



# SimmarianOnline



## Feature Interview: Vice Chancellor Designate

The Simmarian recently interviewed St Mary's new Vice-Chancellor, Francis Campbell, who will soon be taking over from the current post holder, Dr Arthur Naylor.

Born in Newry in County Down, Northern Ireland, Francis brings a wealth of experience to his new role. Prior to joining St Mary's, he worked as a diplomat for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and as a senior policy director for Amnesty International. He has held a variety of high profile diplomatic appointments including at the EU and UN and was also the UK's Ambassador to the Holy See, a former Private Secretary to the Prime Minister and Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan.

According to Francis, "Many of the jobs and functions of a Vice-Chancellor are ambassadorial in nature. It is about building relations across the University, the country, internationally and in the Church. A central part of that outreach will be to our alumni family. We want to ensure that alumni remain committed and connected to St Mary's."

In order for St Mary's to properly position itself in the academic arena, the new Vice-Chancellor said, "I want to ensure St Mary's has an outward focus and gets the right combination of having a solid and sure foundation and identity, which encourages us to be open to the world and the public sphere."

It was the friendly nature of St Mary's community that partly attracted him to the post, an accolade that is echoed by many. Francis recognises that this friendliness extends across the entire University, noting the level of warmth in staff interactions and engagement with students which in turn results in a sense of loyalty amongst staff. "The staff turnover here is very low because people feel that they're part of something," he commented. "That's very unusual in London, which is very large and can be anonymous. So you actually come in here and have a level of human friendliness and warmth."

When speaking about student and alumni engagement, he said, "When we look at why students come here, one of the key reasons is the influence of alumni. Students graduate from St Mary's with a very positive experience. Our alumni have traditionally been at the forefront of encouraging new generations of St Mary's students to start their university studies here in Strawberry Hill. Going forward we will want to ensure that our alumni continue to feel welcome and that the relationship doesn't finish at graduation, but is genuinely lifelong."

Enhancing the relationship with alumni is just a selection of what is on the agenda for Francis over the coming years. Another major focus of his will be ensuring that St Mary's is prominently positioned as a Catholic University internationally, supported by the full university status attained earlier this year. Francis continued, "Now that we have full university status it is important to consolidate our position locally, nationally and regionally; that we get the uniqueness of St Mary's known. It has a human and family environment with people coming here not just for an education, but for an experience. You're not just choosing a university; you are choosing a home away from home so it is important that students feel a lifelong commitment and connection."

So out of all the many universities throughout the UK, why St Mary's University? According to Francis, "There are a number of reasons but the primary reason is the rich history that St Mary's has in the United Kingdom and its contribution to education. It is one of the crown jewels in the Catholic education sector in this country and as such, it is important that St Mary's continues to grow and thrive not only to the service of wider society, but indeed to the wider Catholic community in this country."

## Simmaries in Wartime – Part 2

In the last edition of the Simmarian, we read about Alf Scale's memories of leaving home to start at St Mary's, and what the social life in the mid 40's was like. Here, we find out what effect the war had on Alf's experiences.

The London Blitz, by then, was a thing of the past and apart from a smart bunch of men in University of London Air Squadron (ULAS) uniforms on weekly parade, and a not-so-smart bunch of Captain Mainwaring's antecedents not really taking parades, inspections, or manoeuvres among the trees all that seriously, we were quite untouched by the war in our little Middlesex haven.

Until, that is, our final term, Certif and all. The Germans suddenly came up with a new terror tactic – the V1 aka the 'flying bomb' or 'doodlebug'. This was a mechanical contraption launched from over the channel carrying 1 ton of HE, able to travel at 400mph (faster than a spitfire), and carrying just enough fuel to reach the London area. My main recollection is of a lovely June evening stretched out on the Soccer pitch swotting for next day's History Certificate exam along with Pat Hayes, a Maesteg man, now domiciled in Kirkham, Lancs. An air-raid warning had sounded, but such trivialities were not to interfere with such conscientious students! Suddenly, coming in over the treetops above Waldegrave Park was a doodlebug.

Almost simultaneously with our spotting it, the distinctive “phut-phut” of its engine died, and it began to drop – straight at the college. Pat and I must have covered the distance from field to college buildings in record time, tearing upstairs and along corridors yelling warnings of impending disaster. I had just descended as far as the landing outside of the old choir loft, when the explosion came. Simultaneously almost, the skylight above the old Chapel entrance came crashing down on the tiled floor below. I was thrown (or did I dive?) onto the landing floor, then felt the reassuring hand of Dixie assuring me that I was alright. A number of us rushed out through the College gates in time to see American Red Cross ambulances from Bushey Park (Eisenhower’s D Day HQ) speeding down Waldegrave Road. Priny Shannon hurried past us, and when we reached Cross Deep, within minutes of the flying bomb striking, we saw the devastation. The west wing of Pope’s Grotto was demolished and several houses of the neighbouring block. There were a number of casualties, including fatalities. Priny Shannon was ministering amongst the rubble, and we saw the pathetic sight of a small body of a young child being brought out. We reckoned that Simmaries was one second away from being hit that evening.

One morning during the Consecration at Mass another flying bomb fell in Twickenham’s main street, badly damaging The King’s Head and the open-air swimming baths behind.

Maybe ‘Jerry’ “balanced the books” a little with final incident of our time in college. It was our last Certif. exam, Geography. Exams were taken in the gym and not long into the session, the imminent air-raid warning was sounded. We had to evacuate to the shelters by the playing fields. There was an Exam Board ruling to the effect that if the raid lasted more than one hour, the exam would be cancelled – for obvious reasons! Grading would be made on coursework and the part of the exam completed. Once the hour passed Certif was over, and after the “all clear”, we were told to pack and prepare to travel home asap. There were no objections – life had suddenly become rather dangerous in Strawberry Hill! But it meant that we did not even have time to say our farewells to the many we were destined never to see again. This has always been a great source of regret to me. So while life at Simmaries 42-44 was spartan, austere and authoritarian in the extreme, it was certainly not without incident!

*Alf was Leader of the Choir and Secretary for the Billiard’s Committee, 43-44. Alf would love to hear from any Simms contemporaries, he can be contacted 0191 534 2958 or via his son mick.scales@btinternet.com.*

## St Mary’s Alumnus Receives National Teaching Award



A former trainee teacher at St Mary’s University, Twickenham was recently presented with a National Teaching Award in recognition of his work in a local secondary school. John Andrews, who graduated from St Mary’s in 2007, has won the Silver Pearson Teaching Award (Teacher of the Year) for his work at Featherstone High School in Ealing. He received the award during a school assembly, where he was presented with his certificate by broadcaster, Ian Hislop.

John, who is also a qualified nurse, studied St Mary’s PGCE Secondary (Health and Social Care) Programme and after graduating began teaching at Featherstone High School in Health and Social Care, where he has been instrumental in inspiring young people to learn about and develop a career in the profession.

The award forms part of Pearson’s annual ‘Thank a Teacher’ day in May which encourages students to send in thank you notes for their teacher. John will now be entered into the next stage of the competition, where the regional winners will be selected for the national prize.

During the nominations process, John was recognised for his ‘energy, enthusiasm and creativity, helping young people to grow in confidence and self-belief through his example and his exceptional teaching style’. John said, “I am absolutely humbled and honoured that my students nominated me for this award. Teaching health and social care is very worthwhile especially seeing my students progress into university or jobs related to health and social care.

“The PGCE programme at St Mary’s definitely gave me the knowledge and skills to be able to develop my career in teaching, particularly working with pupils in an encouraging and motivating manner. The staff, Jane Chambers (Academic Director) and Ed Boyle (Academic Director) were extremely supportive and the lectures always interesting and there were some exceptional guest speakers. Ed particularly supported me when looking for a school placement in Northern Ireland and he even came to visit me once I was there!”

## Simmarians Organise Charity Football Tournament

A former student at St Mary’s has raised over £3,000 for the Macmillan Cancer Support charity, with help from Sport St Mary’s. Sally Leonard, a PGCE graduate, organised the Macmillan Charity Football Tournament on Sunday 27th April and the University donated its sporting facilities for the game. The tournament helped raise funds totalling £2,203 on the day, with more donations coming through, and Barclays Bank matched funds of £1,000 bringing the current total to £3,203. Sally organised the event with two other St Mary’s graduates to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer, an illness that affected her uncle and grandmother. She previously held a successful football tournament in 2012 and wanted to organise another event in a larger venue.

The recent event had 12 teams with players from different backgrounds including students, firefighters, plumbers, teachers and accountants. Donations were given from individuals and companies for the raffle and two signed football shirts were up for auction.

Sally said, “St Mary’s is renowned for its sports facilities so we contacted them and thankfully they agreed to help us and the charity.

“So many people’s lives are affected by cancer that we decided to help out a different charity this year and that was Macmillan Cancer Support. Many of us whom attended the day have had family members or friends supported by Macmillan nurses in the past and know first-hand the great work they do.

“Each year we are blown away by the community spirit generated at these events and it is uplifting to see so many people, who don’t know each other, come together in such a positive way. We would like to hold this as an annual event and in the future we hope to help local cancer charities. One in three people will get cancer. It is a terrible disease that many people are helpless against; this is our way of fighting against it.”

## St Mary's Alumnus Uses Degree Knowledge to Write New Book

A graduate from St Mary's has used the knowledge he acquired from his Sport Science degree to write his latest novel, *Penalties*. Writing under the pseudonym Luis Adriano, the former student has incorporated his studies into the football based psychological thriller. The story focuses on first-person accounts from the players of a football team as they take part in a high profile match, and the dead body that is discovered the morning after.

When asked what aspects of his degree helped in the development of the novel, Luis said, "The areas that helped me most were the sociological and psychological aspects of sports performance. In terms of sociology, I'll always remember the point of how sport often mirrors wider society. I honestly think professional football currently remains behind general society in certain elements and I wanted to convey this. Through certain sub-plots I've included themes such as racism and mental health. More than one character suffers from mental illness and I wanted to focus on how the condition worsens when it goes unrecognised. There are many real life tales of depression amongst professional footballers, with the suicides of Gary Speed and Robert Enke being the most tragic.

"In addition, I find it sad that there are no openly gay players in any of the top four leagues and therefore chose to include one player who is in a gay relationship. I remember one of my lecturers being particularly passionate about similar sociological issues."

Social issues in sport are of deep interest to Luis, who based his dissertation on the education young professional footballers receive. He advises students to focus on an area of the programme that they are particularly passionate about and become an expert in it, using it to your advantage when you graduate.

Although there are no immediate plans to write another sports-related book, Luis does want to incorporate the other half of his degree in his writing. "My degree was also in Primary Education and I'm keen to develop a story showing the cultural diversity of a small group of trainee teachers deciding whether or not they want to stay in the classroom."

The diversity of St Mary's was part of the reason why Luis enjoyed his time at the University, citing that it allowed him to gain a good understanding of how people are motivated. He commented, "It was great making new friends from all over the world, not just the UK and Ireland. It's a time I look back on with real fondness and hope my daughter goes on to have an equally great time if she wishes to study at St Mary's."

## 2015 Alumni Weekend

In 2015, the Alumni Weekend will be Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd August. Alumni can take advantage of free venue hire in the Waldegrave Suite or Students' Union to host their reunion(s). If you're interested in holding a reunion please contact the Alumni Relations Office.

## St Mary's Develops Relationships in Malaysia



Jim Moreland, Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Theology and Leadership at St Mary's recently visited Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia as part of an ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Education. Jim, who specialises in Science Education on St Mary's PGCE and MA Education programmes, also co-ordinates a project in conjunction with St Mary's International Office and the Malaysian Ministry of Education to train science and mathematics teachers as part of a matriculation programme established in 2008.

In addition to meeting with the Ministry of Education in Malaysia, Jim also hosted an alumni event with students who have trained at St Mary's over the past few years. Jim said, "We had 24 former trainees (at least two from each of the four cohorts) attend the reunion; it was a great turnout as many travelled from all over Malaysia. Some former trainees introduced their husbands and children to the group!"

As well as providing a platform to network and meet with fellow teachers, the alumni were also able to watch video recorded messages from some of their former teachers, including St Mary's Senior Lecturer Irena Grounds, who were not able to attend the event. Students from the 2012-13 cohort were also praised for their innovative work in pedagogy after producing and editing their own teaching videos.

Jim rounded off the visit with a trip to the ATC Advance Tertiary College, which delivers St Mary's BA Management Studies programme, as well as representing St Mary's at the British Council Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur.

## Events and Reunions at St Mary's University

Planned events and reunions for 2014 are as follows:

29th-31st August	Basketball/37 Year Reunion for the class of 1977
29th-31st August	47 Year Reunion for the class of 1967
9th November	Remembrance Sunday at St Mary's
12th December	Alumni Christmas Dinner

## Half Dozen Halt Team SU Winning Streak at Third Alumni Pub Quiz



The third St Mary's Alumni, Staff and Friends Pub Quiz was held on Friday 6th June. Taking place in the Students' Union Bar, over 50 alumni, staff and friends attended to pit their wits against each other. Bottles of wine were up for grabs for the winners; however, it was bragging rights which were the most hotly contested prize of the night.

Ten teams participated, with St Mary's staff represented by departments including Library and Learning Technology, Student Services and Finance, while Alumni teams included graduates from a range of eras dating back to the 1970s right through to 2013.

Taking account of feedback from previous event attendees, the event was moved from a Thursday to a Friday night and the start time pushed back to 7.30pm. Everyone was promptly in their seats, ready to start and make the most of the finger buffet provided.

Team SU were defending champions having won the first two quiz events held in 2013, but a hat-trick was not to be and they finished second to newcomers, and alumni team, Half Dozen. Our congratulations to Half Dozen team members Charlie McCann (75), Julia McCann (76), Catherine Rigby (91), Simon Rigby, Helen McCann (11) and Charlie Muldonney (*pictured above*).

## 40th Anniversary Reunion (Class of 1977)

Hello SIMMS 1974 intake, Basketball Club and Football Society! If you haven't already registered for our reunion this August, then time is of the essence!

The price for the reunion is £50 and will include:

- Friday evening Social
- Saturday Sports Afternoon
- Saturday evening Black Tie Dinner & Dance. Your dinner includes a starter, main meal, dessert, coffee and after-dinner mints.
- Sunday Mass in the Chapel at 11am

Additional options, at your cost, will include:

Tour of Walpole House; River Cruise; Sunday Lunch.

We have tried our best, with help from many others, to contact our classmates. Please pass this message on to those who may not already be aware of the reunion. We so look forward to seeing you at the reunion and would like to remind those interested in attending that the booking deadline is Friday 25th July.

All our very best wishes,

Charmaine McHale (*née Bartlett-Barfoot*) ([mchales@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mchales@blueyonder.co.uk))

Helen Soucie (*née Wright*) ([helen.soucie@gmail.com](mailto:helen.soucie@gmail.com))

## 50 Not Out Reunion (Class of 1967)

This will be the seventh reunion event since the departure of the 1964-1967 cohort and paves the way for our Golden Jubilee Event, which is planned for September 2017.

We would like to ask you to let us know of any contacts with former colleagues who may have not come to our attention so far. The last reunion was attended by six former friends with whom we had lost touch since our student days, after tracking them down through established contacts.

Please note that those interested in attending must return their booking forms and payment to the Alumni Relations Office by Friday 25th July.

For more information please contact John White, [whitejam@btopenworld.com](mailto:whitejam@btopenworld.com).

## The 60's and 70's Group

Another meeting of this group will take place in July to coincide with the visits of several Simmarians now living abroad. Meetings usually take place on a Friday afternoon/evening at The Chandos Pub off Trafalgar Square.

To register your interest, or join the mailing list for information about future dates, and share your memories of St Mary's please contact Joe directly.

Joe Loughran

[joe@theloughrans.co.uk](mailto:joe@theloughrans.co.uk)

## The Liverpool Simmarian Club

2014 is the Liverpool Simmarian Club's 110th Anniversary and founded in 1904 it continues to flourish. Members continue to meet at 12 noon on the last Thursday of each month at The West Lancashire Golf Club and partake of an enjoyable lunch. Additionally, the Club celebrates its two major functions each year. Firstly, the Anniversary Mass for deceased members at Sandymount Retreat Centre followed by formal lunch at The West Lancashire Golf Club. This year, in particular, we remember Gerry Wright (1952/54), our past president who died in January 2014.

Secondly, we will celebrate the University Feast Day on 8th December 2014 with Mass concelebrated by Fr Alex Fleming (44/46) and Fr Godric Timney OSB (71/72) at Sandymount Retreat Centre followed by formal lunch at The West Lancashire Golf Club.

John White (64/67) has organised a Strawberry Hill reunion for Liverpool Simmarian Club members on 29th-31st August 2014 to mark the 110th Anniversary. Anyone interested can contact John via his email, [whitejam@btopenworld.com](mailto:whitejam@btopenworld.com).

The current Committee elected at The AGM in January 2014 is Tony Brookman (62/65), President; Steve McKenna (58/60), Treasurer, and Geoff Farrell (54/57), Secretary.

Geoff Farrell

Secretary

## The Future of Work is Self-Employment

Recent figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicate that there are now over 4.5 million people in the UK working on a self-employed basis, and that only half of the working population are on an employer's payroll and work full time hours.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) predicts at least half the workforce could be self-employed or employed on zero-hours contracts by 2030. This means that more and more students will need to develop their understanding of what being self-employed means and face the fact that they may well be working in these conditions at some point during their career.

Students need to develop greater understanding of the rewards that come with self-employment, but at the same time be aware of the challenges. It is important that, by the end of their time at university, students are equipped with those skills which will help them to survive in a changing career landscape.

### Some of the Rewards of Self-Employment

Self-employment can allow greater flexibility and the possibility to work from anywhere in the world. Flexibility can enable individuals to juggle other life commitments. Recently we discussed freelancing and setting up a business with people in a range of sectors, from cake making to photography. Read what they have to say about working as a freelancer on the [Careers Group Blog](#).

### Some of the Challenges

Being self-employed or working as a freelancer can mean insecurity and precarious conditions for workers, causing disillusion and difficulties in motivating oneself. The financial aspects associated with this kind of work can also be stressful. Additionally there are risks associated with isolation and not having a group of colleagues to interact with on a daily basis.

### Skills

When talking to students across disciplines, whether they are thinking of being self-employed or not, we highlight the need for them to be proactive, but what do we actually mean by this? The dictionary definition of proactive is tending to initiate change rather than reacting to events or serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation.

This is particularly important when working as a freelancer or on a zero hours contract, as are resilience, and the ability to pick oneself up after a difficult situation or some negative feedback. A strong personal and professional network are invaluable too.

If you'd like to speak to a careers advisor about your career goals or becoming self-employed, please email [careers@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@smuc.ac.uk) or phone 020 8240 4055.

## Strawberry Hill House and St Mary's University welcome visitors to the Wedding Showcase

On Sunday 16th March 2014, Strawberry Hill House and St Mary's welcomed couples getting married to a Wedding Showcase. This was the first time a Wedding Showcase had been held by the two venues and more than 200 visitors were welcomed on the day. The unique event gave those who are busy organising their wedding an opportunity to view the stunning historical rooms at Strawberry Hill House, where wedding ceremonies can take place, and visit the Waldegrave Suite at St Mary's, which can be booked for wedding receptions.

One of the features of the Wedding Showcase was the two bridal wear fashion shows held in the Waldegrave Suite. Current St Mary's students modelled the fashions which showcased the latest bridal wear, special occasion wear and accessories by BOA Boutique in Richmond. Visitors also had an opportunity to see 'mock' wedding ceremonies taking place in the Long Gallery at Strawberry Hill House conducted by the Celebrant, Anita Koch.

Wedding event suppliers from car hire to photographers, caterers, florists, hair and make up artists, a travel company and toastmaster were on hand at the Wedding Showcase to help the couples plan their special day and many offered discounts for those who booked.

Visitors were welcomed by staff from both Strawberry Hill House and St Mary's who provided information about booking the venues for wedding events. Due to the popularity of the day, a significant number of bookings for 2015 and beyond were taken at the Wedding Showcase for both Strawberry Hill House and St Mary's.

For more details about hiring St Mary's facilities: visit [www.smuc.ac.uk/conferences/weddings-and-functions](http://www.smuc.ac.uk/conferences/weddings-and-functions) email [conferences@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:conferences@smuc.ac.uk) or call 020 8240 4044 / 4311.

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## SHOCC in Central America

Alumni from the 1972-1975 cohort may well remember Dee Smith who, on gaining her Teachers' Certificate in Geography and Education, immediately left to teach at a school in western Kenya. Between 1984 and 1989 Dee was Project Coordinator of the East Pokot Basic Education Project with responsibility for building, staffing and designing the curriculum for 10 schools for semi-nomadic pupils. SHOCC began its association with her work at this time, providing funding for rainwater harvesting systems at each of her schools.

In August 1994, after training and taking her vows to become a Maryknoll Sister, Dee moved to Guatemala to become the General Director and Project Coordinator of Proyecto Vida. This is a HIV/AIDS project that provides a range of services for those with the disease. The project includes an 18 bed hospice at Coatepeque which SHOCC has supported since it opened. As well as providing funding for the hospice, we also sent Dee the money needed to purchase 5 acres of land next to the hospice to develop as an ecological farm.

**The farm is now fully operational and Dee recently sent SHOCC this article on progress.**

"When we first began the hospice in 2007 we didn't have enough land to plant the crops we wanted. In 2011 a generous benefactor donated the money to purchase a piece of land adjoining the hospice compound. Ever since I left Kenya in 1989 I have had a yearning to continue with my farming activities in more conscientious way.

"With the new piece of land and a few spades, shovels and machetes, a team of us began to clear the fields of all the unwanted weeds and grass using the compost to begin our soil building. The land had been used exclusively for cattle grazing and although the soil had plenty of cow manure deposited on it over the years, the topsoil was very poor and typical of the coastal region. We set about planting citric fruit trees and some larger trees such as avocado and mango with some neem and moringa trees thrown in for good measure. Our goal at the beginning was to create new land using worm, general vegetable and organic waste composting and through our fledgling chicken farm, some chicken manure now and again.

"By 2013 we had enough 'new' soil to start growing different leafy vegetables to supplement the diet of the patients in the hospice. Many of our residents have iron and vitamin deficiencies and rather than spend money and time on pills and tablets, we intentionally increased the daily input of natural vitamin and iron compounds from our farm. We have three excellent women who work in the hospice kitchen and love to come up with different menus to use the vegetables (green sauces, tamales stuffed with the vegetables, etc.) As two of them are people with HIV they know the importance of a mineral and vitamin rich diet to offset the side effects of their antiretroviral medicines.

"We now have many local people popping into the farm and buying seedlings to plant at home. It is wonderful to see the message spreading about healthy, organically grown 'vitamins and minerals'. Our Moringa project is now so popular that we have had to increase production and print up an illustrated brochure with recipes and instructions for the many uses of the 'miracle' tree".

What Dee does not mention are the beehives that last year produced over \$1,200 worth of highly nutritious honey, and the wormery which now consists of four large tanks composting all the waste from the hospice and the farm. Last year these tanks produced nearly 500 kgs of worm cast compost and 400 litres of what is known as 'worm tea'! Mixed at a ratio of 10 parts water to 1 part tea, this provides a highly nitrogenous liquid fertilizer which is used on the farm.

Since leaving St Mary's, Dee will have devoted 40 years of her life to helping the disadvantaged in Kenya and Guatemala and SHOCC has been privileged to be associated with her work.

*Proyecto Vida is one of several projects across the world currently being helped by SHOCC.*

Kevin Cook

SHOCC Chair of Trustees May 2014



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- Education: Pedagogy and Professional Values and Practice
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## Alumni Relations Office Survey Results

Our thanks again to all the alumni who took part in our recent survey, as well as those who attended our focus groups. We wanted to make sure that you know your views are having an impact on the service we provide, and as such would like to summarise some of the key findings and resultant actions we either have already taken, or plan to implement over the coming months.

The survey was conducted online and ran for three months, from December 2013 through to the end of February 2014, canvassing alumni opinions on events, communications, the alumni website and social media. The survey was also supplemented with three focus groups, attended by alumni and staff, starting in November 2013, running through to April 2014.

The survey had equal response rates from alumni aged 20 through to 69. Responses from alumni aged 70+ were not as high, but still encouraging. Of those who chose to disclose their location, the majority were based within the UK, but there was still a good response from alumni now based outside the UK. Slightly more female alumni (53%) completed the survey than male.

### Some of the key findings from the survey were:

- The biggest cited obstacle for alumni wishing to attend events at St Mary's was geographical distance or a lack of time.
- Many alumni also indicated that they do not attend events because they are worried they won't know anyone there.
- Free text comments indicated a lack of awareness of the alumni events being held.
- Free text comments indicate many have inadvertently dropped off the mailing list in the last few years, probably around the time the hardcopy editions of the Simmarian were stopped in 2010.
- Of those receiving our communications, over 90% were satisfied with the Simmarian Online Newsletter, including its format, content and method of sending.
- A third of alumni responding have used the alumni website.
- There was some interest in an alumni specific facebook account being set up, but little interest in other social media channels such as twitter.
- Although many of our alumni were not aware of our LinkedIn account and group, of those that were, 49% found the content relevant and engaging.
- Many alumni indicated they are happy to simply continue receiving emails from St Mary's with no need for additional channels of communication.
- There was a common theme throughout the survey freetext comments about the lack of continuity that's been offered by the Alumni Relations Office in both communications being intermittent and not having a consistent point of contact.

Actions that the Alumni Relations Office have, or will be taking, as a result of your feedback include:

- Scheduling more events for Fridays and Saturdays, as well as weekdays.
- Continuation of Alumni & Friends events, so that you can bring non-Simmarian partners, or friends with you. We are also looking into options to help alumni who are worried about attending events in case they won't know anyone.
- We will soon be introducing a monthly email to all alumni opted into events communications, collating all the events and activities taking place at St Mary's for the upcoming month. This would include events such as drama productions and public lectures.
- More work will be carried out trying to make contact with those alumni who haven't heard from us since the Simmarian Postal Newsletter was stopped in 2010.
- There are no plans for the time being to alter the format or content of the Simmarian Newsletter based on the very positive feedback received.
- More work will be carried out to generate alumni profiles and collect alumni memories for inclusion on the alumni website to provide more interesting content.
- While there is interest in having an alumni specific Facebook account, those that currently follow the central Your St Mary's page feel the content is still relevant to them. Therefore we will continue to use the central account as a method of getting our news and updates out to alumni.
- More work will be done trying to expand the membership of the LinkedIn Group, with the hope that alumni will begin to drive the content themselves, providing discussion points of interest to you.
- Internal procedures have been revised and updated to ensure continuity in the service provided by the Alumni Relations Office.
- We are looking at our communications strategy to ensure more planned and scheduled contact at a level people are comfortable with.

If anyone has any comments or questions about the survey results, or alumni services you receive or would like to receive from St Mary's, then please feel free to email us.

## Rest in Peace

St Mary's has been informed of the passing of the following Simmarians, may they rest in peace.

Patrick Masterson (1972)

Andrew McMahon (1973)

Susan Jenkins (1978)

Catherine Cassidy (1988)

**How did we do?** Your views on this edition are important to us – What have we missed? What would you like to see included? What events would you like to be organised? Please email [alumni@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@smuc.ac.uk)

Find us on     

## Where Are They Now?

**Ralph Hope (1947)** Happily retired since 1980. DIY fan. Visit family abroad and at home regularly. Amateur keyboard musician. Heavily into Church work. Otherwise, keeping on the right side of my wife.

**Humphrey Long (1955)** Retired in 2001 following 48 years of teaching in schools in Tower Hamlets. Final school 40 years Head of Physical Education. Extensive career in basketball. Founded London Schools Basketball Association. England Youth coach 128 international coaching caps. Club coach 44 national championships. Coached 5 ESAA athletic champions and two Great Britain athletes. School recently named new school sports hall after me.

**Julio Alcantara (1961)** Retired 1996 Gibraltar's first home-grown Director of Education 1984-1996. MBE 2010 for services to Education and Community. Hon. Mayor of Gibraltar 2010-2012.

**Colin Lyth (1966)** After leaving St Mary's I taught art at Balham South London and was Head of Art at St Austin's School, Charlton SE London until 1981. I married and emigrated to Australia in 1982. I was coordinator for Art at St Augustine's College Brookvale, Sydney, NSW, until retirement in 2000.

**Patricia Marachli née Hoye (1973)** Married and resident in France (40 years). Teacher of English over many years. Computer studies + medical formation cardiologist's assistant.

**Christopher Holmes (1973)** Teaching at Summerhill School, 1975-1981. Teaching at St Christopher School, Letchworth, 1981-1986. PhD at Huddersfield University, 1986-1989. R&D Engineering Manager at Holroyd Machine Tools, Rochdale, 1989-current.

**Nigel Evans (1973)** I taught in West Drayton after qualifying in 1973. Went to work for Hounslow before moving to the Wirral in 1975. Married in 1976. Deputy headship in York in 1982, daughter born 1985. Moved to a headship in Selby 1992 and retired in 2008. 30 years amateur dramatics in local village group. Joined a theatre workshop group with York Theatre Royal. Appeared in a couple of productions in the Theatre Studio. Appeared in a couple of York Uni student films. Continued minor acting with a small speaking part in *York Mystery Plays* 2012. Enjoying holidays and doing as little as possible.

**David Conlon (1975)** I am now officially retired from teaching, having taught at the same Catholic school in North Manchester for 36 years from 1975 to 2011. I began teaching History at St Gerard's Secondary Modern school in Moston from 1975-1977, which became a comprehensive school in 1977 – St Matthew's RC High School. I taught History and Latin there for the rest of my career. I was also Head of Year 9 for 16 consecutive years, Head of Department and then Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for timetabling, the curriculum and examinations. I continue my association with Catholic education in Manchester as I work part-time for MANCEP, the Manchester Catholic Education Partnership. I facilitate curriculum subject meetings and am responsible for organising an INSET day for over 800 colleagues once a year. My eldest daughter now lives in Strawberry Hill, so there are lots of pleasant memories when I visit her!

**Christopher Fitzpatrick (1976)** Set up and established Sole Mates Insoles.

**John Cullinan (1977)** I have recently retired having completed 36 years in schools, mainly in the Midlands. I finished as a Vice Principal of an 11-16 Academy. I taught RE all my career but also taught PE, History and ICT. I enjoyed my time in Catholic schools but was tempted to the dark side and finished my career working for the Midlands Academy Trust. Now enjoying life without Ofsted or performance management. Have been married to Heather for 34 years and are now enjoying our retirement together.

**Gordon Becket (1982)** 30 years at Woodford County High School for Girls (29 as Head of Religious Studies). Teacher Governor (25+ years). NUT Rep (20 years). Webmaster Redbridge RE Network ([redbridgerenet.co.uk](http://redbridgerenet.co.uk))

**Mary Beeken née Martin (1986)** I have been teaching for 24 years but have recently gone part-time. I have self-published two novels on Kindle and around 40,000 copies have been downloaded worldwide. I am just starting my next book and hope to publish that in a few months' time. My husband and I have celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary this year. We have two children.

**Michael Wilson (1988)** I am Head of House and PE Teacher at a Catholic Secondary School in Preston, Lancashire. I am a trainee teacher mentor and in charge of leadership in the school.

**Christopher White (1989)** I am the Group CEO of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland. I have 400 staff reporting to me, with 16,500 service users and a budget of €20m.

**Nauman Quershi (1992)** After leaving St Mary's, which at that time was affiliated with the University of Surrey, I returned to my previous job. In 2002, I was promoted as Headmaster and subsequently as Vice Principal of one of the finest Public Schools in Pakistan. Later on, I worked as Principal of City School in Lahore for 3 years. Presently, I am working as Project Director of The Message Foundation, an organisation which plans to open primary and secondary schools all over Pakistan on a non-profit basis.

**Elizabeth Cheetham née Cummings (1992)** I am a Learning & Development Commissioner for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). I live in Nuneaton in Warwickshire.

**Veronica Kaneti (1994)** Happily in love with my best friend, Richard Moles. We are planning to have our second child and seriously considering moving to the very beautiful Lyme Regis, Dorset. I'm still teaching, Richard is still nursing and our stunning daughter Anastasia, aged 4, gets more and more amazing each day!

**Sarah Briggs née Dixon (1995)** After graduating, I worked as a laboratory technician for a water company. I left in 1999 to have our eldest daughter. Our second child was born in 2001. Since then, I have set up my own property rental company which I now run and manage. I recently began studying accountancy but put plans on hold as I was diagnosed with breast cancer early last year. I have made a full recovery following a successful surgery and treatment plan. Now I am taking the time to decide what I want to do.

**Veronika Binoeder (2009)** Have successfully completed an MA in English Literature at Kingston University (grad. 2013).