

Mary Stewart Tait (1886-1925)

Mary achieved Class II in Final Honours in Modern Languages at Oxford in addition to gaining the Hampstead Physical Training College Certificate in 1892. She is well known for introducing to Madame 'a simple pleated tunic, which reached the ground when the student knelt'. It eventually became the usual school uniform for many girls all over the world. At one stage Mary taught Kindergarten children and working class girls in Edgbaston and also had some private patients. In 1893 Mary was listed as the Superintendent at Dartford and was Vice Principal for six years. The photograph, dated about 1903, held in the Österberg Collection shows her wearing a Madame Bergman Österberg College brooch.

Mary was appointed Lady Principal of Dunfermline College of Hygiene and Physical Training in 1908. During her time in office, in 1909, the Scotch Education Department recognised the college as a Central Institution for the purposes of Education and it was therefore eligible to receive grants. *The History of Dunfermline College* quoted the minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, which was presented to both Houses of Parliament in June 1909: *The Diploma is recognised by the Scotch Education Department as the basis of a special qualification to conduct Physical Exercise and School Gymnastics... Candidates for admission to the college were expected to hold the Intermediate Certificate of the Scotch Education Department or an equivalent.*

Mary appointed three of Madame's former students to her staff: Anna Holmblad (1902), Vera Volkhovsky (1904) and Ruth Craigmile (1906).

Mary resigned her post as Principal in 1910 as a result of a disagreement with the Dunfermline College Trustees re her salary. She joined three different suffrage groups after she was no longer in post.