sessions in there.

COLLEGE ART

Visitors to College will notice that, slowly but surely, various pieces of art and photography are creeping up onto the corridor walls. Photos have come from a variety of sources, such as photo competitions and the Informal Ball, but if any alumni have any digital photos of college life which they’d like to see up on the walls please do send them to us!

St Mary's Bar Report

2009 was a year of change for Mary's Bar, both inside, and out. The first phase of this development was achieved under the supervision of the former Professional Steward – Edd Bower, who worked hard to secure 'Best Bar None' status. Not only that, but we were a firm favourite for the overall category title which eventually went to Chad's. I took over from Edd in October and am pleased to say that the improvements to the bar have continued and hopefully become more tangible. Since starting, I have redecorated in a bright and modern style and introduced a new range of quality cocktails and proper cask ale. This has had the impact of making Mary's a far more welcoming and vibrant place to be.

Entertainment has been high on the agenda, with a new television and stereo equipment increasing our capabilities. We now regularly screen live football and use the television to display PowerPoint presentations advertising upcoming events, promoting our products, and displaying other useful information.

We have introduced a range of new events this year including the Pre-Klute-Power-Hour, which takes place on a Sunday and a fortnightly pub quiz which, due to its popularity, was extended into a 'Battle of the Common Rooms' quiz in the dining hall proving to be a resounding success. Other events include the Back to School party, a Christmas Celebration as well as smaller themed nights including a Japanese Night and Reggae Reggae Night.

Despite all of our recent efforts, it is still universally recognised that Mary's Bar requires much work. A student comedian noted, "Mary's bar is to bar crawls what battery farming is to chickens." What is needed is a new-build, providing Mary's with a bespoke bar which fulfils the needs of the whole college and also provides steady income for the JCR. This is a particularly ambitious project as set out by Prof Gilmartin, as it is not simply a bar, but a combination of a bar and extensive Arts centre – a project which is as daunting as it is fantastic.

The planners have given the go ahead and all that is needed now is a great deal of funding - a mountainous challenge in itself. If enough funding is raised to get this project underway, not only will Mary's have the greatest tradition, location, aesthetics and spirit of any Durham College but we will have the finest facilities as well which would not only send application numbers soaring but also improve the Student Experience Survey.

The first part of this funding has already been raised through an auction to purchase the first pint of proper real ale (Brains SA Gold) served in Mary's, which was won by the generosity of Teikyo Bursar Mike Daly, who paid the sum of £60 for the privilege and was duly served by Professor Gilmartin. Now we are looking for further donations and fundraising ideas. Watch this space for more information.

Ross Clark
Sabbatical Bars Steward

The 56 Book Fund

In December 2009, the 56 Book Fund Committee awarded some £1500 in grants to fourteen successful applicants from a total of twenty two applications. The applications were judged according to their needs, principally financial hardship and a need to own the books requested.

The process was conducted entirely by electronic means, with the information and application forms on the Society website, email correspondence and electronic payment directly into bank accounts. This is the first time in several years that the Society has administered this fund and we look to continue the considerable success achieved this year in the coming years.

However, the funds for this award are depleting and thus there is a need for donors within the alumni community to make donations to enable the 56 Fund to continue into the future. There is a clear and present need for this award and it would be a real shame if it was to fold due to lack of funds.

For anyone who would like more information, please contact Steven Spencer: s.p.spencer@durham.ac.uk

MARY'S THROUGH

In Times of War - Anne Elliott

2009 marked the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War and through the St Mary's archives we are fortunate in being able to get a sense of what life at Mary's was like. In her report of 1939/40, the Principal, Miss Rachael Eleanor Duff Donaldson, stated of the previous year's reunion, "When we met here last year, in spite of the cloud which has hung over the world for so long, we did not expect that our next meeting would be held in the eighth month of war."

It seems that the outbreak of war did not radically disrupt college life too much and even student numbers were approaching a "very promising" fifty. Reunions were still held, "even if the occasion does not admit of the usual luncheon, or allow as many to travel here as usual."

International relations were maintained as far as possible: a British Council student arrived from Estonia but one from Romania did not. News came that the two British Council students from the year before, from Finland and Czechoslovakia, were safe despite the tragic events in which their countries were involved.

College traditions seemed to continue though Mary's Day suffered slightly from the "arctic weather." No games were possible and the service took place in the Common Room, (used at night in most of the winter because of the blackouts). Only the Carol Service was held as usual in the Chapel. "The usual tea-party for St. Mary's Home took place and home-made plays and dancing brought a very pleasant day to a close." Old students visited often, some with husbands home on leave. "The annual picnic was at Dunstanburgh this year. The drive through beautiful country was much enjoyed; luncheon on the rocks and a visit to the Castle with tea at Alnwick made up a very happy outing."

The eve of Miss Donaldson's retirement prompted her to look back, in a much-quoted part of her report, to the beginning of her reign in the First World War, at Abbey House, wondering what lay ahead like a fresher would. The friendly welcome stood out, "meeting every night for so-called 'coffee' (the war eliminated the coffee but did not affect

THE AGES

the good fellowship) in the Common Room...there we knitted feverishly, and sang patriotic and other songs, and frequently beat a hurried retreat to Abbey House Kitchen to join the domestic staff while aircraft whirred over our heads." She tells of organising mixed hockey and cricket matches for soldiers billeted in Hatfield and of occasionally entertaining the small number of men who remained or returned invalided from the war, "when my bedroom and sitting-room with folding doors were camouflaged and rolled into one".

How interesting that Miss Donaldson, Principal from 1915-1940, made this link and, indeed, was herself the link, between St. Mary's College and the two World Wars!

Source: St. Mary's College Report 1939/1940; pp3-6 Principal's Report dated 27th April, 1940

The 1952 Fresher - Elizabeth Boyd

With your reading list, you receive a list of suitable articles to bring to Durham, which includes sheets, an eiderdown, cups and saucers, a sugar basin, a butter dish, tablecloths, etc, for which there is not a great deal of choice as they are in short supply. These are packed into your trunk, with your books and clothes and the trunk is collected from home and delivered to College by the railway company, for 3/6 (121/2p). It is waiting in your room when you arrive.

First Day

You meet your room-mate with the other freshers, also some older students. All of the other freshers are vivacious and articulate to a degree you can only hope to aspire to. The second years are amazingly sophisticated, and lose no time in telling you that during your time in Durham your goal is to obtain a degree, a husband, and £1000 per year. The Principal is a tiny Scot with a soft voice, who can see what you are thinking. You are instructed to put your butter ration in your covered container, and to place it with your sugar ration in its bowl in the large cupboard at the entrance to the Dining Hall, to be collected for use during meals.

Freshers' Conference

You experience the Union Coffee Bar, where you are greeted like an old friend by a Chadsman who had been on teaching practice at your school, who says you must now call him Ike. This is quite beyond you although you try to appear at ease.

You go to the Fresher's Ball in the Great Hall of the Castle, where an enormous elderly gentleman engages you in conversation, and enquires how you like Durham. As he is wearing a long purple dress you are rather overwhelmed – you later discover he is the Bishop of Durham, Michael Ramsey. To introduce students to the area, a series of visits is arranged. You go to Consett Iron Works. Although your home is in Consett, you have never been allowed near the Works, and you din the experience terrifying, although you do strike up an acquaintance with a Chadsman in your Department when you both flee in terror form a white-hot girder rolling across the floor towards you.

The older students put on an entertainment on Saturday evening, and amaze you with their self possession and talent. You are particularly impressed by the Senior Woman, Doreen, who sings songs from *The Mikado*: she is quite grown-up. (At this stage your ambition is to be twenty-eight and have interesting bags under your eyes.) The Principal quietly informs students that her flat is just above the front door, and that it would be appreciated if she did not have to listen to people saying goodnight to friends.

First Week

At your Department, you meet you newly appointed Prof, who gives the group (of fourteen, including five women) a pep talk. He warns the women not to get pregnant. You are surprised by this, as it had not occurred to you that this would be an option in your course; as you do not at this stage know the facts of life, you spend much of your first year not sitting too close to male students in the library.

There is a fire practice, during which the fire engine runs over the ornamental square in front of the main entrance, annihilating the baby tree planted there: the Fellows' Garden is no more. At the first lecture, everyone has read more, knows more and had more opinions than you. One of the Freshers is in her late twenties! Another is from Africa!

On the Saturday night at the end of the week, the Freshers have to produce a song. Gwyneth takes the year in hand, and you make up something to the tune of 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. This is

performed at the College sing song, which features songs by previous years and some old favourites. Apparently there have been problems with the facilities: the music rooms are not soundproofed; the partitions in the toilets are not thought to be of a decent height, and have to be raised.

First Term

You wear your gown to all lectures. Lectures are in the Almshouses on Palace Green, and sometimes in Permberton. The lecturers call you 'Miss', as do your fellow students. If you are out during the evening and return between ten and eleven, Mr Robinson is on duty at the kitchen entrances to check your name in the book. You do as you are told – after all, you have for more freedom here than you ever had at home – but there are rumours of people who do not sign out, and return by the way of the laundry window. You discover that one of your fellow freshers has her own radio!

JCR meetings are held in the West JCR on Sunday afternoons. There is a heated discussion (in which you do not, of course, participate) about whether students should come into breakfast with their hair in curlers: it is decided that they should not. There is a Freshers' Dance in college, which you do not attend. About half way through the evening you are dragooned into putting in an appearance, because there is such a shortage of women – you go down, and are mobbed by male students who have come to Mary's because they want to meet women. Some people are worried by the lack of privacy in the washrooms so curtains are fitted in front of the washbasins.

You meet your moral tutor, who gives you a glass of sherry. This strikes you as the height of sophistication. She mentions that she will be monitoring the number of times you sign out of college, because you will need to do some academic work while you are here. Not until forty-odd years later do you discover the tutor's checklist, which has a detailed breakdown of your evening activities.

There is some ruling about whether students are allowed to visit pubic houses. As you have never been inside a public house, and have no intention of visiting one, you do not appreciate the strength of feeling amongst male students in your year who have come up after national service. The Waterloo features largely in their discussions. At the end of term you have collections. It does not occur to anyone to tell you how well you did, apart from signifying that you are allowed to continue your studies.

First Year

Attending JCR meetings becomes rather difficult as you by now have other things you want to do on Sunday afternoons. But you are present on the occasion when people in the front row declare they can see woodworm in the table used by the officers: the table, a gift from one of the men's colleges, is an antique.

There is a discussion at another JCR meeting about pieces of tin in the students' food, soup, or perhaps fruit. The matter is taken up with the Bursar, and the kitchen acquires a new tin opener. You are invited to visit other colleges. You have coffee in Hatfield, John's and Castle. The college holds a formal debate, for which you have to wear evening dress under your gown. You are so interested in what people are wearing that you cannot recall the topic, or who spoke.

You spend a great deal of time working in the library: the afternoons are thirsty, as women are not allowed into the Union bar in the afternoons. You and another student stay up all night talking, just to see what it feels like. You play tennis for college, but this does not seem to involve playing away from home; probably the courts at Mary's are the only ones for women. You do play mixed friendlies on the courts at the racecourse.

It is some time before you invite a young man for tea. When you do, you ask him in for three o' clock, quite forgetting that visiting hours are from three-thirty. A student from next door pops in at about ten past, wearing a rowing sweater and a pair of diaphanous panties. She sees the back of your guest's head and pops out again pretty quick.

During the Easter term a meeting of the SMCS is held in the East JCR. You and your friends are amused by the idea that the hated and gloved ladies were ever your age. You are invited to Castle day, which you enjoy; it is the first weekend of Easter term and a blazing hot day. You do not understand why everybody laughs when Lofty does a cabaret turn and declares he will give up rowing, his actual words, "I'll never touch an oar again!"

You are offered a vacation job as an au pair with a French family; the letter points out that it is a custom of this particular family to swim naked, so your moral tutor advises you do not accept the post. Instead you work for a family business on the outskirts of Paris; you learn to be a barmaid and have some interesting experiences before your return as a second year.

Phrases to Remember!

CHEESED OFF!

Here's an anecdote from the late 1960s and one that many Mary's alumni will remember! When sitting down to formal meals (of which there were four a week for the whole College!) a quarter of an hour before grace was said, we'd devour the cheese and biscuits set out ready for the end of the meal; then after the dessert, we asked for more. Unfortunately for later alumni, an astute student, after graduation, became a Bursar in college and being only too well aware of this custom and with an eye for economy, arranged that, henceforth, the cheese and biscuits were served once only - after the dessert!

Graduate Profile - Fiona Webster

What a pleasure it is to write for the Society newsletter! With a BA Hons in Modern Languages (French & German), in 2008 I was the penultimate "real" Mary's girl to graduate. I still fill with pride when thinking back to graduation day: for that day was the culmination of four great years at Mary's, a college with unique spirit. I can't quite put my finger on what it was exactly, but I do know that the majority of Mary's students, whether male or female, were filled with such enthusiasm, it was almost impossible not to get involved. Events such as Informal Ball required weeks of preparation, even day-to-day tasks like running the Bar involved huge contributions. I had a great time working in the Toastie Bar, you could always tell how good (or bad) college tea had been by the length of the queue!

My last trip back to Durham was for the reunion weekend organised by the Society back in September. It gave me the opportunity to meet up with my friends, who are now spread across Europe and some of whom I hadn't seen since graduation. When entering college it became immediately clear why everyone had returned: for me it felt like the second home it always had been. After working for nine months as an English Teaching Assistant in a secondary school, I'm now a secretary in Luxembourg, using languages every day, which I love. I have also recently completed a translation of an exhibition guide and catalogue for a museum in Trier, which will be published early next year.

In any case, I'm very much looking forward to returning to Durham for the next Society reunion...

30-Year Reunion

Last year, a group of eight friends who were at St Mary's from 1976-1979 decided it would be a good idea to have a "30 years since we graduated" reunion. This is the story of our great weekend in August 2009.

Six of us arrived on the Friday afternoon and found ourselves in rooms in the West Wing of the Old Building (now called the Fergusson Building). After we had got past the worrying moment of whether we would all recognise each other, we started reminiscing and catching up which continued throughout the weekend. We all agreed that, with the exception of the internet connection, and maybe some new furniture, the rooms were pretty much as we remembered them - even the bathrooms seemed just the same!

We enjoyed a Friday evening meal at a cafe-bar on the peninsula which was very different to when we were students. Saturday morning saw us joined by two more friends and we set off to look at the "new bits" of Durham. We wandered around both Josephine Butler and Ustinov Colleges and thence to the Botanic Gardens. Considering the gardens are so close to Mary's, none of us had been there in our undergraduate days! Lunch was in the Cathedral Undercroft whilst we discussed whether we could manage to climb to the top of the cathedral tower and I'm pleased to report that we all made it. We made our way back to Mary's via a new shopping centre, the river and then Prebends Bridge (for much scenic photo taking).

The highlight of the weekend was a superb three-course dinner in a private dining room in college, courtesy of the Mary's catering staff. We interspersed the courses with looking at photos of our Durham days, and current photos of our families etc.

Over our breakfast on Sunday, we agreed to have a 40-year reunion in 2019, hopefully with even more friends. The weekend was rounded off by either a service in the cathedral or a walk along the Wear, followed by coffee on Palace Green as we relived our graduation!

If anyone would like to get back in touch with any of us, please email Barbara Bedord at barbarajbedford@dunelm.org.uk

New SMCS Website

October 2009 saw the launch of a new St Mary's Society website. The address for this site is:

<http://sites.google.com/site/stmaryscollegesocietysite/home>

This will become the main portal for providing information to all members. We welcome members' feedback and are happy to include items submitted. The site is already in use to provide reunion information and has been used to administer the 56 Book Fund in 2009. Please take a look to find out what your Society is doing for you.

Mary's Angels

St Mary's is planning to launch a Business Angels scheme, similar to those already on offer at other Durham Colleges. Mary's Angels will aim to put current students in touch with graduates of their college who can offer information and guidance about their career post-graduation.

We're currently developing a secure website, which will host basic profiles of our 'Angels' and be accessible only to genuine students of St Mary's. Students would then be able to contact individual graduates for further advice.

This project is still very much in development, but we're aiming to launch the website to students in summer 2010. To be successful, we will need alumni from all walks of life and from varied career paths to sign up, create a simple profile and be willing to answer the odd email enquiry.

To get involved in this exciting new initiative, please email st-marys.angels@durham.ac.uk and ask to become one of the first generation of Mary's Angels. Alternatively you could write directly to college marking your letter 'Mary's Angels' using the details on the contacts page.

Reunion Report 2009

Margaret Collins (nee Purnell, 65-68)

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th September

Twenty-six alumni registered for the weekend, with members turning up at different events over the three days. Although the numbers attending this year were not as high as recent reunions, alumni expressed their appreciation for an enjoyable weekend and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones. There was a very welcome age-range of alumni this year from the 1940s through to the 2000s. A lot of keen participation over the weekend led to some good feedback with ideas as to what worked and what could be introduced or improved upon next year.

Members were welcomed on Friday evening with a buffet supper and the college shop open – which always proves a good place to meet up and chat. Chances just to relax over a cup of tea were felt to be an important part of the reunion weekend, so not too heavily structured a timetable was welcomed.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday morning, chaired by our President, Dr Liz Manning. After the meeting there was a chance to have a guided tour around the college, so those who hadn't been back for a few years could see the changes made and also plans for future developments.

Unfortunately the Principal, Prof Phil Gilmartin, could not attend the whole weekend, but his input was much appreciated, especially on Saturday afternoon when he was available to meet and talk with alumni about the college as it is today.

The Reunion Dinner was well attended and the meal was excellent – the best panna cotta I've had in a long time – and it was a very relaxed and enjoyable occasion. In general, all the meals were excellent and reflect the high standard of food offered in college. This pleasant discovery received a lot of appreciative comments.

The Chapel Service took place on Sunday morning and some members also took the advantage of a beautiful morning by having a walk around Durham and the Cathedral. A memorable sermon was given by the Chaplain, Revd Jenny Moberly, on the significance of the name and dedication of our college. This was followed by a traditional roast beef lunch which is always a good way to finish the formal part of the weekend.

During the weekend we had our customary fun quiz organised by Miss Ann Elliott, to whom we are as grateful as always, this year focusing on old photographs of St Mary's and its students with us challenged to guess the year. It proved much more difficult than we expected! Postgraduates were on hand over the weekend and contributed an excellent reminder of the continuity of college life - as well as a lot of practical help. We are grateful for their input, as we are to all those who helped to make the weekend such a success.

REUNION 2010 - 24th – 26th September

ALL THE ZEROS!

For those of you who matriculated at the head of a decade, i.e. in 1940, 1950, 1960, etc, make the reunion of 2010 the best ever! It will be a great opportunity to come to Durham, meet friends, share past experiences and discover what Durham has to offer today. There will of course be a warm welcome with plenty going on for everyone else, so let's see you all here.

The provisional timetable is:

Friday 24th Evening:	Welcome and buffet supper
Saturday 25th Morning:	AGM
	Tours around college
	Buffet lunch
Afternoon:	Meet Professor Phil Gilmartin
	Reflections of the Decades - with archive displays and reminiscences
	Chapel Service (5pm)
Evening:	Reunion dinner
Sunday 26th Morning:	Revisit Durham - with news, views and possible tours
	Traditional roast lunch

If you would like to attend the reunion there are four ways to obtain a booking form. You may contact us via post, email, download a form from the reunion page of the website or telephone the College. All contact details are on the back page of this newsletter. In the case of postal or email contact please clearly label as 'SMCS reunion booking form request.'

News of St Mary's Alumni

Alumni News

Mrs Elizabeth Smith (nee Jackson) B.A. Diploma in Education (St Mary's 1953-1957) who is already a Freeman of the City of London, was awarded an M.B.E. in the New Years Honours list as Vice Chairman and Board Member of Colchester Institute for her voluntary services in Further and Higher Education.

Professor Elspeth Garman was appointed to the position of Visiting Professor in Durham University's Chemistry Department. Elspeth is also President of the British Crystallographic Association.

Anne Walmsley has been awarded an honorary D.Litt. by the University of the West Indies for her achievements as a publisher and cultural historian both at Longmans and as a freelance editor and writer on African and Caribbean Literature and Education. Special mention was made in the citation of her book which documented the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) and reference was made to her forthcoming book on the subject of Caribbean Art. The degree was conferred at a ceremony in Jamaica in November 2009. She and her husband, Ron Farquhar, were both able to attend as the guests of the University. (Information sent in by Janet Cooper (nee Eason) St. Mary's College 1951-54)

Deaths

Dr Julia Shand (1975-1978) sadly passed away in February 2009 after a long battle with cancer. Following her BSC(Hons) in Durham, Julia worked in the pioneering Zoology Department of Bristol University before moving to Australia to complete her PhD at James Cook University. It was there that Julia met her husband Rob and they settled in Perth. Julia worked at the University of Western Australia and soon gave birth to two children, Rebecca and Guy. Julia was pivotal in the development of a world-class colour vision research hub at UWA as well as establishing ongoing collaborations with the Institute of Ophthalmology, London and the University of Oxford. Julia's colleague Prof Lyn Beazley writes, "We will always remember Julia's science and her science legacy. But far more than that, we remember her kindness and thoughtfulness for others...Vale Dr Julia Shand, We salute you and give thanks that you were and will continue to be part of our lives."

St Mary's College News

In an exciting development the BBC have recently completed filming at St Mary's College for an episode of the detective series 'George Gently', starring Martin Shaw. Filming took place in all parts of College during the Easter holidays. We will keep you updated on developments in this area via the website news section.

Graduation statistics 2009

Another successful year for Mary's undergraduates. 21 First Class degrees were awarded along with 121 Second Class Division 1, 30 Second Class Division 2 and 2 Third Class degrees. Congratulations to all graduates.

The Seasons

*Ducks on the river,
Swallows on the wing,
Cowslips on the bankside,
Now I know it's spring.*

*Roses in the hedgerow,
Darters o'er the mere,
Bees on the clover,
Show that summer's here.*

*Sloes on the blackthorn,
Conkers 'neath the tree,
Brambles ripe for picking,
In the autumn breeze.*

*Berries on the holly,
Bird prints in the snow,
Hedgehogs snug in tool shed,
Away from winter's blow.*

*Oil in the oceans,
Litter in the lakes
Spoil earth's fragile beauty,
My heart breaks.*

Nancy Parker

Nancy Parker attended St Mary's during the 1950s. Sadly she passed away two years ago whilst out walking with friends but her passion for nature and Northumberland survives in her beautiful poetry. A collection of Nancy's poems is available by sending a stamped addressed envelope (9" x 6") to: B W Hart, Hill View Cottage, Townfoot, Haltwhistle, NE49 0ET. Please enclose a cheque for £4.00 made payable to R.M. Parker. (Postage costs are 90p 1st Class 76p 2nd class).

Val Clark (20 September 1941-8 November 2009)



On 18 November 2009, a number of us from St Mary's attended Val's funeral at St. Cuthbert's Church, Shotley Bridge, the church a short distance away from *Meadow Garth*, Val's home since her childhood, which she shared with her husband Brian. When I first came to work here in 2000, Val was contributing to the life of the College in a number of ways. She had returned in retirement to focus on academic issues, not in the department of Psychology where she studied for her first degree here, but in the Department of English Studies, registered for part time doctoral work. She was not only a committed alumna but someone who brought dedication to archival work in College as well as acting as Duty Officer in term-time (a fairly thankless role) and as a member of the College Tutor team. She was a good friend to Jenny Hobbs and to me.

Illness prevented Val from completing her doctoral work in the English Department, which concerned university novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She was a person of great generosity and kindness for whom St Mary's College had offered a context for freedom and intellectual discipline: a place she had clearly valued all her life.

Dr Gillian E. Boughton

Key SMCS Contacts

All Officers and Committee members may be contacted.

We prefer electronic communication wherever possible and all general enquiries, news, or items for the archives should be sent to the email address below which will enable you to reach Vicky Lorimer, the Society Secretary:

smc.society@durham.ac.uk

If you prefer to contact via post or need to send paper items then please send to the college address below marked for the attention of the SMCS secretary, or in the case of submissions for the archives, marked for the attention of the Archivist.

St Mary's College, Elvet Hill Road, Durham DH1 3LR

You may also gain contact via College reception:

Tel: 0191 334 5719

For contact specifically regarding the newsletter please contact Steven Spencer on s.p.spencer@durham.ac.uk

Next SMCS AGM

The Annual General Meeting of St Mary's College Society will take place in St Mary's College on Saturday 25th September 2010 at 10.30am. Papers for the AGM will be available on arrival.

There are currently up to three committee representative posts available. Nominations for committee representatives, stating willingness to serve for one, two or three years, will be accepted up to the start of the AGM. All enquires to join the committee are welcomed to smc.society@durham.ac.uk.

Nominations for committee members must include:

Name and address of nominee

Names of one proposer and one seconder

All those named must give their name when in college and years in college.