

The Simmarian



St Mary's
Alumni

Edition 22
Autumn 2025



175TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION
1850 - 2025



Alumni Reunion 2026

We're thrilled to announce that the St Mary's Alumni Reunion 2026 will take place on **Saturday, 29th August**

- Welcome drink
- Delicious BBQ
- Archives on display
- Guided university tours
- Live entertainment and dancing
- Reconnect with old classmate



EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

Don't miss out on the best price – book your Early Bird tickets [HERE](#)

Early Bird pricing ends 14th February 2026. If you have any questions or queries, please email alumni@stmarys.ac.uk

Book your Early Bird Tickets via the QR Code or click through [HERE](#)

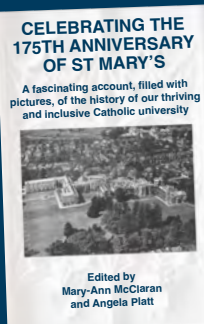


St Mary's University
Twickenham
London

175 Years of
Inspiring
Excellence

On Sale Now

St Mary's in Time and Place: 175 Years of St Mary's University



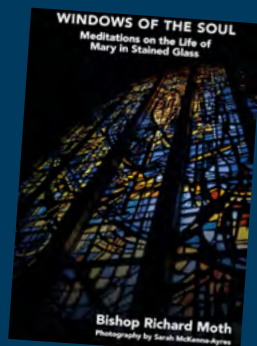
Celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of St Mary's University; depicting the fascinating picture of the rich history of this thriving and inclusive Catholic university.

[Click here](#)

Also available to purchase

Windows of the Soul; Meditations on the life of Mary in Stained Glass

[Click here](#)



Welcome to the Simmarian

It is my great honour to welcome you to this special edition of *The Simmarian*. 2025 has been a memorable year for the whole St Mary's community as we have been celebrating both the 175th anniversary of our foundation in 1850 and the centenary of our move from Hammersmith to our home at Strawberry Hill in 1925.

We've been reflecting on all that we've been given by those who have gone before us: the visionary commitment of our founders, who had faith in the power of education to lift people from poverty and open up their full God-given potential; the generosity of the Vincentian priests and brothers, who built a small teacher training college into the thriving institution we know today; the pioneering women who ensured that St Mary's would be a place for all; the sacrifices made by those many Simmarians who gave their lives in the two great world wars of the twentieth century and whom we honoured in the Chapel on Remembrance Sunday; and the outstanding sports people who have achieved so much for their countries and have ensured a Simmarian gold medallist at every Olympics since Beijing 2008.

But this has also been a time to look to the future and ask what we will do to build on the wonderful foundations at St Mary's. The University continues to expand its range of programmes and facilities, with the stunning new Esports Arena being the latest fantastic facility at Strawberry Hill.

The centrepiece of our plans for the future of St Mary's is our new School of Medicine. To house the School, we're building the brand new Centenary Building on our main campus. The land has been cleared and, as I write, the builders have begun their work. As our founders

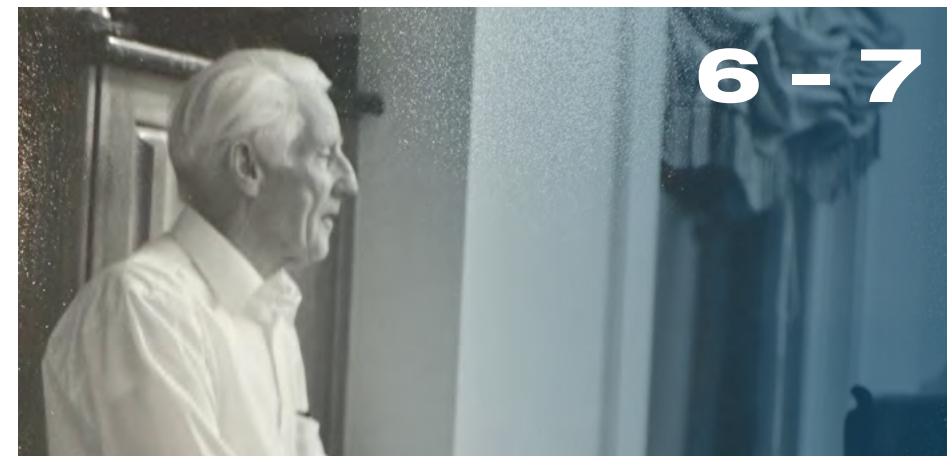


addressed the great social issue of education, we are determined to help address the health challenges our society faces, with the vision, values and commitment that our Catholic foundation has given us.

You, our Simmarian alumni, are a vital part of our story. I hope you'll have the opportunity to visit St Mary's and view the 175 year timeline that stretches all along the main corridor and the exhibition of fascinating pictures and documents from our archives on the ground floor of the Library. We continue to commend St Mary's to the intercession of Our Lady, in whose honour we are named.

Monstra te esse Matrem!

Professor Anthony McClaran,
Vice-Chancellor



6 - 7

In Memory of my father, **Warrant Officer Carter**



10 - 11

Experiences of St Mary's as a **first female student**



22

Anniversary **Alumni Reunion**

OBITUARIES

In Memory of Lee Brooks

Who sadly passed away on 7 August. A member of our community for over 30 years, Lee graduated in History in 1996 and joined the University as staff in 1997.

As Senior Lecturer in Film, he inspired generations of students, organising exhibitions that showcased their work on campus and in London. He will be fondly remembered to the field of film studies. He will be fondly remembered for his passion for Disney and his academic contributions to the field of film studies.

In Memory of Professor John Charmley

Who sadly passed away this year. Joining St Mary's in 2016 as Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Strategy and later serving as our first Provost, John retired in 2021 but continued to support the University as Emeritus Professor and Chair of the St Mary's University Press Editorial Board.

He introduced foundation year pathways, widening access to higher education for hundreds of students. A distinguished historian and author, and guided by his faith, John made an enduring impact and will be greatly missed.

CONTENTS

1850 – 1960

Through the years **4 - 5**

In memory of my father, Warrant Officer Carter **6 - 7**

1960 – 1999

Through the years **8 - 9**

First female student **10 - 11**

2000 – 2001

Through the years **12 - 13**

Memory lane **14 - 15**

2014 – 2020

Through the years **16 - 17**

The F.H. Swear Club **18 - 19**

2021 – 2025

Through the years **20 - 21**

Alumni reunion **22**

Reconnect **22**

Careers **22**

News stories **24 - 25**

St Mary's London School of Medicine **26**

Alumni story **27**

Made at St Mary's **28**

1850 – 1960

THROUGH THE YEARS ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY

1898

Inter-College Sports introduced between Borough Road, St Mark's, St John's, Westminster and St Mary's Colleges.

1901

Stained glass is created by Layers and Westlake, signed and dated 1901. It will later appear in the Chapel on the Strawberry Hill campus.



1918

Sixty-four Simmarians had been killed by the end of the First World War. You can find the memorial to them in the University Chapel.

1913

Courses are introduced leading to London external BA and BSc degrees through the University of London – though are initially delayed due to the First World War.

1850

St Mary's is founded in Brook Green, Hammersmith by the Catholic Poor School Committee and Cardinal Wiseman to meet a growing need for teachers.



1906

Still running today, The Simmarian was previously drafted by hand, and was published in print by 1906.



1930

A new wing was added to the building; it and Strawberry Hill House subsequently suffered bomb damage during the Second World War.



1939

Two hundred students now secure external degrees of the University of London.

1937

A 120-yard running track is laid.



1925

As the College grew, it moved to Strawberry Hill, with both Horace Walpole's Gothic building and the Waldegrave extensions becoming home to St Mary's.



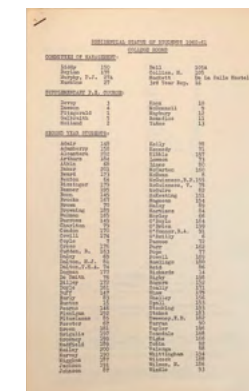
1945

Seventy-seven Simmarians were never to return from the Second World War, with a memorial to them also in the University Chapel.



1959

St Mary's grows to offer five hundred places.



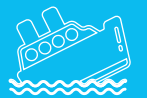
Spotlight

The world around St Mary's



• **1881**

First use of electric light



• **1912**

The sinking of the Titanic



• **1918**

WW1 ends



In Memory of my father, Warrant Officer Carter

Written by: Paul Carter, PhD

On March 12, 2025, just over two weeks shy of his 101st birthday, my dad, Thomas (Tom) Carter died. Some people are lucky enough to lead charmed and blessed lives—Tom was one of them. Even his passing was seamless: he simply complained about feeling “grim,” and within the hour, he died peacefully in his own bed. A heart that had beat strong and reliably for over a century simply decided to stop, without fuss or bother.

So what is the story behind those hundred years? We live in uncertain and unsettling times and believe much is changing, but a lot can happen over a century. A nation can undergo dramatic shifts – none more so than the UK from the 1920s to the 2020s: a world war, the loss of a global empire, and the multiculturalisation of its population. Tom lived through all of this; served as a Warrant Officer in the RAF during WWII; trained to be a teacher at St Mary's College either side of his service; then remained in education for forty years before retiring – and spent the final thirty-six years devoted to bringing joy and love to his ever-growing family.

Tom was part of the Greatest Generation. It's a daunting term – it simply can't get better than greatest! His generation stood up when their nation needed them, without hesitation. Tom didn't lead his nation, wasn't even a commissioned officer, but his story matters. He was part of a generation that's fast disappearing and likely never to be repeated. He was made of Christian character. He lived true and straight. He was gentle, never angered (and I'm not exaggerating), and had a terrific sense of humour.

I was Tom's youngest child (of three). By the time I came along, Tom had recently been appointed headmaster of a new Catholic primary school – St. Thomas of Canterbury, in Rainham, Kent – which opened in January 1967. This became the highlight of his teaching career, and he stayed for over twenty-two years until retiring in 1989. All my knowledge of him began

when he was already Mr. Carter – the formal, somewhat strict headmaster. He led a school that was outstanding, both academically and in sports (mostly football)! As a child, I knew he was respected at school and across the parish, but it wasn't until we prepared for his hundredth birthday last year that I truly realised the role he played in so many lives. Thirty-five years after retiring, we were inundated with messages and cards thanking him for all he'd done. A good educator touches more people than you can imagine – childhood experiences form the roots of adult life. My dad had a real impact on generations of children, and it was uplifting to know his legacy will live on.

Tom was born in Thornton Cleveleys, northwest England, in 1924. At seven, his life was shaken by the sudden death of his beloved father from pneumonia. Despite this, Tom performed well at school and had a happy childhood with three siblings.



He wanted to teach and entered St Mary's College, Twickenham in 1941. But it was wartime, and within a year, he joined the RAF, ultimately becoming a navigator flying Lancaster Bombers. He served in the UK, then the Middle East and India (assisting with the troubles surrounding independence). While in India, he became very ill with dysentery and was told never to eat spicy food again – he survived for decades on meat, two veg, and apple pie with custard!

After the war, Tom returned to St Mary's in 1946 and graduated with a teaching diploma in 1948. He stayed locally in Middlesex, working at St. Mary's Primary School in Isleworth until 1952 (and met and married his wife during this time). He had a spell back in the north before heading south to Kent with his young family, initially working in Chatham in 1959 before his headship appointment in Rainham.

Just a few years after retiring, his wife (and my mother), Monica, died – so he lived the last three decades of his life alone, in his own home. But he was never really alone. He was a wonderful patriarch to us all. I live in the United States with my family, and my siblings also live overseas, but Dad was always grateful for whatever time we could spend with him. He took us as we were and was always happy to have us around. He exuded peace and calm and always laughed at my jokes.

I was honoured to give the eulogy at his funeral. We were deeply touched that the RAF provided an honour guard, draped the Union flag over his coffin, and offered a final toast to Warrant Officer Carter. It truly felt like a grateful

nation was thanking him for his service – and reminding our children of that Greatest Generation and their sacrifices.

After the funeral, we discovered a hidden gem in his house: he had kept all the testimonials from each school he'd worked at, even one from the Principal of St. Mary's College. These letters, dated 1948 to 1966, cemented what I already believed were Tom's fundamental qualities. The Principal of St. Mary's College, G.J. Shannon, wrote in 1948: "I have great pleasure in recommending Mr. Carter as a young man of good character and ability... He is most reliable and will make a teacher of very good quality." Four years later, Reverend E.M. Dempsey (Isleworth) said: "He served during very difficult times of change... through his tremendous zeal, ability and energy he achieved extraordinary results," adding, "he produced from the most unpromising materials, Boxing, Football, Swimming and Athletic Teams, second to none." When Tom left St. Michael's Chatham in 1966, Thomas Hill, the parish priest, stated: "I readily believe the tone, spirit and appearance of the pupils greatly improved when he was Deputy Head... Chatham owes him a debt."

I think we all owe Tom Carter a debt and are blessed to have had him in our lives. My dad loved God, his family, and teaching. He was old-school – he believed in the equal value of religious education, academics, sports and music. He was formal, strict, fair, gentle, hardworking and very funny. I don't know exactly how St Mary's College shaped his trajectory, but I'm sure it did – Tom Carter journeyed through there at a poignant time in history, and it formed the basis of his successful career. And for that, many should be grateful.



“Tom Carter was part of a generation that gardened in his suit and tie. That when there was a minor fire in his house one day, he went to brush his teeth and hair before contacting the fire brigade! He was a fervent Catholic and a wholly family man.”

1960 – 1999

THROUGH THE YEARS ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY



1963

The Chapel, designed by Sir Albert Richardson and influenced by the medieval Albi Cathedral in Southern France, is finished.

1966

Women join the college on equal terms with male students. There are now 1,000 students at St Mary's.



1992

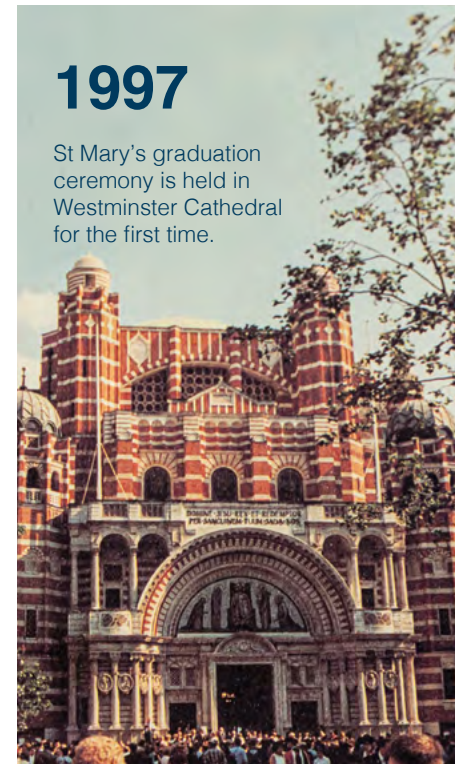
The University of Surrey replaces the University of London as St Mary's validating institution.



The last Vincentian Principal Father Byrne retires, and the first lay Principal Dr Arthur Naylor is appointed. He subsequently becomes the first Vice-Chancellor when St Mary's achieves university status.

1997

St Mary's graduation ceremony is held in Westminster Cathedral for the first time.

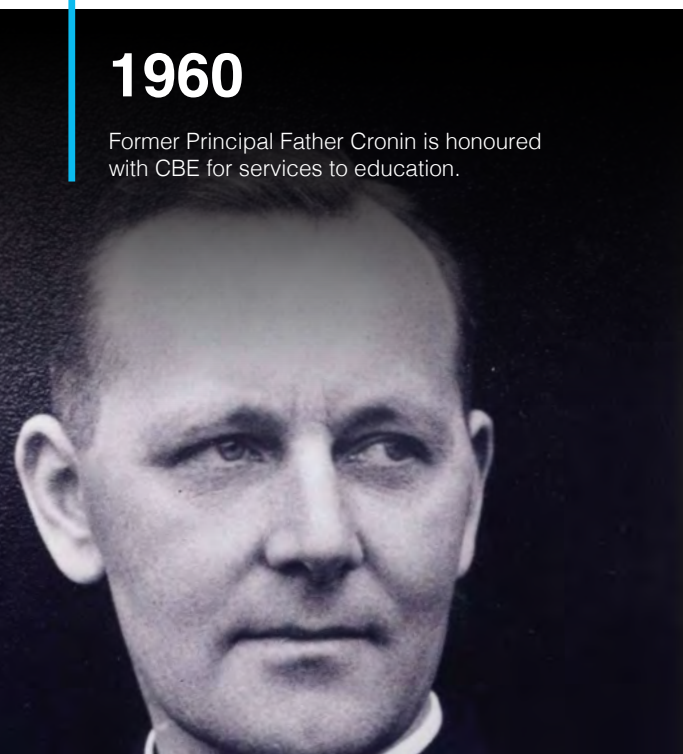


1999

St Mary's purchases sixteen-acre site of playing fields, which becomes its Teddington Lock Sports Campus.

1960

Former Principal Father Cronin is honoured with CBE for services to education.



1971

Founding of Strawberry Hill Overseas Concern (SHOC), the University charity which has raised nearly a million pounds to support 40 projects to tackle disadvantage and inequality.



1993

Alumnus Pete Postlethwaite is nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in In the Name of the Father.



Spotlight

The world
around
St Mary's



• **1966**

England win the football World Cup.



• **1969**

Neil Armstrong becomes the first man on the moon



• **1989**

Fall of the Berlin Wall



My memories of St Mary's as a first female student

1966 – 1969

Written by
Vicky Stewart (Hubberstey)



Vicky Stewart
(Hubberstey)

In 1966 my first choice of college was St Mary's, which for the first time, was about to enrol one hundred female students to study alongside nine hundred men. The teacher training colleges I had visited were single-sex and differed little from my convent grammar school, which I was busting to leave. St Mary's offered what I needed, male tutors and students, beautiful surroundings, and to be treated as an adult.



“

Students organised college dances, gigs and folk nights. The annual Rag Week had fun events with money collected for charity culminating in Strawberry Fair on the lawns and a Ball in the Waldegrave Ballroom. There were also Leavers Balls and in 1969 a steel band played, very popular then.”



After a campus visit I was interviewed in the Round Room in Strawberry Hill House. Principal Father Cronin led the questioning, seated behind a large mahogany table before the ornate fireplace. I was referred to, formally, as 'Miss Hubberstey'.

Having opted for Art as my 'First Main' I was shown the Art Rooms and interviewed by Department Head L. de C- Boucher who recorded me as the department's first female student. There were studios for painting (John Horwill), graphics (Tom Elliot), poetry (Dorothy Peacock), a darkroom for photography (John Fagg) and a general studio for art lectures. Today these are the Drama Studios.

Drama was my 'Second Main', headed by Roger Lane. The Drama Studio-cum-Theatre was where the current theatre is now. Pete Postlethwaite was a student two years ahead of me. He was 'Lear' in '68 with Eamon Boland. In his autobiography Pete writes about St Mary's and the huge support Roger Lane gave him both at college and in the early years of his acting career. Mick Melia was in my year. Both Eamon and Mick went on to have roles in BBC dramas and on stage.

Later, I changed from Drama to Music under Donald Ray and continued learning piano under Elsie Snell. A row of soundproofed practice rooms each had a piano, however, I discovered that if I went to the Waldegrave Ballroom I could play on the concert grand in the bay window overlooking the lawns.

In 1966 there were fewer 'Hostels' in Waldegrave Park – Nos 9, 15, 17, 21 had been used by male students but redecorated for the women. The smell of fresh paint takes me back to those first days in No 21. All had their original lounges as common rooms and the large bedrooms had two or three students in each. One bathroom per hostel was shared; no shower. We had beds and wardrobes but no desks so we used the library and classrooms. Miss Hogan was in charge of females in campus accommodation and when our new candlewick bedspreads arrived she let us pick our own colours. We were baby-boomers and possessions and choice had not figured much in our lives.

If you lived on campus, meals were provided in the Ref on handing in a meal ticket. The Bar, where a drama studio is now, the one with pillars down the sides and windows overlooking the lawns, was originally the chapel for the old house. Mail was collected from the Porter's Lodge, next to the main campus entrance, where it was alphabetically ordered into cubby holes, and the shop sold college scarves, stationery and new and second-hand course books.

We studied English, Mathematics and various core subjects. Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy of Education (Peter Enright) were interesting, but the textbooks challenging. I still have the three final exam papers for these subjects, each three hours, with my jottings around the questions I chose to answer. I'm amazed now that I could answer them. We all 'knew' Mick Jagger's Dad, Joe Jagger, whether we did PE or not! Each year we had 'teaching practice' in London schools with some schools far from college. They were for periods of 4, 5 or 6 weeks and we were assessed.

Students organised college dances, gigs and folk nights. The annual Rag Week had fun events with money collected for charity culminating in Strawberry Fair on the lawns and a Ball in the Waldegrave Ballroom. There were also Leavers Balls and in 1969 a steel band played, very popular then.

On leaving I was given a testimonial by the Head of Art and a booklet with a report from my personal tutor outlining my interests, courses undertaken and assessment of teaching ability.

So, what excites me about the future of the University? I believe St Mary's will remain a small university enabling it to retain its close personal relationships. Standards will remain high in all areas and I will watch the league tables hoping 'Student Experience' and 'Teaching Quality' will continue to rank in the top 5 and 10 in London. The opening of the new Medical School next year is very exciting – I've watched the video walk-through and am envious and St Mary's is launching the first qualification in 'Muslim school leadership'. **I'm so proud to be an Alumni.**

2000 – 2012

THROUGH THE YEARS ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY

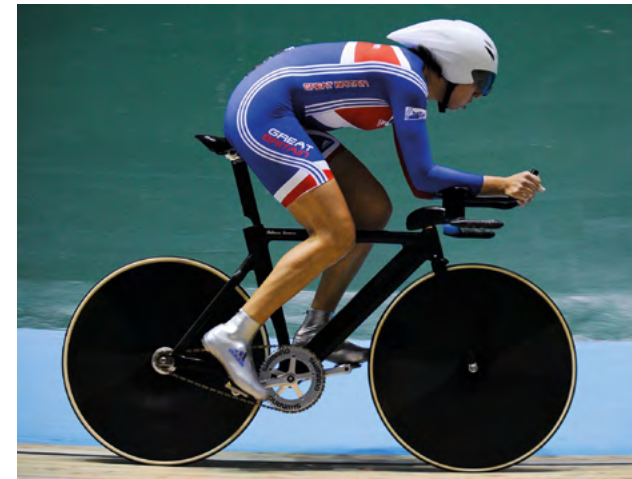
2004

Alumna Rebecca Romero takes home an Olympic Silver medal in the Quadruple Sculls rowing race at the Athens Olympic Games.



2007

Strawberry Hill House and adjoining grounds are leased by the University to the Strawberry Hill Trust, an independent building preservation trust.



2008

Alumna Rebecca Romero takes Gold in the Individual Pursuit at the Beijing Olympics. She is the first British Athlete ever to win Olympic medals in two different sports.

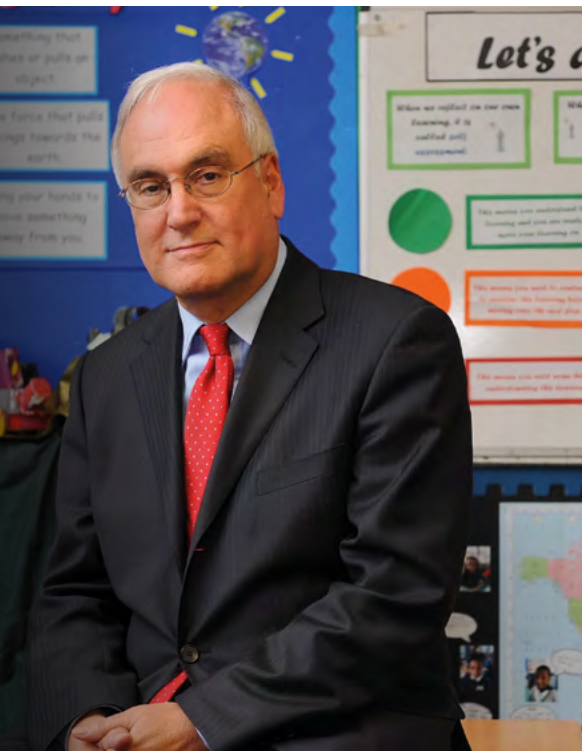
2011

The new Sports Centre is opened by Lord Sebastian Coe, which would go on to host ten nations for their pre-Games training camps at London 2012.



2000

Alumnus Sir Michael Wilshaw is knighted for his services to education.



2006

St Mary's is granted the power to award its own taught degrees by the Privy Council, becoming St Mary's University College.



2010

Pope Benedict XVI visits St Mary's as part of his state visit to the UK. He undertakes three events on campus including The Big Assembly on the athletics track, celebrating Mass in the Chapel, and an interfaith forum in the Waldegrave Drawing Room.



2012

18 athletes from St Mary's competed at London 2012 with Sir Mo Farah winning two Gold medals.

Alumna Adelle Tracey is chosen by Dame Kelly Holmes to be one of seven torchbearers and light the Olympic Cauldron at the London 2012 opening ceremony.

Spotlight

The world
around
St Mary's



2000

Millennium
celebrations.



2007

Introduction of
the iPhone.



2011

Prince William
marries
Catherine
Middleton



Memory Lane



1. Rugby Team 1970

(Back row) Billy Connolly, Tommy Bradley, Pete Ekers, Murtagh Forde, Keith Knight, Paul Kavanagh, Desi Lamph, Senan Doonhan, Mike Doonhan (with arms folded) Chris Lindsay, Murtagh Forde, Tom Bradley, Billy Connolly, John Brennan, Steve Beck, Kevin, (bottom row) Pat Griffin, Kevin Allwright, Andy Moran, Mick Lavelle.

2. 24-hour disco, 1969 Rag Week, Wild West theme

Jo Cummins (Boegner) (hand up to forehead). Katie Walker (in foreground with hair in plaits) Pat Gooch (foreground on left with back turned to camera).

Katie Walker (both hands joined together and uplifted). Bob Fenner (blonde guy near foreground dancing).

3. 1970, Cab in car park

Chris O Shea (far left), Ian Fox and Tony Grubb (lying down).

4. 1971 The College Bar

(Left to right) Mick Cullinane, Juri Kaczowski, Dave Wilmoth, Pete Griffin, Tim Cullen, David Lawrenson, Alan Hollis, Paul Warburton, Paul McNicholas, Jimmy Kerr.

5. 1969 Hostel 15, 1st term

Maria Trevithick, Alan Parish, Shelagh Lindsay, Anne Leavy, Matt Geoghegan (+1), Andy Bazan, John Ingram.

6. 1972 St Mary's

Gary Reece, Rose Webb and Tosh Braithwaite.

7. 1973 Sponsored Walk along the Thames

Phil Bevan, Bill Browne, Mick Grant, Marianne McPhillips and Louis Maingard.

8. 1975 shot

Paul Gillham, Sue Owen, James Drury and Mary O'Doherty.

9. 1974 Rag Week

Jean, Chris and Sue.

10. 1974 Rag Week, Float

11. SIM RAG 1971



12. 1974 Rag Mag Committee

Phil, Ramona, Helen, Halina and Donny.

14. 1960-61 Rugby Team

Names are left to right

(Back Row) Gerry Miller, Chas Galbraith, Terry Dillon, Gerry Holland.

(3rd Row) John Lodge, Pete Stafford, Brian Dickson, Harry Fearn, Satch Power, Mick Maybury, Fr. Mark Gibrale, Mick Spall.

(2nd Row) Tom Foster, Brian Dilly, Fr. Dunning, Pete Harvey, Brian Kelly.

(Front Row) Mick Ryan, Ron McCarten, Brian Condon, Charlie Rose.

15. 1980 Going Down Ball

Paul Moores, Dave Clinch, Clive Cooper, Dermot Kelly, Peter Michael Trant.

16. 1971 The College Bar

1983 Going Down Ball.

17. 1977 Trio Shot

Larry Bartel, Charlie Hyam, Dave Toneri.

18. 1969 Wild West Rag

Taken on the steps of Park House, a hall of residence for 40 girls in East Twickenham managed by nuns.

From Left: Sitting on wall wearing a black hat is Colin Wright (an excellent gymnast and trampolinist) Next to him sitting on wall with headband is Katie Walker. The girl kneeling on the front step is Sue Coward (now Sue Mills). Behind her in red top is Ray Evans. Next to her is a guy called Dave Sperry (or Spary) Lady front right dressed as saloon girl is Jo Cummins (Boegner)

19. 1987 Ball

Cliona, Kate Slack, Imogen Carpentier, Alex, Nicola Wilkinson

20. 1973 Saturday afternoon mooching

Left to Right: Alex Ionnou, Annie Meehan, Liz Kelly (RIP), a friend visiting Liz, Paula Halpin (RIP).

21. 1973 Going Down Ball

33 Waldegrave Road. Joe, Cecelia Longley, Steve Farrell, Dick Clay (RIP). Rose Webb with Graham.

22. 1972 St Mary's Garden

23. Louis Winthorpe III 1990's Snap

2014 – 2020

THROUGH THE YEARS ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY

2015

St Mary's celebrates its 165th anniversary marked with events including the official installation of its first Chancellor HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols at Westminster Cathedral.



Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, is appointed as a Distinguished Professor in Irish Studies.



2017

The athletics track is renamed the Sir Mo Farah track in recognition of his extensive athletics achievements.



The Exchange, a new community hub for art, music, comedy, and theatre, opens in Twickenham, operated and managed by St Mary's in partnership with Richmond Council.

2014

Prof Francis Campbell becomes St Mary's second Vice-Chancellor.



2016

St Mary's sees twenty-five athletes, alumni and students attend the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio.



With a total of six medals, St Mary's ranks as the 25th most successful 'nation' on the medal table.

Sir Mo Farah completes a historic double-double of Olympic Gold medals in the 5000m and 10000m.



2020

Prof Anthony McClaran becomes St Mary's third Vice-Chancellor.



Alumnus Joe Wicks launches his daily PE with Joe livestream on YouTube. The series raised £580k for charity and Joe was awarded an MBE. Joe became the first recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from St Mary's in 2022.

2019

St Mary's becomes home to Mater Ecclesiae College, a Pontifical institute awarding Ecclesiastical degrees that date back to 1614.



Spotlight

The world around St Mary's



2014

Scotland votes to remain part of the UK



2015

The Paris Climate Agreement is adopted by 196 countries



2020

Coronavirus, 'COVID-19' pandemic.





The F.H. Swear Club

AWay, way back in 1973, students made their way from around the UK and beyond, treading well worn paths, to embark on Teacher Training courses at St Mary's, Strawberry Hill. Little did we all know then, that in addition to the acquisition of teaching qualifications, many of us would form wonderful friendships, some of which would last a lifetime.

The 'Birds of a Feather' adage was never truer than for one such group who, having met and bonded in the Autumn of '73, formed a Club in the Spring of '74, loosely based on the dubious premise of catching each other out when not conforming to agreed rules and regulations, in particular the suppression of bad language. The F.H. Swear Club had been born!

Together we enjoyed many extra curricular activities, fun, games and typical student japes, with 'Dead Ants', The Generation Game Disco and the 23 Legged Pub Crawl immediately springing to mind. However it may be appropriate at this point to apologise to those who knew us back in the day (lecturers included!) and may have witnessed any unseemly behaviour, but some 50 years later, surprise, surprise, not much has changed. Leopard, spots and all that. Without realising it though, support for each other in good times and bad, cemented our friendships, strengthening bonds that would hold firm for our lives way beyond college and far deeper than contravening Swear Club rules.

Fortunately, and somewhat unsurprisingly, the friendship of our 'Band of Brothers' entered its next phase, namely, the reunions!

Following the completion of respective courses, we all went our separate ways in search of employment and the commencement of life outside the comfort and security of our college bubble.

As a number of the group remained in the Twickenham area, of the first three annual get togethers, two were in Strawberry Hill. The itinerary for these weekends followed a



Following the completion of respective courses, we all went our separate ways in search of employment and the commencement of life outside the comfort and security of our college bubble.



similar format, and suffice to say, involved the consumption of more alcohol than was advisable and also the rendition of songs, many of which were learned in the college bar from older students. More importantly however, it gave us the opportunity to catch up on the wellbeing and developments of everyone in the group and reminisce on our college exploits, (stories that predictably would be repeated and increasingly embellished in subsequent years!). As members of our group began to establish more permanent roots in areas further afield, our meetings began to be organised by individual members close to, or even at, our own homes. In Blackpool 1980, the decision was taken to meet annually, in early June, with subsequent meetings agreed one year in advance. We are proud to say that this has been upheld to date. Some 52 years later, we met in Liverpool and June 2026 will see us descend on Wales!

In addition to these annual events, most of which see in excess of 15 of us in attendance, other smaller gatherings take place regularly and the obligatory WhatsApp group keeps us in touch and up to date with each other's news and is used for ongoing competitions, generally of a sporting or musical nature, just to keep our competitive juices active! Weekly online meetings during and post Covid had many highlights, including a Murder Mystery Evening in full period costume.

For those who knew us and were aware of our aforementioned exploits at College, in particular the odd person who may have had doubts about our future prospects (again, lecturers included!), you may be interested

to know that within our ranks, we have several retired Headteachers all of 'outstanding' establishments, Senior School Leaders, Senior Social Workers, Lecturers, Business Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Published Authors, Playwrights, a Justice of The Peace and a couple of C.B.E's thrown in for good measure!

However, we would all acknowledge that without the experience of Simms and all it had to offer, our lives would not have been so rewarding and productive.

Finally, it would be very remiss not to mention those no longer with us, in particular three of our group, namely Tony Nickson, Jim O'Brien and Pete Kane (whose names we proudly display on our Club shirts), and also all those not in our Swear Club who shared in our fun and enriched our lives, who have also passed away. R.I.P. friends and thanks for the many wonderful memories.

So, there we have it. A group of ex-Simmarians finding, establishing, developing and maintaining special relationships. We know that this is not without parallel, indeed we have strong links with other groups of past College students who were as fortunate and blessed as us. In particular female students who were randomly placed together in College hostels and also a number of older students who, in our 1st Year, took us under their (dubious!) wings and helped make us realise the importance and truly unique nature of being a Simmarian.



2021 – 2025

THROUGH THE YEARS ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY



2021

Alumna Corrine Hall MBE wins Gold and sets a new World Record as pilot for Lora Fachie MBE in the Women's 3000m Individual Pursuit B at Tokyo 2020.

St Mary's receives Research Degree Awarding Powers from the Privy Council, completing its journey to be a full independent University.

2022

The University hosts 'A Day in Lourdes' as part of the UK tour of the Relics of St Bernadette.



2024

St Mary's Spartans become the first university team to play Wheelchair Rugby League.



St Mary's University, rated as Outstanding in 2011 for its teaching programmes, retains the status in 2019 and then again in 2024.

Honorary Bachelor of Education Degrees are awarded to alumni who had previously achieved Certificate of Education, in ceremonies in the University Chapel.



Spotlight

The world around St Mary's



• **2021**

Tokyo Olympics



• **2023**

OpenAI launches GPT-4



• **2025**

Women's Rugby World Cup



Alumnus Prof Jason Arday becomes one of the youngest people ever appointed to a Professorship at Cambridge University.



Sir Mo Farah becomes the first patron of the Bakhita Centre.

2023

Alumnus Tom Grennan achieves his third No 1 album with 'What Ifs & Maybes' and wins the "Best UK Act" award at the MTV Europe Music Awards.



2024



Fourteen athletes from St Mary's are selected to compete at the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Alumnus Aaron Grandidier-Nkanang wins a Gold Medal in Men's Rugby 7s for Team France. St Mary's athletes and alumni have now become an Olympic or Paralympic Champion at every Games since Beijing 2008.



2025

St Mary's announces the launch of the School of Medicine, which will be hosted in a new Centenary Building named to mark a hundred years of St Mary's in Strawberry Hill.





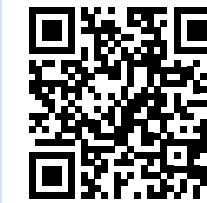
Reconnect and Stay Part of the St Mary's Alumni Community

We'd love you to stay connected with the St Mary's alumni family. Sign up to our monthly alumni newsletter [HERE](#). Join our Alumni Facebook and LinkedIn pages to catch up on news, memories, and updates from fellow alumni.

Alongside our main Facebook page, alumni have created dedicated groups for those who studied in the 60s/70s, 80s, 90s, 2000s, and 2010s.

Find your group from your time at St Mary's and stay close to the friends and moments that made those years unforgettable.

Facebook



LinkedIn



BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW

2026 Alumni Reunion

Following the success of the 2025 reunion, we're excited to announce the date for the next big gathering:

Saturday 29th August 2026

All year groups are warmly welcome!

Book your tickets [here](#)

Other Reunion Events in 2026

Friday 31st July

Marie Bennett Reunion (1976–1979)

Waldegrave Suite

Email Alumni@stmarys.ac.uk to register your interest.



Saturday 1st August

Bobbie Coughlan Reunion (1966–1969)

Celebrating 60 years since women first joined St Mary's University

Waldegrave Suite

Email Alumni@stmarys.ac.uk to register your interest.

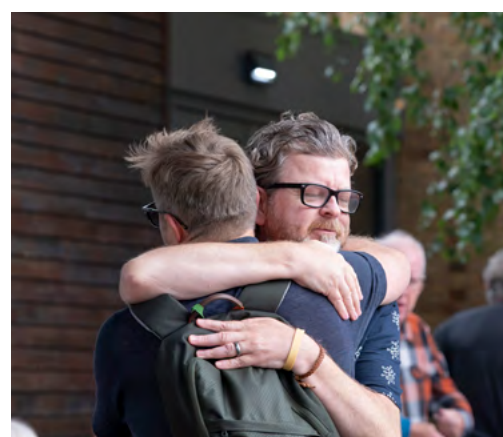
175

ANNIVERSARY ALUMNI REUNION

SATURDAY 30TH AUGUST

It was a joy to welcome alumni back to campus for a day filled with memories, laughter, and reconnection. From tours and tasty treats to dancing and shared stories, the reunion was a celebration of the St Mary's community and legacy.

Alongside the main event, a special 70s Reunion was held in the Waldegrave Suite, hosted by John Booth and Frank Sudlow – bringing together old friends for an evening of nostalgia and joy.



Careers & Employability

St Mary's Careers & Employability are proud to back up the phrase “Simmies for Life” with our commitment to you, providing free careers support for life.



Whether you are thinking about changing careers entirely, are considering a new qualification or further study, or just need a helpful bit of careers advice in your current endeavour, we are on hand to give you support. It doesn't matter whether you graduated one year ago or ten years ago, we'll provide you with the same excellent service that we offer current students.

Accessing this support is easy. Just register for a graduate account on CareerConnect, our one-stop shop for all things careers. Once registered, you'll be able to log in and book an appointment time that works for you. On this site, you can also search for job vacancies, register to attend any of our careers fairs, and access a wide variety of careers resources.

So why not sign-up today? Just email careers@stmarys.ac.uk to request a registration link.

We also offer alumni opportunities to advertise jobs, internships and placements at organisations they work for, and also opportunities to mentor current students. For more information, please email careers@stmarys.ac.uk.

2025 News Stories



HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols Celebrates Mass for St Mary's University's 175th Anniversary

Archbishop of Westminster and Chancellor of St Mary's, HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving for St Mary's University's 175th anniversary on 26th June, during which the University was presented with an Apostolic Blessing from His Holiness Pope Leo XIV.

[Read full story here](#)

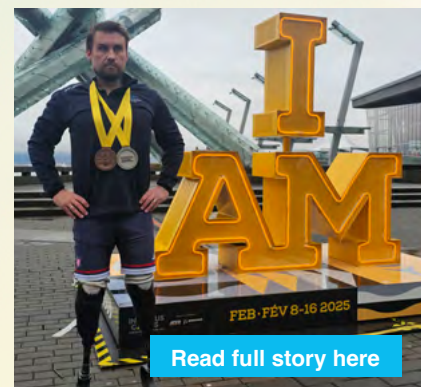
Christopher Bryde wins Silver & Bronze at Invictus Games

Current PhD student, author, and graduate of BA and MA Creative Writing Christopher Bryde has won a Silver and Bronze medal at the 2025 Invictus Games held in Whistler, Vancouver.

Christopher competed for the United States in four events during the Games, having served in the US Marine Corps from 2007 to 2012, before joining St Mary's in 2019.

In the Biathlon Men's Sit Ski event, Christopher won the Silver medal having missed first place by just nineteen seconds.

He then took home a Bronze medal in Wheelchair Rugby, with the US team beating Columbia, Ukraine, and Australia.



[Read full story here](#)



[Read full story here](#)

St Mary's Academics work with FIFA

Academics, are helping to shape research and education into women's football as guest editors for a special supplement of the journal, Sports Medicine, which explores the health, performance, and support systems surrounding female athletes. The supplement is supported by The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

Four Rugby World Cup Winning Red Roses Alumnae Awarded Honorary Doctorates by St Mary's

Four 2025 Rugby World Cup winners have been awarded Honorary Doctorates in a ceremony at St Mary's.

Alumnae Jess Breach, Abi Burton, Rosie Galligan, and Ellie Kildunne were awarded Honorary Doctorates in Sport in recognition of their significant contributions to English Rugby.

All four played key roles in this year's unbeaten Rugby World Cup and Six Nations campaigns, which has seen them become global ambassadors for women's sport and inspirations to future generations.



[Read full story here](#)



St Mary's Alumnae Crowned Rugby World Cup Champions

St Mary's University, London alumnae Ellie Kildunne, Jess Breach, Abi Burton and Rosie Galligan have won the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 with England's Red Roses.

[Read full story here](#)



St Mary's and the Royal Artillery Unite for Remembrance Rugby Event

St Mary's welcomed the Royal Artillery for a special double-header rugby event, featuring men's and women's teams and bringing together students, service members, and the wider community, to honour Remembrance through sport.

[Read full story here](#)

St Mary's Student Wins Prestigious Cricket Awards

Sport scholar, Isabella James has been named both Bowler of the Year and Women's Club Player of the Year by Kent County Cricket Club – one of the most successful women's sides in England and Wales.

Isabella, who only made her debut for Kent in April, claimed 22 wickets at an average of 25.54 in her first season. Her achievements put her alongside past winners including England captains Charlotte Edwards and Tammy Beaumont.



[Read full story here](#)



A Bold New Chapter for St Mary's

As St Mary's celebrates 175 years of educational excellence, we stand on the brink of an extraordinary new chapter: the launch of the St Mary's University School of Medicine.

St Mary's has proudly announced plans to open a new School of Medicine on our campus at Strawberry Hill. Following the demolition of R block, work has begun on the Centenary Building, which will be home to the School, and which is due to be completed next year. Driven by scientific excellence, human values and social purpose, the School is set to be one of the UK's first socially accountable medical schools. It will focus on preparing the next generation of doctors to address 21st century health and health system challenges, as well as inequalities locally and globally, nurturing a new generation of socially engaged doctors.

Student recruitment has begun and interest is strong. Our team has been active globally, attending major fairs in Dubai and promoting the school in Paris, Switzerland, Canada, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and India.

As Alumni, you can feel part of this defining moment for St Mary's. We are proud to be building something truly distinctive; a School of Medicine rooted in scientific excellence, core human values, and social purpose. You can find out more about the School of Medicine here <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/school-of-medicine>

If you would like to discuss supporting the School of Medicine please contact Caroline Glen, Director of Development; caroline.glen@stmarys.ac.uk.



[Read more](#)



Alumni Story

– Robert Noall

What year did you come to St Mary's University?

I joined St Mary's in 2011 to study Sports Coaching Science and graduated in 2014.

Why did you choose St Mary's and your degree, Sports Coaching Science?

St Mary's had a fantastic reputation for both sport and coaching, and I wanted a degree that combined theory with practical experience. At the time, I wasn't completely sure what I wanted to do in the future, but I knew that studying at St Mary's would give me plenty of hands-on opportunities to explore different paths and help me make the right long-term decision.

What was life like as a student at St Mary's when you studied there?

In my first year, I played hurling because I wanted to try something new, but after one season I returned to hockey, which I'd played since I was five years old. The hockey team competed at a very high level, and I learnt a lot. Coming from Cornwall, where sport is quite rural and there aren't many high-level teams, playing for the St Mary's first team was an incredible experience. It gave me access to great coaching, top competition, and the chance to meet players performing at the highest domestic level. That experience really started my journey toward becoming a professional coach.

After you graduated, where did life take you and how did you end up in the Netherlands?

After graduating, I began building my career in hockey coaching in the UK. I coached hockey in Richmond and worked as a school sports coach at several locations. In 2015, I moved to the Netherlands for what I thought would be a one-year opportunity to coach and train at HC Bloemendaal. Within a few months, I realised this was where I wanted to stay long term. Since then, I've continued to progress as a professional coach, working across youth, senior, and performance hockey.

I am currently Technical Director of a hockey club with more than 1,000 members, Head Coach of a girls' under-18 team competing at national level, and Assistant Coach of the women's first team at Klein Zwitserland in The Hague. Alongside that, I am also District Trainer-Coach for the girls' under-14 team, helping to develop talented players on a four-year pathway with the ambition of reaching the under-18 national team.

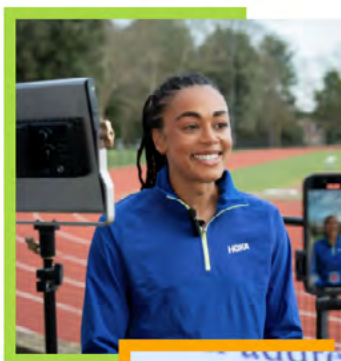
Do you still keep in contact with any of your old flatmates, teammates or classmates from your student days at St Mary's?

Yes, I still speak to some former students from time to time, but most of my lasting contacts from my time in London came through my placements and work. I think that's because many people on my course went into sports science, whereas I focused more on the performance coaching route.

Made at St Mary's

St Mary's has been inspiring excellence for over 175 years and has been the catalyst for success for thousands of former students. [Here](https://madeat.stmarys.ac.uk/) are just some of the stories of people who were Made at St Mary's...

<https://madeat.stmarys.ac.uk/>



From solicitors to social media superstars, educators to policy advisors, and even some of the world's best athletes, St Mary's alumni have gone on to great things

But studying at university is more than just your future career. It's the lifelong friends you make, the hobbies and interests you discover, and how you grow as a person. Find out how St Mary's impacted some of our alumni in their stories...

“

To have been a small part of St Mary's, in its 175 years of history, makes me feel really proud. It just means the world to me. ”

– Prof Jason Arday

[Read their stories](#)

