

Easter Term round-up – St Mary's College stories and events

Inter-MCR Formal – 2nd May – With cherry blossom trees in full bloom, the Middle Common Room invited guests from across the University to the annual Harry Potter inter-MCR formal. The biggest MCR event of the calendar held in the neoclassical 19th-century setting that is the picturesque St Mary's College. Guests were initially greeted by Hedwig the owl on the terrace ahead of a welcoming drinks reception at platform 9 3/4. Following this, guests found their stained name cards in the Dining Hall amongst all four houses with 'bewitched' chocolate frogs at their seats. After a brief interjection by Quirrell during the three course meal, guests made their way down to the three broomsticks bar for a drink, photos in the photobooth, and chocolate coated fruit skewers. Here they were met by a series of actors including Snape and Myrtle. Overall this occasion was an evening to celebrate before the real slog of revision began and a way of joining together the MCR body of the University; creating the friendly and welcoming atmosphere around St Mary's which is known by all.



Experience of Beekeeping Day – 4th May / 1st June / 2nd June – If you've ever thought about beekeeping or wondered about bees and honey, joining the St Mary's beekeeping team for an unforgettable beekeeping experience day was the perfect opportunity. St Mary's Beekeeping Society opened its doors for the first time to hold beekeeping experience days, open to students and members of the local Durham community. Participants enjoyed lectures, cosmetic making, wild bee home building and practical beekeeping as part of the day organised by members of the beekeeping society. The day was made possible from the generous support of the St Mary's College Development Fund who fully funded the day. A complimentary lunch and refreshments were provided as well as all the protective clothing and materials. It was a special opportunity for all.

One exciting part of the day was the chance to get up close to the bees and open the hives. Small groups opened a hive to check the general health of the bees with an experienced beekeeper. There were many drones and worker bees to be seen and one lucky group even spotted the queen! In the afternoon wild bee homes were constructed using natural materials such as bamboo and drilled logs. These were designed to attract leaf cutter and mason bees. Participants also had a go at making cosmetics using beeswax (beeswax lip balm and hand lotion bars).



JCR President's Guest Night Formal – 9th May – This was our time as a College to take pride in all that has been achieved by the JCR and the College with the support of Ellie Ng, our bright, energetic and cheerful JCR President! She was the host, and she had an array of messages to convey in thanks to all groups of people. From the staff to clubs and societies, to all those that chose to get deeply involved within the JCR, taking up positions and helping out on all the preparation and activities that go on throughout the year. It was a direct way to show how grateful she was to all of us, even those that work more in the background to keep the College ticking, and all deserved the recognition they received. Without all these brilliant students, the College would not be the place it is today!



End of Exam Formal – 7th June – The time for our students to relax after endless weeks of revision, staring at books in the library. This Formal was a celebration of the exam period coming to an end and in the knowledge that everyone had tried their best! It was the beginning of many celebrations to follow. Whether this was their first year of exams completed to celebrate an important milestone and to look forward to more academic learning and research to come; or whether this was their last exam period ever – with it being an important term to determine grades and their future steps after University (entering the ‘real world’). Everyone had a joyful evening and once more appreciated a bit of freedom.



Tri-48 – 13th-15th June – 18 athletes from Mary's tackled 3 sports for 48 consecutive hours. This year, Tri48 was raising money for Grace House, a charity based in the North East that supports children with disabilities. The first 12 hours focused on rowing at Mary's, followed by 12 hours of cycling (Mary's basement) and they finally finished off with 24 hours of running at Maiden Castle and Whinney Hill in some harsh weather! Many donations were made (over a £1,000 was raised) and a huge amount of cheer and support was brought by Mary's students to help them complete this exhausting task.



Midsummer Ball – 18th June – Months in the preparation. The Midsummer Ball finally arrived in style! A large marquee was set up on the SCR lawn that housed the evening dinner and was a spectacle, with decorations all around College with the theme of Peter Pan. The accompanying dodgems and twister fairground rides, and the ample supply of food trailers were excellent additions to the entertainment.

Not only that, but many students managed to celebrate throughout the whole night, making memories that will never be forgotten, partying till the morning and getting a group photo on Observatory Hill.

Certainly this was an evening to remember and celebrate after the stress of exams, though for postgraduates dissertations still loomed and was a much needed break away from study routines.



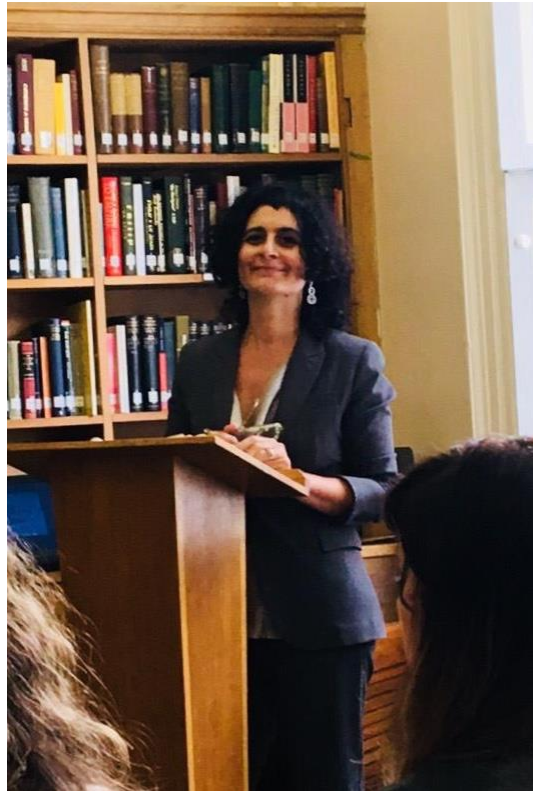
Intervention Initiative and Durham Award – 19th June – Students who completed the Intervention Initiative – a 3 day intensive course in active bystander training with particular focus on understanding sexual violence and domestic abuse – and those who successfully completed the Durham Award were thanked and congratulated by the Acting Principal, Catherine Paine, and Senior Student Support Officer, Dave Robson, in the SCR with coffee and cakes.



Visiting Fellows

Tiziana de Rogatis – St Mary’s St Mary’s Fellow ((June 2019)

Tiziana co-organised a two-day international conference on ‘Elena Ferrante in a Global Context’. The so-called Neapolitan Novels interweaves culture with some of the emergent topics and issues of globalisation as her female protagonists negotiate the tensions between local identity and national and transnational belonging. The debate resulted in a productive and engaging opportunity to exchange ideas and advance the literature in this field.



Tatiana Churikova - St Mary's Visiting Women's Fellow (April-June 2019)

Tatiana is a Senior Research Scientist in the Laboratory of Petrology, Geochemistry and Mineralogy at the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology in Russia and has been working with colleagues in the Department of Earth Sciences this term.

Valery Katsuba - St Mary's College Visiting Research Fellow (May-June 2019)

Valery was a Resident Research Fellow at St Mary's College in partnership with the Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art in Bishop Auckland. He began writing articles and stories about art and was soon introduced into artistic circles, and in 1999 began to dedicate himself to art using photography and writing as a means for expressing his artistic ideas. His first exhibition took place in the House of Photography in Moscow in 2000. He later exhibited in Madrid (Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando), Mexico City (Museo Nacional de San Carlos), the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, etc. Currently his works are in the collections of the National Center of Art and Culture Georges Pompidou (Paris), Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Madrid), Art Center 2 de Mayo (Madrid), the State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg) and others. Valery undertook a project at Mary's and took many photographs of the College, College life, societies, sports and idyllic shoots of students and staff, which he hopes to exhibit with the support of the Zurbarán Centre.

Alumni Careers Event – 22nd June – Many thanks to all alumni that attended this event to help inspire our current students and help inform them of what career path to choose, how to best apply skills and interview techniques to gain the upper hand in the recruitment process. A wide range of job sectors were present and this relaxed environment ensured the students were comfortable to ask questions and learn as much information as possible.

Mary's Day – 23rd June – Another huge highlight for this terms student calendar! The theme was travelling back to the 1980's and a magic day followed with surrounding entertainment. This year included inflatable obstacle courses, bouncy castles, slides, face painting, photo booths and many food stalls. The main acts of musical entertainment included Basement Jazz and Chronotic Brass which are formed from current Durham students and the headline act was a Queen tribute band which rocked with Mary's as the crowds danced away the night/

Warm weather graced St Mary's SCR lawn and food and drinks helped replenish the energy levels to keep a lively and buzzing atmosphere for the whole day.



Musical – 25th/26th June – The final drama production of this academic year, Foot of the Hill Theatre intended to go out on a 'high' after such enthusiastic performances from the past two terms and they certainly achieved their purpose. This vividly creative take on the well-known 'High School Musical' was a fast-paced performance of high-energy songs that got the whole audience engaged and laughing with the stage in the centre of the Dining Hall and lines taped down to create an atmospheric feel of a basketball court.

Finalists Formal – 27th June – A kind gift from the College to all finalists, this event was a celebration of all their successes. Finalists invited friends and family and this also was a perfect opportunity for everyone to acknowledge how far they had come and all the support they had received in the process. It was also an opportunity to mark the departure of Professor Simon Hackett as Principal of the College and to thank him for all he has done for the College over the last 8 years. All-in-all, it was a lovely evening with a lovely meal served by Mary's catering staff and a fitting end to a chapter of University life, before they diverge on differing paths of jobs, further studying and travelling.



Graduation Drinks/Dinners – 1st July-5th July – The second round of graduating students this academic year, after the January Winter Congregation. Drinks receptions were held and two Formal Dinners were organised for the graduating students and their families to join in the celebrations of the College.



St Mary's College Society Reunion Weekend – 30th August-2nd September – With this event being advertised from the early months of the year, the Society has great plans to mark the centenary year of St Mary's receiving its College status. St Mary's became a College in 1919, having previously been the 'Women's Hostel' and since then has become a home and place of learning for many generations of students. The 2019-20 academic year will see a number of events to mark this important milestone and the Society intend to kick-off the celebrations at this summer Reunion.

They are hoping for the largest number of alumni to attend as ever before across the weekend and especially for the Grand Reunion Full Hall Formal Dinner on the Saturday evening. This event is a chance to experience the life of College and the atmosphere of Formals, reminiscing of past times and memories as a student, whilst getting the opportunity of staying in College rooms and walking the corridors of years past once more.

Trips to the Oriental Museum, Botanic Garden, and visits to the old homes of St Mary's in the Chorister School and Abbey House are planned, along with a Chapel Service on the Saturday. We hope many of our alumni can attend.