

# MORE LIFE

St Thomas More  
Catholic High School

EASTER 2022

## MAX GODFREY YOUNG MAYOR



This year's young mayor elections have recently finished. Year 10 student, Max Godfrey, became the next Young Mayor of North Tyneside, following on from Suzie McKenzie, another St Thomas More student.

Mr O'Connor runs our student council and supported students from STM to run for election. He said "St Thomas More are proud to carry on providing Young Mayors! Huge congratulations to former Young Mayor, Suzie McKenzie, for her hard work and excellent example to our young people in the region." He

also congratulated Meg Giles in Year 11, who ran against Max for Young Mayor, as well as Kody Walker in Year 10 and Alisina Hassani in Year 12, who both ran admirable campaigns in a bid to become members of the UK Youth Parliament, but who both sadly lost out this time.

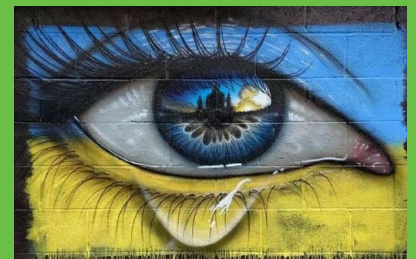
I recently caught up with Max and interviewed him for More Life. The full interview can be seen [here](#), with my write-up continuing on page 5.

Max's winning campaign was one built upon climate change, a subject

### AN EASTER PRAYER FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

As we fast approach the Easter season, we pause for a moment to reflect on the current situation in Ukraine and other war torn areas of our divided world. The Resurrection story shows to us that darkness and evil cannot last forever, and we pray - in solidarity with all those who have had to flee their homes in recent weeks - that we can move towards a society of peace, justice and unity. Lord, dispel the division that exists in our world and provide sanctuary for all those in need. Lord, in your most merciful love, Amen.

Street art painted in Cardiff on 28th Feb 2022 by 'My Dog Sighs'.



**'Samantha's Legacy' team visit the school to raise awareness of knife crime**

02

**From plastic challenges to hijacked radio shows to the return of World Book Day**

07

**'We are the change that we seek' Charity and Citizenship work at STM**

03

**Bumper crop of ex-pupil successes**

09



# 'SAMANTHA'S LEGACY' SHARE FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF KNIFE CRIME

Violence, knives, and murder are not the average classroom subjects but 'Samantha's Legacy' is an organisation that aims to give young people the chance to hear first-hand the devastation one family can experience at the hands of knife crime.

Back in 2007, at the age of eighteen, former STM student Samantha Madgin was stabbed to death, leaving behind her 10-week old son and a shattered family. Since that day, her family have campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness about knife crime in the hope that they can stop another family from going through what they have had to endure. This includes working with the creator of the Knife Angel sculpture, constructed from 100,000 blades surrendered to or seized by the police. Two years ago a group of students, now in Year 10, may remember visiting the sculpture when it visited The Sage as part of its national tour.

The BBC filmed the talk from 'Samantha's Legacy' for a documentary on knife crime in the North East. The film makers also spoke with Year 11 Student Council and Ambassador members, Charles McManus, Brooke Pyle and Meg Giles, who represented the school wonderfully with their thoughts and reflections on the issue of knife crime and the real story of Samantha. The family featured in the documentary have also been in touch to praise our pupils and school for their support. The documentary is available here on the [BBC iPlayer](#).





# CHARITY 2021/22

Thank you so much to everyone for their generosity to the range of causes we have supported since the start of this academic year. Students in Main School have collected for various charities listed in the Christmas issue. Year 11 pulled together a huge haul of food for the Food Bank in the final week before Christmas and a group of students raised £300 for Unicef in Ukraine in the past month by running a bake sale, despite their imminent GCSE exams.

Sixth Form alone have been involved in five separate campaigns so far this year, raising money and donations for Afghan Refugees, St Vincent's Centre in Newcastle, a recent urgent appeal for Ukraine, as well as Pink Day and Comic Relief. In total they have raised well over £3000 and several minibuses loads of donations.

Ailish Bland, Year 13, was involved in one of the recent campaigns: "We visited St Vincent's Church in Newcastle on Monday with donations of clothes and toiletries for refugees who are seeking asylum in the area. I feel that it is extremely important for us, as a Catholic school, to help causes like this, as they help people less fortunate than ourselves and align with the values of our school. The centre helps many people across Newcastle, offering hot meals, clothing and support to those who need it. It's extremely important that people keep donating in order to ensure that it can keep running. It was amazing to have the opportunity to actually go and see the people our donations are helping."

For more information on recent charity work please see the school website at [stmacademy.org.uk](http://stmacademy.org.uk).

# "CHANGE WILL NOT COME IF WE WAIT FOR SOME OTHER PERSON OR IF WE WAIT FOR SOME OTHER TIME..."



## TYNE AND WEAR CITIZENS ASSEMBLY

Once again St Thomas More students (and staff) made a fantastic contribution to the Tyne and Wear Citizens Assembly on Thursday 17th March.

A number of students acted as the 'floor team', promoting the event outside the Civic Centre, welcoming guests to the event and showing them to their seats. Local leaders,

event organisers and guests of the event commented on their professionalism and their enthusiasm.

Lucy Oshegbu and Angel Muchiso, both Year 10, and Keira Edwards, Year 13, were involved in putting together a short film on anti-racism work in school. They spoke eloquently and emotively about the need to tackle racism in education and the attendees were literally queuing up to thank and praise the students at the end of the assembly.

Tyne & Wear  
**citizens**

Shantel Suneesh, Mishama Sony and Eve Zikhali, Year 12, met with North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll in the week leading up to the assembly, asking for his support to challenge Arriva to meet with them to discuss cheaper fares for 16-18 year olds. (Mr Driscoll said yes, but Arriva is a work in progress).  
- Mr Watson

# WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...



The Tyne & Wear Accountability Assembly was a 2-hour long assembly with more than 500 local people, all coming together to voice their concerns about numerous specific issues that are affecting North Tyneside and what could be done to tackle them. One of the main concerns they have is racism in education, which is important as it affects students and staff within our community on a frequent basis. Hearing live accounts and incidents of racism was upsetting but necessary in order to truly understand how it felt to be discriminated against, especially in a place that is supposed to be a safe environment for students and staff. To make a real difference, more preventative measures still need to be put in place, while condemning all forms of discrimination. The greatest takeaway from this event was that individual differences and cultural or ethnic backgrounds should not be a factor when it comes to simple morals; everyone deserves to be treated equally and respected as a human being.

- Angel Muchiso and Lucy Oshegbu, Year 10



This year students in Year 12 have been campaigning for more affordable bus fares for Sixth Form students. We conducted a survey and a listening campaign, which highlighted the main issue that students who are not yet eighteen are being charged the adult fare. We are passionate about this movement since we know the immense financial impact it can have on individuals. Further discussions led to us writing a letter to Arriva with these testimonies. We received no reply. This pushed us to plan our action to make change. We partnered up with members from Tyne and Wear Citizens, Simon and Wendy, who helped us facilitate this movement. Michael reached out to Mayor for the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Jamie Driscoll. He agreed to meet with us in Newcastle to discuss the issue; his power helped

us to get Arriva's attention. He also wrote a letter to Arriva, for which we received a reply in 20 minutes! This relationship that we have built with the Mayor was vital for our campaign in making bus fares fairer. We invited him to the Tyne and Wear Citizens Accountability Assembly where the issue was publicised. The Accountability Assembly involves many people who have the power to make changes to prominent issues e.g. racism and the real living wage. In this assembly we presented our issues regarding the bus fares, and we feel it really brought this subject to light. We plan to do further actions in the future to make bus fares more affordable because we believe that students who want to attend Sixth Form shouldn't have their education hindered by the price of public transport.  
- Shantel Suneesh, Mishama Sony and Eve Zikhali, Year 12



# WE ARE THE CHANGE THAT WE SEEK"

- BARACK OBAMA, 2008



(continued from front page) important to so many young people. He said "I want to increase the number of schools signed up to the green flag eco awards, increase recycling in the borough and to get a greater number of bins in public areas in schools." His aim for his term as Young Mayor is to fulfil his climate change pledge as well as making room to address other issues unrelated to climate change.

"I believe [it] will help local people, not just the young, but across the age gap" said Max, when asked how his work as Young Mayor would help others. He said he knows the importance of climate change and the devastating effects it could have on the borough and the world. Becoming

Young Mayor has given him a platform to voice his concerns around what is being done for the environment. His pledge is going to make real change to the way it is being dealt with.

When asked why it is important to have a youth voice in politics he said "I think that if young people are actually represented in politics and the issues important to us are actually brought to the forefront of what's actually being done, then our issues actually may be dealt with." We wish Max the best of luck on his term as Young Mayor, and wish him every success as he pushes for the voices of young people to be heard.

- Keira Edwards, Year 13



# CAREERS UPDATE

## NEXT STEPS FOR YEAR 11

On Tuesday 22nd of March, Year 11 completed their 'Next Steps' interviews with the Sixth Form Pastoral Team, Tyne Met College and Connexions. Students were supported to make their Sixth Form subject choices and had the opportunity to speak to Lee, our external careers advisor.

## NEXT STEPS FOR YEAR 11

This term also included National Careers Week from 7th-12th March. During form time, students selected and viewed a number of videos via the MyPath website, which allowed them to explore careers which they had not thought of and created some fantastic in-class discussions. To view more videos click [here](#).

## BUILD MY SKILLS WITH ESH

Over one hundred students from Years 10, 12 and 13 have been engaging in the Build My Skills project, which aims to bridge the skills gap, remove clichés and promote the construction sector to students in the local area. The students have completed sessions with Esh Construction and Ryder Architecture, and the next is with Media Works.

## YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE

Year 10 are currently on the hunt for employers to support them in their forthcoming Work Experience Week from 4th-8th July. They have been very busy contacting potential employers and organisations. If you think that you may be able to offer a placement then please email [Year10WorkExperience@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:Year10WorkExperience@stmacademy.org.uk).

## YEAR 12 ENTERPRISE: THE BAKE OFF!

The Year 12 Enterprise group have been working hard this term to set up their pop-up enterprise, which has seen them plan, prep and produce cakes for two bake sales. So far they have raised over £200 to reinvest into a summer business in the final term.

## USEFUL CAREERS WEBSITES

[National Careers Service](#) - includes entry routes, skills required and salary, as well as related careers and the chance to read up-to-date labour market information.  
[Plotr](#) - allows you to explore different sector areas.  
[Amazing Apprenticeships](#) - tackles misconceptions and promotes the benefits of apprenticeships.





# VIRTUAL GERMAN EXCHANGE

Easy, enjoyable, educational. These are just 3 of the words that I would use to describe the Cafe Connect Meeting in which myself and many others took part on the 14th March 2022.

Due to Covid 19, this year's German Exchange was a little different from usual. The pandemic became a huge obstacle in terms of actually having successful contact with our German partners. Despite this, thanks to the hard working staff of both participating schools and the dedicated members of the UK-German Connection team, they have effectively circumnavigated this obstacle. The solution to the problem was through the means of Cafe Connect, which is effectively a large Zoom call. Everyone taking part was involved in the first stage where the organisers brought



everyone together. We were then split into breakout rooms, where we got to meet with our partners and a few others.

Having to hold events over Zoom was definitely something new to many of us, but the experience was still one to remember! Connecting with our German Exchange partners

over text gave it that relaxed element, especially with the way Cafe Connect was set up. It allowed us to hold a casual conversation no different to the way we would talk to our friends. While going online this year was definitely not the outcome we all wanted, it was still amazing. We were able to answer questions about ourselves and learn about culture and life somewhere else, which I believe is at the heart of the German exchange program.

The Cafe Connect meeting was a valuable experience for all of us and we look forward to the next exciting opportunity that we can take part in.

- Lily Clephane and Kendra Paisley, Year 9



My partner's name is Emilia and we are both interested in the same music and books. Emilia is a huge Harry Potter fan and is passionate about her interests such as horse riding and mountain biking, to name a few. This is a learning experience for both of us, however her English is incredible but I'm still learning. - Lily

## GERMAN ESCAPE ROOM

Last Monday my German class and I spent our lesson solving a German Escape Room. This was a great exercise to use the German language and have the mindset of a native German speaker. With the help of vocabulary sheets we had to solve the Escape Room task, eventually finding the code to release a competitor from a locked dressing room for 'Das Supertalent', the German equivalent to 'Britain's Got Talent'.



We solved the clues in German but used other skills too. We used Maths equations to find the magician's number and used foreign countries' flags to fill in German numbers. By listening to a popular German singer, Nina, we filled in the lyrics to find another part of the code. After solving the code, we then used a German dictionary to find who the 'culprit' was. Each character's last name was a German word which correlated with their act in the show. For example, the magician's last name was Zauberin, literally translating to magician; the juggler's name was Jongleur, and the flag act was Fahne. Solving 'Das Supertalent' was an entertaining lesson that helped us have fun but also helped my class and I to get a clearer understanding of German culture.

- Georgie Bond, Year 9





# NEWS ROUNDUP



## YEAR 9 PLASTIC CHALLENGE

As part of their Topical Issues topic this year, Year 9 Geography students were encouraged to complete a Plastic Challenge homework, involving doing additional research projects, watching documentaries and even making models out of recycled plastic. Students produced some incredible projects, and the best ones were rewarded with a trip to Crusoe's on Longsands beach for a hot chocolate.

- Mr Murray, Geography

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2022

This year, North Tyneside Council held a virtual Holocaust Memorial Day. The theme for the event was 'One Day' and schools from North Tyneside worked together to mark the memorial and remember all those who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Alongside pupils from other schools in North Tyneside, William Beattie, Keira Edwards and myself worked to compile a selection of speeches centring around the theme of 'One Day'. Keira's reflection was a day in the life a Jew in Hitler's Germany, mine was a day in Auschwitz Concentration Camp and William's emphasised the importance of contemporary relevance when studying the Holocaust. All three aimed to bring attention to the individuals who suffered at the hands of the Nazi Party, and how important it is we do not forget that the victims were once people like us.

The event endeavoured to reflect on what we can learn from the past, promoting the understanding that there is always a path to genocide, it does not just happen. Furthermore, we must challenge prejudice, highlight the importance of tolerance, promote equality and continue to remember the victims of the Holocaust and of genocide. The event was filmed and is available [here](#).

- Molly Owens, Year 12



## EVE KEYS TAKES OVER MEMORY LANE RADIO

Tuesday 8th March was International Women's Day. To mark this, I was really excited to be given the opportunity to host my own, real life radio show on Memory Lane Radio, a relatively new station broadcasting online and on DAB across Tyneside. They handed me the reins to their Saturday night Dancefloor Decades show, where I played party tracks from the 70s and 80s, and invited listeners to get in touch. Listeners shared who their most inspirational women were, ranging from Marie Curie to Maya Angelou, Rosa Parks to Dolly Parton. It was such a great (if slightly terrifying) experience and one that I will never forget! Memory Lane Radio can be found at [www.memorylaneradio.co.uk](http://www.memorylaneradio.co.uk)

- Eve Keys, Year 10

## YEAR 8 RETREAT

After last year's cancelled retreats, last month sixty six students in Year 8 were finally able to attend our retreat to the Youth Village, tucked away in the peaceful and green Derwentside. Students stayed for two nights and reflected on the theme of the Road to Emmaus. The retreat also coincided with Ash Wednesday, so we were able to celebrate Mass together and receive ash crosses on our foreheads to symbolise the beginning of the Lenten season.

Reagan in 8T wrote: "There is a lot of interesting things about the retreat. One of them is the activities e.g capture the flag, would you rather. The staff at retreat made it fun as they were as creative as possible when it comes to games."

The room was comfortable and had plenty of room for luggage, I really enjoyed the retreat and would definitely go again. It is a good way to learn more about religion whilst still having lots of fun with friends."

- Michael, Chaplain



## WORLD BOOK DAY WAS BACK!

After two years of Covid disruption, World Book Day was back in the library. Year 7 students enjoyed Quizzes and a Treasure Hunt around school to find literary characters. We had over ninety entries! Winners were Elena Coxon, Gabby Blackburn and Katy Otterson in 7O, Eve Bullock in 7T and Hannah Wilkinson & Annie Michael in 7R.

The book and bookmark sale was run by library helpers Julia Jewsiewicka, Anna Thirlaway, Molly Rose and Milly Jane Allan, Charlotte Nicoll, Brook Parker, Scarlett Frisby, Olivia Wilson, Emmeline Fenn and Phoebe Cunningham, some of whom are pictured above left. Well done for all your hard work girls! Beyond the library many other fantastic book-related activities took place!

- Miss Edwards, Librarian



## THREE CHEERS FOR STM NETBALL TEAMS

On Monday 14th March, Year 7 girls took part in the North Tyneside U12 Netball Tournament. STM fielded two teams and the tournament took place indoors at John Spence High School. The tournament involved playing five games within the heats, and the top two sides from each heat progressed to the semi-finals. During the heats, STM came up against John Spence, Marden High, Marden Bridge, Longbenton and Kings. Of the five games played, we won four and lost one, meaning we progressed through to the knockout stages of the competition. Despite a brave performance, we lost to a very strong John Spence A team. All of the girls from St Thomas More tried their hardest and should be proud of their achievements. We are looking forward to getting stronger as a team for future games and trying to bring home some medals for the school.

- Beth Carter, Year 7



## PERFORMING ARTS STUDENTS TAKE TO THE STAGE

I was involved in the 2022 North East Dance Festival, along with the Year 11, 12 and 13 Performing Arts students. This year, due to Covid, the venue was changed to Whitley Bay Playhouse, giving us more space, though we still had no live audience. When arriving at the Playhouse, everyone was excited and enthusiastic about performing on a big stage and sharing their dances. The atmosphere was buzzing as people were changing into costumes and getting ready to perform.

Different schools contributed their interesting and engaging performances and everyone was encouraging of one another. Each performance had two rehearsals, followed by a real performance which was professionally filmed. It was so fun and refreshing performing on a stage again for the first time since Covid. It was so restoring to see other schools perform and take part in such an expressive and entertaining event, particularly the primary students, who loved seeing older dancers perform. Everyone was supportive of one another, giving big cheers and applause when a performance had ended. The day ended on a high as everyone was feeling accomplished and satisfied with their performance. Everyone enjoyed being a part of the Dance Festival. We can all say that we are proud to be members of the St Thomas More Dance community.

- Emily Rutherford, Year 13

Mrs Roberts added that she was very proud to watch the performers "come to life and perform superbly in such a fantastic setting, something which they have missed greatly during the pandemic."



## KATY BECOMES INTER-COUNTIES CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPION



Huge congratulations to Katy Otterson in Year 7 for winning her age group at the Schools Inter Counties Cross Country Championships this weekend. Katy had a tough race in the wind but battled through and won, making her Year 7 Girls Northern Schools Inter Counties Champion! From her success at this race, she has also been selected to represent Northumberland in future races. We look forward to hearing about Katy's next successes!

## NIAMH QUALIFIES FOR THE BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Just before Christmas I qualified to compete at the Welsh National Swimming Championships. I managed to win my favourite event, which is the 400m Individual Medley, as well as winning silver in the 50m, 100m and 200m Backstroke. I also won two bronze medals in the 200m Individual Medley and 100m Breaststroke. The experience of competing at a national competition and swimming in the Welsh International Pool in Swansea was brilliant and really made all the hard training worthwhile. In April I have qualified

to compete at the British Swimming Championships in Sheffield, where I will be swimming against many swimmers that represented GB at last year's Olympics. The event is often used to pick the GB team for the summer World Championships, so I am really looking forward to it and will hopefully learn a lot from the experience.

- Niamh Savory, Year 9



## EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

This issue we have a bumper crop of ex-pupils who have been in contact with the school, but we are always on the look out for more successes, big or small and of any type. If you or a member of your family would like to feature in a future issue, please e-mail [alogie@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:alogie@stmacademy.org.uk).

### GEORGIA FORESTER

2009 - 2016



Having studied History, Maths and Geography at STM Sixth Form, I left in 2016 to attend Glasgow University, but after a few months realised I wanted to be closer to home and started studying Politics and History at Newcastle University in September 2017. Finishing university during the first lockdown was quite the challenge, and I didn't get a graduation ceremony until November 2021!

Since October 2020, I have worked in the Joint Biosecurity Centre, now part of the UK Health Security Agency, reviewing COVID-19 policy, workplace outbreaks and areas of high COVID rates to see how we can reduce transmission throughout the country. In July 2022, I'll be moving to London after recently being offered a Business Consultant role with Principle One, a company that specialises in the Law Enforcement and National Security sectors.

### GEMMA HUDSPETH

1996 - 2003

I qualified as a Nurse in 2006 and have had a variety of Nursing roles, including working in the Falkland Islands as a Senior Staff Nurse for two years. I currently work for the UK Health Security Agency as a Health Protection Practitioner in the North East. I investigate and monitor outbreaks of communicable disease such as E-Coli, and I contribute to the management of incidents such as environmental and chemical events.



## BETH ROBERTSON

2010 - 2017



After leaving St Thomas More in 2017, I completed a Masters in Civil and Structural Engineering at Sheffield University. I secured a scholarship from the Institution of Civil Engineers and a Canadian engineering company WSP that provided me with summer placements every year of my studies in WSP's Newcastle office. During these placements I got to work on a range of projects such as inspecting the roof of the Grainger Market and M&S in York City Centre.

Having studied Geography in Sixth Form I was keen to have a final year project that focused on helping people in areas struck by natural disasters. As a result, I developed a coding script that found the most efficient shapes of lightweight steel members in emergency shelters used after an earthquake. The main aim was to ensure these structures could be built by local people, making them lightweight without reducing their structural capacity, making the shelters cheaper and eliminating the need for machinery during construction.

I am now working in WSP's London office in the Bridges team; inspecting and assessing bridges such as Cannon Street Bridge and Borough Market. Being able to use the maths and physics I have studied whilst having a visible impact on my local community is a pretty dreamy job!

The photograph is just after I handed in my dissertation during lockdown. We walked 4 hours to a pub in Hathersage to celebrate and the views were great along the way!

I attended many trips during my time at St Thomas More, from Mr Murray's infamous Holy Island trips to the wonderful Lourdes pilgrimages with Sixth Form. These trips filled me with a passion for travelling and helping others, so after leaving St Thomas More I worked at a summer camp in upstate New York for two years, where I taught performing arts to underprivileged boys from New York City.

During my time at STM I also represented my year group as student counsellor, which is something I have carried on during my time at Northumbria University. I studied on the Humanities Foundation Year before progressing onto the English literature BA, and during the four years of my degree I was course representative for my peers. After graduating in 2021 with a First Class Honours degree I progressed onto the English Literature Masters programme, where I also have the position of Post-Graduate Rep for the Arts, Design and Social Sciences faculty.

More recently, I have campaigned and been successfully elected to the position of Vice President of Education at Northumbria's Students Union. So, from June, I will oversee the academic experience of all Northumbria Uni students in the hope of providing a happier educational experience for all. St Thomas More played such a big role in shaping the person I am today, and I will be forever grateful for that!

## LIV BIRD

2010 - 2017



## NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2022

Address: Lynn Rd, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 8LF  
Phone: 0191 258 8340

Email: [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk)

Newsletter: [alogie@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:alogie@stmacademy.org.uk)

If your circumstances change and you need support: [familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk)

[stmacademy.org.uk](http://stmacademy.org.uk)

 @STMRCA