



Welcome from the President

Dear Alumnae,

The centre pages of the Newsletter publish an extract from the fascinating interview with Phyllis Burke (Roscrea), the renowned stained-glass artist. Thanks to Dairine Walsh who edited the original publication from the *Irish Arts Review* and who has put so much thought in redesigning the Newsletter reflecting our international status and carrying the international AMASC colours and logo.

Our coffee mornings which are open to all past pupils on the second Saturday of every month continue. Thanks to Máire Kirwan who has brought many new hostesses on board and thank you to so many who have given generously of their time. The monthly Film Club is flourishing with thanks to Áine Carson Tennyson with an increasing number attending.

A number of members of AMASC are looking forward to visiting Joigny this June. Thank you to Maebh Gallagher and Perdita Quinlan who has put so much work into arranging this visit and dealing with all the logistics of travel.

In memory of Joanne Sheehan former President of AMASC, the Committee gave a donation of €250 to the rscj in Joigny and €250 to the Blackrock Hospice who looked after Joanne in her final days. Both donations were gratefully received.

The AMASC AGM is on Saturday, 10 May 2025 at 12.30 pm immediately following the monthly coffee morning. A light lunch will be served. We look forward to seeing everyone there; the notice of the AGM is in this Newsletter. My three years as President comes to an end at the AGM on 10 May 2025. Good governance requires change and renewal. We would particularly welcome nominations as committee members from alumnae of Armagh, Leeson Street, Monkstown and Roscrea.

AMASC is the international representative body of rscj past pupils in Ireland. Whilst regrettably three schools have now closed both Armagh in Northern Ireland and Mount Anville in this jurisdiction educate under the ethos of rscj. Regardless of which school(s), each of us attended, it must be remembered that we are all the one Family.

We would remind current members and we are looking for new members for AMASC. We need your support for continuing our coffee mornings, Film Club, and in particular the publication of this Newsletter with its printing and postage being AMASC's single largest expense.

With best wishes and thank you to all our supporters

Frances Meenan President, AMASC Ireland



Dates for your Diary

- Saturday 10th May AMASC AGM
- June - Visit to Joigny
- Coffee Mornings 2nd Saturday of each month
- Film Club 3rd Wednesday of each month



Coffee Mornings

10.30am to 12pm. 2nd Saturday of each month.
All welcome

12th April Joan Balfe & Alice Davy

10th May Maire Kirwan & Moya Farrell

14th June Frances Meenan & Marie Hanlon

12th July Margaret Cawley O'Connor & Jean Coleman

9th August Mimi Goodman & Catherine Murphy

13th September Marie Harte & Eithne Gallagher



Film Club

3rd Wednesday of each month
The Odeon Stillorgan



St Malachy 1960-61 St Peter's CC, Milford, Co Donegal

By kind permission of the Irish Arts Review, this is an edited version of an interview with the stained-glass artist Phyllis Burke (a past pupil of Sacred Heart Roscrea) - first published in the *Irish Arts Review* vol. 40 no. 4 (winter 2023).

Heavenly light

David Caron (DC) meets stained-glass artist Phyllis Burke (PB).

DC: You were born in 1930 in Kildare town, before moving to Dublin aged fifteen. Did you come from an artistic family and was your creativity encouraged?

PB: Not really, though my mother painted as a pastime and my older sister, Clare, who later became a nun, used to encourage me to draw. There was no drawing on the curriculum in Kildare, but aged eleven I went to school in Roscrea. The fact that they had drawing classes was an inducement to go to boarding school.

DC: You made a trip to France which made a profound impression on you.

PB: I think it was 1954 that I went to France and visited Chartres Cathedral and St Denis and La Chapelle, and when I came back, I went straight into the stained-glass class at the College of Art that evening. Johnny Murphy was the teacher there. Patrick Pye and Helen Moloney were also studying stained glass. We were all slightly mature students and I attended there for a couple of years. I was concentrating on glass at that point but I continued with the drawing and painting classes. A group of us – about six or seven – including Berthold Dunne and James Nolan, used to go out every Sunday, painting watercolours. We'd get the bus or the train to places like Loughshinny, Malahide or the Dargle.

DC: You also met your future husband, Arthur Gibney, then a young architect, on these painting trips.

PB: Yes, I persuaded Arthur to get me some glass to do and he contacted a friend of his who was working for Pearse McKenna – who did a lot of work for Africa – and Pearse gave me a set of Stations of the Cross to make for a church in Nigeria (in 1958). I remember I made the first station myself – I cut the glass and leaded it, and it wasn't great. They were small, about one foot square. I got the glass from Hetley's in London. It cost me a fortune – £20 – I still remember that! In Johnny Murphy's class there was also Dermot McLoughlin, whose brother worked in Harry Clarke's studio as a glazier. Johnny said to me, 'Ask Dermot to do the leading for you,' which he did. We became great friends and he did a lot of the glazing for my work over the years. He was one of the best glaziers. I depended on his good advice. He took pride in his work.

DC: You mentioned that your older sister became a nun. Do you think your interest in stained glass and your own faith played a role in your career? Were you drawn to religious subjects?

PB: No, but I always say I was very fortunate being involved in religious work, as that is where the work was for stained-glass artists.

DC: Were there any stained-glass artists or artists who worked in other media who inspired you?

PB: Not really, but I would have been influenced by the Impressionist painters, such as Monet. Their preoccupation with colour and light would have parallels with stained glass.



Lamb of God 1974 Oranmore CC, Co Galway

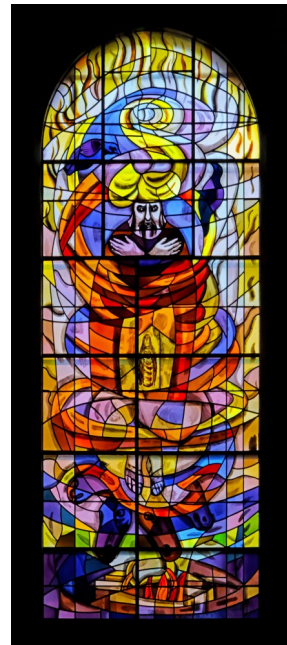
C: Can you speak about the role of light when it comes to stained glass?

PB: Light is very important. A sculptor's medium is stone, wood or metal, a musician's is sound, a glassblower's is glass – but a stained-glass artist's medium is light, and glass is their tool. It carves, moulds, directs the light, which is never static. Even on a clear day light changes, however gradually. So, a window is always changing – constantly being recreated, I like to think. That is why I am not in favour of putting artificial light behind stained glass. There is no life in it.

I always had to be very aware of the rotation of the sun, but Clarendon Street Church was unusual as there were adjacent tall buildings, some of which bounced light off them in an unexpected manner, and that brought additional light into the nave. I remember, after the *St Joseph* window had been installed, Fr Christopher brought me up to view it. With a large window you never see it all together until it is erected in position and I would hold my breath in anticipation. Until it is put in, the window is still mine. Then, when I see it, it goes from me, and I get so depressed. Fr Christopher was surprised and said, 'But you've got all the other nave windows yet to do!'



The Good Shepherd 2002 Carmelite Priory, Loughrea, Co Galway



St Elijah 1991 Carmelite Church Clarendon St, Dublin

DC: You made your last windows in 2007–8 for Clarendon Street and for Terenure College's Chapel. Did you make a conscious decision to stop working?

PB: No, there were just fewer commissions for stained-glass artists. The last thing I did was a small enamel for Clarendon Street, for the entrance to the confessional room there.

DV: Looking back at your stained-glass career, what aspect of a stained-glass commission did you find the most enjoyable – coming up with the initial design/ composition, drawing the cartoons, selecting or painting the glass?

PB: Selecting the glass, oh yes! That was the best part. Selecting all the different tones and colours, and there would be bubbles that would add to its character. Generally, the tones would be lighter in one part of the sheet of glass, and you'd have to mark out on the sheet which part you would want the glazier to cut. The thing about 'antique' glass, the type I used, is that it varies so much. It's so alive. It's never the same when you view it – in a second it can change. Glass is not like a picture hanging on the wall. The architecture, the surroundings the light coming in, the orientation of the window and the height from the ground are all important

I always say that when I die and wake up, if I'm in the kitchen I'll be in hell, but if I'm in my studio, selecting glass for a window, looking at it against the light, I'll be in heaven.



On December 8, the Archbishop of Paris dedicated the altar of the newly renovated Notre Dame de Paris and placed inside a small reliquary with the relics of five saints.

These are five individuals who have marked the life of the diocese of Paris: three women and two men who demonstrated five ways of responding to the Father's call.

One of them is Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865), educator and founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart, which received its Jesuit-inspired constitutions in 1815.

AMASC AGM

AMASC AGM – Saturday, 10 May 2025 at 12.30 pm

AMASC is the international representative body of alumnae and alumni of rscj schools in Ireland

Agenda

- Minutes of the last AGM
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Nominations for President and members of committee
- (nominations for past pupils of Armagh, Leeson Street, Monkstown and Roscrea – particularly welcome)
- The future of AMASC
- Any other business.

A light lunch will be served.

Nominations for positions on the Committee must be in writing and be signed by two fully paid-up members of AMASC. For ease, nominations may be emailed to pastpupils@mountanville.ie at least seven days prior to the AGM.

MAPPA UPDATE

MAPPA Business Luncheon 2025: Celebrating Sisterhood and Community Support



The second annual MAPPA Business Luncheon took place at the Fitzwilliam Lawn Tennis Club, bringing together an incredible group of women from various industries and backgrounds to celebrate the power of sisterhood and community.

MAPPA (The Mount Anville Past Pupils Association) has a long-standing tradition of fostering connections and providing a platform for past pupils to come together, support one another, and uplift the next generation. This year's event focused on the theme of "Sisterhood"—a theme that highlights the power of women supporting one another in business and beyond.

Christina Torsney, President of MAPPA, kicked off the event with an inspiring speech that celebrated the continued growth and connection of the past pupil community. Christina, a proud member of the class of 2008, shared her pride in being the youngest ever president of the Association and emphasised the importance of the Sacred Heart ethos—built on Faith, Character, Intellect, Community, and Social Awareness.

One of the most exciting elements of the event was MAPPA's ongoing support for the Rose Bursary Programme. The money raised through event sponsorship will go directly to this initiative, which provides financial assistance to students in need. The event was inspired by the success of past pupil networks at boys' schools, with the ambition to not only emulate but surpass them in creating a dynamic, supportive, and empowering community for women.

The highlight of the day was the panel discussion on "Sisterhood," featuring three remarkable past pupils: Joanne, Elaine, and Ciara Byrne. Each shared their unique insights and experiences on how women support one another in both their professional and personal lives.

Deputy Principal Elaine Kelly also took the stage to speak about the Rose Bursary Programme and how the MAPPA community can continue to support it.



**AMASC (IRELAND)
COMMITTEE 2024**

Áine Carson Tennyson (Mount Anville)
Marie Doyle (Monkstown)
Phil Elwood (Roscrea) Cork Branch
Jean FitzGerald (Mount Anville)
Maebh Gallagher (Mount Anville)
Elizabeth Gebruers (Roscrea) Cork Branch
Marie Hanlon (Mount Anville) Treasurer
Máire Kirwan (Mount Anville)

Hilda O'Connell (Leeson Street)
Frances Meenan (Leeson St and Mount Anville),
President AMASC
Gabrielle O'Neill (Mount Anville)
Perdita Quinlan (Mount Anville)
Christina Torsney (Mount Anville) President MAPPA
Dairine Walsh (Leeson St and Mount Anville)