CENTRE FOR MARIAN STUDIES

Charity Number 1183579

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

The Centre for Marian Studies (the CMS), established in 1995, provides educational courses, promotes research and maintains a library, on subjects relating to the theology and wider cult of the Virgin Mary. It has no religious affiliation and is open to members of any religious tradition or none. Members of the CMS are dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration to support and advance Marian scholarship.

The CMS was originally registered with a Trust Deed in 1997 as The Marian Study Centre (Registered Charity 1066253). In 2019 the decision was taken to register the charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, whose only voting members are its charity trustees. Our registration was confirmed on 24th May 2019 (Charity Number 1183579). This annual report covers the period from 1st September 2025 to 31st August 2026, as the latter is our accounting end of year date.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The CMS aims to advance the education of the public in all matters related to the Virgin Mary, including any theology, devotion, and other social and cultural activities pertaining to her, in particular for the provision of a library, a picture collection, and other material resources, the undertaking of academic research and the dissemination of the useful results to the public and the provision of educational courses and lectures.

In April 2021 the CMS signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with St Mary's University in Twickenham to develop mutual agreements for cooperation based on our respective academic and educational needs. The Memorandum of Understanding was renewed in June 2026 for a second five-year term. St Mary's University is the official home of the CMS, and the CMS library collection has been established in the crypt of the church on the university campus. The collection enhances the theological resources held at the university and is available to researchers in Marian Studies.

The trustees have cross-referenced these objectives and activities with the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The CMS website, which is maintained on a voluntary basis by a member of the CMS Management Committee, provides information on Marian news and events: www.marianstudies.ac.uk.

The trustees and members of the Management Committee of the CMS are actively engaged in Marian Studies and examples of their publications are listed on the charity's website: https://www.marianstudies.ac.uk/publications

In order to promote research, we have also now developed a scheme that allows people to apply to become Fellows, Members and Associates of the CMS. The full details are posted online on our website: https://www.marianstudies.ac.uk/membership We are very grateful to the Fellows and Members whose financial support allows us to carry out our objectives.

ONLINE EVENTS

We have continued to offer a regular programme of free online events, which allow speakers and guests to join us from home and abroad.

3rd February 2026
Candlemas Lecture (via Zoom)
We held our fifth Candlemas lecture in honour of the late Dr Cathy Oakes, who was an art historian and one of the founding members of our charity. Cathy was an expert in medieval Marian iconography and her untimely death in 2019 was a great loss to the CMS on both a personal and academic level.

We were honoured that our guest speaker in 2026 was the eminent Art Historian Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, who gave an illustrated lecture entitled 'The Virgin Mary from the perspectives of women scholars: Anna Jameson, Marina Warner, and Miri Rubin'. Professor Apostolos-Cappadona kindly asked that the honorarium of £100, which we were able to offer thanks to the generosity of one of our Trustees, should be used for the benefit of our charity. As we intend to send a selection of duplicate copies of Marian books from our collection to a seminar in India, the money will help to pay for the postage.

Online seminar series
Since 2023, we have organised a monthly series of online seminars on Wednesday afternoons during the academic year from October to June. We are delighted that so many established scholars have presented papers on a wide range of Marian topics, with the opportunity for the audience members to ask questions and offer observations.

The topics for 2025-26 were:

22nd October 2025: 'Wisdom's Apex: Mary's Role in the American Evolution Controversy' – Professor Jacob Phillips (St Mary's University)

12th November 2025: 'Did God create the world for Mary?' – Dr Michaël Bauwens (University of Antwerp, Belgium)

10th December 2025: 'A Walk on the Wild Side: Pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City' – Dr Siân Lacey Taylder (Fellow of the Centre for Marian Studies)

21st January 2026: Marian iconography in the context of Portuguese confraternities of Mercy' – Joana Balsa de Pinho (Artis - Institute of Art History, School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon and Institute of the Patroness of Portugal for Mariology Studies, Vila Viçosa, Portugal)

11th February 2026: 'Sweet Mother and Militant Virgin: The Two Faces of Mary' – Dr Patrizia Granziera (Professor of Art History at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, Cuernavaca, México)

18th March 2026: The Modern Controversy about Mary's Betrothal to Joseph' – Dr Gloria Dodd (President of the Mariological Society of America, University of Dayton, US)

15th April 2026: 'Some Reflections on the Poetics of Praise in the Vernacular Marian laude of the Duecento and Trecento' – Professor Brian K. Reynolds (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan)

13th May 2026: Praying with Mary: The Book of Hours on the Eve of the English Reformation' – Rev. Dr Paul Williams (Domestic Chaplain to HM The King and Rector of the Sandringham Group of Churches)

3rd June 2026: 'The Blessed Virgin Mary as a Bridge between Islamic Spirituality and Christian Theology' – Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi (The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)

As the seminars were very successful, we are going to run a fourth series in 2026-27.

CMS SATURDAY SEMINAR

In addition to the academic seminars on Wednesdays, we decided to hold an online event on Saturday 28th February 2026 to discuss the topic of Marian apparitions and their consequences. We invited three guest speakers to approach the theme from different angles:

Dr Chris Maunder, who is the author of *Our Lady of the Nations: Apparitions of Mary in 20th Century Catholic Europe* (2016), gave a paper entitled 'Responding to Apparition Movements: The Norms of 2024'.

Lauren Montenegro, whose doctoral research focuses on apparitions and visions of the Virgin Mary, discussed how they influence Roman Catholicism, and how Roman Catholicism influences apparitions.

Joe Evans, who is a Visiting Scholar at the Villanova University Center for Peace and Justice Education, explored the implications of Mary's appearances (and appeal) to non-Christians in Asia.

We intend to hold another Saturday seminar in the forthcoming academic year.

ONLINE JOURNAL

In 2021 the CMS relaunched *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* as a peer reviewed, online and open access journal. We have joined the mEDRA scheme to register the journal content for the Digital Object Identifier System.

During the period covered by this report, the CMS published two issues of the journal.

Issue 5.2 (November 2025) included impressive articles on 'The Immaculate Conception in the light of Kashmir Shaivism' by John Dupuche; and 'Marian Devotion as an Expression of the Self-Understanding and Public Face of the Church' by Sarah Jane Boss.

As we approached the Christmas season, it was an appropriate time to begin a discussion on the historicity of the virginal conception of Jesus, with Chris Maunder and Sarah Jane Boss offering counter arguments.

Following the publication of the Vatican's latest Marian document *Mater Populi Fidelis,* we were also pleased to publish a letter on that very topic from Brendan D. Towell, in the hope of encouraging other people to join the conversation.

Issue 6.1 (May 2026) contained two papers that demonstrate our international readership. Chris Carr, who is now the President of the Mariological Society of America, examined Elizabeth's greeting to Mary in the Visitation scene and considered how her words offer a message for Christian discipleship; and Matthew Green, a Marist Brother who currently leads the Province's postulancy programme based in Timor-Leste, proposed a Marial framework for Marist formation in the triad of Call–Ponder–Response.

We were also very pleased to include a fascinating article by Angela Costley, who explored the common association between the mother of Jesus and the sister of Moses, asking whether we would do better to look at the New Testament Mary in terms of Jochebed, Moses' mother. Her contribution formed part of our ongoing debate on the virginal conception, and we were very happy to allow Chris Maunder 'a right to reply' to the response to his paper on that very topic in the November 2025 issue of *Maria* (5.2).

Both issues of the journal also contained reviews of important Marian publications.

The journal contributes to our commitment to publish innovative Marian research in the fields of theology, philosophy, literature, history, visual culture, music, sociology, anthropology and psychology. We warmly welcome original contributions on Marian topics in the form of refereed articles, discussion pieces, translations and book reviews.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Centre for Marian Studies: Accounts 2025-6

Year End: 31 August 2026

Balance at 1st September 2025	**3884.97**	
	Income	Outgoings
Fellowship fees (8 fellows)	404.68	
Membership fees (17 members)	408.50	
Website		0
MEDRA journal DOIs		211.42
Zoom		209.88
Donations via Crowdfunder	60.00	
Crowdfunder fees		1.64
Donations via Bank Transfer	75.00	
TOTALS	948.18	422.94
Net income	525.24	
Balance at 31st August 2026	**4410.21**	

The accounts for 2025-26 are not complicated and our internal review process is sufficient.

Our income this year was £948.18. We received £813.18, made up of fees from Fellows and Members, and donations (via our Crowdfunder Page and bank transfer) of £135.00.

Our outgoings were £422.94. We made our annual payment to mEDRA for the DOIs for our online journal (£211.42 in 2026); and we paid £209.88 for the Zoom account that allows us to run our online seminars. There was also a Crowdfunder fee of £1.64.

At present, the funds are unrestricted, i.e. not earmarked for specific purposes. The funds held by the CMS are also too small for the holding of reserves.

We have concluded that the CMS has the funds and resources for it to be an ongoing concern for 2026-27. If fundraising is successful in the future, it will be necessary to undergo external financial monitoring.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The CMS is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and has used the Charity Commission's template for its governing document.

All trustees must be aged over 16 years and at least one of the trustees of the Centre for Marian Studies must be 18 years of age or over. The maximum number of charity trustees is twelve and the minimum number is three. If the number falls below the minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees or appoint a new charity trustee. The quorum for a trustees' meeting is two. Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the Centre for Marian Studies.

Management of the charity

The Centre for Marian Studies is currently run by six trustees and five members of the Management Committee, all of whom contribute to the aims of the charity on a voluntary basis. We are delighted that Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi (The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London) accepted the invitation to join our committee in 2026.

Trustees and Members of the Management Committee

Trustees
Sr Dr Cathy Jones (Co-editor of our journal)
Dr Melanie Landman
Professor Andrew Louth
Dr Catherine O'Brien (Chair of Trustees and Director of the CMS)
Mr Mike Russell
Reverend Canon Dr Paul Williams

Members
Professor Sarah Jane Boss (Secretary, librarian and co-editor of our journal)
Dr Chris Maunder (Treasurer)
Mrs Natalie Maunder (Website coordinator)
Professor Jacob Phillips (Conference organiser)
Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi

The full committee meets twice a year, usually in September and March.

Reference and administrative details

The Centre for Marian Studies

Charity Number 1183579

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