

Mary Paisey MBE

Mary Paisey was born and brought up in Bath. She gained a geography degree from Oxford University and a teaching diploma from Cambridge University. After graduating, her first teaching post was at Croydon High School under the headship of Margaret Adams, who in fact was a Soroptimist and is also one of our #WhoisShe? nominees. One of the first and probably most memorable pupils that Mary taught was Jacqueline Dupré, who had a special timetable to take account of her requirement for extra cello lessons, and special tutoring in music. One story that resonates with Mary is of the first school ball that she attended with her fiancé just shortly after their engagement, when the Head turned to Mary and said: 'you and your fiancé will teach me to do the conga!' It was not a request, so much as an order! Mary taught at Croydon from 1954 to 1958 when she became pregnant with her first child, a honeymoon baby boy. Learning of her pregnancy, Miss Adams said to Mary: 'tell the girls to carry your books!'



Her husband was then appointed Junior Manager of a Plastics Plant in Barry, so the family moved to South Wales where they lived for ten years and Mary worked at both Barry Grammar School and Glamorgan College of Education. During their time there, the family expanded again with another son in 1960 and a girl in 1962. In 1968 the family moved to Richmond, where Mary took a position at Digby Stuart College in London. In 1971 Mary's husband's job brought them to Salisbury, and she took up a position as Senior Lecturer at Sarum St Michael's College. When the College was closed in 1978, she led the fight for redundancy payments for herself and her colleagues, threatening her employers with an industrial tribunal. 'I have never been afraid to put my head above the parapet', she says of herself. 'I was disappointed when they backed down – I had picked out what I was going to wear in court!' Following that, she took a scale one teaching position at La Retraite School (now Leehurst Swan) where she went on to serve as Head from 1986 until her retirement in 1994. She went on to serve as a Governor at the school.

Her first husband had died of cancer in 1972, and with her marriage to Patrick she acquired two more sons and another mother in law - Phyllis Wood - who was a member of SI Bath

Mary joined SI Salisbury in 1984 and was Club President in 1988-9, the year of the Club's tenth anniversary. She was a regular Federation Conference attender and she attended the 1991 International Convention in Nottingham. She was President of Southern England in 1996-7. She served as Mayoress of Salisbury in Patrick's Mayoral year 2005-6.

The Club had been a driving force in the establishment of Salisbury Women's Refuge in 1983-4, and the project is very dear to Mary's heart. She served as a Trustee of the Refuge for 30 years and has recently been appointed Honorary President. She supports many other local community projects including Wessex Community Action, The Lovelane Friendship Club Day Centre, Christian Aid, the Arts Society and Churches Together. She was awarded the MBE in 2010 in recognition of her work in support of Salisbury Women's Refuge, and her years of service to the local community.

In 2013 Patrick died of cancer, and since then Mary has continued to support community projects, and is very proud of their family of five grown children and seven grandchildren, with whom she stays in close touch. She was delighted to attend the Charter Dinner of the new Salisbury Club in August 2019 at Salisbury Cathedral.