



St Mary's College  
Durham University

# St Mary's College Donor Report



## Donations make all the difference

**Support from our donors allows St Mary's College to support its students in a much wider variety of ways. One of our key aims is to ensure that financial circumstances should not be a barrier to engaging with, and benefitting from, St Mary's unique community. Like many of our alumni, I was a student when tuition was free, and my family background meant that I had a grant to support my living expenses. The higher education landscape is no longer like that.**

Many of the funds given so generously to the College therefore go to supporting students from lower income households. The more we can support this group, the more diverse a group of students we can attract to college, improving the educational experience for all. We are able to award scholarships to support some students throughout their degree course. To encourage students to come to Mary's, we offer catering bursaries to reduce the cost of catering to something closer to the cost of self-catering. We are able to provide every student from the lowest income household strata with support to engage in college activity by covering the cost of JCR levies, freshers week costs and an academic gown. This is all because our donors appreciate the value of having a diverse community and understand the costs associated with getting the best possible wider student experience at Mary's.

Other areas of funding target the student experience for all. Donation funding this year supported the creation of a new studio for dance, yoga and theatre rehearsals. This additional asset will transform activity in these areas. Other funding through the 'student opportunities fund' enables students from any background to bid for support to undertake an enrichment activity.

We are grateful to everyone who supports Mary's. The funding they provide makes a direct difference to the lives of our students. This report illustrates only some of the activities we have delivered this year, which we hope demonstrates the value extracted from every act of generosity. Thank you to every one of our donors.

**Professor Adrian Simpson**  
St Mary's College Principal





## Permanently endowed full scholarships

Over the years, we've had many alumni generously fund scholarships. In many cases, these fund one student, supporting them with additional funds across their degree course. In some cases, we are able to permanently endow a scholarship, so that we can support new students year after year. For example, our Durham Inspired Russell-Fairbairn scholarship has funded students regularly since 2016.

Thanks to some particularly generous acts of kindness, we have added five new permanent, endowed full scholarships. The Doris and Stanley Williams Scholarship, named after her parents, comes from the legacy of Hilary Williams and will fund one scholarship at a time. The Margaret Bloomfield Scholarships will fund up to four scholarships at a time. Indeed, the legacy from Ms Bloomfield has also allowed us to continue our catering bursaries, giving £1000 towards catering costs for students from lower income households.

*"It is an enormous honour to be the first recipient of the Margaret Bloomfield Scholarship at St Mary's. Like many others, I fell in love with Mary's on the open day - it is definitely the prettiest and most friendly college! Thanks to the Scholarship, I can fully embrace all that Durham has to offer. Academically, I am furthering my love of Classics and especially Latin and Classical Greek. Outside of lectures, I am enjoying a host of activities including rowing, sailing, technical theatre and darts. I know I will have very many happy memories of my time at St Mary's".*

**Rose Stacy,  
Margaret Bloomfield Scholar**

## Postgraduate Scholarships

We currently have two scholarships for St Mary's students who undertake a postgraduate degree at Durham.

### The Beatrice Hollingsworth Scholarship

This scholarship is for a St Mary's student who has graduated with a degree in a subject in the science faculty and embarks on a postgraduate degree in a science subject.

### Thoits Scholarship

Mary Thoits was a donor based in Canada who began to give funds to us in 2017. With the funds she donated, we have created the Thoits Scholarship for a St Mary's student undertaking a higher degree outside of a science-based subject

In 2025, Ned Sanderson was awarded the Beatrice Hollingsworth Scholarship and Bee Wilkes the Thoits Scholarship.

*"The scholarship has allowed me to continue pursuing my interests through a unique research masters, which would have otherwise not been possible due to financial constraints. I am hoping that my research on risk mapping pollution sources using novel eDNA data will be of wider benefit to practitioners and policy makers. Additionally, I have the opportunity to remain involved with college societies and to try new activities".*

*Ned Sanderson  
Beatrice Hollingsworth Scholar*

## Our Russell-Fairbairn DU Inspired Scholar

Hetty Lort-Phillips was awarded the Russell-Fairbairn Durham inspired scholarship in the academic year 2024/25, which was founded by two St Mary's alumni and their families.

*"The day I received a scholarship from St Mary's College, among excitement, relief and joy, the one feeling that dominated was gratitude. Many students like me come from difficult financial backgrounds, and coming to university can be so daunting with so much to take part in and enjoy. I am engaging in the vibrant life here at St Mary's, enjoying everything that is offered, from societies and clubs to balls and formals and everything in between. I am extremely grateful to St Mary's for giving me this significant opportunity that will allow me to freely take part in college life".*



**Caption: Hetty Lort-Phillips**



# Mary Thoits Scholarship

Bee Wilkes, pictured, was appointed as the Mary Thoits Scholar in 2025.

*"I am honoured to have received this scholarship from Mary's. I have loved being part of the community here during my undergraduate degree, and grateful for the opportunity to pursue my passions in my Creative Writing MA. Postgraduate study is an expensive endeavour, especially combined with the cost-of-living in Durham, and I will be able to use this money toward costs such as rent and books. This scholarship has made my dream of studying Creative Writing accessible, and for that I am very grateful".*

A Durham degree can open many doors, but in the ever-changing and competitive job market, an undergraduate degree will only go so far. With this in mind, we are working hard to raise funds to help more students and encourage them to remain at Durham to study a postgraduate course. During our first college telephone campaign, we began our fundraising efforts. Typically, a scholarship is worth £5,000. We remain ambitious and would like to offer more undergraduate to postgraduate students the opportunity to receive financial support to encourage them to continue their studies here at Durham University while remaining part of the St Mary's community.





## St Mary's Bursaries

These are available to St Mary's students to help with academic or extracurricular activities - such as sports, societies and travel.

## 125th Anniversary Bursaries

To celebrate St Mary's 125th anniversary in 2024/25, we were delighted to award nine incoming students from lower-income households a bursary to the value of £1,000, which will go towards college catering fees.



*"Growing up in the face of adversity, university seemed out of place for me. I longed to receive quality education whilst also being able to experience uni life to the fullest. The 125th anniversary bursary allowed me to flourish as a young adult. University is a transformational part of adulthood, which has been made easier for me with the bursary"*

Amelyn Wood, above.

## Future Bursaries

The 125th Anniversary Bursaries will continue thanks to the generosity of Margaret Bloomfield.

## Student Opportunities Fund

Due to the generosity of our donors, at the beginning of each term at St Mary's College, we advertise the Student Opportunities Fund, which is made up of various donations and legacies we've received over the years. Some of the funds that make up the Student Opportunities Fund include:

Cicely Alice Campbell Travel Bursary  
Irene Calvert Travel Bursary  
Margaret Fergusson Scholarship  
Mary Holdsworth Travel Scholarship  
Valerie Clark Travel Bursary

In 2024, we awarded 32 students over £6,500, which was used for various activities, internships support, sports equipment and extracurricular courses for personal development. Funds can be used for travel; in fact, some of our students have visited Canada, Hong Kong and Sweden, to name a few destinations.



Anna Gallagher-Gill, pictured above, was awarded funds from the Irene Calvert Travel Bursary to fund an expedition to Mexico.

*"I carried out a project mapping seagrasses on a lagoon, which is important for fighting against climate change. The trip was valuable for my own learning and a good experience for my future."*

## Funding an internship

Diana Policane, pictured below with her students, received funds from a St Mary's alumni donor for a three month internship to teach in Kuala Lumpur over the summer of 2025.

Speaking of her time in Kuala Lumpur, Diana said:

*"I taught full-time across five different refugee schools, reaching more than 100 students, many of whom had fled Myanmar due to national conflict and political instability. I taught a mixture of subjects: English, Maths, Science, Geography and Enrichment."*

*I quickly fell in love with Malaysia's vibrant culture, diverse cuisine and stunning architecture. My first week was full of exploring, tasting new foods and capturing endless photos."*

*I was deeply moved when I learned about the struggles these kids have faced at such a young age. Despite so many obstacles, these kids were always happy, willing to learn, and the most respectful individuals I have ever met. The strength of these students and their strong minds has been truly inspirational."*

*I am beyond thankful to St Mary's College and Durham Volunteering, as well as the YTL Foundation, for giving me this incredible opportunity".*





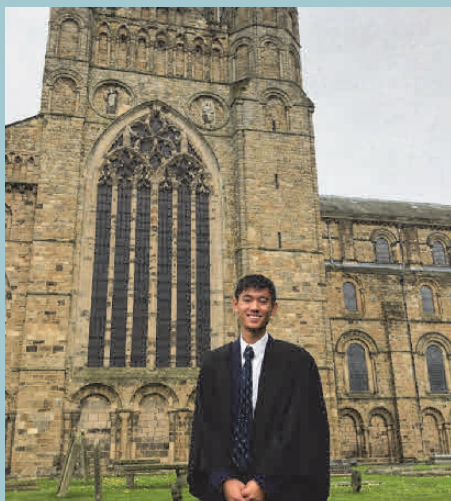
## Student stories



**Ruth Williams received funds to help cover fees during her year abroad.**

"Studying at the University of Calgary allowed me to take modules that I would not have the opportunity to study in Durham, for example 'The Canadian Arctic' and 'Mountain Regions of Western Canada'.

I had the experience to learn about different cultures and to develop personal skills required in a workplace setting. I developed important personal skills such as adapting to living in a new country and a new academic system. I have also developed initiative skills by joining the University Parks Canada Society to continue growing my passion for geography beyond my degree, by completing trail reports in the national parks and attending ranger-led talks about the local environment".



**Nathan Chen received funds for a language course.**

"Cantonese has been a language that I previously have found difficult to access without formal tutoring or learning, so having this chance to study under guidance from a teacher alongside others has been a massive opportunity. I hope that this will help me communicate with my non-English speaking grandparents.

I am extremely grateful for this bursary and the opportunity it provides. It has helped with what my hopes are for the future and my language learning".



**Andrea Chloe Borbely-Popovici used her award to perform in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.**

"The award allowed me to participate in the Edinburgh Fringe, a once-in-a-lifetime experience that has had a profound impact on my personal and musical development. Performing six consecutive nights with my group allowed me to refine my stage presence, grow as a vocalist, and learn how to perform under the unique pressures of a high-profile festival environment.

Attending the festival greatly enriched my university experience, giving me confidence and strengthening my sense of belonging at Durham. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity and I hope to return to the Fringe in the future".

## Student stories

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**Duncan Newing received a contribution to fund a volunteering opportunity in Zambia.**

"I had the privilege of working in Zambia to help grow and enhance grassroots football development. I worked with local coaches to build and expand the football infrastructure by developing community hubs and establishing a sustainable framework for ongoing football programs. This role allowed me to make a meaningful impact by promoting youth engagement, improving football skills, and supporting personal development within the local communities".



**Maddi Tetley required funds to help with the additional costs of dissertation fieldwork for 6 weeks.**

"The award was used to pay for fieldwork supplies and waterproof clothing. I was commuting an hour each way every day between Durham and the North Pennines. Bus services are infrequent, and there was no accommodation near where I needed to be. This meant staying in Durham was the most appropriate option, but I incurred a lot of expenditure on fuel.

Receiving this bursary helped to reduce some of the financial pressure of this trip and allowed me to dedicate my time to my fieldwork instead of trying to get additional sources of funds. I'm extremely grateful for the bursary and all the help it provided".



**Leo Boddy asked for funds to purchase essentials for his Latin Ballroom dancing.**

"My competition shoes contributed to the immaculate presentation required to do well at competitions, and their high quality was also required for the extensive flexibility and wear that was required of them. I placed 5th in Advanced Ballroom and 3rd in Intermediate Latin at Nationals. A big thank you to St Mary's for supporting me and my dancing".



## Donor profiles

Ann Fazakerley (née Walker), studied French with a German subsidiary at Durham University from 1976 to 1980. While at St Mary's, Ann thrived in the supportive and collegiate atmosphere and made many friends.

During her time at St Mary's, Ann experienced financial hardship and thought that she would have to leave the University, but Miss Joan Kenworthy, the Principal at the time, arranged for Ann to receive a philanthropic gift that allowed her to continue her studies and graduate.

After a career in international business, working in marketing and fundraising, Ann is now delighted to be able to give back to St Mary's College through the gift of a scholarship for a modern languages student.

The Fazakerley Scholarship is £5,000 a year for a maximum of four years and was first awarded in 2025/26. Ann is also a member of the Durham University Campaign board.



*"I am delighted to repay the kindness I received from donors to St Mary's when I was a student, by funding a scholarship for a modern languages student."*  
Ann Fazakerley

Vivien Karam (née Crossley) studied French with a German subsidiary at Durham University from 1964 to 1968. While at St Mary's, Vivien felt privileged that she had no financial worries and was able to spend her free time singing and playing the oboe in various university groups, unlike many students today who have to undertake paid work.

After playing with the National Youth Orchestra, Vivien considered a career in music but eventually decided to keep it as a hobby. Instead, she came to Durham to study and spent a year in France teaching and studying at the Avignon Conservatoire. Living in college for the full three years allowed her to make lasting friendships, many of whom she is still in touch with today.

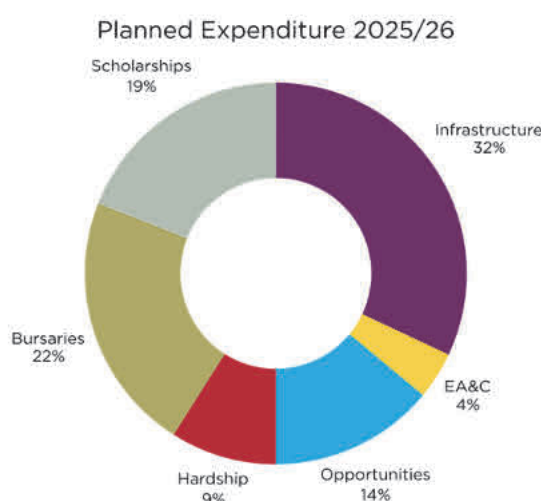
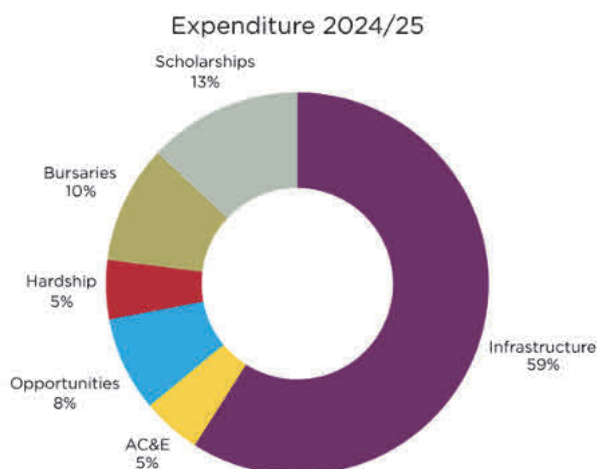
After a career in HR, Vivien is now retired and plays the oboe and cor anglais in a local orchestra. She sings in the English Baroque Choir, plays tennis and enjoys travelling.

Having spent such a happy and fulfilling time at Durham, she would like to give another student a similar experience. The Vivien Karam Scholarship is £5,000 a year for a maximum of four years and was first awarded in 2025/26.



*"I led a privileged life at Durham. All my fees and accommodation were paid for in full. I did not have to find paid work whilst studying. This enabled me to benefit in full from university life without any financial pressures"*  
Vivien Karam

## How we use donations



**Scholarships** – larger awards to individual students, normally from lower-income households, to substantially reduce the cost of study, provided for the duration of the degree.

**Bursaries** – annual awards to individual students, normally from lower-income households, to reduce the cost of living in college.

**Hardship** – occasional awards given in response to need, to assist with the cost of engaging in college activity.

**Opportunities** – occasional awards for which students and student organisations can bid to enhance their experience in college.

**EA&C (Events, Arts & Culture)** – Funding to organise cultural events and support art in college, and also run events, including alumni reunions.

**Infrastructure\*** – funding to enhance the facilities in the college.

(\*) In 2024-5, donations partly covered the cost of refurbishing the bar. In 2025-6, donations wholly covered the cost of creating a studio facility for dance, yoga and theatre rehearsal. Percentages in charts after any admin costs

## Refurbishment works

Every year, Durham University runs a telephone campaign to raise essential funds to enable our students to embrace their university experience. 2025 was the first year that three Durham University Colleges, including St Mary's, came together to run a joint telephone campaign specifically to raise funds for their respective colleges, each with its own distinct campaign objectives.

The telephone campaign drew to a close in May 2025 after our student callers reached over 200 St Mary's alumni, of whom almost 40% made a gift.

Using some of the funds we received from the telephone campaign, work began in the summer of 2025 to update an underused space in the Williamson building, turning it into a performance studio for students to use for dance, yoga, exercise and theatre practice. The room opened during freshers' week to eager students keen to make use of the new space.

St Mary's Student Grace Campbell said:

*"The Studio has massively improved our experience and enrichment as Mary's Dance! The mirrors in particular allow us to teach choreography more effectively, and the floor is smooth enough to facilitate a large range of moves. We love the decorations in the space, particularly the seating area, to improve our sense of community within the society alongside our dancing. Thus, these upgrades to Williamson have bolstered our enjoyment and skill in dance".*



**Caption: Mary's Dance in the new performance studio in Williamson**



# Investing in the future



**DURHAM Dynamics**

## On Board A CAPPELLA

18:10 (45 min)  
£8.50/£6.50

5TH - 10TH AUGUST

EDINBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL | the Space @ Niddry St.

## Donate

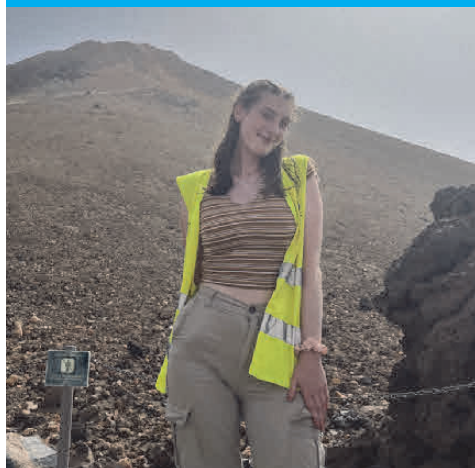
Donor gifts help our students to immerse themselves in the St Mary's and University experience. Scan the QR code or enter the link in your browser to donate to the St Mary's Development Fund.

[tinyurl.com/St-Marys-Gift](https://tinyurl.com/St-Marys-Gift)



## Thanks

All students featured in this booklet have received financial support from our alumni community.





St Mary's College  
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## Get in touch

Donors looking to make a targeted donation or a larger contribution are welcome to contact us directly to discuss particular projects or their individual wishes.

[\*\*durham.ac.uk\*\*](http://durham.ac.uk)

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