

St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London



The Simmarian

Edition 17
Summer 2018

Celebrating the trailblazing women of St Mary's

Christie Watson,
Senior Lecturer in Creative
and Professional Writing

Alumni

Lily Partridge, London Marathon's
fastest British woman

Lara Dearman, crime novelist

Emma Frost, Deputy Director at NATO

Students

Zoe Griffiths, doctoral candidate
researching effective school leadership

Nora Baltruweit, Barbarians' rugby player

Staff

Ruth Kelly, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and
Enterprise and former Education Secretary

Sue Whitham, Head of Student Services, awarded
British Empire medal for services to higher education

Jenny Willott, Director of Enterprise and Innovation,
awarded the OBE for services to political and public life

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The Exchange

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Christie Watson, Senior Lecturer in Creative and Professional Writing, published her book *The Language of Kindness* this year. The book explores the twenty years Christie spent working in nursing and describes a series of acts of care, compassion and kindness in the nursing profession. It spent three weeks in the *Sunday Times* Top Ten Bestseller list and been made BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week. *The Language of Kindness* has been translated into 19 different languages and is being adapted into a television series. Christie has previously won the Costa First Novel Award, and is soon to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of East Anglia.

Welcome



from Prof Francis Campbell, Vice-Chancellor

A very warm welcome to St Mary's alumni and this latest edition of the Simmarian. In St Mary's Vision 2025, we outlined our commitment to our wider community, in which our alumni play such a crucial role. As our valued ambassadors and representatives, the continuing support of our alumni is very important to us. The power of our alumni network was brought home to me recently as it involves one of our most exciting projects, the First Star Academy. At the beginning of July we celebrated the first anniversary of the First Star Academy at St Mary's when we were joined by alumni, volunteers, staff, students and benefactors to mark the occasion.

First Star was founded in Los Angeles in 2011 to improve the plight of children in care by giving them the same opportunities open to other children. For example, in the UK less than 6% of students from a care background go to university, compared with 40% in the broader student population. The four-year First Star programme works with children in their final years in secondary school to give them additional academic and life skills. It is a partnership between the charity and twelve public universities across the world. St Mary's is the latest university to join the network and the first to do so outside of the United States. First Star has achieved impressive results in the United States. Today, 99% of the children doing the programme complete high school and 91% go to university with the remaining entering employment.

The First Star Academy came to us through a former student, Martin Blomley. Martin happened to be at a conference and met the founder of First Star, Peter Samuelson, an ex-pat media entrepreneur based in Los Angeles. When Martin heard about First Star and all the wonderful things it was doing with children in care in the United States, he suggested that St Mary's could be an ideal partner for First Star in the UK. The rest is history. We have just finished the first year of the programme and have agreed to take a second cohort in the summer of 2019. It is a big undertaking by the University, but it is so transformative in the lives of the young people involved that it was an easy choice for us to make.

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of the magazine and I encourage you to stay in touch with us and let us know when you are coming back to visit.

With every best wish for the summer,

Francis Campbell



from Elinor Hatt, Alumni Relations Officer

I'm delighted to introduce this summer's edition of the Simmarian magazine. It's been a busy few months at St Mary's with a lot of change and growth. You can read about some of the key developments in the University News section on pages 3 and 4. Every year St Mary's produces another class of ambitious and diverse graduates, and in March I was particularly proud to see this year's postgraduates at their graduation ceremonies. Despite the snow and ice, more than 900 new alumni proudly received their degrees and celebrated their achievement with friends and family.

In this summer issue, we'll be celebrating some of the achievements of our writing alumni. Lara Dearman and Jemahl Evans tell us about their new novels on pages 8 and 9.

2018 marks two important centenaries: the end of the First World and the enfranchisement of women, a reminder that although we look to the future, there is so much to be learned from the past. With this in mind, we will be looking back at some memories of St Mary's – the experience of the first women to study here in the 50s, St Mary's rock and roll heritage in the 70s, the family connections of St Mary's and remembering some of the Simmarians we have lost this year.

The campus and the people have changed at St Mary's, but the Simmarian spirit of community, inclusion and support endures into 2018. I'd like to thank all the alumni who have volunteered to be career mentors or international ambassadors and invite anyone else who would like to get involved to drop me a line at alumni@stmarys.ac.uk.

Elinor Hatt

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Sir Vince Cable opens St Mary's new Doctoral College



MP for Twickenham and Liberal Democrat leader, Sir Vince Cable, officially opened the new Doctoral College at St Mary's in December.

At a ceremony hosted in the new Doctoral College at 99 Waldegrave Road, research students, guests and academics were able to network and visit the new facility. The day continued with a presentation competition with professors presenting their work and the presentation skills being judged by the PhD students.

Speeches were given by Sir Vince, who is also a visiting professor at the University, Rt Hon Ruth Kelly, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, and Professor Philip Booth, St Mary's Director of Research and Public Engagement.

All research degree students at St Mary's are part of the Doctoral College which provides study facilities for all research degree students. The Doctoral College will become a core part of the research student experience at St Mary's, giving students the opportunity to collaborate and share best practice across disciplines.

Did you know?

There's a Simmarian Facebook page for sharing photos and memories of St Mary's. Search 'Simms Group' to 'like' and join the conversation.



The Exchange: St Mary's arts centre in Twickenham

Stuart Hobday, St Mary's alumnus and Creative Director of the Exchange, introduces the new venture.

Having studied at St Mary's in the 1980s, I'm thrilled to be back here as Creative Director of the Exchange. The Exchange is a modern new-build venue with state of the art facilities, a 300-seat theatre, five studio rooms, large conservatory area and café-bar. It is situated opposite Twickenham station and is already providing a welcome cultural addition to the area since it opened last October.

It's important that local people see The Exchange as their space. As well as a rich programme of music, theatre, talks and family shows, we are providing new spaces for people in the borough. The five studios and the theatre are available for hire by community groups, organisations, businesses and individuals for everything from classes, courses and meetings to conferences and parties. Young people's performing arts classes, after-school clubs and adult well-being classes are amongst the activities already happening at the Exchange.

The Exchange features a lively programme of arts and science events, including film screenings, theatre productions and talks. During the launch season we hosted Germaine Greer, historian David Starkey and physicist Helen Czerski, a Q&A with artist Jeremy Deller, and author, broadcaster and journalist Gary Younge, as well as live music. In February, TV comedian Jason Manford brought his first ever regular London Comedy Club to the venue.

This new home for the arts in Twickenham is the fruit of a new partnership between the borough of Richmond, the site owners, and St Mary's University, who will operate the venue. The partnership is already bringing immeasurable benefit to both the local community and St Mary's students.

We would love to hear from any alumni who feel they could help keep this exciting new venture sustainable for St Mary's in the future. If you would like to support with sponsorship, funding or events for the Exchange, please contact exchangetwickenham@stmarys.ac.uk.

The Exchange is at 75 London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE. For full details of the programme, go to www.exchangetwickenham.co.uk.





Interfaith initiatives at St Mary's

Cardinal Vincent Nichols and two leading Muslim clerics came together to launch a new Muslim Certificate in Religious Studies at the university. On the site of a notable address delivered by Pope Benedict on faith relations in 2010, the religious leaders opened a new interfaith prayer room and launched the certificate as the newest product of their long-standing dialogue.

The new certificate aims to support the religious literacy of teachers and enhance the contribution that religion can make to the formation of British values. It is primarily aimed at those teaching religious education in Muslim schools and supports a cohesive approach to teaching in line with the National Curriculum.

Imams Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra and Sayed Razawi have been in discussions to develop the concept, and the University is now working in consultation with academics from universities across the UK to develop the programme in more detail.

Speaking about the launch, the Cardinal, who is also Chancellor of the University, said: "I am delighted to welcome our distinguished guests to St Mary's and pleased that they can join us in celebrating our continued commitment to promoting interfaith dialogue in the UK and ensuring that our university provides the most welcoming environment for students of all faiths."

Sayed Razawi said, "We are extremely happy that St Mary's has taken up our call. We are walking shoulder to shoulder, working together. This certificate is a partnership, a first, and truly authentic as it is ratified by four senior imams. When we talk about integration this is a wonderful way of doing this through education."



St Mary's hosts Mo Farah's Sports Personality of the Year win

Alumnus Sir Mo Farah celebrated winning the annual BBC Sports Personality of the Year award from a live feed hosted at the University.

Sir Mo, who won a Gold and Silver Medal in the London 2017 World Championships, and after whom the university's athletics track is named, won the title in a public vote, featuring eleven other leading British athletes.

Mo received over 83,000 votes to win and shared his delight at winning the award, telling the stadium, "It is pretty amazing...I didn't imagine I was ever going to win this but anything can happen. If you work hard you can achieve your dreams."

Since the award win, Mo went on to become the fastest ever British marathon runner, finishing third in the London Marathon in April this year.

Alumni spotlight

Alun Morris

1986-89

I grew up in a small seaside town in West Wales called Cardigan, located in the beautiful and remote coastal area of Cardigan Bay. Cardigan is a place renowned both for rugby, and for being the first place in Wales to hold the poetry and singing festival called the 'Eisteddfod' in 1176.

I spent much of my childhood running through fields and on the long beaches. This led to my playing football and rugby at county level and tennis at national level. While studying for my A levels, I looked for a university specialising in sport. After visiting the beautiful setting of St Mary's, I was overjoyed to be accepted to follow a course majoring in Human Movement Studies, with a minor in Theology.

My years at St Mary's were some of the best of my life. My degree helped me pursue a career in sport and leisure management in London and further afield. St Mary's provided a support framework of friends and expert advice from tutors which proved invaluable in later life, both in my career and in facing the challenges of life itself.

After further management courses, I built my way up to become General Manager of a large golf and country club in Essex. This club was built from scratch on the grounds of a potato field and its success resulted in another three such clubs being built of which I became responsible for oversight. In 1999, I became one of the senior managers of the largest country club operator in the world.

In 2003, I had a career change and joined NATO at the Brussels HQ. There I was responsible for expanding and modernising the facilities for NATO's staff and families. I also held the position of Commercial Director for NATO. Recently I was part of a special team facilitating high level meetings at a summit in Wales, where heads of state discussed NATO's future and objectives.

During my time in this diplomatic and multi-national environment, I've not only met many heads of state, but have worked hard to raise money for charities in the Congo, and assisted the Afghan Appeal Fund in building three schools in Afghanistan, as well as supported other international charities. In total, I've helped raise nearly one million euros for these good causes. I received awards such as The Secretary General Award for Excellence on two occasions and I sit on various boards as well.

I've kept my passion for sport and this year I was part of the team which won the over 45 Belgian Tennis Championship. I'm very proud now to be one of St Mary's international ambassadors and to continue my link with a place of huge personal nostalgia, and world-renowned sporting excellence. I've already encouraged one young gifted athlete to apply to St Mary's. I hope that I can make use of my network to encourage more international students to follow in our footsteps as Simmarians to discover a world of expertise, fun and belonging.



Alun Morris talks about his sporting and diplomatic career, and how he hopes to encourage international students to apply to St Mary's.

Career support for alumni

As a Simmarian, you can use and continue to benefit from continued support and guidance from St Mary's University Careers Service for as long as you need.

St Mary's University Careers Service offer support, impartial advice and guidance on finding the right career for you and how to get where you want to be. They can help with career planning, application advice, careers resources, interview preparation and much more. They offer appointments in person as well as remote support by email, telephone and Skype.

They also advertise graduate jobs on an online portal CareerConnect at www.careers.stmarys.ac.uk.

To contact St Mary's Careers Service

email careers@stmarys.ac.uk or call +44 (0)20 8240 4055.

You can also follow the Careers Service on:



@StMarys_Careers



@stmaryscareers

Are you a recent graduate?



The Graduate Outcomes Survey is a national survey capturing information about the activities and perspectives of graduates 15 months after they finish their studies.

All recent graduates who completed a course will be asked to take part in the survey, in order to help current and future students gain an insight into career destinations and development. The responses collected will also help St Mary's to evaluate and promote its courses.

The survey is also of national significance as it allows policy makers, charities, journalists, researchers and others to understand the higher education sector and the state of the graduate labour market.

For further information on the Graduate Outcomes Survey, please visit www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk.

Simmarian family affair

Ben Holdsworth's (1970-73) family connection to St Mary's spans over three generations

My father, Alan Holdsworth, attended St Mary's in the days when it was an all-male teacher training college. He married Pat Uden who trained at Roehampton and they had seven children. Of those children, I started as a Simmarian in 1970 (BEd) and was followed by my elder brother, Peter (also BEd), and a younger brother, Mark (PGCE).

I met my wife, Cheryl (née Bellanti) at Simms and another younger brother's wife, Evelyn (née Sparrow) was a student there. Cheryl and I have four children, three of whom were students at St Mary's – Joanna and Timmy as full time students, and Ellie who studied for a SCITT in Southampton, which was in a Catholic Primary School under the auspices of St Mary's.

Amy-Louise Taylor 2012-14



Why I trained to be a teacher at St Mary's

Completing an undergraduate degree in English and Media Arts at St Mary's University gave me some of the best years of my life. I met lifelong friends and developed my knowledge and skills in my area of study. With help from expert lecturers and a lot of hard work, I graduated with a First Class degree. It made sense to come back for another year!

I knew a career in teaching was for me because I wanted to help others to love learning as much as I do. For me, the combination of university-based sessions and school placements offered the best chance to develop my teaching skills both independently and while being supported by a team of experienced practitioners. It was also great to share the experience with everyone else taking the course, knowing that we could learn together and share practice with each other. School placements gave me the chance to learn from experienced teachers, while also moulding my own teaching style. The right balance of observation and teaching meant I could build up my confidence and knowledge to ensure I was giving my students the best education I could. Don't get me wrong – I made mistakes – but I had a whole team of people around me to help me improve. The placements really throw you into the deep end (in my opinion, the best way to learn is on your feet) but I always knew my lectures and seminars had given me the tools to handle what lay ahead.

Being a St Mary's student made me feel proud and I was confident that I was being given the best route into teaching. Whatever school I visited, when I mentioned the name 'St Mary's' it was greeted with the same response; the University is held in very high regard within the teaching profession. Before I had even finished the PGCE course I was offered a job teaching at the Infant school where I was completing my final placement.

Every one of my lecturers at St Mary's was passionate about teaching. They inspired me to be a better teacher and to never stop building on my own skills. My lecturers were always there if I needed a chat; when I got my job offer at the end of my PGCE, my maths lecturer was the first person I called!

The St Mary's PGCE course includes Masters modules and now I have graduated I am able to carry those credits on to complete a Masters in Education at St Mary's. This is an opportunity I am looking forward to undertaking as I move towards the next step in my educational career.



In Memoriam

We are sorry to announce that, since the last edition of the Simmarian, the following alumni have sadly died.

Peter Blake, 1948-50
Charles Dorrان, 1945-47
Bernard Dunn, 1947-50
Robert Estall, 1947-49
James Euston, 1959-1961
David Finn, 1974-77
Michael Flynn, 1953-55
Simon Geatrell, 1969-72
Tony Haynes, 1952-54
Dermot Hicks, 1973-76
John Hill, 1942-44
Kevin Madden, 1943-45
Paul Martin, 1964-67
Paul Riley, 1985-88
Martin Roddy, 1973-76
John Roberts, 1969-72
Joseph Rodgers, 1949-51
Patrick Smyth, 1969-70
Ann Watts, 1969-72

November Remembrance

On Sunday 4th November there will be a Mass offered for deceased Simmarians at 11am in the University Chapel, which will be followed by tea and coffee. The Remembrance Sunday Mass will take place on Sunday 11th November.

All are welcome.

Lara Dearman

2015-16



Photo © Jane Goodrich photography

My debut novel, *The Devil's Claw*, the first in a series featuring journalist Jennifer Dorey and Detective Chief Inspector Michael Gilbert, was published by Trapeze (an imprint of Orion) in November 2017. It has also been published in France, the US and the Czech Republic and will be released in Germany in September this year. My second book, *Dark Sky Island*, will be published in the UK in November 2018, with other territories to follow.



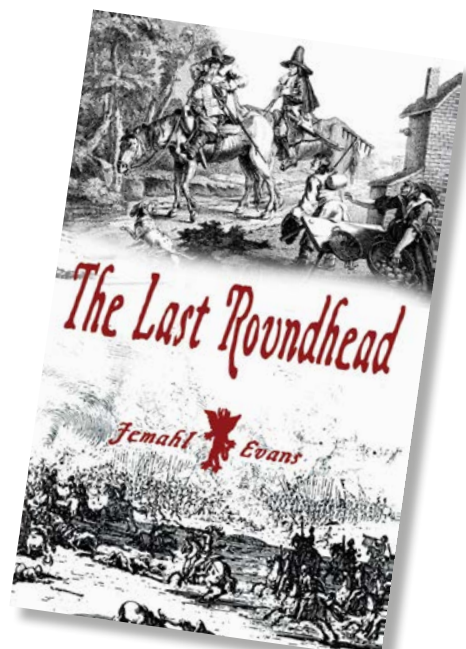
After years spent as a stay-at-home mum to my three children, I was incredibly apprehensive about returning to university, particularly to study a subject that was a world away from my undergraduate degree in International Relations and my subsequent career in finance. But St Mary's proved to be the perfect place to try something new. Class sizes were small and the tutors were available and approachable. The curriculum was challenging, but working my way through the course reading list, which included books by several authors I had never read, reminded me how powerful great literature could be. Meanwhile, the writing workshops gave me the push I needed to produce my own work.

Week after week, I and my fellow students produced thousands of words, either to share with each other or to submit as coursework, all of them part of the novels we were working on. I have never before written so prodigiously. I suspect I never will again. The pressure of having to deliver regularly, and to a deadline, combined with the support and encouragement provided by the tutors and my classmates, meant that I completed *The Devil's Claw* over the course of the MA – a little less than a year. Writing my second book proved a much more difficult task. Working alone, with only one deadline a whole year away, led to a predictable mad rush in the final weeks to deliver. I also missed the feedback from my peers – the ability to share ideas, to talk to people who are going through the same anxieties about their work, to iron out plot weaknesses and examine character flaws in a workshop environment was invaluable, and for me, possibly the greatest strength of the St Mary's Creative Writing MA.

I was delighted to come back to St Mary's in December of 2017 to launch *The Devil's Claw*. I can't think of a better way to have introduced the book than in the very place where I started to write it. I will be forever grateful to the course tutors and my peers, who helped me to realise my dream of becoming a published author. I have been asked many times whether or not I could have written a novel without the MA. I think the answer is yes, I probably could have. But would I have done it? I'm not so sure.

Jemahl Evans

1991-94



Jemahl Evans has been receiving critical acclaim for his series of books set during and after the English Civil War. His first novel, *The Last Roundhead*, came out in August 2015 and was nominated by Netgalley as one of the UK's top ten books that month, and received great reviews in *The Times* and from the Historical Novel Society. The follow up, *This Deceitful Light*, was published in September 2017 and is described by the Oliver Cromwell Society as 'a real page turner' with language that 'fizzes with ribaldry and bawdiness'. Jemahl is a member of the Historical Writers Association, and his books have been compared to the parodies by Robert Nye, Rose Tremain, and the *Flashman* series.

I left St Mary's in 1994 and did loads of different temping jobs (from cleaning a pub to parking control) before starting my masters in medieval history at UWE in Bristol. After that I worked for IBM doing end user training – a soul-destroying but very well paid career. I jacked that in in 2000, went travelling for a couple of years and retrained as a History teacher. It's not as well paid but certainly more rewarding. I was Head of Year 7 at Heathland School in Hounslow but came home to Wales in 2010 after my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I started writing during the summer holidays in 2013 between hospital visits. Holland House Books, who publish the series, are normally known for literary fiction rather than historical comedy but have been brilliantly supportive. One of their authors saw my writing on a website and recommended me, so I have been incredibly lucky. Nowadays, I spend most of my time writing – although I haven't quite given up the day job.

St Mary's features quite highly in my influences on the books. The hero lives on Cross Deep, is neighbours with Alexander Pope, and the original owner and house at Strawberry Hill (pre-Horace Walpole) are in the second book. I spent a summer working in the old house as a student with the caretakers, so had some semi-anachronistic memories to draw on when writing. Although I majored in History, my English minor has certainly helped with the literary stuff. I did a satire course with Derek Alsop and Renaissance poetry with Jean Gooding, who were superb lecturers, so I raid my old books and notes for ideas constantly. I sent both Jean and Derek an email to thank them when the first book came out.

I'm currently working on the next book in the series, which will hopefully be out at some point next year. Some short stories came out as an ebook last Christmas linked to the main books, so there should be a follow up to those this year as well. In between, I am still teaching to keep the wolf from the door between royalty cheques.

The first women of St Mary's

Paula Mathews

1957-58



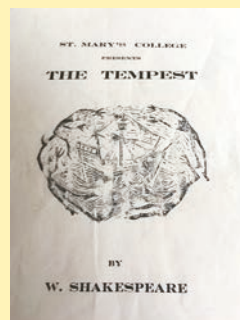
It was 1957 – a time of great development and change in education. All-age establishments were being phased out in favour of dedicated primary and secondary schools. Already a qualified teacher (Digby Stuart, 1954), I was teaching in Coventry when I was offered the opportunity to take a supplementary teaching course to develop my potential to work in the senior sector. The local authority would second me, on full salary, to a course of the governing body's choice. In return I would accept any post they offered me at the end of the year.

At this time, St Mary's was a teacher training college for men, run by the Vincentian Fathers. It opened its doors to women on Sunday evenings, as I knew from my time at Digby, for well-supervised and hugely enjoyable country dances. Otherwise, it was an exclusively male environment.

In 1957, St Mary's, responding to the needs of the time, was offering two supplementary courses for qualified teachers: one was Maths, the other Religious Education. The courses, approved by the Ministry of Education, were open to both men and women. The qualifications were to be examined and certificated by the University of London and carried one salary incremental point. Change was afoot and it was very carefully planned.

It was clearly stated in the course information that "women members of the Course will be accommodated in approved lodgings adjacent to the College. Men will live in the College." It was also only "in special circumstances (that) the Ministry of Education is prepared to consider applications from graduates". They admitted teachers rather than academics and the male/female boundaries were clearly defined.

One Sunday in September 1957 I arrived, with four other women, at Strawberry Hill. We were received into our very own common room by Matron, who was usually in charge of the sick-bay. The table was beautifully laid for our "welcome dinner": just six places – the men had their party in the refectory! But Father Cronin, the Principal, popped along to welcome us – with three bottles of wine under his arm... things were getting better.



We were a disparate bunch sitting round that table: all qualified teachers, but with little else in common. We were all from different parts of the country, from different training colleges and with different "special subjects".

It was quite a laborious meal until, quite by accident, something happened... the six women sitting politely round the table became five. One of our number, fortified by Prinny's wine, had slipped gently from

her chair and was asleep under the table! Matron was somewhat startled, but the rest of us found it hilariously funny; it was a bonding session to beat all others.

The first Simmarian women had arrived

We were a little nervous when we joined our teaching groups, wondering how easily we would be absorbed into these male dominated classes. Jo Dilger and I were startled to find ourselves in a large RE group. However, it soon became apparent that many of the men were athletes and rugby players keen to continue their studies when it also allowed them to represent the College on the sports field. They were team players and I think they found our arrival a bit of a non-event. We weren't going to be much good to them on the rugby field, but as long as we supported the right side and didn't take life too seriously, they seemed happy to have us aboard.

Joined by a female day student called Ruth, a mature PE teacher, Eileen Barber, Crys Kimpton and Sheila Doyle took their places in an equally large Maths class. Compared to the RE group, Crys remembers them as "a bit dull, really", but we quickly settled in to the routine of five mornings of lectures with the men and study and recreational time in our common room.

Of course, it didn't stay like that. We had a warm and comfortable common room. We weren't allowed in the men's part of the College, but they were allowed in ours. A lot of socialising took place.

We lodged with landladies. Crys, Eileen and I shared accommodation with Mrs Gammon and her Siamese cat, Ming-hu-Jezabel, at 18 Wellesley Crescent, Strawberry Hill.

The men were happy to have our support on the touchline, proudly wearing our blue and white scarves. We never pushed boundaries which the College had set, but we did join in where we could. We were particularly welcome in the Dramatic Society where we performed a Noel Coward comedy called *Hands Across the Sea*.

The main production of the year was *The Tempest* and we all became very involved with the costumes and scenery and I, who always dabbled in drama but was not normally leading lady material, was delighted to be cast as Miranda.

It was during 1957 that the walls in the drawing room of the house were relined with pink silk and the first social function to be held there was our 'Going Down Ball' for which the women organised the food and the men provided the labour.

And the supplementary courses? Well, they were life changing. Our subject knowledge was enhanced and we had extra qualifications. We had worked and socialised in a totally relaxed but disciplined community, which provided the best management training I ever received. Coventry schools sent one teacher out and received seven back: Crys Kimpton, Tony Giblin, Bryan Mathews, Ian Kilpatrick, Terry Teesdale and Joe Cox all came to work in the city.

And, of course, there's an epilogue to this story: Crys Kimpton married Tony Giblin, Sheila Doyle married Phil Roebuck, and Paula Kidger married Bryan Mathews.

St Mary's musical heritage

David Lawrenson

1970-73



Pink Floyd performing in the 1970s

I came to St Mary's in September 1970 from Lancashire and had always been into music. One of the attractions of coming to Simms was the opportunity to see live music played there.



Colleges and universities were the places bands played during that era and I was not disappointed. Within months I was sitting on the floor of the theatre listening to Pink Floyd for the princely sum of £1.

Over the next three years we were privileged to see some fine acts but one or two really stick in the memory.

On Saturday 13th May 1972 I went to Wembley to watch my home town club, St Helen's, beat Leeds in the Rugby League Challenge Cup final. I was there with a bunch of friends and after a great day out we made our way back to college, somewhat the worse for wear.

The band, Argent, were playing in the theatre but we didn't have tickets. We ended up standing by one of the fire exits because it was a warm night and the door was open but there was a burly rugby player on security duty. We hung around for a few minutes and then I think he took pity on us and let us in. It proved a great end to a wonderful day.

Fast forward seven years, and I'm a journalist working on a music magazine. Among our contributors were drummer, Bob Henrit, and bass player, Jim Rodford, who both played in Argent. One day I mentioned to Bob that I'd seen an Argent gig back in 1972. He said, "Where?" I replied, "St Mary's College in Strawberry Hill." He thought for a minute and said, "Teacher training college near Twickenham!" He remembered.

Another band I remember were Stone The Crows fronted by Scottish singer, Maggie Bell. Their guitarist, Les Harvey, died in May 1972, having been electrocuted on stage. They recruited former Thunderclap Newman guitarist, Jimmy McCulloch, who later went on to play with Paul McCartney in Wings, to replace him and their first gig with him was at St Mary's. The theatre was packed and the gig was reviewed in the following week's Melody Maker.

Every Thursday I used to walk down to the newsagent's by Strawberry Hill station to buy my copy and would read it from cover to cover. If I had studied the books on my course with as much intensity I would have gained distinctions!

I read about an up-and-coming band called Osibisa, who were made up of African and West Indian musicians and they were playing at the Winning Post pub down on the 316. I went down to see them with fellow students, Paul Warburton and Alan Hollis. They were fantastic. When we came back to college we told the social secretary, Mick Greenwood, who subsequently booked them. They described their music as "criss-cross rhythms that explode with happiness", and it really was that night in the theatre.

In 2017, Osibisa were playing at a club in London so Paul, Mick, Alan and I went down to see them. It was like being back at college!



Where are you now?

Spotlight on 1960s alumni

► Brian Dickson

1960-63

I was on the first of the three year Teacher Training courses from 1960-1963. I specialised in Spanish and Fine Arts and was in the first XV for the three years – a lone non-PE voice! Directly after graduating from Simms, I went to Chile on a British Council contract and taught in a bilingual international school. I followed Chile with posts in similar international schools in Lebanon, the Bahamas, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, Botswana, the UK and the USA. My last fifteen years were as a head of school and I retired from a very rewarding teaching career in 2006. I still do school inspections for the International Baccalaureate in the Americas and am based in a golfer's paradise in Florida – The Villages. I'd love to receive news from any contemporaries.

► Dennis O'Leary

1961-64

Retired from teaching full time in 2002 and from part time teaching in 2012, working mostly in Suffolk. Now spending most time with Bury Theatre Workshop of which I am a co-founder and for whom I have enjoyed playing Albert Doolittle, Prospero, Toby Belch, Capulet, Leonato, Jacques, and this year, Shylock – so I'm being kept busy in my dotage!

► Kevin Clayton

1962-65

I worked one year as an English assistant at a college in France – Romarantin, Loire et Cher. I taught for twenty years at Cardinal Wiseman Greenford and eighteen years at Northolt High School. I retired in 2006 and moved to Dundee where I help in Monifieth History Society as webmaster.

► John Newman

1963-66

I have been retired on the west coast of Ireland for the past eleven years. I did not take up teaching but went into industry. On retirement I was CEO (UK Divisional Director) of some plastic manufacturing companies in the UK.

► Peter Murphy

1964-67

I attended St Mary's College from 1964 to 1967 after which I emigrated to Canada and taught in North Western Ontario for one year, and four and a half years in North Bay. I then took a position in January

1972 with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (an affiliate of the Ontario Teachers' Federation) which is the union to which the teachers in the Province's Catholic schools belong. The bulk of my career centred on collective bargaining and the processing of grievances. I was honoured with a Fellowship from the Ontario Teachers' Federation in 1996 and retired in 1999 when the opportunity arose to take an early retirement.

► Walter Poulter

1964-67

Retired senior police officer and non-executive director for the NHS. Now a school governor, and active grandpa, dad and husband.

► Brian Rafferty

1964-67

Still involved in education – chair of the BOG for Our Lady and St Mochua's Primary School, Derrymoore. Also do some work for CCMS and am a member of the Armagh Diocesan Education Committee.

► John Hillel

1966-69

I attended St Mary's between 1966 and 69 majoring in Geography and Sociology. After teaching in primary schools for a few years I left to form The Pub Theatre Company with a small group of like-minded alternative theatre enthusiasts. We performed new English plays in the reception rooms in pubs and at various other non-theatre venues. I then went to Lancaster University to take a new coursework Masters in English Theatre. In 1976 I emigrated to Australia where I taught in a secondary school in Brisbane and then moved to Melbourne (where I now live) to study film and TV and teach in the Drama department at Melbourne State College. I moved to a position at The Institute of Catholic Education in 1981 where I spent the next fifteen years with three as head of the Creative Arts Department. I left in 1996 to take up a position as head of production at the Victorian College of the Arts. After that I taught Media at ACU, overseeing its development as a separate department and formed a company to produce videos for the education market. I retired from teaching at the end of 2016. These days I volunteer at a local charity shop, sit on the Board of Governance and on various committees at my local Progressive Synagogue, produce videos for charities and community organisations, organise a Repair Café, play tennis, cook and do other bits of house-husbanding (my wife still works very full time).

Send your news and updates to alumni@stmarys.ac.uk

► **Keith Nicholls**

1966-69

Independent sports consultant on facility design and management – worked with Birmingham, Nottingham, Hertfordshire and Winchester Universities among others. Vice Chair of Volleyball England.

► **Brian Fiddler**

1967-70

Taught at Priestly College Warrington as Head of Travel and Tourism. Also taught flying - assisted over 100 students to become pilots. Also assisted many students to Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award – received the presidential award for services to disabled swimming and lifesaving in Warrington. Now a travel writer and author.

► **Paul Baker**

1968-71

The class of 1968 (to 1971), will be 50 years old in September! I read English and Philosophy and played for as many sports teams as would have me. I managed to live in the Old House and Wiseman & Graham too. I married Mary Lennon (Biology and Maths) who lived in 33 – you know the road! Great sports teams and some great characters; Torch; Paul Dowsey-Magog who had an infinite capacity for ale and Pat Coleman, travelling companion for many teams, who could down a pint in 1.5 secs. And Lesley Kelly's laugh, to name but a few! Like most of you I guess, retired! Ended my career as Deputy Head at St Aidan's, Sunderland, a large 11-18 comprehensive.

► **Tony Bispham**

1968-71

I am infinitely grateful to the staff of St Mary's for enabling a lifetime career in teaching. I studied Mathematics and Physics between 1968 and 1971 and secured a post teaching those subjects at St Joseph's RC High School, Newport. With the advent of Computing I completed a degree and spent my career building a department of Computing and Informatics and further expanding it to facilitate IT as a base across the curriculum. After forty four years of service at the same school I retired with a catalogue of happy memories initiated at St Mary's.

► **Ormond Fannon**

1968-71

I am retired and living in Cascais, Portugal. Previous responsibilities:

1. Head of Art, Design and Technology, then Business Manager and Executive Director for Resource Development, St Julian's School, Portugal.

2. Deputy Chief Examiner for International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme – Visual Arts.

3. Accreditation Visit Leader for CIS – Council of International Schools.

4. Board of Directors (member) at Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes – Portugal.

5. Practising artist – www.ormondfannon.net.

► **Ann Baughan**

1969-72

I taught in various schools in Coventry prior to moving to the Highlands of Scotland where I continued to teach until my retirement in 2010. I moved in 2016 to East Kilbride where I continue to pursue my theatrical interests.

► **Michael Collins**

1969-73

I retired in 2006 after a very fulfilling career at St Aidan's School in Sunderland. Our school badge doesn't have the armorial embellishments of St Mary's, but the words are significant: 'God is our light', and with that earnest prayer to Our Lady, 'Show yourself to be a mother', they form the 'bookends' of my life in education (so far). I now work part-time for the international Catholic charity, Aid To The Church In Need. Not wanting to waste time in retirement, I got married in 2006 to a wonderful, inspiring lady and we now have three beautiful children, who attend St Mary's School (where else). So, Eliot was right: 'In my end is my beginning'. I loved my four years at St Mary's.

► **Veronica Hutchinson**

1969-72

Married with two children, the first one getting married early spring 2018. Taught at RC secondary schools in Leeds and Bradford for thirty years. The last school before my retirement was Mount St Mary's High School in Leeds. Still doing the odd bit of supply teaching.

Strawberry Hill Overseas and Community Concern

As we near the end of our 46th year, SHOCC looks back on another fantastic period of helping the disadvantaged in our local area and around the world. We have continued to support projects in Ghana, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and are delighted with the response to the Molly's Smile campaign. Here are a few of the projects we have supported.

Kisaki school, Tanzania

Following a number of generous donations received, including £10,000 from SHOCC, Kisaki school has been transformed.

Santa Maria Hospice in Guatemala gets reliable, clean water at last

SHOCC provided the £3,350 to dig a 60 feet deep well for the hospice. In June 2017, SHOCC Trustee Kevin Cook visited the hospice for the official inauguration.

A new project for St Jude Thaddeus School, Mto Wa Mbu, Tanzania

This is one of SHOCC's newest projects. SHOCC arranged for scouts to complete the construction of the first two classrooms and SHOCC has agreed to help raise the £50,000 required for the five more.

Molly's Smile

In our last newsletter we wrote about providing a memorial for Molly Burdett, a St Mary's undergraduate who sadly died in July 2015. We are delighted to report that the Molly's Smile team, led by Mrs Burdett, exceeded their ambitious target of £21,000 and the Assistive Technology Suite was officially opened at the university.

Read more about ongoing and future SHOCC projects at www.stmarys.ac.uk/strawberry-hill-overseas-community-concern.

Spotlight on postgraduate study at St Mary's



Patsy Gilbert, Academic Director for Drama, explains how St Mary's provides aspiring actors with practical training combined with an academic focus.

University or drama school? Which is best? It's a choice that students on the acting, technical theatre and directing courses of St Mary's University don't need to make.

All our students receive a bespoke education that will include the best drama school training within a university context.

Simply put, we're about teaching the whole student. We train the body, we train the person and we want to work with students who will go on to be theatremakers who will change what theatre is.

Central to the ethos of the course is the conviction that theatre has a social purpose. That's where the head as well as the heart comes in. It's not just about the learning-by-rote that can be found in some drama schools; it's also about training the mind to question – as any good university would do. How actors respond to things intellectually is just as important as how they react emotionally.

It's all designed to produce actors able to walk the walk as well as talk the talk; to leave us at the end of their studies able to say: "I feel creative, I feel ready, I feel able to make my own work and I have something to say."

St Mary's Drama offers the following postgraduate courses:

- MA Theatre Directing
- MA London Theatre
- MA Playwriting

50th reunion

31st August-2nd September



Were you at Simms 1968-1971?

A reunion is planned for the weekend of 31st August-2nd September... our 50th anniversary! Anyone else who studied from 1967 through to 1971 is very welcome to join us.

There will be single en suite rooms available to book in St Mary's and, at the moment, the format is loosely: an informal get-together on the Friday night, a picnic (bring your own) on the Principal's Lawn on Saturday afternoon, a buffet meal in The Waldegrave Ballroom Saturday evening, and drinks in the bar afterwards. Mass followed by coffee will be arranged for Sunday morning.

A more detailed format will follow but if you'd like to book, please visit the website at estore.stmarys.ac.uk/product-catalogue/development or email alumni@stmarys.ac.uk for more information.

Hope to see you there!

Gwen and Torchy
Gwen Hickey and David Simpson

International Ambassadors

Alumni Ambassadors are friendly points of contact for Simmarians travelling abroad. If you are living outside the UK and would like to be an international alumni ambassador, get in touch at alumni@stmarys.ac.uk.

We are particularly looking for ambassadors in Asia and Africa and would love to hear from alumni in these regions.

Alumni mentoring

Mentoring is incredibly rewarding and makes a huge difference to students and new graduates starting out on a new career. If you are looking for mentoring from one of our alumni, or are interested in becoming a career mentor, please read and complete the form enclosed with this magazine and return it to us or email alumni@stmarys.ac.uk.

Help shape our future with a legacy gift to St Mary's

We are often told by Simmarians how much they love St Mary's and remember their time here with great fondness. You can help future generations enjoy a similar experience as we grow and develop our services, courses and research by considering a gift to the University in your Will.

For a confidential discussion on any aspect of leaving a gift to St Mary's, contact Julian Smyth, Director of Development, at julian.smyth@stmarys.ac.uk or on 020 8240 4165.

You can find out more about making a bequest, including different types of legacy and sample wording, on our website at www.stmarys.ac.uk/legacy.

Keep in touch

Do we have up to date contact details for you?

Update your address and send us your news by completing the online form at www.stmarys.ac.uk/alumni or email alumni@stmarys.ac.uk. You can also read our updated alumni privacy statement on our website.