



"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD..."

TYNE & WEAR CITIZENS REACHES NEW AUDIENCES

Following the launch last year of the Tyne & Wear Citizens group, a number of our Year 12 students have been involved in public hearings on the issue of Mental Health.

In 2017, the Mental Health Association found that the North East had the highest percentage of people who reported suffering from a mental

health problem. This issue is being targeted by Tyne and Wear Citizens, with the search for solutions continuing with commissions in Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham.

Throughout the course of the three hearings, we were involved in a discussion on topics ranging from anxiety and depression to the role of

families and schools in supporting young people. We heard heart-breaking testimonies highlighting the important role of schools and exploring the need for open dialogue and choice. Solutions to many of these areas include an increase in public sector budgets in order to, for example, ease the pressure on waiting lists with more staff. In addition, by adding mental health to the school curriculum, we would establish a wider understanding of the importance of our wellbeing.

Overall, the aim of Tyne & Wear Citizens is to raise the issue of mental health and to inspire people to help support others, giving those with issues the hope they need if suffering from mental health issues. It was such an amazing experience to be involved in a force for change in our society; sitting on the panel with trained professionals was an honour. Hopefully we will begin to see the effects of the increased awareness as we help to support those who suffer with issues raised by Tyne and Wear Citizens.

- Alex Stephenson, Hannah Baldwin & Bethanie Ashton-Smith, Year 12

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ST THOMAS MORE FEAST DAY EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN LAST YEAR (See page 2)



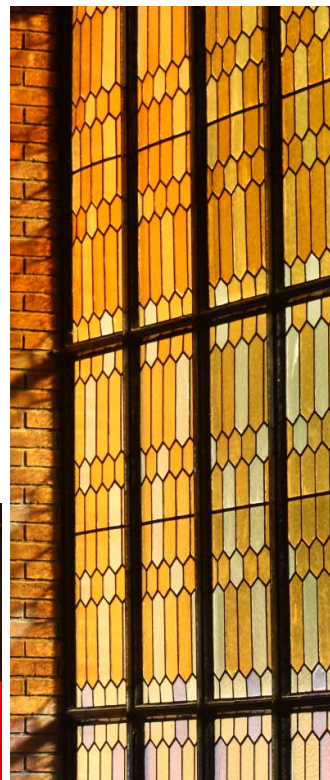
... INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS"
- Margaret Mead

ST THOMAS MORE FEAST DAY

Last month, we joyfully celebrated the life and work of 30 years of our school community on the eve of St Thomas More's Feast Day, held at Our Lady & St. Columba, Wallsend. The evening began with celebration of Mass, which was infused with student participation, from our wonderful student singers to readers of the word and bidding prayers. We had Year 10 artists whose faith-based pieces were displayed in the church and Year 8 dancers who brought the Mass to a close. We were also truly blessed to have all five of our Partnership clergy represented at the Mass, which was celebrated by Fr. David Smith.

After Mass, the 700-strong congregation moved to the parish concourse where we shared in a barbecue, a bouncy castle and even sumo suits! More importantly, there was an opportunity for the students to talk about the exciting things they have been involved with at St Thomas More this year. A huge thank you for all those who came along – students, parents, staff, governors, parishioners, clergy, younger brothers and sisters... it was a fantastic evening where our students shone as brightly as the glorious sunshine.

- Michael Thompson, Chaplain



ALAN CAMPBELL, MP, VISITS 'BRILLIANT CLUB'



This year we have been part of a program called 'The Brilliant Club'. Our course involved many amazing experiences including a visit to Durham University, working with a PhD tutor from Newcastle University and meeting our local MP, Alan Campbell. The objective of the course was to write a 1500 word assignment on the causes of the French Revolution, a topic which was completely new to us. The process involved meeting once a week to discuss different aspects of the topic in a university-style tutorial led by our tutor. Our assignment was marked using university grades and we have just received news that we have all passed. We are all looking forward to our graduation at Newcastle University on the 5th July.

- Niamh Goodacre, Luke Skeats and Niamh Brown, Year 8

LOURDES 2018

'Lourdes was truly the most special journey I have ever had the pleasure of being part of. It allowed me to grow as a person and discover new skills. I rediscovered my faith and was at my happiest 24/7. Lourdes really is one of a kind and so are the amazing children I met there.'

- Neave Miller, Year 12

'If what we witnessed in Lourdes is the future of our church, then we should all be filled with great love and confidence, for the future is bright indeed.'

- Mr Murray



LORD GLENAMARA AWARD

Recently I was awarded runner up to the Lord Glenamara memorial prize. The prize was introduced in 2012 to celebrate the dedication to public service of the late Rt Hon Lord Glenamara CH, an inspirational Secretary of State for Education and Science. The criteria for the prize are academic performance, civic contribution and an interest in government, politics and history. I was primarily recognised for civic contribution and for my interest in politics, because of my volunteering with North Tyneside Youth Council, and fundraising for various charities.

On 26th February I travelled down to London for the ceremony, hosted by Secretary of State Damien Hinds. It was an amazing day and a great honour to have even been considered for such an award!

- Niamh Hughes, Year 12



HELEN BATES AWARD



Although the Helen Bates Award is presented annually to two Year 11 students, we were not told about the award until the day of the assembly. This is because, when the criteria for the award was being drawn up, Helen's family wanted it to be for students who go about their daily lives doing what comes naturally and being good citizens.

After the presentation, we had the opportunity to talk to Helen's daughter, and learned that Helen was one of the early intergenerational volunteers who gave up her time to support students at St Thomas More. She was a great advocate of young people and would correct anyone who believed in the negative stereotypical image of teenagers often portrayed in the media. We both feel modestly proud and committed to following in Helen's example of "selfless giving". - Daniel Dryden and Ruby Stephenson, Year 11

WALKING THE WALL

This summer, four of our Year 12 students intend to walk the length of Hadrian's Wall (84 miles) in aid of Red Cross' Myanmar Appeal. Please support them at: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/WalkingForMyanmar> - Nathan, Simon & Hal, Year 12

PROM 2018



Class of 2018, after all these years our time at St Thomas More has finally come to an end. Undoubtedly, it is the people who make STM such an incredible community, with a special thanks to the staff, who have offered us the utmost support and always gone the extra mile for every one of us. We would also like to thank all the students who have made the time at St Thomas More so memorable; it is a testament to you all that such a diverse group of people feels like a big family. As we embark on the next step of our journey, the memories will remain with us, and we wish every one of you good luck for the future. We hope to see you all again. - Joe Dorr and Darcy Nathan, Prom King & Queen 2018



NEWS ROUND-UP



CHADSIAN FOR THE DAY

On Wednesday 14th March, fifteen Year 12 students visited St Chad's College at Durham University. The current students who showed us around were incredibly welcoming and helpful, offering advice and answering questions. The series of mini-lectures we attended were valuable in the way they offered us a taste of a range of subjects and gave us a feel for University-style learning. The day provided us with motivation to keep up our hard work. - Stephanie Potts, Year 12

YEAR 7 WIN THE BOYS COUNTY CUP

After an amazing season, where STM Year 7 team had already won the North Tyneside league, we also made it to the Northumberland County Cup final. The game started well with Colin Slater opening the scoring after just two minutes. In hot conditions we played some very good football, taking the game to extra time after an equaliser from Ovingham. A great run from Will Slater set up Owen Stonebanks for the winner, and we lifted the trophy as a team. - Charley Robson, Year 7

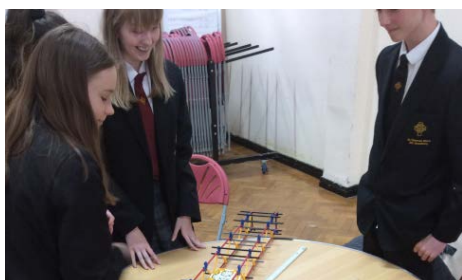


BERLIN

Berlin is a place with a dark history, so it was fascinating to experience the way German people have dealt with this. Our visit to the East Side Gallery immediately showed us how the negativity of the past could be transformed into Art. Another important experience was our visit to the Stasi prison, where political prisoners were tortured during German's divisive past. It was eye-opening to say the least. - James McCutcheon, Conor O'Neill and Jack Woodward, Year 12

YEAR 8 SKI TRIP

This Easter some lucky Year 8 students and sixth formers were given the chance to go skiing in picturesque Austria. It didn't take most people long to find their ski legs, and after two days most people were up on the mountain, still learning and, of course, falling! There was fun off the slopes too, including an ice-cream night and a trip to the swimming pool. I have brought back so many memories from the skiing trip, I have made new friends and learnt new skills. - Josie Anderson, Year 8



STEM K'NEX DAY

The STEM day on Thursday 14th June gave us an opportunity to learn more about STEM whilst competing in a series of challenges. The day's most challenging task was to build a bridge to hold the largest weight possible. We had to rely on creativity and the knowledge of what makes a bridge successful to create our masterpieces. Many groups used triangles for weight distribution, with the winning bridges holding over 3500g. - Abbey McKenna, Year 9

YEAR 12 BIOLOGISTS VISIT EDINBURGH ZOO

When we first climbed down from the bus we could immediately hear the strange calls of exotic birds and, eager to see them, we quickly headed towards the crowds. Our tour took us to some of the most important animals in conservation at Edinburgh like Bertus, an enormous Indian Rhino. We also visited the chimpanzees and saw the research facility where chimps can choose to interact with scientists for treats. - Holly Holman, Year 12





UNDER 15 GIRLS COUNTY CUP FINAL

The final was against John Spence and we fielded a young team of mostly Year 9s. The match started well with Lois Greenslade scoring a goal that was sadly disallowed! The second half took its toll and John Spence scored three goals to win them the match. Great play all round and a special mention should go to captain Jess Emami, goalkeeper Amelia Patterson and defenders Saskia Juric and player of the match, Ruth Clark.
- Saskia Juric, Year 9

MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION FOR YEAR 9

The local Magistrates' Court Mock Trial competition took place in March at Newcastle Law Courts. The competition involved us building a case and coming up with the arguments for and against for both the prosecution and defence based on the brief we were given – in this case a knife crime. We competed with other North Tyneside schools and received excellent feedback on our performances.
- Amy Tullock & Rosie Pang, Year 9



WORD MILLIONAIRES BY THE DOZEN

These are our wonderful Year 7 Word Millionaires, students who have read one million words or more on the Accelerated Reader scheme this year. Currently there are 27 star readers, up from 14 for last year. Special mention to John Perella, who has read the most.
- Miss Edwards, School Librarian



KEY FUND REWARDS OUR KEY SKILLS

The Key Fund is a charitable not-for-profit organisation that unlocks potential in young people. We presented our day out to the Key Fund panel, demonstrating our Key Skills including negotiation and communication. They were impressed and awarded us £250 to do the activities. Our best activity was EXIT Newcastle - this was an escape room where we had one hour to find clues, diffuse a bomb and get out.
- Jessica Dickson, Isla Morrin, Laura Nelson & Lauren Stephenson, Year 7



YEAR 9 MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY TASTER DAY

We arrived at Newcastle University Medical School for 9am and were seated in the main lecture hall. It was great to see what it would be like to be in a university lecture, but the best bits of the day were the practicals. In the morning, we learnt how to tie stitches that surgeons use in theatre. We were then given a challenge of using laparoscopic equipment (used in keyhole surgery) to pick up small items using a camera and mechanical hands.
- Chrysta Lois, Year 9

YEAR 10 MATHS FEAST

Upon arrival at King Edward VI School in Morpeth, we were presented with a wide array of delicious food to eat before the real work began. Five rounds of competition, two hours and many challenging questions later, our teams finished fifth and third, only losing out by ten points to the joint winners. We did ourselves proud and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to explore new, more sophisticated mathematical concepts.
- Dana Buendia, Year 10



TOXIC TECHNOLOGY

For their Writing Assessment, 7E were asked to research the topic of screen addiction, debate it in class and write a newspaper article presenting their findings. In order to gather facts and statistics, they completed lots of research from scientists and psychologists. They formatted their work professionally and used very effective, persuasive language techniques - just like a real journalist would! I was SO impressed that I pieced together extracts from everyone's articles and class contributions so they could see their hard work and wonderful ideas in print. I am very proud of all of them and their hard work this year.

- Mrs Gordon, English teacher

Today we have the benefits of decades – centuries, actually – of technological advancements that allow us to communicate effectively, share information and entertain ourselves. Are we using it purposefully and rationally? Or are we at risk of becoming slaves to it?

TECHNO TOTS

We looked at a study by Sue Palmer, a child psychologist; she is troubled by the fact that the long term impacts of all this screen time are unclear. Palmer's study recognised some rather troubling trends since the launch of the iPad in 2010:

- Toddlers are learning to navigate touchscreens before they're able to walk and talk
- Children are arriving at primary school with poorer communication skills than previous generations
- Teens are dedicating a disturbing 5-6 hours a day to screen-related activities.



A potty with iPad holder, formerly available on Amazon, was ranked in the top 10 WORST child products of 2017.

"What is happening to this generation of kids?", asks Catherine Graham.

Young people's thirst for technology has overtaken their desire to get outdoors! Moreover, there is a lack of real life, face-to face interaction in the way we young people communicate today. We stand in the school yard, surrounded by people to talk to, but we walk around with our faces in our phones, usually letting our thumbs do the talking.

RESTLESS IN A RESTAURANT - Meg Giles

Sitting in a local restaurant I saw a huge party, including a lot of children, come in for a birthday celebration. After ordering, one of the younger children began to get restless whilst waiting for their food to arrive. One of the adults swooped in to the rescue. The screaming stopped; the squirming ceased. Was it a miracle that triggered this transformation? No! It was an iPad! Great idea – calm the calamity by letting the child watch an episode of their favourite show until the food arrives. However, the child remained glued to the iPad when her plate was placed in front of her and, in an impressive display of multi-tasking, consumed her meal with both eyes cemented to the screen. What happened to table manners? Are devices being used positively or just to pacify?



DYSTOPIAN FICTION OR A GLIMPSE INTO OUR FUTURE?

When Steven Spielberg read 'Ready Player One' he felt that Ernest Cline "has seen the future before any of the rest of us could possibly imagine it." Is Cline's novel a work of dystopian fiction or a worrying glimpse into our future? Is Fortnite our OASIS?

'Ready Player One' is set in the year 244; the earth is ravaged and its people are poverty stricken. Wade Watts, like most of humanity, spends hours plugged into the OASIS: a sprawling virtual utopia where you can be anything you want to be, where you can live and play and fall in love on any of ten thousand planets.



"These shocking statistics gave us a lot to think about," comments Ryan Turvey

IS THERE A SCIENTIFIC REASON WHY WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH SCREEN TIME?

Doctor Victoria Dunckley found, in a recent study, that too much screen time and an over-reliance on video games as entertainment has led to a condition called atrophy; the brain tissue actually begins to shrink! Considering, our brains are still growing (and will continue to do so for up to the next 10 years) this is a bit worrying, don't you think?! Furthermore, the "rush" we get from a particular achievement on a video game releases a chemical called dopamine, which can cause addiction!

We're a generation missing out on first hand experiences because we spend our lives in a state of virtual reality. So, should we overlook this problem or should we act against it? 7E say: support each other by making an effort to plan and enjoy face-to-face experiences without the bars of a backlit screen.

MY LIFE IN ULTIMATE FRISBEE

AN INTERVIEW WITH EX-PUPIL SAM TURNER



Mr Logie: When did you start playing Ultimate Frisbee?

Sam: I started playing at St Thomas More in 2008, travelling to the Edinburgh Beginners' Tournament with the club - by that point I was hooked. I had enjoyed playing football and tennis casually before that but was never the most sporty or athletic student. Ultimate offered something which demanded athleticism but didn't have the same culture as other sports.

Mr Logie: So you continued playing after leaving STM?

Sam: Yes, I played quite casually at university until my final year in 2011-12 when I captained the Cambridge University side. After I graduated I worked in Cambridge for three years and continued to play with the city club.

It was at this point that I got really into the sport and started strength and conditioning training, doing lots of additional work in the gym and on the track.

Mr Logie: I understand that you now played Ultimate around the world. How did this start?

Sam: I decided I wanted to play at the highest level after seeing friends go off and play for Great Britain U20 and U23 teams. I trialed successfully for the Cambridge Mixed team going to the World Club Championships in Lecco, Italy in 2014, where we finished in sixth place. This led me to joining the senior Great Britain Mixed squad in 2015 and 2016. We won the 2015 European Championships in Copenhagen and finished fifth at the 2016 World Championships in London. I have also received a GLL Sports Foundation award each year from 2015 to present, which has helped me to afford to play at these tournaments.

Mr Logie: So what's next for you in Ultimate?

Sam: A couple of years ago I moved to London and joined a new club team competing in the men's division called Chevron. We are currently ranked second in the UK and are training lots in the run-up to the 2018 World Club Championships in Cincinnati, USA in July.

St Thomas More's Ultimate Frisbee Club is currently on hold, but will return in the near future. Watch this space!



OSKAR ZIENTARA TAEKWONDO

My name is Oskar Zientara, and I compete in Taekwondo, training three times a week for my club Hwa Rang School in Newcastle. I recently competed in the Scottish Open ITF Championships, winning two gold medals, one for sparring and one for my patterns. I love competing in Taekwondo and find that the sport has taught me self-defence and self-control.

- Oskar Zientara, Year 11



EVE RUDD CROSS COUNTRY

I was honored to be selected to represent Northumberland Schools in the National Cross Country Championships. On Saturday 24th March I travelled with the team to compete against the best 11-12 year olds in the country! The course was approximately 3km long, very hilly and muddy. The start was fast as nearly 200 girls pushed and shoved to gain positions. I gave it my best shot and was pleased overall with my performance.

- Eve Rudd, Year 7



LILYIA WATSON ICE SKATING

I started skating at the age of six just for fun, but was quickly approached by coaches who saw potential in me. I have since climbed up the ranks within competitions and in the last two years have moved to competing in National Competitions, finishing second in Sheffield and first in Edinburgh. I train four times a week, three of which are before school from 6am to 8.30am. Ice Skating is a very tough sport but I love it, and if I put in enough hard work I will succeed in my goals.

- Lilyia Watson, Year 8



WE ARE 'CALLED TO SERVE' AND WE KEEP COMING BACK

As well as the twenty-five Year 12 students who travelled to Lourdes, the Easter pilgrimage has also become a place where many former students return to help with assisting the children on their 'holiday of a lifetime' experience. This year, there were eleven St Thomas More students from across the last nine years. Christ calls us to "serve and not to be served" and this just goes to show that our students leave St. Thomas More with a sense of this, committed to serving those in our community who need it the most.

- Michael Thompson, School Chaplain



Back (left to right): Hannah Schubeler (2017), Kate Longstaff (2016), Sophia Allen (2017), Chloe Jobson (2017), Damian O'Connor (2014), Rachel Thornton (2013), Andy Bradley (2014), Michael Thompson (2009).

Front (left to right): Clare Nelson (2017), Caroline Kelly (2017), Liv Bird (2017)

EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We have been delighted by the response to our ex-pupil feature, and it has been fascinating seeing what you are all up to these days. Please keep them coming by e-mailing alogie@stmacademy.org.uk; all we need is your story, a recent photo and the dates you attended STM.

DAVID CRICHTON

1988-1995

I joined St Thomas More in its very first year, 1988, with my father having attended the same school, St Anselms, when it first opened too. Since leaving STM, I graduated from Newcastle University in 1998 with a BSc in Mathematics before working briefly as an accountant. In 1999 I went to FTE Europe, an aviation academy in Spain, to train to be a pilot, and I currently work as a training Captain flying long-haul on the Airbus A330 for Thomas Cook. This year I took part in a little-known show called MasterChef, which has since kept me busy with various collaborations and my own pop-up restaurant once a month.



CALLUM MONTGOMERY

2005-2010

After leaving St Thomas More I spent three years studying a Diploma in Professional Cookery at Gateshead College before working under Michelin Star head chef Martin Blunos at Seaham Hall. More recently I worked at the Michelin Starred restaurant House of Tides by Kenny Atkinson and now work in a Gastropub.



HANNAH PYLE

2006-2013

After leaving sixth form, I read English at Royal Holloway and am now researching for my PhD at the University of Glasgow, presenting my research at conferences in Stirling, Durham and, most recently, at Brown University in the USA. During my degree, I was also an active member in the Writing Society, editing the creative writing journal: The Jam Magazine, and more recently two postgraduate-led journals: Esharp and The Kelvingrove Review.

NEXT ISSUE AUTUMN 2018

FACILITIES FOR HIRE

Did you know that our school facilities, including our state-of-the-art dance studio, are now available for hire to organised groups? See www.stmacademy.org.uk/facilities-for-hire/ for more information.

Address: Lynn Rd, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 8LF

Phone: 0191 258 8340

Email: info@stmacademy.org.uk

Newsletter: alogie@stmacademy.org.uk

stmacademy.org.uk