

Stella Maris College Archives

Annual Report 2023–2024

Sr. Jebamalai FMM, Archivist

The academic year 2023–2024 marked a significant phase in the growth and activity of Stella Maris College Archives. Through focused collection expansion, historical research, digitization, and conservation training, the Archives continued to enhance its role in preserving institutional memory and fostering archival awareness.

Collection Development and Expansion

Additions to the Research Wing

Two doctoral theses were added to the archives' academic repository:

1. *Mapping the Interspersing Trajectories of Self and Culture*
— Ms. Safrine N., Department of English
2. *Nanomaterials for Photocatalytic Applications*
— Ms. Ashwini, Department of Chemistry

Special Additions

Four autograph books were archived:

- *Tamil Brahmi Eluthukal* – Jerar Amburose
- *Maya: Illusion* – Ms. Sosha Anand
- *Empowering India: Ideas for Action by Scientists and Engineers* – Thalappil Pradeep & Krishna Narayanan
- *Impact of Leadership Skills in Managing and Retaining Multigenerational Workforce* – Dr. Nisha

Departmental Journals

- *Memory Bytes* — Silver Jubilee journal from the Department of Computer Science
- *Khilti Kaliyan* — Annual journal from the Department of Hindi

These were added to their respective archival sections.

Media Documentation and DSpace Integration

A total of **16 media clippings** from leading newspapers, documenting the college's achievements and events from 2023 to March 2024, were archived in DSpace. Highlights include:

- **India Today (June 2023)** – Stella featured in *Best Colleges of India 2023*
- **APN News (June 30, 2023)** – Peace March organized by the College
- **Dinamani, Dinakaran, The Hindu (Nov 2023)** – Coverage of the lecture by Dr. Cynthia Jude
- **The Times of India, The Hindu, DT Next (Jan–Feb 2024)** – ICON 2024 events, awareness campaigns, and policy discussions
- **Indian Express, Sambad, Economic Times (Feb–Mar 2024)** – Features on women empowerment, global achievements, and innovation
- **Contributions by students and faculty** — “Let Her Breathe” by Ms. Merlin Benny and “Inspire Inclusion” by Benette Yazhini A.

Thematic Exhibitions and Engagement

Archival display panels were actively used for **thematic exhibitions**, designed to encourage interaction and interest among students. These exhibits highlighted historical documents, student achievements, and institutional milestones.

Additionally, **success stories** were compiled and regularly updated in DSpace for broader digital access and preservation.

Historical Research and Digitization

This year's research focused on the **social concern initiatives** of Stella Maris College. A key discovery was that the College's social outreach efforts predate the formal establishment of the **NSS unit in 1968**, going back at least two decades.

An article featuring visuals and findings was uploaded to DSpace.

Digitization of NSS Records

- **39 years of NSS Annual Reports (1969–2003)** were digitized.

- The original first NSS report was rediscovered and basic preservation measures applied:
 - Surface cleaning
 - Removal of deteriorating agents
 - Support for brittle pages

These materials are now candidates for an upcoming advanced conservation project.

Conservation Initiatives

Conservation Skill-Building

Visits to other archives introduced the **Japanese tissue mending method**, highlighting the scarcity of conservation learning opportunities in Tamil Nadu. This sparked an initiative to promote interdepartmental collaboration — especially between the **Departments of Chemistry and History** — to develop restoration and preservation capabilities.

Student Training Programme



A three-day **Conservation Training Program** was organized in collaboration with **Mr. Ranganathan**, Managing Director of **Photolam Pvt. Ltd.**

The archivist attended a one-day seminar on 26 March 2024. Dr. Jeyaraj, the former curator from the Tamil Nadu Museum discussed the topic “Recommended Physical Structure for Archiving”. Dr. Nantha Gopal I.A.S., Commissioner of Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research chaired the seminar. The participants discussed practical difficulties in conservation, opening up new horizons for cooperation between the archivist and the Tamil Nadu State Archives in the field of paper conservation.



A Visit from the Past: Reconnecting with the Batch of 1963–64

On 20th September 2023, Stella Maris College was graced by a heartwarming visit from Ms. Barbara Gostisa Pretnar, an alumna of the 1963–64 batch, who traveled all the way from Slovenia to reconnect with her alma mater. Her return, after six decades, was more than a nostalgic journey — it was a bridge between generations and a powerful reminder of the enduring spirit of Stella Maris.

The alumna shared vivid memories of college life in 1963, painting a picture of a simpler, yet deeply formative time. From academic routines to cultural life, her recollections offered rare insight into the foundations on which the College has grown. Listening to her stories was awe-inspiring — a window into a past that shaped the present.

Her reflections underscored four decades of remarkable development — in infrastructure, academic excellence, social outreach, and student empowerment. The transformation of the campus, the growth of departments, the technological advancements, and the broadening of global connections stood in sharp contrast to the modest beginnings she remembered.

This meaningful visit has been documented and archived in Stella Archives, not just as a record of nostalgia, but as a testament to the legacy of alumnae who continue to carry the Stella Maris spirit across the world. Ms. Pretnar's return reminds us that while time moves forward, the bonds formed at Stella Maris remain strong — transcending borders and generations.



Academic Engagement with Archives: A Resource for the Present Generation



Stellarchives continues to serve not only as a repository of the past but also as a valuable academic resource for the present generation. During the academic year, the Department of Economics engaged actively with the Archives in pursuit of historical records and visual documentation related to their department.

The faculty and students visited the Archives seeking information on the evolution of their department, including departmental journals, photographic records, and significant milestones. The archivist warmly welcomed the initiative and provided them with relevant archival material and copies of key documents for academic use.

This interaction reflects the growing awareness among departments about the role of archives in research, documentation, and institutional identity. Stellarchives continues to encourage such collaborations, ensuring that the legacy of each department is not only preserved but also accessible and meaningful for future scholarship.

International Engagement and Future Outlook

The archivist's **project proposal to Liverpool Hope University, London** was accepted. The proposed visit aims to explore:

- Best practices in paper artefact conservation
- Maintenance and display of rare collections
- Advanced archival methods in a global context

This engagement is expected to open new horizons for **heritage conservation** initiatives in Tamil Nadu.

Stella Archives continues to grow in its mission of preservation, access, and education. The year 2023–2024 witnessed expansion in content, technological enhancement through DSpace, and a strong push toward conservation and training.

With interdepartmental collaboration, student participation, and international academic engagement, the Archives is poised to become a model for institutional preservation efforts in the region.