

A CAREER IN JOURNALISM: Mary Ingham 2.15 pm Thursday, September 17th

On Thursday, September 15th, Mary Ingham told us of her diverse career working on a variety of newspapers and magazines from *SHE* in London to the Carlisle-based *News & Star*.

During Mary's many years in print journalism, the industry changed dramatically with manual typewriters giving way to PCs and laptops and print sales dropping as online content expanded. Mary's work was not always enjoyable, she said, but it was always interesting and she felt privileged to have met a vast cross-section of people and to share their stories.

Mary admitted creating some groan-inducing puns for headlines, an early example in *SHE* being 'A Womb with a View' to accompany a photograph taken by a woman while giving birth. Working as a sub-editor on *SHE* was Mary's entry into journalism. Combining feminism and tradition, the magazine gave a voice to women with imaginative ideas and enterprises and at the time had a circulation of 330,000. It was printed in Italy, its deadlines dictated by flight times to Turin. Mary had an on-the-job training in which accuracy was highly valued and she was allowed to take tentative steps into celebrity interviewing with a feature about tennis star Ilie Năstase.

Mary was scaling the career ladder on *SHE* when she left to pursue a dream of living in San Francisco. There she did some subbing shifts and freelance articles for the *Pacific Sun*, a weekly news magazine in Marin County north of the Golden Gate Bridge. The *Pacific Sun* paid by the column inch and writers developed a correspondingly expansive style.

A few years later, Mary was back in the UK, working as *Farmers Weekly's* first female sub then as a reporter on – and later editing – its Farmlife section. Her time on Farmlife involved long hours and extensive travel in the UK and Europe as she interviewed farming families about their business diversifications and interests. Brand extension was important and included running readers' weekends and providing hospitality at the big agricultural shows.

After marrying and moving to Cumbria with her family, Mary worked for *The Cumberland News* and *News & Star* and we were reminded of local events such as the arrival of refugees from Bosnia, the Queen's visit to Oasis (later Center Parcs) "glowing with her star quality", and Tony Robinson and 'Time Team' at Appleby. Floods were a sadly recurring theme and reporting on the devastating foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2001 made a lasting impression.

Mary went on to work for Cumbria Life as a commissioning editor, writer and deputy editor, followed by four years as the magazine's freelance arts editor. Under the editorship of Richard Eccles, the magazine went from bi-monthly to monthly and Mary spoke of the pleasure of working with staff photographers such as Phil Rigby and columnists including Caz Graham and Hunter Davies. She said the magazine was all about celebrating the best of Cumbria, its landscape, food, homes, culture and inspirational people such as Ulverston saxophonist Jess Gillam and writer and broadcaster Melvyn Bragg.



Her involvement in reporting on events of international, national and local significance clearly gave Mary a rewarding and interesting career and stimulated a range of questions from a very appreciative audience.