



REBECCA HEADS TO TANZANIA TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

After leaving STM back in the summer, I'm now 6 weeks into my 9 month stay in Tanzania. I am volunteering in Don Bosco Secondary school Didia, in the North of Tanzania. The school is primarily a boarding school run by Fathers, Brothers and Sisters from the Salesian community and takes students from the English equivalent of Year 6 through to Year 13. The students were so welcoming to me when I arrived and I am already starting to feel at home in the community. I love spending time with them, learning about the music and dance that they enjoy and I am trying my best to learn some Swahili - they are very good teachers!

At the moment I am helping one of the Sisters to teach English Grammar to a year 6 class. It is their first year of learning English - as their mother tongue is Swahili - so the lessons can be challenging, however I find them equally as rewarding.



The students wake up at 4.30am to study before mass at 6.00am and then study until 10.00pm. My main role is to get to know the students, what is going on in their life and help in any way I can. Although I will be missing home I'm looking forward to experiencing more of their culture over the Christmas period.

- Rebecca Mould, graduated 2019

Mick Douglas
1949 - 2019

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to excel outside class

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Author Daniel Tawse
returns to STM

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Council Representatives

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ADVENT PRAYER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

God our Father, as we journey through Advent help us to be people of patience and prepare well for the coming of your Son. As darkness will soon be overcome, help us to reflect bright Christmas light into the world by living our lives to their fullest and reaching out to all those in need. Amen.



SIXTH FORM STUDENTS DIVE INTO ANOTHER PINK DAY

On Friday 25th October, Sixth Form students dived straight into the excitement of our annual PINK DAY! From pyjamas to slippers, hair dye to tutus, Year 12 and Year 13 engulfed themselves in the pink world for an amazing cause, the Breast Cancer Now charity! Brownies, cupcakes, doughnuts and all biscuits imaginable were part of the sugary treats available at the bake sale. Particular thanks to 'Bake me a Cake' in Whitley Bay and Roderick Tan for their amazing professional cake donations, which were raffled to staff.



With the money from the cake sale combined with the students' donations to dress as pink and as crazy as possible, we raised a staggering total of £882.00, with Matt Caffrey (Year 13) alone raising £225.00 for dying his hair pink! An amazing result.

- Shyler Little, Year 12



MICK DOUGLAS 1949 - 2019

At the end of November, we heard the sad news of the death of former colleague, Michael (Mick) Douglas. Mick taught at St Anselm's and was one of the original staff of St Thomas More after amalgamation in 1988. He served as Head of Geography and then as Head of Year until his retirement in 2006. He was passionate about the outdoors and ran the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in school for many years. When he retired Mick continued to serve education in the Diocese as a Governor, Admissions Appeals panel member and advocate for young people.

People who knew him and worked with him have left messages of condolence that paint a picture of a true Christian man, a mountain of a man with a booming voice and a presence around the school that lasted long after his retirement. People described him as truly dynamic, with a kind and open nature who always had the interests of the pupils at the heart of everything he did, giving up countless hours and weekends to also run the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Others have commented on his passion for his subject, in particular being a major part of the Geography department's Boscastle flooding case study after being stuck there during the 2004 floods, in one of his many stints as stand-in warden at one of the country's Youth Hostels, for which he had a particular love.

Without doubt Mick will never be forgotten here at STM due to the unique contribution he brought, a true STM legend and a key player in the formation of the school right from the start. He has been described as a measuring stick for a quality teacher, Head of Year and human, truly one of a kind and an inspiration to so many.

John Marshall, former Headteacher of STM (1988-2007) has written the following: "So grateful for his unwavering and instinctive support, commitment and loyalty to the school community, and to me personally, and for his personality, rich humour, and wealth of worldly wisdom and common sense. A true stalwart of STM. Rest in peace for a long, long time."



ICELAND 2019

Day 1: The flight to Reykjavik was calm and steady, with everyone catching up on their sleep after the 12:15am start. Once we arrived in Iceland around 10:45am, we visited the impressive Tectonic Plate Margin, the space between the Eurasian and the North American plates. Shortly after this, we went to the world famous Blue Lagoon, where we enjoyed face masks whilst taking in the breath-taking views. - Megan Crowe & Gracie Davies

Day 2: It was an early 9:00am start and it was still pitch

black, but everyone's spirits were high as we drove to the Pingvellir National Park to see a beautiful waterfall. We then went on to walk round the rim of an extinct volcano before heading to the geysirs. As we walked towards the big one (Stokkur) it went off and soaked us all with steam. Everyone was standing, phones at the ready, for the next eruption. By 7:30pm we all jumped in the hotel pool; it was a lovely way to end an adventurous second day. - Amy Tasker and Gracie Davies

Day 3: Today we visited the Lava Centre, where we got to experience a volcanic eruption simulation and to see how Iceland has changed through different periods. After the Lava Centre we visited some more waterfalls, one of which (Seljalandfoss)

we were able to walk behind. After the waterfalls we visited the Solheimajokull glacier, seeing how climate change has affected it, before our final stop at the black sand beach near Vik. - Megan Salmon, Sophie Newton and Erin Marshall

Day 4: First stop on the coach was the Sun Voyager statue in Reykjavik. Most of us then tried the famous hot dogs that Bill Clinton ate three of when he visited Iceland, we also went to the water tower dome and took in the most amazing view of the city and the snowy mountains. Later we travelled to the Hallgrímskirkja church and listened to the choir, which was very different to our choirs in the UK. - Natasha McGowan, Josie Anderson and Niamh Rafferty



YEAR 11 STUDENT EXCELLING BOTH IN AND OUT OF CLASS

ALEKSANDRA SZYMCZAK

UNESCO has designated 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table and as such, there are activities taking place around the world. Aleksandra Szymczak in Year 11 entered the Chemical Industries Association poster competition, where entrants had to choose what they considered to be the most important chemical element in their lives. Aleks chose to do her poster on Hydrogen, producing what you see below.



Aleks' hard work and exceptional attention to detail won her first prize in the national 15-18 years category, winning £1000 for the Science department at STM to spend on equipment, as well as a £300 individual prize.



EX-PUPIL AND AUTHOR DANIEL TAWSE RETURNS TO STM TO SHARE HIS EXPERTISE

On Tuesday 26th November, a group of Year 9 and 10 students had an author visit from an ex-pupil, Daniel Tawse, to talk about his debut novel 'Fairy Boys'. The novel is set in the North East over the course of a summer and its main character is a 14 year-old boy called Star who is trying to find himself. During the session we asked him questions about his writing and what gave him the inspiration to write his novel. He also asked us about our aspirations and talked about how the main character tried to achieve his. Then he asked us

to write a short story using the 'show not tell' method. We could all write about whatever we wanted and at the end he read some of them out and gave feedback on them.

We enjoyed talking about our aspirations and then using these to help shape a piece of writing. It was fantastic to share our ideas with a published author. We would definitely recommend his book too! Thank you, Daniel! - Erin Marshall and Charlotte Lowe, Year 10 and James Taws and Luise Johnson, Year 9

Food, Water, Industry, transport, buildings, education, medicine, environment, us.



TRIPS AND EVENTS



LITERACY TRAINING DAY

Literacy across the curriculum was the focus of the November Training Day for most staff. We were pleased to welcome Tom Martell from the Education Endowment Foundation, who gave an excellent keynote speech on literacy and then ran a workshop on how to teach academic vocabulary. We even enjoyed a book swap during the tea break, trading a book that we had enjoyed for something else recommended by a colleague. - Mrs Feeny, English Department

YEAR 13 BIOLOGY VISIT TO THE CENTRE FOR LIFE

On Monday 14th October, the Year 13 Biology students went on an exciting trip to the Centre for Life. A particularly impressive part of the day was when we used micropipettes, which was something new to everyone. Using these new techniques we created a DNA profile of our own saliva. The day was very interesting and helped us all greatly in understanding the techniques we have discussed in class. - Maisie Ritchie, Year 13



BTEC MUSIC CHILDREN IN NEED CONCERT

On Friday 15th November, the BTEC Music students across Years 10, 11 and 12 performed in the school hall in front of a large audience, raising money for BBC Children in Need. Throughout the day, we set up the stage, lighting and sound, making sure everything was perfect for the night ahead. Every single person in BTEC Music was involved, whether that be performing or via the lights/sound. - Megan Coupland, Year 10

YEAR 7 CHRISTMAS FILM FOR LOURDES

On Monday 2nd December, the Year 13 BTEC Business group held a Year 7 Christmas Film night for the Lourdes HCPT charity. HCPT offer children with a variety of difficulties the chance of a week of respite away from their family. Around one hundred Year 7s attended, showing great enthusiasm for buying tickets, drinks and sweets, with one student commenting that it "was a good way to meet new people within my year group!" - Year 13 BTEC Business students



DANCE SHOWCASE

Our talented dancers in Performing Arts and the Year 7 Dance Club performed with passion at the Celebration of Dance Evening on Wednesday 4th December! The evening was successful not only thanks to the commitment of Mrs Roberts and the dancers who performed, but also thanks to the wonderful audience who attended. It was so great to see a variety of ages and dance styles showcased. All the dancers should be very proud. - Martie Inson and Emily Rutherford, Year 11

UK MATHS OLYMPIAD FOR GIRLS

At the beginning of October, I sat the UK Maths Olympiad for Girls along with Elizabeth Adamson, Shruthi Sathish and Olivia Smith. The questions are deliberately challenging to really try and make you think. It was interesting to attempt problems that are so different to what we do in A level Maths. One of the big aims is to try to encourage more girls into Maths and Science subjects, and I think that this Olympiad really helps to promote interest. - Caitlin Pang, Year 12





HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PROJECT

One of our recent projects in Health and Social Care has been to design a menu for a specific dietary need, my chosen dietary need was an individual who was skipping meals, missing key nutrients. This area of the subject has helped me to investigate areas that I might pursue in my future career, hopefully as part of the Royal Navy's logistician services, which would give me so many opportunities to travel whilst also cooking and learning new skills.
- Bethany Taylor, Year 13

LEEDS TRINITY TRIP FOR ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY

On Thursday 7th November, Year 12 and 13 E&P classes had the opportunity to visit Leeds Trinity University. After a campus tour, the afternoon was a two hour taster session on the degree courses offered in Philosophy, Ethics and Religion. We found this very informative and engaging, particularly as the lecturer covered some work on Augustine's teachings on human nature and the soul, which we are currently studying as part of our A Level. - Skye Foxton and Ellie Curry, Year 13



YEAR 7 WORD MILLIONAIRES

Here are our first Word Millionaires for this year. Joe Eggett 7R, Matilda Woodhall 7M and Yousuf-Ali Hasan 7S have all read over a million words each this term using the Accelerated Reader scheme. Popular authors for the three include Derek Landy, Joseph Delaney and Lemony Snicket. Between them they have notched up over 5,500,000 words....an amazing effort!

- Miss Edwards, School Librarian

MRS MOLE'S READING HABITS

The boys from the Year 7 Book group have interviewed Mrs Mole about her reading habits. Not surprisingly history books are her favourite. As a child she loved the Chronicles of Narnia and would recommend Tudor Terror by Terry Deary to any Year 7. Sadly she reported that she is too busy to read as much as she would like but she always keeps up with the newspapers and modern politics.
- Joe Eggett, Yannik Hardy, Ted Miles, Zak Brannon & Jonathan Gaukrodger, Year 7



SPORTSHALL ATHLETICS

On Tuesday 26th November it was cold and damp; luckily the Year 7 Athletics against the best athletes from thirteen local schools was indoors. For each track event we entered two boys and two girls, and all did fantastically well, particularly in the relays. In the field events we again did well, particularly in the shot putt, watch out Olympics 2028. We were all very proud to represent STM and to finish in fifth place at the end of the day.
- Ava Sutcliffe, Year 7

TABLE TENNIS

On Tuesday 3rd December, our under thirteen and under sixteen Table Tennis teams both represented North Tyneside in the Tyne & Wear Sport School Games tournament at the Beacon of Light in Sunderland. Both teams produced fantastic results to reach their respective semi finals. Congratulations to Alex Docherty, Alex Kelly, Alfie Given & David Keirpacz, Ethan Veitch, Kyle Lloyd, Kevin Abraham & Braden Marshall.
- Mr Young, PE



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM...



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

On Tuesday 12th November, Year 9 students commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day. This consisted of all students participating in workshops, History lessons and even a talk from a Holocaust survivor, Eva Clarke. This was to remind all of the students about the terrible events that happened between 1941 and 1945 and to make sure we are all educated on the effects of this tragedy.

During the workshops, different subjects taught us things connected to the Holocaust. These subjects included: Food Technology, where we made Challah bread; Art, where we drew on tea bags to remember those lost; Languages, where we learnt words related to the Holocaust and History, where we wrote memorials to the six million Jewish people who lost their lives.

In the afternoon, we were all engaged by a talk from a Holocaust survivor, Eva Clarke. She told her inspirational and uplifting story about how she and her mother were affected by the dreaded camps. She went into detail about how her mother was imprisoned by the Nazis and how she survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Mauthausen in the Czech Republic, Poland and Austria respectively. The story she told was engaging, interesting and let us all see the trauma that the prisoners experienced there. Since Eva was only born at the end of the war in Mauthausen, she didn't have many memories of the camps, so the stories she told were her mother's, but that didn't stop the story from putting the horror of the camps into perspective.

- Ethan Stout and Daniel McMillan, Year 9

LESSONS FROM AUSCHWITZ

On Wednesday 16th October we were given the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the Holocaust Education Trust's annual 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme.

Following a visit to the local town, where we were shown the normality of Jewish lives before the war, we toured the first camp, Auschwitz 1. This camp was a concentration camp, mainly for political opponents, Gypsies and other targeted groups. It was largely made up of brick barracks as well as a gas chamber which was the cause of thousands of murders. The second camp, Birkenau, was the camp which saw the majority of the 1.1 million Jews who died at Auschwitz murdered. The experience was very eerie as we attempted to take in the demolished gas chambers, overly-small barracks and the train tracks which led millions to their death.

The visit has given us a new perspective on our daily lives. It is crucial for people to visit concentration camps such as Auschwitz, as ultimately the lives of the millions of Jewish people who were murdered must live on. It is a wake-up call as to what humans are capable of doing to each other.

- Robbie Fenwick and Freya Rippin, Year 13



**TED
MILES
YEAR 7**



**MEGAN
NEASHAM-McMANUS
YEAR 7**



**JOE
McMULLAN
YEAR 8**



**JOYCE
MISA
YEAR 8**



**KEVIN
ABRAHAM
YEAR 9**

YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL

The school council election took place at the beginning of the Autumn term. Two pupils from each form were nominated as form representatives. They were then asked to prepare a short speech on why they wanted to be a member of the Student Council. On the day of the election, every student in the school was given a polling card and the opportunity to vote for one person from their year.

We now have a Student Council that consists of two students from each yeargroup from Year 7 to Year 13. Our team is confident, resilient and keen to make things happen. Some of these changes are in the areas of recycling, food and energy wastage, litter and bullying. We hope to create positive change around St Thomas More! If you would like anything raised with the School Council, please speak to one of your year group representatives. - Shruthi Sathish, Year 12



**FARI CHHINA-
CONYERA
YEAR 9**



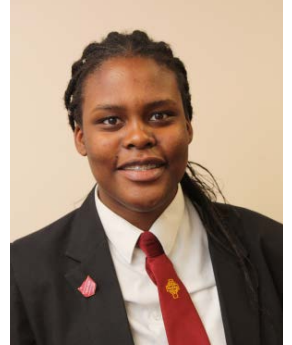
**VICTORIA
PELLEVA
YEAR 10**



**SAM
TELFORD
YEAR 10**



**JAMES
BERTRAM
YEAR 11**



**GLORIA
METANMO
YEAR 11**



**SHRUTHI
SATHISH
YEAR 12**



**WILL
WILSON
YEAR 12**



**DAVID
ADAMS
YEAR 13**



**KATIE
BLAND
YEAR 13**



**GEORGINA
POWELL
YEAR 13**





JAYDEN STAFFORD ACHIEVES HIS KARATE BLACK BELT

Hello, my name is Jayden from 7A. After just over five years of training with NFKA (Northern Free-Style Karate Association) North Shields and Cullercoats I have finally made it to a black belt. This was a very memorable day in my life as I made my family, instructors and, of course, myself proud. I was supported by my instructors including Mr Robson (school caretaker). It was a very intense day which lasted over five hours, during which I had to show all of the skills I have learnt. This quote has helped me very much all the way through my Karate training from aged six until now, "Aim high and you will succeed". I hope my achievement will inspire others to reach their dreams.

- Jayden Stafford, Year 7

EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES... ...AND HOW TO JOIN OUR ALUMNI

We love sharing the success of our ex-pupils and this issue is no different. We are also in the process of building up our alumni network through an organisation called Future First. If you would like to be involved please follow the link on our Twitter account @STMRCA or go to networks.futurefirst.org.uk/register/stthomasaided/type, and if you would like to share your story in a future issue of More Life please send an email to alogie@stmacademy.org.uk.

DECLAN PANG 2009-2016

After finishing seven years at STM in 2016, I left for Oxford to start my degree in Medicine. We've been allowed to do so many exciting things, including cutting open limbs, taking blood for the first time, and holding a beating heart! The Medicine course at Oxford is pretty unique in that we have a compulsory year out during third year, so last year I specialised in 'infection and immunology'. I helped to optimise a safe Ebola model to replicate real (and quite scary!) Ebola virus biology without the need to cover up in Breaking Bad-style hazmat suits! I graduated in July and I'm really looking forward to spending more time on the wards this year. I'm intending to apply for a Cancer Research UK DPhil position next year, taking three years to focus on cancer immunology, before coming back to continue my clinical studies.



JESSICA BOURON 2014-2018

As a very enthusiastic first year marine biology student, I quickly realised that I should make the most of my summers before graduating. When I discovered that Operation Wallacea offered expeditions diving and monitoring tropical reefs in the Coral



Triangle, I knew it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. With the support of my friends and family, I hesitantly applied for the Alfred Russel Wallace grant, and my initial reaction on hearing that my application had been successful was to jump around my room with excitement and call everyone I could think of who had supported me. The sense of accomplishment I felt arriving in Makassar, Indonesia motivated me even more for the two weeks ahead; I could travel to the other side of the world on my own! Being immersed in such a beautiful, diverse and rich ecosystem only increased my appreciation for the marine world.

Diving twice a day in stunningly beautiful tropical waters taught me a lot, and I quickly learnt that diving scientifically is a very different experience to recreational diving. If the occasional hydroid sting or being up to my elbows mashing fish guts for bait is the price for becoming a field biologist, then it is one I will happily pay. I'm no longer simply working for my degree – I now know where I'm heading.

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