

# MORE LIFE

St Thomas More  
Catholic High School

SUMMER 2022

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR FRAU WAKEMAN



German history. He talked about the importance of language learning and the cultural benefits it brings.

The award ceremony followed and Frau Wakeman won the Lifetime Achievement Award, which was presented by the German Ambassador. German snacks, including Wurst, Pretzel and Bier were then served in the garden.

Frau Wakeman retires this summer and this award is a recognition of her dedication to German at St Thomas More. Frau Wakeman has been the ultimate ambassador for German and her commitment to the German Exchange programme has given hundreds of students the opportunity to visit Germany, experience the culture and to form lifelong friendships.

We thank you Frau Wakeman for everything you have done for German at St Thomas More and we all wish you a happy and well-deserved retirement.

Mr Watson added that Frau Wakeman "has been an inspiration to countless pupils and colleagues during her 26 years at St Thomas More. She is passionate that young people should learn about the language and culture of Germany and for many years supported and then led our German exchange programme. I cannot think of someone more deserving of such an award."

- photo below shows Frau Wakeman with Miguel Berger (left) and Neil MacGregor (right). Copyright German Embassy London

On Thursday 30th June Frau Wakeman and Frau Fisher travelled to London as guests of the German Ambassador at his residence in Belgravia. Frau Wakeman had been nominated for a German Teaching Award. The afternoon started with a welcome from Miguel Berger, the German Ambassador to the UK. This was followed by an entertaining speech by Neil MacGregor, former director of the British Museum and author of *Memories of a Nation*, a book about



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# FR DERMOTT DONNELLY

## 1967 - 2022



Many of you may have heard the news last week that Fr Dermott Donnelly was taken ill on the evening of Wednesday 6th July at the Summer Festival and passed away on Friday afternoon.

Fr Dermott spent his whole ministry as a priest for the young people of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese. He founded the Youth Ministry Team at the request of Bishop Ambrose in 1994 and he went on to set up the Youth Village where we have enjoyed many years of school retreats since it opened in 2004 for day retreats and 2010 for residential retreats. Through YMT's gap year programme he also

developed generations of youth leaders who are now placed all over the world with many working in teaching and Chaplaincy. He will be a huge miss, both personally and for our Diocesan youth ministry.

We pray for his family and friends at this difficult time. Some of Dermott's nieces and nephews have come through St Thomas More, and so we remember them and their families in our prayers at this time too.

Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace, Amen.

# SUMMER FESTIVAL

Everything has started to go ahead again this year, and the Diocesan Secondary Schools' Festival – known affectionately as 'God Camp' – is no exception. For the first time since June 2019, almost 500 young people from across Hexham & Newcastle Diocese gathered at the Emmaus Youth Village to celebrate faith, joy and love in the context of the theme 'The Unknown'.

11 students in Year 9 attended from St Thomas More and enjoyed wall-to-wall sunshine, music from The Voice semi-finalist Adeniké and Faith Child, input from religious sisters from the Channel 5 TV show 'Bad Habits, Holy Orders' and a chance to relax, recharge and socialise after a busy year in Year 9. - Michael, Chaplain



# THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE, LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT! FEAST DAY RETURNS



On the 23rd of June 2022 St Thomas More celebrated it's annual feast day. A Mass was held at St Columba's Church in Wallsend, followed by a BBQ and games. This was the first event that has taken place since 2019, and it was fantastic to see everybody back together again after so long. This year's theme was "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!" (Psalm 118:24).



A group of students went to the church throughout the school day to practise and prepare for the celebrations. There were lots of different jobs to do such as, setting up the orchestra and the band, practising readings, taking items from school into the church hall for after the service, rehearsing the dance and sign language performances, and helping out by setting up the altar for the service.

A group of Year 7 girls learnt and performed sign language to the final song in the service, "Joyful Joyful" by Brenton Brown. They volunteered their time to learn the song. Many of the girls had never learnt sign language before and it was a new experience for them. They thoroughly enjoyed it and learnt a lot, not just the signs, but about the language, how it is used, why it is used, the different formats, supporting people who use it, and how to communicate more effectively with the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

We signed the song in Sign Supported English, meaning we used the signs of British Sign Language, with the grammar of spoken English, this made it easier for the congregation to follow along.

After the Mass, the congregation piled out into the bright sunshine and enjoyed some food and entertainment as well as having a chance to chat to students about all the work and opportunities that take place at St Thomas More. It was great to be back at St Columba's for our Feast Day celebrations and we can't wait for next year!

- Eve Keys, Year 10 (who brilliantly taught and led the Year 7 signing group)



# LOURDES 2022

Lourdes has been an extraordinary experience, one that I don't think I'll ever forget. I don't believe a single person in our group making their first pilgrimage knew what to expect when boarding the flight, but it is safe to say we were not disappointed!

It was not until we turned a corner whilst carrying a huge flag on the first day that I could finally look behind me and I realised how many people were following behind us, it was breathtaking.



For me personally, witnessing the large number of people participating in the procession allowed me to grasp the true meaning of Lourdes; it showed me the true power of faith in uniting people from all walks of life, from all over the world.

The pilgrimage to Lourdes has ultimately enabled me to reconnect with both my faith and with God. People told me about how life-changing Lourdes was, now I understand what they meant. - Emily Kennedy, Year 13

# PROM 2022



Despite Covid taking control of our first year, it has not changed the family atmosphere and togetherness St Thomas More's Sixth Form provided us with.

In their own way, everyone has pushed through the hardest two years of their school life, but Prom summarised our unity and it was the most special night celebrating everyone's hard

work. The past two years has formed special bonds with groups of friends and with teachers that we are so thankful for!

To the Class and teachers of 2022, thank you for the irreplaceable memories and continuous support, we honestly couldn't praise Sixth Form more!

- Niamh Dale and Matty Penhall, Year 13

## ...ON THE TOP OF THE PODIUM

At the beginning of May, as well as preparing for her upcoming GCSE exams, Djolie Bulica (Year 11) was busy smashing it at the British Weight Lifting Championships in Birmingham. With a PB total of 135kg, Djolie became English Champion for her age group and secured her place on the Northern Development Squad. Well done Djolie!



## ...WINNING A REGIONAL AWARD



I was nominated for the 'Young Carer of the Year' Award at the North East Children of Courage Awards for raising awareness in school about what a young carer is and some of the obstacles we face. I did this by talking in assemblies to Years 7 and 8. At the event at the Hilton my interview video was played then I was invited onto the stage to receive my award. I was very proud that the smallest thing I do can make a big difference.

- Amy McCoy, Year 11

# THESE GIRLS KNOW THEIR PLACE

## ...FLYING A FIGHTER JET

For the next part of her flight training with the Air Cadets, Lily Thompson (Year 10) was invited to fly a Grob Tutor T.Mk 1 training aircraft at RAF Leeming, and was at the controls for around an hour. She particularly enjoyed the loops, barrel rolls and aerobatics!



## ...HELPING HER TEAM TO VICTORY



Back in April, my gymnastics team and I competed in the TeamGym English Championships. We compete on three pieces of apparatus as well as a synchronised routine to music, where we have to be in time throughout the full routine. It is tricky landing moves at the exact same time, but we had a really good routine and scored the highest floor score of the day. Our combined scores meant we were crowned English Junior Champions 2022.

- Josie Anderson, Year 12

# FAREWELL TO YEART

On Friday 24th June, we celebrated leaver's day, Year 11 were welcomed into school with a fantastic balloon arch as they entered the dining hall for a leavers breakfast with staff. Students enjoyed getting their shirts signed and saying goodbye to their teachers.

The morning ended with a leavers' assembly - the STM way! Silly awards were given, tutors performed their TikTok dances as well as their Sweet Caroline performance. The year group loved this as they were up singing along. It was a fantastic morning with lots of tears, take care class of 2022!

- Mrs Martin, Mr Knowles and the Year 11 Tutor team



# 1 SPORTS DAY RETURNS

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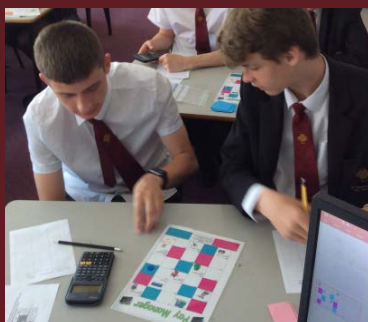
After a three year break due to Covid, Sports Day at Monkton Stadium returned with a bang! The sun was shining and the students were excited to experience the day they had heard so much about. Many newer members of staff didn't even know what to expect. The day didn't disappoint, with records tumbling:

- Alexa Hastie (Y7) girls 200m
- Katy Otterson (Y7) girls 1500m
- 9E boys relay team
- Macy Cunningham (Y7) set the school record for a new event, girls 300m

"I had an absolutely amazing time at Sports Day. There was lots of friendly competition and it was a character-building experience competing with my form, especially the way everyone felt included and respected. We were really pleased with a win from our girls relay team after a lot of training leading up to the race."

- Chloe Cairns, Year 9

# MATHS IS NOT ABOUT NUMBERS, EQUATIONS, COMPUTATIONS OR ALGORITHMS...



## MY MONEY WEEK

My Money Week is a chance for students to explore Maths beyond the classroom, and this year followed the themes of Numeracy in Sport (Year 7), Numeracy in Careers (Year 8), Wages, wants vs needs (Year 9) and Budgeting, income and expenditure (Year 10).

The Pay Day Game (photograph left) was a highlight for Year 10, where students worked through three months of "real life", getting paid, paying bills, having "chance" expenses or gains and keeping track of finances. Winners of the yeargroup quizzes wrote their thoughts (right).

- Mrs Szoltysek, Maths



## MATHS CHALLENGE

In April, 120 students from Years 7 and 8 took part in the UK Mathematics Trust Junior Mathematical Challenge. 37 students achieved a Bronze award, 20 a Silver and 6 students achieved a Gold award. Elliot Marlborough (Year 8) scored enough marks for him to be invited to take part in the next round, the UKMT Junior Kangaroo, where the questions are even more challenging. Elliot scored 108 out of 135, and achieved the highest possible award of a Merit. This meant he was in the top 25% of all students who competed in the Kangaroo. A great achievement!

## MATHS CONFERENCES

On Tuesday 21st March, two teams of Year 10 students took part in the nationwide Maths Feast. Tensions rose throughout the competition and going into the final round the two STM teams were split by a single point. A final round of Maths Relay saw us pour our Maths knowledge into our answers; the atmosphere was extremely tense! With first place going to one of the other schools, the two STM teams came joint second! The organiser announced that we had scored higher than many teams around the country, even ones who had won their regions. A great team challenge that made us think differently about Maths! - Izzy Dutton, Year 10

The Maths Show was about luck in games and the maths behind them. The stakes were set high at a Freddo and when they asked for volunteers my hand shot up. The game I would be playing was higher or lower against two other students. We each started with 100 points, wagering as many points as we wanted each time. I started with an illogical gamble, betting 80 points on 'lower', even though it was an 8 with a 50/50 chance. It paid off! From then onwards I played it smart risking only 10 points each time, a strategy which worked. I was awarded the Freddo as the crowd went wild! - Alex Kelly, Year 10



"I enjoyed using Maths that relates to real life. We looked at tennis, darts and football"

- Oliver Grieves, Year 7

"My Money Week gives you a chance to know what you are capable of and how your skills come into play when you apply them."

- Abbie Cassidy, Year 8

"The lessons gave us all a further understanding of future jobs we may be interested in and the higher education we must complete to achieve this."

- Holly Kersey, Year 9



# ...MATHS IS ABOUT UNDERSTANDING

- William Paul Thurston



# STUDENT ACTION PRODUCES RESULTS

## ARRIVA 'FAIRER FARES' CAMPAIGN

In the last newsletter, we reported that we were working on getting Arriva to meet with us to discuss how we could get a set fare of £1.20 for 16-19 year olds in Tyne & Wear in line with Stagecoach, Go North East and the Tyne & Wear Metro. Currently, Sixth Form students have to pay an adult fare on Arriva buses.

After months of trying, Arriva finally agreed to meet with us, and on July 12th students were thrilled to meet Kim Purcell, Commercial Director for Arriva North East. Students – along with other adults from across the Tyne & Wear Citizens Alliance – travelled to the Arriva depot in Newcastle in fancy dress (wearing their parents' work clothes or 'occupational dress' to show that whilst we look ridiculous dressed as adults, Arriva continue to treat us this way!) ready to sing some nursery rhymes.

The meeting was a huge success – the beginning of a good working relationship with Arriva has been formed – and we look forward to working on the issue of fairer fares over the next few months. Watch this space!



"I felt the meeting went really, really well. I was so proud of everyone's contribution at the public action and in the meeting. I am overwhelmed with happiness because of how far we have come this year and how positive the future seems."

- Eve Zikhali, Year 12

"Our action and meeting with Arriva was so important because it shed an important light on this issue which students have faced for a long time. Community organisation and taking public action really shows how young people do have a voice and we really are able to create change."

- Shantel Suneesh, Year 12

## STUDENT COUNCIL

On 18th May 2022, the Student Council requested to present to the Leadership Team on their work this year. The Student Council presented four key proposals in response to wider pupil feedback. The four key topics were, The Eco Green Flag Award, The BiteBack 2030 Project, Recycling in school and The ClassCharts Reward Shop. All topics/ proposals were well received by the Leadership Team and some good honest conversations were had!

The Student Council also met recently with Mr Gollings and Ms McNulty to discuss the new catering tender. Mr Gollings tutored the Student Council on how to analyse and review a business proposal properly and how to make better informed decisions. The Student Council reviewed the proposals for the new catering contracts, gave their views and offered questions to be asked on behalf of the Student Council by Mr Gollings.



## MARY GLINDON VISIT

The recent visit from Mary Glindon MP was hugely successful, with pupils discussing the many different projects, campaigns and changes they have either led on or been a part of. This included the Anti-Discrimination group, led by Angel Muchiso and Lucy Oshegbu, who talked about the 'trailblazing work' they have done to raise awareness and tackle issues around racism, sexism, homophobia and sexualised language in school. Ms Glindon pledged to raise the profile of the Fair Bus Fares campaign and the The Anti-Discrimination group by making reference to them at the next local authority meeting. - Mr O'Connor, Student Council Coordinator





# CAREERS

## YEAR 12 CAREERS

Monday 4th July began with an insightful and inspirational talk from Richard Nugent, managing director of local business TwentyOne Leadership. He discussed his own challenges and how he



overcame them to build his successful business. He also provided useful tips to help us progress successfully onto the next stage of education. My peers and I were inspired to look for careers we would enjoy and to not be held back by anything.

The week before, students were given the opportunity to choose from a huge variety of career sessions ranging from politics and digital journalism to marketing and clinical psychology. The individual sessions were lively and were limited to a relatively small number of students, who were genuinely invested in learning about that particular career.

Molly, on her choice of sessions: "The guest from Chronicle North East helped me understand what an average day in journalism might look like. In addition, a graduate Geography student from Cambridge University provided me with information on the Oxbridge admissions process as well as an insight into university life. I really valued this session, as it wasn't a tutor or staff at Cambridge, but an STM ex-pupil with recent experience."

Careers day would not have been possible without efficient and effective organisation by Mr Towns and Mrs Borwick and on behalf of all Year 12 students, we would like to thank them and all the session leaders who attended. - Zoe Parkin, Molly Owens and Hal Kennedy

## BUSINESS CIPFA GAMES

On Friday 1st July we competed in the CIPFA games at Tynemet College, working on a business strategy for a council experiencing budget cuts. We were interrupted throughout the day to tackle real world situations, such as meeting with trade union leaders or issuing public statements on our current strategy. This helped us gain an understanding of what working in the public sector is like. Although it was a hard and challenging day, we had a great time and had lots of fun.

- Luke Skeats and Megan Rowntree, Year 12



# SUPPORT THROUGH THE SUMMER

At St Thomas More, we believe that mental health and wellbeing are the basis for a happy and successful life at school and beyond. We strive to improve the wellbeing of students and staff in everything we do, seeking to build resilience, identify and monitor concerns, and support students and families who face challenges. During the summer holiday period whilst our school is closed we would like to direct our young people to free, safe and anonymous wellbeing support with Kooth.

Kooth is an online free service for young people to access help and support if they are facing problems or simply

need some extra support. They offer free support for anxiety, relationships and all aspects of your mental wellbeing. For more information visit [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com).

Do you find the six weeks difficult to cope with? Over the summer holidays there is a new team working to help with any additional pressures the holidays might bring. You can contact them via email for any problem at [northteam@kooth.com](mailto:northteam@kooth.com).

Where can parents and students get advice if your GCSE or A Level results are disappointing? Kooth can support parents and students who receive disappointing results. There will be two free webinars dedicated to offering support on Thursday 25th August 4-5pm and Tuesday 30th August 4-5pm. Use this [link](#) to sign up.





# “THERE WAS A GREAT BIG MOOSE” YEAR 9 HOLY ISLAND 2022

On the 1st of July 2022, sixty five students and five teachers set off to Holy Island for three days of adventure, fun and really bad singing. We ate fish and chips, took a beautiful boat tour around Holy Island... well, aside from the ‘passing shower’, competed in the STM tradition of rock tower building, explored lime kilns, and searched St Cuthbert’s beach for lost beads, all in the first day!

The next day, after some well-deserved sleep, we headed out to the sand dunes where we jumped, raced and admired the beauty of them. Mr Murray taught us how to clean up the sand dune after we were done which resulted in many of us getting very sandy! After this we headed back to camp for lunch and a sports day including wheelbarrow, piggyback, running and sack races. We were joined by Mr Rayson and

his family who walked down to the beach with us, where we played frisbee, rounders, football and made sandcastles as well as paddling in the sea! To end the day we had a fun disco where we danced and sang until our voices hurt.

On the last day, we got a coach to Low Newton-by-the-Sea where we then walked down the coast to Dunstanburgh Castle and Craster for an ice cream.

Out of all the exciting activities I think everyone agrees that the group singing led by Mr Murray and Mr Logie was what really made the trip special. We had such a great time with our friends and teachers! Thank you Mrs Robertson, Mrs Robson, Mr Craigen and Mr Logie for such an enjoyable time, and an even bigger thank you to Mr Murray for organising the weekend.

- CJ Courtney and Zara White, Year 9



## YEAR 7 QUAYSIDE



In the week beginning 20th June, all Year 7 students took a Geography trip to the Quayside in Newcastle. Some of the students have written their thoughts on the day:

“We saw lots of amazing places like Ouseburn Farm, Seven Stories and the Byker Bridges. We saw lots of people, the law courts and a lot of fancy offices and new homes that they have built.” - Millie Jane Allen, 7S

“My favourite part of the trip was learning about all the bridges and how the Quayside has changed over the years. It highlighted the brilliance of the city we live in. It was very educational but also very fun; it was definitely a trip which I would do again.” - Jake Smith, 7S



## STM STUDENTS TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY

NCS is a chance for students to get involved in exciting activities, make new friends and make positive change in their communities. After they came into school to speak to Year 11, NCS sent us the following: "Once again, St Thomas More is the top performing school out of the entire 66 schools which we cover across the North East. We have seen 127 young people interested and nearly 70 of those secured their place on NCS this summer, which is fantastic. I would just like to mention that all the staff at the school have been lovely and we feel welcomed whenever we attend the school."



## EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

As we have done all year, we like to finish the newsletter with news from some of our ex-pupils. 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).

### KATHLEEN MALPAS

2010 - 2017



Since leaving St Thomas More I have been working towards my undergraduate degree in Psychology (specialising in experimental psychology) at Northumbria University. I have had the opportunity to complete a research internship alongside an esteemed member of staff at the university, investigating victim-blaming tendencies within the LGBTQI+ community in the context of anti-LGBTQI+ hate crimes. I have successfully constructed and administered my own Stroop Test simulation and online survey, and with an extensive knowledge of data and statistical analyses from my advanced statistics modules, this could possibly result in a future publication.

Outside of academia, I have worked part-time in retail, alongside my closest friend Kurt Nicholson-Marshall, who also attended both my primary school and St Thomas More. We both cherish our time at St Thomas More, and frequently recall our memories from our high-school experiences which have helped shape us into the adults we are today.

### KYLE MYERS

2004 - 2011

After leaving STM, I studied medicine at Oxford for 6 years, gaining 2 degrees (1st class BA in Medical Sciences, and BMBCh) in the process. I have also published scientific research papers in multiple journals. I decided to head back up north after finishing uni, and practised medicine in the Highlands of Scotland for 2 years, then started specialising in psychiatry. After all of this, I decided I wanted to change career! In August, I'm going back to university to train as a secondary teacher, which I'm really looking forward to.



## NEXT ISSUE AUTUMN 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)

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