

## Stellarchives updates.....

The Stellarchives serves the Stella Maris College community in the preservation and administration of institutional records and manuscripts. The primary purpose of the Archives is to collect, preserve, maintain and render access to the rich historical evidence of the institution's heritage for posterity.

This year, the annual meeting of the Stellarchives representatives was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2016.

Dr. Sr. Helen Vincent highlighted the changes the College has undergone with a tinge of nostalgia. She shared details about the Bonaventure Block, and some of the historical facts associated with it. Dr. Agnes Fernando, Committee Member shared the experience of her pursuit in getting the doctoral thesis of Dr. Sr. Edith Tömöry. She narrated her visit to the ancestral home of Sr. Edith's where she had spent the early years of her life. The narration included a lot of interesting details about the ancestral house and Sr Edith's family. Sr. Francisco Nirmala, Committee Member, who had attended a UBCHEA (United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia) programme in Boston College, America, shared her experience at the International Conference on Higher Education during which she visited the Archives of Boston College. The Archivist, Ms Gita Balachandran presented the future plans for Stellarchives which includes the collection department wise of the annual class photographs right from the inception of the College to the present for which the representatives were requested to collect and tag the photographs from the coming year. Also a booklet of the profile of Retired Faculty and Staff, famous personalities and achievers of the College Alumnae would be compiled with the data and the photographs available.



**Meeting of the Stellarchives representatives – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2016**

Stellarchives had several visitors during the academic year 2016-17. They were Sr. M. R. Basil Rose and Sr. Hilda Mathias from Holy Cross College, Nagercoil. Sr. Sahila, Sr. Chamila Fernando, fmm and two sisters from the Convent of Our Lady of Victories, Sri Lanka. The Provincial Superior of the Chennai Province, Sr. Leena D'Souza, fmm, expressed great admiration in the following words: *“Ms. Gita & team, congrats for the wonderful Stellarchives - hard work, creativity, patience and love for speciality to set up this marvelous work. God bless you”*.

Besides these there were some eminent people who visited the Archives and recorded in the visitors' book their appreciation of the work done.

Dr. R. Nagaswamy, former Director of Archeology, and former Curator for Art & Archeology, Government Museum, Madras, commented: ***“A great institution that inspires and makes one to experience that greatness.”*** Dr. V. Sakthi Rekha, Librarian of Madras School of Social Work, Chennai also visited the archives. Fr. A. Charles, Secretary to the Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, wrote: ***“It was a learning experience to browse through the dedicated work of Mrs. Gita. I congratulate her for her meticulous execution of traditional preservation techniques. God bless!”***

Ms. Geetha Iyer, former head of Sahyadri School (KFI), Pune, who holds a Ph.D. degree in Education from the Madras University, gave a brilliant presentation on commonly found insects that spin silk. The theme of her book is ‘The Weavers’. Mr. Hamish Boyd, Mrs. Fifi Fernandes, and Komali MeDi Clown Academy were other visitors who presented their autographed books for the Stellarchives. Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Chairperson, UGC Expert Committee for Autonomy Review remarked: ***“Stellarchives left me spellbound. Congratulations to the vision and team that values and celebrates the heritage of great institutions!”***

Dr. M.R. Srinivasan, Dean I/C, College Development Council, University of Madras, and member of the UGC Expert Committee for Autonomy Review expressed his appreciation: ***“Wonderful collection and preservation to showcase the history of SMC. Best wishes for your future program in this direction”.***

A. Revathi, writer and activist was another of the visitors. Dr. Atima Sharma Dwivedi, Principal, Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar wrote: ***“It has been an amazing experience to visit the archives section of this library. Very insightful, practically translating the dedication and passion of Ms. Gita. Great learning experience... coming from a heritage institution, I would like to incorporate many creative things I have seen here, in my own institution! Keep inspired, God Bless You!!”***



Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath,  
Chairperson, UGC Expert  
Committee for Autonomy



Sr. Leena D'Souza, fmm,  
Provincial, Chennai Province



Dr. M.R. Srinivasan, Dean I/C,  
College Development Council,  
University of Madras

## Stellarchives was used extensively by the students of the College for garnering

The Archivist gave a lecture on importance of archiving for the students of the History department which included a tour of Stellarchives on July 29, 2016. On the 69<sup>th</sup> birthday of Stella Maris College, the Students Union screened the video taken from the video collection “The Stella Marian Saga: on the road to the future,” which had been prepared for the Golden jubilee year (1996-97) of the College. The club members of Kalediscope extensively used the photo collection of the Stellarchives for their presentation on the old and new look of Stella campus.

During the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the History department, the Archivist extended help to the department to collect detailed information of the department’s heads and several photographs. The birthday of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was celebrated at Stella Maris by the Photography club on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 for which Stellarchives contributed the photographs for the exhibition.

Two articles were written by the Archivist with information available in the archives; one in memory of Sr. Louise Theresia fmm (née Louise Osser), faculty of the departments of French and English (1949-76), and the other of Sr. Thecla Camacho, fmm (Mother M. Eanswida) founder and former head of the department of social work (1952 – 1977). For the memorial service of the latter, organized by the Department of Social Work on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2017, Stellarchives contributed black and white photos of Sr Thecla’s achievements in the department.

The following writers autographed their books during their visit to Stellarchives: *Light in Darkness* by Mr. Hamish Boyd; *Nature, Culture and Gender* by Mary Vidya P Porselvi; *Mounaththaik Kalaikum Mozhi* by Nanthamizh Nangai; *Masterpieces of Chola Art* by Dr. R. Nagaswamy; *Butterflies on Campus* by Kalpana Jayaraman; *Dr. Vishvanath Tripathi ke sahitya mein chitrit grameen jeevan sabhyata* by A. Fatima; *Antimdashakke mahila kahanikaron ke badhalte samajik sandarbh* by Srabani Bhattacharyya and *The Weavers* by Geetha Iyer.



Ms. Geetha Iyer



Dr. R. Nagaswamy



Mr. Hamish Boyd

The following books autographed by the ex-students and visitors of the college were presented to Stellarchives: *Dare to Do* by Kiran Bedi; *Yassmin's Story* by Yassmin Abdel Magied; *Now I Can See* by Christopher Coelho; *Aesthetic Chaos* by Crystaline Jeanetta John; *Rangoli* by Anuradha Ananth; and *Nature, Culture and Gender* by Mary Vidya P Porselvi

A new addition to the artifacts in Stellarchives is the first Piano acquired by Stella Maris College. It was manufactured by J B Cramer & Co in 1885. It was bought around the year 1950 in order to start the Bachelor of Music Course in the College. Mother John Haughton and Mother Godelieve from England had much influence in the education department; and Sister David had the highest degree in western music. Sr David became the founder of the Music Department in 1956. She taught both theory and practical along with another French Canadian, Sr. Celine François.

This precious artifact is evidence of the innovative spirit of the pioneers of Stella Maris College who started the Bachelor of Music (Western Classical Music as major and Indian Classical Music as ancillary) with the permission of the then Vice Chancellor of the Madras University. An interesting fact is that J.B Cramer & Co. was a manufacturer of musical instruments and publisher of western music in London since 1824. They won a silver medal for invention in 1885, and are highly reputed in the field of music even today.



Other additions to the Archives are First day covers, one of St. Theresa of Kolkata who had visited the College in 1986 and postage stamps of various countries.

Some of the other achievements of Stellarchives are the collecting and digitising of the annual Class Photographs for all departments, right from 1947 which has already begun; and identifying the year and tagging the students and faculty members in them. Stellarchives is happy that it lent its expertise for preserving and digitising the blue prints of all the College buildings on the campus.

Stellarchives is grateful to all faculty members and students of the college - both past and present - who have extended help and support in all its endeavours.