

Stellarchives Update...

This year, the annual meeting of the representatives of the Stellarchives was held on 12 July 2017.

- ❖ The meeting began with a prayer lead by Dr Agnes Rozario, Vice Principal, who thereafter welcomed the gathering. As Stella Maris enters its 70th year, it is with great joy that we look back on our history and rich legacy, and make every attempt to preserve it for the coming generations, she said.
- ❖ Sr Susan, fmm Secretary of the College addressed the audience on the importance of the archives in an institution of higher learning. She began by congratulating the archivist, Ms Gita Balachandran for the tremendous effort she has expended in conceiving and setting up the Stellarchives, begun four years ago. Sr Susan stressed the need to record the birth, growth and history of the College because of its unique nature and its cultural heritage. The hand written manuscripts were evidence of all the decisions taken by those who shaped the history of the College, and all the activities that went into its establishment. They provide firsthand information of significant matters related to the College. These manuscripts, and also the blueprints of the various buildings which we now find on the campus, being valuable are all stored for security purposes in what is known as a 'strong room.' Hence these documents may not be taken out of the strong room. But one can, of course obtain permission to view them in the archives for study and research purposes. The research thesis of the faculty and students of the College are also being preserved for this reason. Besides these, the Archives preserves books and articles published, and papers presented by the faculty and students at national and international forums. Journals, brochures and other ephemerals.
- ❖ Ms Gita Balachandran presented the updates of the achievements of the Stellarchives. The preservation of photographs and manuscripts relating to the three visits of Shri A. L. Mudaliar to Stella Maris College are evidence of memorable historical events. As decided at the last meeting of the Representatives of Stellarchives on 23rd August 2016, the class photographs are being collected, and also tagged. For the recent years the Departments are engaged in writing the names of the students in each class on the reverse of the photographs. As for the photographs of yesteryears, some members of the retired faculty are lending a helping hand in identifying their classmates. This is indeed a herculean task! It is hoped that at the next Alumnae Meet there will be an activity organized in which all the members will be asked to help filling in the missing names of their classmates, and the Department that completes the greatest number will be acknowledged and rewarded.

❖ Sr Nirmala next shared about her visit to the archives of Providence University, a Catholic University that she had the opportunity to visit while on a two month stay in Taiwan as a visiting scholar in the Methodist University as part of a UBCHEA exchange programme. After describing the Archives, she mentioned a few good practices that she found worthy of emulation – namely, a visit to the archives was a mandatory part of the curriculum in all the courses; classes were sometimes conducted in the lecture hall of the archives on subjects related to the college; students were given research assignments related to archiving, and workshops were also conducted.

❖ **Future Plans:**

A web portal of Stellarchives is being planned to provide digital access to the collection of photographs, and coins and stamps. A policy manual has been prepared and is awaiting the approval of the Management. Cloud computing is considered very essential to provide alternative methods of preservation in the event of things being destroyed by fire or floods; and its possibility is being explored. Networking with other archives in the country and abroad would enhance efficiency and accessibility. The team working with the Archivist is planning to visit the archives in the Franciscan Generalate in Rome in order to share expertise, and also to do a short internship in the archives of KULeuven, the Catholic University in Belgium. Since this year marks the 650th year of the Hungarian Chapel in Aachen, Germany where Sr Edith Tömöry's doctoral thesis is being studied and discussed, a visit to Germany would be mutually fruitful.

Meeting of the Stellarchives representatives - 12th July, 2017



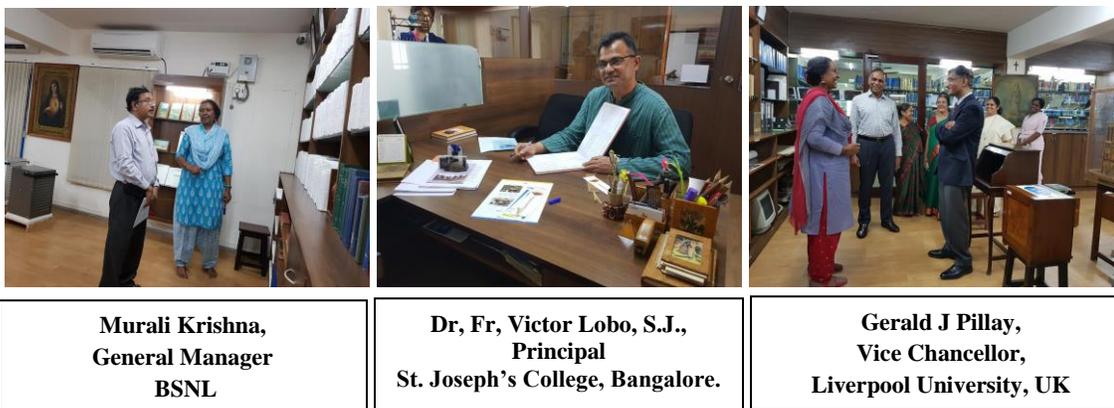
❖ Stellarchives had many visitors during the academic year 2017-18. Here's a list with their comments:

- ✓ **Capt. Indu Dinesh Nair**, Dept. of Chemistry, 1990 – 1993 batch, ex NCC student.

“It was an awesome experience visiting the college archives. An exceptionally done project! Hats off to Gita ma’am for this lovely initiative. Wish you all the very best for this outstanding project.”

- ✓ **Dr. Fr. Victor Lobo S.J.**, Principal of St. Joseph’s College, Bangalore.
“An amazing sojourn in the archives, which made me go down the memory lane of Stella Maris College. Great work indeed!”
- ✓ **Ms. Madhuri Shekar**, Dept. of History, 2004 – 2007 batch.
“A Wonderful trip down memory lane! So happy to be back and see all the changes. The archives are thrilling and momentous. Here’s to more progress while remembering the past!”
- ✓ **Sr. C.T. Theresa fmm**, from Villa Theresa Convent, Mumbai.
- ✓ **Eight FMM sisters** from Maris Stella College, Vijayawada.
“History and heritage passed on visually and vividly, letting the generations of the present... and the future to make a re-visit to the past. A very commendable and committed contribution towards the well-being of the college: connecting and weaving webs of unity across the generations!”
- ✓ **Ms. Ashrafi S. Bhagat**, 1977 - 2012 and **Ramaa Narayanan**, 1985 - 2006, Retd. Faculty, Dept. of Fine Arts
- ✓ **Three FMM sisters** from Philippines.
- ✓ **Murali Krishna**, General Manager, BSNL.
“The pioneering initiative of Stella Maris College in scientifically and systematically preserving their history and heritage in all its dimensions is to be supported and emulated by other educational institutions too. The dedicated efforts of the team headed by Mrs. Balachandran deserves highest praise.”
- ✓ **Winston A. Henry, and John J. Moses** from Chennai.
- ✓ **Sr. Noreen Murray, fmm**, New York.
“The passion, care and enthusiasm is a blessing. You are doing a great ministry.”
- ✓ **Sr. Benedicta Amiziah, fmm** from Ghana, West Africa.
- ✓ **Dr. Fr. Emmanuel Kallrackal, CSC, Fr. Pappy Valan, CSC** from Holy Cross College, Agartala.
“I am deeply impressed by the pains taking way in which the Archives is developed. It is certainly a great asset to the college.”
- ✓ **Dr. K. Sandhya**, Head & Reader, Dept. of English, Maris Stella College, Vijayawada.
- ✓ **T.M. Gnanapragasam**, Retd. Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Arul Anandar College, Madurai.
- ✓ **Ms. Varalakshmi**, Dept. of History, 1981 – 1984 batch
- ✓ **Ding-Yah Yang, Hung-Nan Huang, Kiran**, from Tunghai University, Taiwan
“Interesting trip to the history of SMC!”
- ✓ **Sr. Theresa, fmm** from St. Francis Convent, Myanmar.

- ✓ **Gerald J Pillay**, Vice Chancellor of Liverpool University, UK.
“This is very inspirational! Gita’s vision for a heritage collection is infectious. Well done!”
- ✓ **Ms. Sheela Murthy**, Founder & President, Murthy Law Firm, USA.
 Dept. of History, 1979 – 1982 batch.
- ✓ **Dr. Jesudoss Manalan**, Senior Librarian & Dean IR, Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirapalli.
- ✓ **Dr. K. Chitra**, Principal, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts and Science for Women, Coimbatore.
“It was a honour to visit the Archives, a one-of-its-kind attempt. Thrilled to see the manuscripts and well preserved documents. Energetic and enthusiastic Archivist!”
- ✓ **Nish Amarnath**, Author and Journalist, USA, former student of the Dept. of Economics, 2003 – 2006.
“It was a privileged to visit the Archives and I am especially touched because memories are so important and the team here has gone through great pains to preserve memories from the past for eternity. Reflects the legacy of Stella Maris and all who were part of it”.



- ❖ Stellarchives was used extensively by the students of the College for garnering information on the following occasions.
 - Sr. Mary John - We helped her to write an article by giving her information on Indian spiritualism (Shaivism and the Vedas). She also referred to her doctoral dissertation “Future time perspective self-concept and vocational interests by adoloscents” that is preserved in the Archives.
 - Madras Heritage Week Display: In keeping with the theme of Heritage, on 30 August, Stellarchives put together a small but striking exhibition in the entrance to the library

which showcased a few pages from the history of the college. Students paused to catch a glimpse and read about former Principals and important visitors to the College.

- While some buildings had been transformed, the carefully and safely preserved first building on the campus, the Bonaventure Block, remains a fine tribute to our heritage!
- Journalists from Times of India collected information and photographs for their article on Stella Maris College
- Sr. Diana found material in the form of photographs and information for her Power Point Presentation on the contribution of FMM sisters to the development of Stella Maris College
- Ms. Priya George, Dept. of Social Work sought and obtained information about the percentage of students who had passed in her department.

❖ The following writers had autographed their books during their visit to the Stellarchives:

- *“Drugs Use/ Abuse among Youth of a Fishing community in Chennai city – India”* by Sandra Joseph, Dept. of Social Work
- *“Policies and Practices of Drug use in India”* by Sandra Joseph, Dept. of Social Work
- *“Surya Prakash Retrospective 1960 onwards”* by Ashrafi S Bhagat Dept. of Fine Arts
- *“Regional Modernity”* by Ashrafi S Bhagat, Dept. of Fine Arts
- *“Folklore, Culture and Heritage of Tamil Nadu”* by Kalpana Jayaraman , Dept. of Zoology; Priya George, Dept. of Social Work; and Dolly Thomas, Dept. of History
- *“In Love and Warcraft”* by Madhuri Shekar, Dept. of History, 2004 – 2007 batch
- *“Victims for sale”* by Nish Amarnath, Author and Journalist, USA, former student of the Dept. of Economics, 2003 – 2006.



Dr. Ashrafi S Bhagat
Department of Fine Arts
1977 - 2012



Ms. Madhuri Shekar,
Department of History
2004 - 2007



Ms. Nish Amarnath,
Department of Economics
2003 - 2006

Other Achievements of Stellarchives

- ✓ Consultancy work for Don Bosco College, Yelagiri, Library to study the library processes and propose to the Librarian ways to improve the quality of services in view of the forthcoming visit of the team for NAAC accreditation in May 2018. From 17 to 22 January, 2018
- ✓ Madras Dyslexia Association is a 25 year old organization working in the field of Dyslexia and training teachers to help them, They have in the last 25 years made a large collection of reference material and books which are very valuable and useful for every member in the institute. They are in the process of setting up an organized reference library. Gita Balachandran helped them by providing expertise and time to guide them to understand and set up the library.
- ✓ Departmental Journal cover page redesigned. As a journal of an academic institution is a publication of scholarly articles aimed at research in the subject and hence should be of a certain standard, and as in the past, the cover pages of departmental journals of Stella Maris College were of different shapes, sizes, colours and designs, the archivist, Ms. Gita Balachandran explained to the departments the need to create a standard format for the cover page. Colour coding could be used to distinguish different departments, she suggested.

With this aim, and the assistance of Ms. Meenakshi Madan, faculty, department of Fine Arts a cover page was designed. Ms. Balachandran offered this format with colour coding to the departments. The Staff Council formally approved of this design at the meeting held on 23rd October, 2017.

- ✓ Coins cataloging is in progress. Detailed work has been done on the type of display and the template for the metadata has been prepared.



**Don Bosco College
Yelagiri**



**Cover Design
Departmental Journals**



Coin Preservation

This year the first year students were given an orientation about the Stellarchives. Stellarchives is steadily growing. It is preserving the history and heritage of the College both scientifically and systematically. This is no small achievement for the College, as it has now become a trendsetter, and many colleges in the city and the country are following suit.