

Termly Report – Michaelmas 2019 – St Mary’s College stories and events

SMCS Reunion 30th August – 1st September – This alumni event was the College Centenary celebration of achieving College Status. It was the biggest attendance to this event to date! Excellent after dinner entertainment in the form of a folk band allowed people to get up and jig, no matter their age, and for a very special evening have no worries and reminisce about their early adult years as a student, with most remembering Mary’s as an only women’s College. It was also the first appearance of the new Principal, Professor Maggi Dawn, who flew and arrived from America the same day! The event ran smoothly with many former principles and staff returning for the celebration to mark the significance of the event and the principles all could see their portraits that loom over the Dining Hall, which gave them such pride, never having left behind their love for the College. Trips to the Botanical Gardens, Oriental Museum, the old Chorister School and sites that Mary’s previously was located were organised throughout the weekend where they could rekindle old friendships and they all had the option of staying over in the College rooms once again.



Alumni Civil Service Career Talk 21st October – Alice Jollans and Hannah Gould returned to Mary’s to disseminate all their knowledge of the Civil Service Fast Stream (of which they are both part of and are currently working) to all year groups of Mary’s students. This was a great chance to get a special connection and a real insight into the application processes and what they do on a day to day business. The prospects of the job and their reasons for following this path varied, and they were willing to answer all questions that flooded their way as people knew how respected and competitive this career is. The turnout was excellent, and the talk was most informative with lots of little do’s and don’ts for the tests required.

Joint MCR/SCR Formal Dinner 22nd October – This was a very formal setting and the perfect time for mature students and postgraduates to meet the members of staff and other SCR members. The MCR were sat dispersed around High Table. It was an event that gave all the students a feeling of acceptance and care to be a part of the College, even if some had just joined this year. It was a great chance for them to network with our SCR members who have a range of roles and jobs, and they all

mingled over food and gin. Our affiliation with Teikyo College shone through as SCR members from Teikyo attended and hosted the pre-dinner drinks.



Chinese outreach programme (2nd year running) – With this programme being such a success last year ran by Durham County Council in collaboration with St Mary's, we wanted to take this opportunity again. As both our students that went to the primary schools to teach, and the pupils that got involved, varying in age from 5-11 years enjoyed this project so much last year and had a very positive impact, we couldn't miss the opportunity. This coming year is the year of the Rat and a special celebration event will take place at the Town Hall on the 1st February, where as part of the day the classes taught by our students will perform something they have learned and show the fruition of all the hard work of our students and the pupils. Be it a Chinese poem, song, alphabet or to make something physical that is related to the Chinese culture. This year we collaborated with Ustinov College so we had a mixture of students in each group working together to obtain the same goals.



Hallowe'en Dinner 29th October – This was one of the first big JCR events of the year and for our new Principal – Prof. Maggi Dawn to be head of. It was a chance for all returners to come back into College and to meet the new 1st years. It was a fancy dress frenzy with a huge variety of costumes as Hallowe'en means different things to different people. Some were clearly more up for dressing and makeup than others. As always with any formal, the kitchen and catering staff were excellent, efficient and always respected as doing an amazing job for the College throughout the year. The JCR President Nuriya Shoro kicked off the Informal with a spooky recital of 'The Witches' from Macbeth. At the end of the meal, Maggi Dawn and one of our Social Chairs, Frances Barona, handed out awards for the Best Individual Costume, Best Couple Costume and Best Group Costume.

- Best dressed couple: The pair of grapes, in which their costume was made entirely of balloons.
- Best dressed group: The Scooby Doo gang.
- Best dressed individual: The shaman, who collected his award in true shaman style.
- Other creative costumes included the Winnie the Pooh gang, Medusa and the Durham colleges.

Michaelmas Dinner 8th November – As well as our alumni society celebrating this, our students didn't want to pass the opportunity either, and decided to make the centenary of gaining College status the Michaelmas Dinner theme too. The JCR Vice President, Helen Paton, invited back a few alumni as guest speakers to talk about their days of a women only college – Joan Kenworthy, Elizabeth Fisher and Helen Niven. Their speeches were far reaching to the students and they all listened with much intent. Their stories opened the eyes of some students to think about the past history of this College, and all were proud of what they have achieved, will achieve and how they are now contributing to the College. In full celebration style a tiered cake was baked that celebrated the 100 years!



Foot of the Hill Theatre Company 'The Importance of Being Ernest' 17th & 18th November - & - Pantomime 8th & 9th December – 'Alice in Durhamland' – These plays were fun for all and a huge amount of effort goes in to these productions by our students. The costumes and outfits worn were smart and polished to the outrageous and hilarious in 'Durhamland'. As always they were a talented group and clearly hours and hours of work in rehearsals paid off. Though often what makes it more enjoyable and fun are the slip of the tongue moments and haze over their lines as they are put in the spotlight, and the audience were not disappointed! Well done to all involved, it is amazing work you all do.

The MCR also put on an in-house production of 'Alice in Durhamland the Rise of Skywalker'. It was a barrel of laughs with many star wars references and even some banjo playing and surprise singing acts of high standard! A nice farewell before they all broke up for the Christmas break.



MCR Research Seminar 21st November – This is a chance for all Post-graduate students to share and explain their research ideas for dissertations or final year projects. The environment was a healthy mix of friendly discussion and positive criticism. Giving everyone a chance to answer questions and get challenged to then adjust their methodology or gain illuminating ideas from another fellow MCR member. The process works like speed dating where each person gets 5 minutes to explain their topic and discuss before they move on to the next table and a new group appears to tell the same information, but get totally different ideas and feedback. The incentive of pizza also helped the evening!



Winter Ball 22nd November – The Winter Ball was a huge hit as always, being the first Ball of the year and the first ever for our new students. The hallway was decorated by the committee and anyone artsy that wanted to help out, and it looked exquisite. There was extra entertainment features and perks of the night like the chocolate fountain and a photo booth to capture the evening's delights and memories. The topical theme of the Ball for our winter festivities was the Great Frost of London.



Christmas Formal 5th & 10th December – Both events were well attended and full. And full is the best word to describe all the students that attended as they ate a Christmas dinner prepared by Mary's catering team. It was a fun and happy event with songs and plenty of laughs echoing throughout the Dining Hall. The sense of Christmas spirit and the thoughts of many of the students going home to see their family for the first time this term created a cheerful atmosphere. The second formal even finished

with a live lounge with many talented performances by our musically gifted students. The 12 days of Christmas was sang during the meal with lyrics twisted to fit Mary's. Each table had a number and would sing and stand up each time their number was part of the song.



Carol Service 11th December – It took place in the Cathedral this year after our annual celebration of mulled wine, minced pies and carols sang by our choir in Kenworthy Hall. The candle-lit procession that followed was a marvellous sight as a continual glow flowed to the cathedral which was then followed by the awe of the great edifice. The Service promptly followed, with readings from staff and students from the Bible to mark the occasion and the choir sang throughout filling the structure with beautiful voices and notes of joy. This year's extra edition of brass instruments fell upon the congregation, and all were in praise of what a wonderful atmosphere it created. The perfect way to see-off the final week of term!

