

MORE LIFE



St Thomas More Catholic High School, North Shields

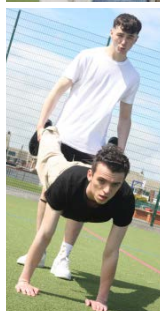
SUMMER 2021



YEAR 13 LEAVE IN STYLE (80's & 90's style!)

On May 27th 2021 we left St Thomas More forever. After an unforgettable two years at Sixth Form, it is easy to say it's an experience we will never forget. Although our experience at Sixth Form has been fairly different to past years, the accepting community and student-teacher relationships that are such a core part of our college have been amazing. From online learning to face-to-face teaching, the teachers at St Thomas More showed us their support and helped guide us through the difficult times that Covid has brought.

(continued on page 2)



Meet the KS4 Pastoral Team **02**

Year 7 back to 'something like normal' **03**

Year 10 'Preparing for Work' Day **05**

MEET OUR KS4 STAFF

10



Mrs MARTIN
HEAD OF Yr10

I have been a teacher of Geography at STM for 14 years and joined the pastoral team in 2019. I have been impressed with how resilient the students have been during these challenging times. I'm looking forward to guiding Year 10 through their final year at St Thomas More.



Mr KNOWLES
Assistant Yr10

I teach PE at STM and my passion for sport continues outside of school, with most of my free time being filled with football and golf. Although this year has been full of challenges, it has been great to see our Year 10s mature so much. I am looking forward to seeing the year group thrive in Year 11.

11

I have just finished being Head of Year 11 and was sad to see such a fantastic year group finish school. I am looking forward to the challenge of going back to Year 7 and seeing their enthusiasm. As a PE teacher, I enjoy playing cricket and watching most sports, especially football, despite some disappointing NUFC performances this year!



Mr ANDERSON
HEAD OF Yr11

I wish the departing Year 11 all the best for the future! Presently I am working hard with Mr Anderson to prepare for the new intake of Year 7 in September. I am enjoying getting to know them on paper and can't wait to meet them all in person.



Mr BALLARD
Assistant Yr11

LEAVERS (continued)

After all the hard work through assessments, teachers were incredibly thoughtful in planning a fun-filled last week to conclude our time at St Thomas More. On the last ever PSE lesson we had touching speeches from our form teachers, who have been so encouraging over the past two years, particularly helping us to prepare for our next step in life. The following day we all dressed up and, despite the rain, had a picnic followed by some old school sports games. The picnic was topped off with DJ Steve Keys playing some of the greatest hits from the 80s and 90s, bringing the whole year together, dancing to the likes of the Macarena, Cha Cha Slide and ending with a huge year group Hokey Cokey.

Finally our last day at St Thomas More arrived and it was an emotional rollercoaster for everyone. In the morning we had a Leavers'

Breakfast outside Sixth Form and in the afternoon we had our Leavers' Assembly, where we reminisced as a year group about all of our memories from Sixth Form. During the assembly, we had a liturgy from Michael to bless us going forward, which was followed by some special words from Mrs Borwick wishing us luck for our future, including some stories sent in by students. Mrs Hallam also gave a tear-jerking speech including some of the funniest memories we've had in Sixth Form and to conclude the assembly a photo presentation where some sentimental music was played.

We will certainly miss all of the teachers around Sixth Form and the community that we have felt part of. We will always remember our time spent at St Thomas More.

- Emily Stewart & Lucy Finkle, Year 13 (alumni)



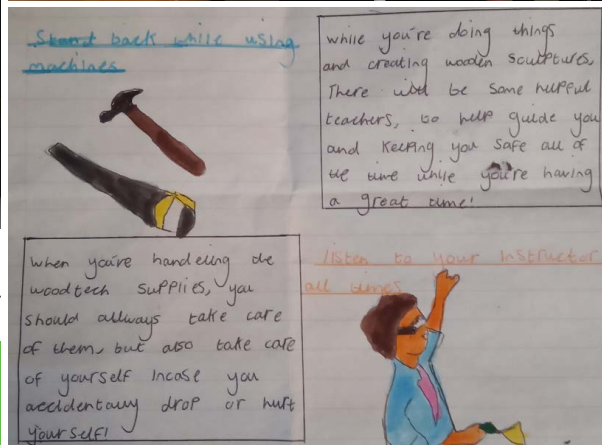
After a year of being located in Science Labs and RE rooms, Year 7 finally managed to get into the Design & Technology department! All Year 7 students were given the chance to opt into either Resistant Materials workshops or Graphics workshops, to have a taste of what they will all be doing next year in Year 8.

The Resistant Materials group have been working with various workshop tools and machinery and are well on their way to making a mobile phone holder. The group taking Graphics are experimenting and having some fun using Photoshop, working on some digital editing.



Kiana Radich has written about the importance of safety as we move towards more practical lessons like this.

- Mrs Tueart, DT



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY
RETURN TO THE DT BLOCK

YEAR 7 RETURN TO SOMETHING LIKE NORMALITY



GEOGRAPHY
QUAYSIDE TRIP

A few weeks ago, all Year 7 form classes went on a trip to the Newcastle Quayside. On this trip we learnt all about the Quayside and the changes that have taken place over time.



At the beginning of our trip we headed up the Ouseburn Valley, an area that used to be full of industry and people passing through. We then visited the Ouseburn Farm, which is a charity and community farm in the urban heart of Newcastle, filled with lots of wonderful animals. On our way to the Quayside we passed Seven Stories, founded as the National Centre for Children's Books in 1996 by Elizabeth Hammill, who believed that they could make a difference to the children and families nearby.

On our trip we crossed over the Swing Bridge and had a lovely view of all the bridges. The building of the Swing Bridge started in September 1868 and it was opened to river traffic in 1877.

On our fieldtrip we found out lots of fascinating things about the Newcastle Quayside and how it has changed and become what it is today. When we got back to school we began our projects all about 'The evolution of the Newcastle Quayside' and we really enjoyed our school trip.

- Kyla Fortes and Lola Kirkbride, Year 7
(photography by Joshua Summers and Alisha Stevens, Year 7)



MEANWHILE...



YEAR 13s COMPLETE THEIR EPQs

The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) is an optional project available to Sixth Form students, worth half an A Level. There has been a range of fascinating subjects researched this year, from PTSD in Paramedics and Protective Safety Measures in Formula 1, to Non-invasive treatment for Chronic Low Back Pain and Racial Inequality in the American Criminal Justice System. One student even researched Revisionist Westerns and wrote his own Western. More info [here](#).

GERMAN EXCHANGE GOES VIRTUAL

The exchange programme with Willy-Brandt Gymnasium in Oer-Erkenschick will continue into its 28th year, this time in a virtual format. We are very happy that we can keep the connection alive and thrilled that so many Year 8 students have shown an interest in getting involved. We have also set up a teacher exchange, giving our Year 12 students a chance to do online lessons with a teacher live from Germany.

– Mrs Wakeman, German



OLYMPIAD BIOLOGISTS REACH NEW HEIGHTS

As A level Biology students we were given the chance to participate in the Intermediate Biology Olympiad. We found it a great opportunity to challenge ourselves, completing an hour of questions based around topics we learn in biology at GCSE and A level. - Abbie Ross and Stella Pozzi, Year 12
Congratulations to all, but in particular Jack Barnett and Aleksandra Szymczak, who both achieved a Gold Award, placing in the top 5% of entrants nationally.

YEAR 8s EXCEL AT THE UKMT MATHS CHALLENGE

The questions in the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge encourage use of mathematical reasoning and fluency to solve challenging problems. Of the students who completed the challenge this year, 26 achieved a Bronze certificate, 11 Silver and 5 Gold. The five students who achieved a Gold certificate were invited to take part in the Junior Kangaroo, a follow-on round that is even more challenging. The picture shows Lucy Clarke, Sadie Litchfield, Olivia Worrall, Annabel Whitehead and Abigail Tindle, all Year 8, smiling having completed the challenge.

- Mr Rayson, Maths



YEAR 7s CREATE LIBRARY WEBS

A group of pupils in Year 7 are making connections and identifying themes in books by famous local author, David Almond, focusing on 'My Dad's a Birdman' and 'Skellig': Teagan noticed that 'the bird wings connected to the father and the daughter and dad trying to fly. I noticed that their last name was Crow.' Lewis connected paragraphs on the Dad with one about different birds in the garden, commenting that 'the birds had inspired Dad to make the wings.' Hannah 'made a connection between belief and faith. Dad said he believed in his wings and in another paragraph he talked about having 'wings and faith.''



'It shows that it doesn't matter if they (Dad and Lizzie) are flying or not. The wings are bringing them together through teamwork!' said Daisy, while Ella suggested that you 'could try connecting a paragraph from a story to something that happened to you.'

- Teagan Davidson, Ella Park, Lewis Gibbs,
Hannah Sunil and Daisy Stoker, Year 7

YEAR 10 'PREPARING FOR WORK' DAY



On Tuesday the 29th of June all Year 10 students attended a 'Preparing for Work' Day. This involved each form class developing new skills which would help us in our future careers and education. We completed a number of sessions over the day. These included a session with the army. This involved us solving problems through team building, communication and logic activities. This was great fun and gave us a chance to work with the army and ask questions. We also completed some virtual sessions with the DWP (Department for Work & Pensions). This session introduced us to preparing for an interview and what skills we would

need to be successful. Ask Apprenticeships also delivered a virtual session which introduced us to Apprenticeships and also taught us how to complete successful application forms. The day was great fun and we would recommend it to students next year.

- Mrs Johnson's Year 10 Business Studies class

INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN THE NHS?

YPAGne (Young Person's Advisory Group North England) present young people with the chance to participate in constructive projects and by engaging in these they can gain a set of useful skills valued by universities and employers.

'Nattering with the NHS' is a new YPAG project. Covid-19 has halted work experience for young people at a time it is needed more than ever. YPAG have come up with the idea of hosting a live podcast, giving young people the opportunity to chat to different professionals and ask questions about their roles/jobs and the skills required to do their job.

Previous episodes are recorded and available on [YPAGne's YouTube channel](#), and you can follow us on Social Media for information about future events.

- Ella Logan, Year 11



CAMERON ASKS 'IS IT TIME FOR THE QUEEN TO STEP ASIDE?'



The death of Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh, has thrown up many emotions and questions around the monarchy and the future of the royal household. What does the future hold for the Queen, who celebrated 68 years on the throne at the beginning of June?

I spoke to twenty people over the last two weeks and twelve of them believed that the Queen may abdicate. Mr Harris, an art teacher at St Thomas More Catholic High School, agreed that she has achieved so much, but that "maybe it's just time to hand over to Prince Charles and concentrate on being a good great-grandma."

Cain Nesbit said "I think the Queen will abdicate because not only did her rock die, but there are many other affairs currently in circulation." What Cain may be referring to is the departure of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, which has shone a spotlight on the royal family over the past year.

What is clear is that life as a monarch is never easy, but as she moves into her 69th year as our Queen, she shows no sign of giving up the throne yet.

- Cameron Quinn, Year 7



Any views expressed in this piece do not reflect the views of St Thomas More Catholic High School

OUTSTANDING ATHLETES



AMELIA WHITEHEAD SLOPE SUPERSTAR

On Monday 10th of May I travelled to Stoke to compete in the Nationals Schools Association Open Championship. I finished first U16 girl and was the fastest overall female on the day. This race was the result of months of hard training both on my skis and in the gym.

The race was run in time slots due to COVID but no one let that dampen the mood. When your group was called you could go and have some warmup runs followed by course inspection. My first two runs were good but I managed to put down a really fast run on my third to seal the win.

I would encourage anyone interested in skiing and especially slalom to look to their local ski slope in Sunderland and RT ski club (rtracing.ski). There is also the opportunity to participate in entry level schools race teams via ESSKIA (the English School Ski Association). They run training days in Sunderland a few times a year, further information can be found at www.esskia.org or by contacting Mrs Mole (emole@stmacademy.org.uk)

- Amelia Whitehead, Year 9



ENGLISH SCHOOLS GOLF U14 BOYS CHAMPION

NATHAN BUCHANAN UNDER 14s BOYS GOLF CHAMPION

On Thursday 13th May I played in the Northumberland County Schools Golf Championship at Ponteland Golf Club, competing against 75 other golfers in Years 6-11 from schools all over the county. The standard was very high with some of the older boys playing off handicaps of +2. If your handicap is in the plus figures you are good enough to turn professional!

I played really well on the day and finished in 22nd place overall. Once my handicap was taken off, I finished 4th. I was so happy with my results on the day, but even more excited to later find out that I won my age category and now officially the Under 14's Boys Champion!

Getting the news that I won on Thursday boosted my game and obviously helped for the competition that I went to play in on Sunday 16th May at Matfen Hall. I won my category again, but I also got my second Hole in One in less than two years; the odds of getting a Hole in One are 12500 to 1 and I've done it twice.

- Nathan Buchanan, Year 7



RHYS BRUNTON, YEAR 9 LONG JUMP

ANNA FITZPATRICK, YEAR 11 HIGH JUMP

SUSAN FOLORUNSO, YEAR 12 100m

GOOD LUCK TO OUR ATHLETICS STARS

This year three of our students have been selected to compete for Northumberland in the English Schools Athletics Finals in Manchester on the weekend of 9th/10th/11th July, the first time we have had three students in the same year.

This is the highest level of competition for a school-aged athlete in England, and is where the likes of Jessica Ennis, Mo Farah and our very own Ross Murray all started out. Best of luck to all three!

- Mrs Plummer, PE



EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We hope that the range of successes achieved by our ex-pupils inspire our current students, showing them the range of opportunities available to them. As always, if you would like to share the success of a former student, please contact alogie@stmacademy.org.uk and you could feature as early as the autumn issue of More Life.

DERRY HIRE 2005 - 2012

I left St Thomas More in 2012 to begin a Midwifery degree at Northumbria University, having studied Psychology, Biology and Ethics & Philosophy at Sixth Form. I graduated from my degree in 2015 and have worked at the Royal Victoria Infirmary as a midwife since then. I am now based on the low risk birthing unit, where my passion lies. The photo on the right is actually me holding my baby niece, who was born on 26th April 2021 (one of the perks of the job!)

Derry featured in a [recent article](#) on the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals website, celebrating International Day of the Midwife. 'As we celebrate the work of our midwives on International Day of the Midwife, Derry Hire, a midwife at the RVI, has been looking back at this last year. She said: "Working throughout the past year has definitely been a challenge. Ultimately, babies were still being born as they always have been. We had to learn and adapt quickly to a change in environment. When I look back over the last year I feel really proud. I am proud of my colleagues and myself for our resilience and all of the hard work we have done, continuing to provide high quality and safe patient care in the midst of a pandemic. I love being a midwife and it has always made me proud, but I feel like there is something about the past year that has made it feel more special and important.'"



ADAM BOLAND 2008 - 2015

After leaving STM in July 2015, I went on to study a Masters Degree in Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials. After my 3rd year of studies, I took an industrial placement year with Cummins Emission Solutions in Darlington, focussing on research and development of new diesel engine aftertreatments, with increased focus on the need for innovative technology which could lower vehicle emissions without impacting performance. After my placement, I returned for my final year and graduated from Newcastle university in summer 2020. Like so many people during the pandemic, I found myself out of work initially, but luckily was able to return to my placement as a fully qualified engineer. The challenges that come with research and development are tough but rewarding, especially when you get to the final product and see the impact it has on making the world a cleaner place. If you love STEM like I did at school and relish a challenge, do an engineering course! They are worth the effort and are such versatile degrees to have.

NEXT ISSUE AUTUMN 2021

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