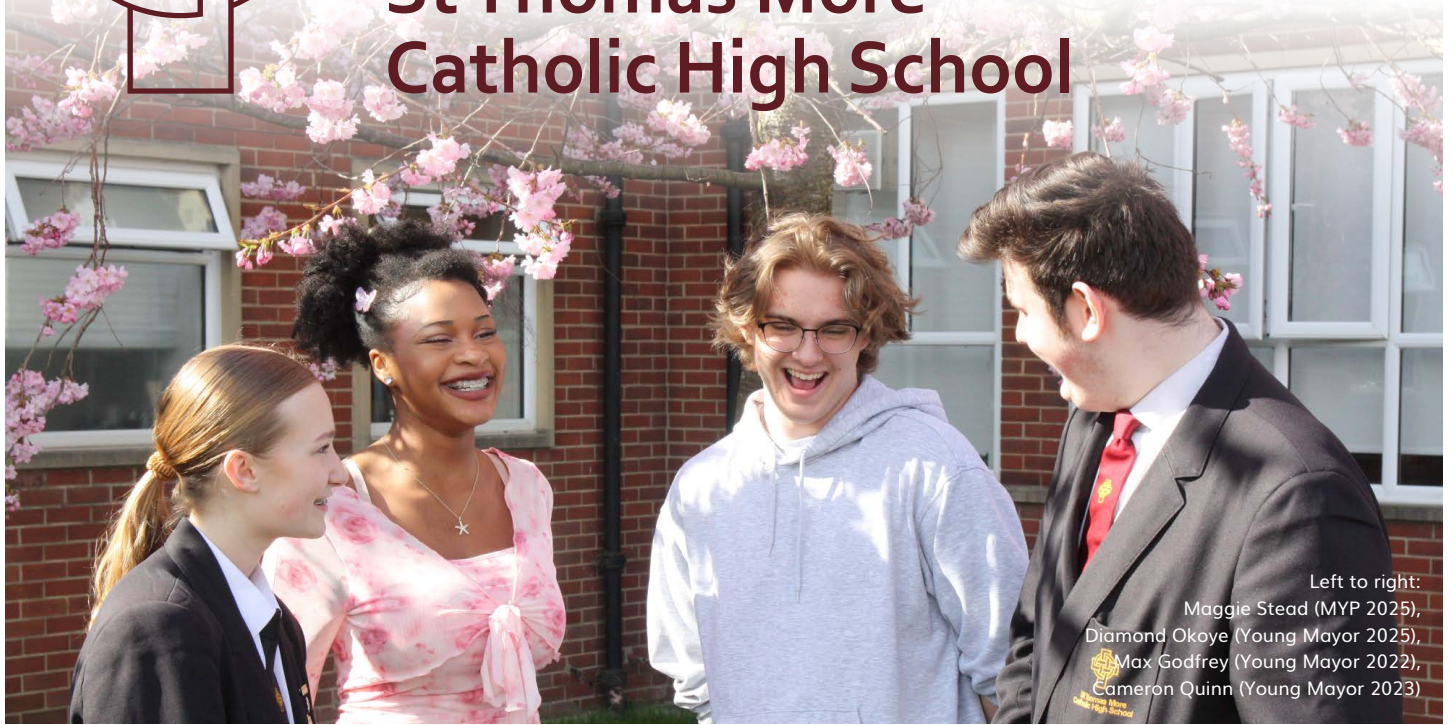




MORE LIFE

EASTER 2025

St Thomas More Catholic High School



Left to right:
Maggie Stead (MYP 2025),
Diamond Okoye (Young Mayor 2025),
Max Godfrey (Young Mayor 2022),
Cameron Quinn (Young Mayor 2023)

DIAMOND AND MAGGIE CONTINUE OUR LEGACY AT



North Tyneside Council

On Friday the 7th of March 2025 North Tyneside Council announced the victors of the 2025 Young Mayor and Member of Youth Parliament elections. The results continue a rich tradition we have at St Thomas More, with our very own Diamond Okoye and Maggie Stead winning election to the two posts, the first time our school has held both offices.

Diamond ran on a platform of providing an inclusive environment and opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, religion or disability. In her new position as Young Mayor she will be supported with funding and the advice of council staff to help her to achieve her pledges. Moreover, Diamond marks the fourth

Young Mayor our school has had in the last five years, continuing a proud legacy of participation and leadership in local youth politics.

Maggie as the Member of Youth Parliament for North Tyneside has a major platform, conversing with local MPs and the chance to visit Parliament and participate in the Youth Parliament Debate to advocate her pledge: To utilise spaces within the borough for regular youth clubs and inclusive, safe socialising. She will represent North Tyneside's 42,000 young people on a national forum. Maggie marks the first Member of Youth Parliament the school has had elected in 7 years, which is a momentous occasion and a great feat for both Maggie and the school.

(continued on pg 4)



"When I saw the opportunity to run as a Member of Youth Parliament, I grabbed it with both hands. I knew that if I got elected, it would be an amazing opportunity. My pledge was, and is, to utilise spaces within the borough for regular youth clubs and inclusive, safe socialising. The night of the ceremony was one of the most stressful nights ever, but one I'll never forget! I am so thankful to all my family and friends that have supported me, and I'm so grateful to everyone in the borough who voted for me. I'm excited to get started and to work alongside Diamond, the new Young Mayor, to try to make the borough the best place for as many people as possible!"

- Maggie Stead, MYP (and Year 9)



HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



High School Musical was this year's STM musical extravaganza! The spark and energy injected into the entire process by the staff, and continued through the students, has been truly exciting. The musical has allowed students from Year 7 through to Year 13 to unite the school community through a joint love and passion for singing, dancing and acting. Weekly after-school rehearsals have formed new friendships, allowed for musical and acting development but most importantly, a drive to come into school every day and engage with opportunities offered.

The joy and commitment for the musical has extended into other studies within school, positively impacting the students and their engagement with school. Individuals involved have truly shone, highlighting the immense talent of STM students.

The dedication from those involved is something to be recognised and has been reflected by the positive reaction from the audience, and praise from each other.
- Mrs Sinclair, Director



I have made so many friends of various ages that I worked with as a team! We all supported each other through the highs and lows and we have made it through together. This is an experience I will never forget.
- Max Milburn, Year 10

I've never performed on stage before and this show really changed my life! I met so many new and amazing people and my previous friendships grew even more!! I had the best time ever... truly one of the best experiences of my life!
- Maggie Stead, Year 9



I absolutely adored being in this show, the backstage laughs, new friendships, and the whole experience was one the best I've ever had. I wish I could go back and do it all again. Saying I loved the show is a HUGE understatement. Definitely an experience I won't forget, an honest dream come true.
- Freya Broderick, Year 7

Being in High School Musical was a dream that I wish I could relive over and over again. The cast, the crew, the band and the teachers involved made the show incredible and I honestly couldn't have asked for a better HSM family. I can't speak for everyone, but being in the show changed my life for the better.
- Dannii Basilan, Year 11



Saying I loved being in this show is an understatement; I absolutely adore my cast and they are life-long friends. This has been a experience I definitely will not forget.
- Ava Appleby, Year 8

Working on a musical production was a completely new experience for me but from it I have gained friends, skills, and confidence. It truly has been the most amazing experience, and one I hope to have again soon!
- Iris Darcy, Year 11



"A huge congratulations to the school for the absolutely fantastic production of High School Musical. It was a real joy ... WELL DONE to everyone. There is so much hard work which goes into preparing for events on this scale. I have been humming the tunes all week!

Everything was brilliant; the performers, the band, the backstage team, front of house, the venue, I was so proud of the school. I am looking forward to next year already. Please can you pass my congratulations on to everyone involved. Thank you!"
- Mrs Bloomfield, School Governor

SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY



St Thomas More is proud to support City of Sanctuary UK. Wherever we come from, we all have a right to feel safe. That's why city by city, community by community, we are building a more welcoming UK for people rebuilding their lives here.

Schools are the heart of our communities and are central to building a better, fairer and kinder society – for everyone. This year, we are working towards becoming a School of Sanctuary.

A School of Sanctuary educates the whole school community about the experiences and realities of people who have been forced to flee; encourages a culture of welcome and safety for people seeking sanctuary and plays an active role in this.

We would like to encourage everyone in our school community to find out more about refugees and those seeking asylum. The quiz from Refugee Action and myth-buster article from the International Rescue Committee (hyperlinked below) are a good place to start.

- Mr Hill, MFL



On 18th February, Year 9 students from the St Thomas More Schools of Sanctuary Student Group were lucky enough to attend the North Tyneside Young People's Welcome Summit. The summit was an amazing day to connect with others, and it was interesting to hear the different issues other schools were facing and what they were doing to try to tackle these.

At the summit, there were many organisations, communities and groups that came to join us, including Acorn Nursery, Show Racism the Red Card, Walking With Wallsend, North East Museums and many more. We found it fascinating to learn about the work that is done across the region to support different communities.

We also took part in team-building activities that helped us to find common ground with each other. One activity had us quickly get into groups according to shared interests. Some of the groups included "Football Fans", "Purple Lovers" and "Blackcurrant Cravers".

During the day, we worked together to come up with a list of key challenges students at our school might face when they join us, as well as considering possible solutions. Following the summit we have been working on these back in school. The purpose of our student group in school is to work together to make St Thomas More an even more welcoming place for all and we look forward to doing as much as we can to make this happen.

- Isabella Clennell, Year 9 (edited by Hugo Ni, also Year 9)



...continued from front page

The great result of this election is an opportunity to explore the school's significant legacy at the council and the importance of youth participation in local politics. The school's first Young Mayor was Rebecca Leighton in 2011, who advocated young people's activities and championed a music festival at Segedunum Roman Museum. She was followed by Abbie Armstrong in 2015, who led a campaign against bullying in schools alongside the Police and Crime

Commissioner. Then followed Suzie McKenzie, the only two-term Young Mayor, due to the pandemic, who led the youth council on young people's mental health. In 2022 I was elected and led a campaign around climate change and the local environment, working with schools to help them achieve the Green Flag Eco Award, increasing the number of Eco-schools in the area to 51. In 2023, Cameron Quinn took over, working on a 'Ready,



Set, Grow' competition. Diamond, the latest mayor in the school's rich history, has a great opportunity to continue the legacy of her predecessors and to make our school community proud.

- Max Godfrey, Year 13



MATHS CUSTARD CREAMS ARSENIC



POLITICS, POWER & PROTEST

For this year's World Book Day the school library staged it's very own "Murder Mystery."

Sadly, Mr Watson, the Headteacher was found dead in the library. Student detectives had 3 days to solve clues based on art, literature and science to learn the identity of the murderer. There were also some red herrings in order to make things interesting!

After submitting all the evidence the murderer was revealed as Mrs McCabe, Head of History. The 2 top detectives were Emily McGuirk and Charlotte Siddle, both from 8A. Not only did they guess the murderer but also the method; Mr Watson was poisoned by an arsenic infused custard cream!

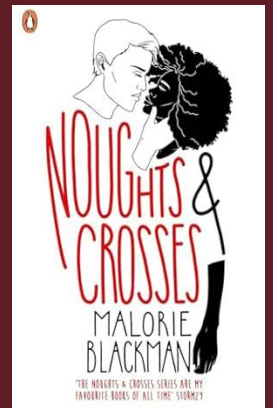
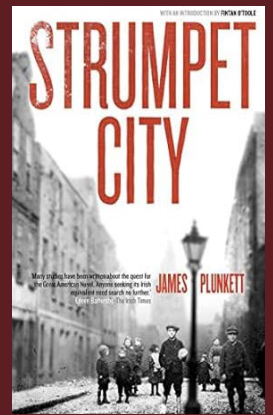
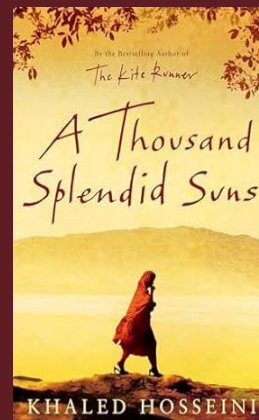
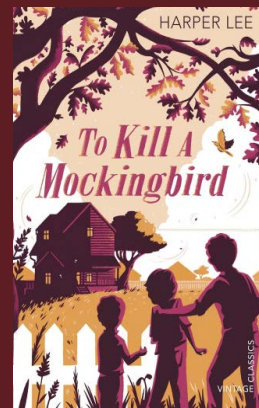
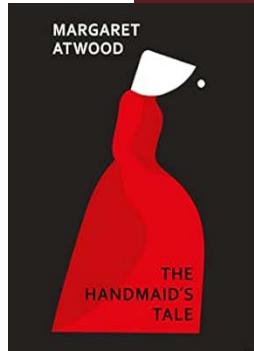
- Miss Edwards, Librarian and Chief Detective



Following the awarding of their prizes, Emily and Charlotte said "it has been fun but tense, waiting for the next clue and keeping our solutions to ourselves." They especially liked speculating which teacher was a most likely murderer!



Speaking after her arrest Mrs McCabe said, "I thought I'd got away with it, I didn't think those students would be able to find me out!"



The Politics, Power & Protest novels are stories about the ideas, people and power struggles that shaped worlds. Many feature characters with ideas out of step with their societies, from Atticus Finch's attitudes to class and race in *To Kill A Mockingbird* to Bernard Marx's dissatisfaction with the world order in *Brave New World*.

- A Thousand Splendid Suns* - Khaled Hosseini
- Brave New World* - Aldous Huxley
- Home Fire* - Kamila Shamsie
- Lord of the Flies* - William Golding
- Nought & Crosses* - Malorie Blackman
- Strumpet City* - James Plunkett
- The Color Purple* - Alice Walker
- To Kill A Mockingbird* - Harper Lee
- V for Vendetta* - Alan Moore
- Unless* - Carol Shields
- The Handmaid's Tale* - Margaret Atwood



FAREWELL FROM MICHAEL

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everybody in our magnificent community – students, staff, parents, parishioners, clergy & governors – for the ten wonderful years I spent as School Chaplain at St Thomas More. It was a privilege to walk alongside and accompany so many of you on journeys of life and faith and, believe me when I say, my life has been impacted deeply by each and every encounter with a pupil or other member of the school community.

I was particularly proud of all our young people who got involved in social justice issues – important work rooted in the teachings of Christ and the Gospels. It was as a pupil myself at St Thomas More in the 2000s where my values were shaped and I was introduced to the work of the SVP, CAFOD and the Fair Trade Foundation through the School Chaplaincy. It was therefore always important to me to continue this work as a Chaplain and help young people understand their place in the world and to learn how to spot inequalities and injustice in society.

Becoming a member institution of Tyne & Wear Citizens in 2017 gave us the tools to move from charity to justice and watching our young people lead campaigns on poverty, transport, and mental health was inspiring. Watching the students grow in confidence as they shared the stage with Cabinet Ministers, MPs, Mayors and important business people was astounding and I will be sharing these stories forever.

Last year I was given the opportunity to join the organising staff team at Tyne & Wear Citizens to help other schools and colleges develop their young people to lead on campaigns important to them. I felt like it was an important next step in my life; to help more and more young people understand their own pressures, and help them to do something about it by taking action.

I will miss St Thomas More so, so much – the community is one that lives up to the Christian values of love, peace, truth, tolerance and justice in all its endeavours and I can't wait to see how our pupils go on to change the world, making it a better place for all.

You'll always be in my prayers! - Michael



CAMERON MAKES SOME NOISE AT THE CONVENTION OF THE NORTH

During February half term, I travelled to Preston with Tyne and Wear Citizens to take part in the Convention of the North, an opportunity for members of different sectors to get together and discuss how to make a difference to the North.



On day one, I met other delegates from Citizens UK at our fringe event the day before the conference, where we agreed our key statement around improving public transport across the North. On day two, I took part in two panel discussions, where I spoke about the gaps in the curriculum for vocational, environmental and hands-on education, and how this corresponds to gaps in the market and industry. I also spoke about the real living wage and how young people are not coming into the industrial workforce due to barriers such as low pay. I met key figures including the Mayor of North East England Kim McGuinness, asking them to sign our statement to support the work Citizens UK are doing in regards to advocacy and engagement, transport and the real living wage.

On the third day I heard speeches from a variety of speakers, including Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, on levelling-up, transport, net-zero, electricity pricing and health innovation. As the only young person at the event, I made it my mission to change people's perspectives on youth voice.

- Cameron Quinn, Year 11

(photo to the left shows Cameron with Mayor of the North East Kim McGuinness)

CATHOLIC LIFE



ASH WEDNESDAY

On the morning of Ash Wednesday students attended Mass at St Aidan's Catholic Church Wallsend. They received blessed ashes and returned to school, where ashes were distributed to over 250 students across the school community. Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent, we mark ourselves on the forehead with ashes as a symbol of mortality.

- Ryan Regi, Year 8

SEASON OF LENT

Our theme during this season of Lent is 'Walk together in Hope'. During Lent we are called to follow Jesus' example, where he fasted in the desert for 40 days. We are called to reflect upon three aspects of life, prayer, fasting and giving. In our lives today, we usually give something up for Lent and try to stick to it. At St Thomas More we are challenged to do something for others. This year we come together following our theme of 'walk together in hope', supporting our many different named charities.

- Leo Hand, Year 8

St Thomas More Catholic High School

How can we **'walk together in hope'** at St Thomas More this Lent?

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Sixth Form
<p>Sarah's Star <i>Shining through the dark times</i></p> <p>Supports individuals (and families) suffering from incurable illnesses in the North East.</p>	<p>St Cuthbert's Care <i>Caring, Faith</i></p> <p>St Cuthbert's Care provides care for the most vulnerable members of society in the North East.</p>	<p>Sarah's Star <i>Shining through the dark times</i></p> <p>Supports individuals (and families) suffering from incurable illnesses in the North East.</p>	<p>CAFOD <i>Caritas Action for Overseas Development</i></p> <p>CAFOD supports projects and programmes all over the world, with a focus on international emergency and development work.</p>	<p>Blood Cancer UK</p> <p>Supports individuals suffering with blood cancers.</p>	<p>Our Lady of Lourdes Kenya <i>Mission in Muhoroni. Educating and supporting families.</i></p>

Lent is the time to re-set the focus of our hearts and minds... as we journey through life in hope.

FLAME 2025



On Saturday, March 15th, thousands of Catholics from across the country (and quite a few Geordies!) made their way to London for the 2025 Flame Congress. This year's theme was "Fearless and Unstoppable", as boldly stated on our hoodies, making us not only identifiable to one another, but also unified. As we made the journey to Wembley, it was clear that despite our different backgrounds and where in the country we came from, we were all bound by a common purpose, to be fearless with God's love and unstoppable in our potential. The atmosphere was nothing short of electric! We were fortunate enough to hear inspiring talks from the most resilient amongst us, all sorts of genres of music from artists such as Adenike, known for starring as Whitney Houston on the "Queen of The Night" tour, and "Flame's Stormzy", Guvna B. The event was underpinned by powerful moments of worship, which uniquely allowed us to embrace our faith in an arena full of thousands of young people. Kaila Sadiq in Year 13 said that the experience "reignited the 'Flame' (get it?) of her faith" and Skye Brunton in Year 13 said it was "lit". This year's Flame won't be forgotten by us any time soon.

- Semira Kilic, Year 13

SEAHAM PILGRIMAGE

On Wednesday 27th March, students from STM travelled to St Cuthbert's Church in New Seaham to see Bishop Stephen celebrate Mass and preside over the veneration of the relics of The Blessed Carlo Acutis. Carlo Acutis was a London-born teenager, who will become the first saint of the millennial generation when he is canonised on 27th April. Born in 1991 and growing up in Milan, Italy, Acutis passed away in 2006 at the age of 15 due to leukaemia. His life, though short, was marked by a profound faith and a passion for technology, which he used to spread the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Carlo had great devotion to the Eucharist, and his dedication to faith and skill with technology earned him recognition within the Catholic community and beyond. His canonisation is a testament to his enduring impact and the inspiration he continues to provide to young people. It was a joy and a privilege to be there to celebrate this momentous event.

- Rachel Hibbert, Year 11



NEWS AND EVENTS



BLACKSMITHS EVENT IN A LEVEL 3D DESIGN

As part of our A level 3D Design course, True North Trades, Blacksmiths from Durham visited STM and spent some time with us in the workshop. Darren and Chris have been blacksmiths for a combined total of eighteen years and have worked with celebrities such as Robson Green and now even us. The session consisted of us creating two intricate designs with a Nordic theme. We made an arm ring and a bottle opener.

Steel was heated up in a furnace until it was glowing red - it was unbelievably hot! We then started hammering away at an anvil to shape, twist, bend and eventually polish it, leaving us with a handmade one-off item of jewellery, and a sweaty back from the heat of two furnaces and the effort required to shape the steel into the desired shape.



The bottle opener was an opportunity to use our skills of shaping and twisting that we had learnt during the day and gave us a good excuse to crack open a cold one (at home) to 'test' if our skills have paid off at the end... It had, and they all worked perfectly!

It was such a great experience which I know none of us will forget. Darren and Chris were great instructors, and them laughing with us along the way made it that much more enjoyable. Thank you to them for showing us their trade. We would definitely recommend it to anyone who fancies a new hobby or for someone trying to relieve stress by smashing something really hard.

YEAR 9 VISIT TO NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

We were very happy to be chosen to take part in an exciting five day programme with Northumbria University. We left school on the coach at 9am on 30th January for the launch event, picking other schools up on the way. When we arrived at the University we had a tour of the campus; there was a gym, a pool, a huge library and lots of shops and restaurants. We then took part in team games (including a version of charades) with pupils from other schools, before having lunch with our families. We headed home after some more team games, with a university goody bag. (Lucie)



I thought the most interesting part was when we were told that if you looked at one of the buildings from a bird's eye view, it is shaped like a brain! I also really enjoyed the lunch, especially the cakes! (Daria)

We are really looking forward to our other days, which include a theatre trip, a day at NUFC Foundation, an Art day and finally our 'Graduation', where we will celebrate with our families. (Ocean) - Lucie Widdows, Daria Kurosz and Ocean Peacock, Year 9



TALK FROM HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR MALA TRIBICH

On Wednesday 22nd January, I was given the opportunity to listen to a Holocaust survivor with 30 other students in Year 9. I think it was very inspiring learning about the struggles of Mala and how she overcame the fear and oppression the Nazis inflicted upon her. She was forced to leave her home a number of times and lost everyone close to her at a very young age. It was very inspiring listening to someone who survived such horrors and I feel lucky with my life today.

– Daria Kurosz, Year 9

CHRISTMAS FOOD BANK THANK YOU

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported the Sixth Form Food Bank appeal again this year. We left two minibuses full of food with the Salvation Army just before Christmas, and the volunteers were extremely grateful. They informed the students of how desperate the need is and how our donations will be used. The collection also helped to support twelve of our own STM families, who really needed the help going into Christmas, so it is an unbelievably valuable resource. – Mr Clifford, Assistant Head of Year 12



MORE NEWS AND EVENTS



ALNWICK GEOGRAPHY REVISION WEEKEND

Last Friday (21st March), straight after school, we set off on our much-anticipated trip to Alnwick. We arrived at our hostel around 4pm but before settling in, we got straight to work with a quick revision session.



Dinner was a traditional fish and chips meal enjoyed in the hostel dining room, after which we checked into our rooms. The evening continued with a variety of revision games and quizzes from 5.30 to 9.30pm, including an entertaining geography-themed version of pass the parcel. To unwind, we spent an hour in the games room, enjoying activities around the hostel, including a particularly competitive game of table football.

The next morning, we were up early for breakfast at 8am, followed by another short but focused revision session. Soon after, we took a fifteen-minute bus ride to Boulmer Beach, where we walked two miles along the coastline. One of the highlights was our "Geography speed dating", where we had to recall as much information as possible on different topics. After a packed schedule, we headed home - though Mr. Murray's group had the added treat of a pie! - Thomas Rowell, Year 11

THE OUSEBURN - A CHANGING PLACE

On Monday 17th March, Year 12 Geographers visited the Ouseburn, a great example of a changing place with a massive rise and fall of the valley in recent centuries. The area was shaped by industrialisation during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, with many industries thriving such as glass making and pottery. People lived in a vibrant community of squalid tenements with limited space.



Our tour took in the river, which has been so important for the Ouseburn

as a transport route, the Ship Inn 1891, which was the pub for a poor area, originally a row of terraced houses stretching up Stepney Bank, home to 77 people. The living conditions were appalling with a typhoid outbreak in 1898 killing 24 residents. We then followed an old cobbled street down to the old bridge crossing the burn. The building of the two main bridges over the valley ultimately led to the fall of the Ouseburn at the beginning of the 20th century as there was no longer a need to go down the valley.

Finally, we learnt how, with the help of the Ouseburn Trust, the area has now been redeveloped and regenerated and is a creative hub for many industries, including the National Centre for Children's Books at Seven Stories and the Toffee Factory, which is now home to over 20 digital and creative businesses.

- Zac Brannon, Year 12

Coatings That Last: Extending the life of your products

by Nicole Lai

Coatings can increase the sustainability of products by providing a protective barrier that safeguard against different environmental factors.

Introduction

This poster is to provide an overview of several types of coatings, including organic, inorganic, and hybrid coatings and examine their mechanism of corrosion protection.



Figure 1 Major types and examples of anticorrosion coatings

Major types of anticorrosion coatings

Organic	Inorganic	Hybrid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composed of carbon-based polymers Provide effective barrier protection against corrosive environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These coating are created through a chemical action Offer excellent resistance to high temperatures and harsh chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides sacrificial protection by corroding preferentially to the underlying substrate

How does it work?

Barrier effect

- The coating forms a barrier corrosive elements from diffusing
- Effectively isolating the substrate from damaging environmental factors

Sacrificial layer

- The sacrificial layer has higher electrochemical potential than the substrate
- Corrosive agents will attack the sacrificial layer first

Self healing properties

- The ability to repair themselves upon sustaining minor mechanical damage
- When the coatings are subject to such damage, the healing agents are triggered, initiating a restorative process within the affected region

Conclusion

- Organic coatings are hydrophobic, disrupting hydrogen bonding in water
- Some inorganic coatings are hydrophilic, promoting controlled water attraction to form passive oxide layers.
- Hybrid coatings combine the flexibility and adhesion of organics with the chemical resistance and durability of inorganics
- Hybrid coatings often providing superior performance compared to single-material coatings.

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NICOLE LAI ON SUSTAINABLE COATINGS

During the Christmas holidays I participated in a national poster competition organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry. I chose the topic of how coatings can extend the life of products, so I looked at anticorrosion coatings and how they work. Each poster was assessed based on its appearance and the content by industry experts and world-renowned academics. My poster was awarded joint third place, for which I won a £50 Amazon voucher. This competition allowed me to broaden my knowledge and prepare myself for university by doing independent research. Special thanks to Miss Dalrymple and Dr Paradis for giving me advice and helping with the submission. – Nicole Lai, Year 13





Hi everyone,

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to every year group in St Thomas More for electing us to represent you this year. We are truly grateful for your trust and support, and we're excited to work together to make our school an even better place. We're committed to listening to your ideas, addressing your concerns, and making sure everyone's voice is heard. Here's a quick update on what we've been working on and what we're planning next:

What's been done so far:

- **Locked Toilets:** We've attempted to tackle the issue of the cleanliness of the toilets in having them locked during lesson times, accessible with a pass.
- **New PE Nets:** Thanks to a great idea from the last school council, we've brought the idea of new PE nets to life!
- **Chat with leadership:** We had some productive discussions with Miss Hagan on various school needs.
- **Football:** We've supplied new sports balls for each year group at social times.
- **Stationery Shed:** The new stationery shed is up and running, ensuring easier access to school supplies. This is available everyday at break and lunch time.
- **New Food Options:** We've introduced some exciting new food options, including noodles, Katsu chicken, and brownies.

What we are working on next:

- **Fundraiser for Football Nets:** We're planning a fundraiser to support the purchase of additional footy nets.
- **Seating:** We're working on getting more seating around the school to improve outdoor spaces.
- **Raise Money for Benches:** We are also planning to raise money for benches, ensuring everyone has a place to sit at social times!
- **Chat with Simon:** We're scheduled to have a discussion with Simon about further dining hall improvements.
- **Whole School Survey:** Look out for the whole school survey in your email which will be centred around the dining hall – your feedback is important to us!
- **Newsletter:** We will continue to update you on our decisions and progress via the newsletter.
- **Email:** We are setting up a Student Council email so you can get in touch with us on the school system.
- **Culture Day:** Keep an eye open for news on St Thomas More Culture Day!

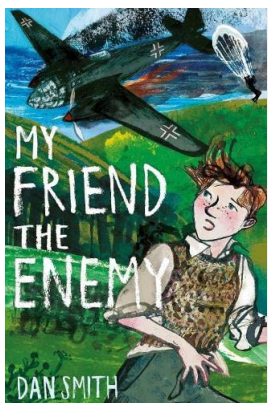
Thanks again for your support and stay tuned for more updates!

Best regards,
Your School Council

SOCIAL MEDIA UP FOR DEBATE BY OUR GERMAN TEAM

We recently competed in the semi-finals of the national German Debate competition run by the Goethe Institute, and whilst the final result wasn't what we hoped for, it was still a great experience. This round's topic was "Do social media influencers have a negative influence?"; between us we presented arguments about the positive effects of influencers in Austria and Germany and told the judges of the importance of taking personal responsibility for managing what we see on social media. Our case was strong (and expressed so well in German!) but unfortunately, we just lost out to the Central London School for Girls by a narrow margin. We'd like to thank Frau Fisher and Frau Ritchie for all their help preparing us for this competition, and helping us reach the semi-finals; we can't wait to put our German speaking skills to use in the real world!

- Joe Eggett, Lily Clephane, Sam Blair and Scarlett Thane, Year 12



DAN SMITH RETURNS TO WORKSHOP WITH YEAR 7

On Monday 10th March Dan Smith came in and gave a talk about his books to Year 7, followed by a creative writing workshop with a group of 30 students. Dan Smith is an award-winning author who has written books including 'My Friend the Enemy', 'The Wall Between Us' and 'She Wolf'.

At the workshop he gave us writing prompts such as writing about our dream house and gave us a few minutes to write something with those prompts. We could share what we had written or just keep it to ourselves. He then showed us pictures and we had to write a title and captions for the images. He told us what he is inspired by and that he thinks about his first draft for as long as possible. I really enjoyed the workshop and it helped me with my creative writing. - Hollie Ebdale and Olivia Whillis, Year 7



STM Cross Country team (left to right) Zac Brannon, Isaac Pottinger, Jonny Gaukrodger, Elliot Moore and Hugh Fenwick (Joe Eggett missed the photo)

RUNNING FOR THE FINISH LINE

by Hugh Fenwick, Year 13

March saw the end of one of the most successful Cross Country seasons in the school's history, starting with the English Schools Cross Country Cup Final in Leeds. This was the first time STM had qualified for the event, racing against some of the fastest schools in the country. With the brilliant support of Mr Hitchcock, the senior boys team embraced a tough course to finish in an impressive 23rd position (as one of the only state schools at the event). It was a great experience for everyone; for most of us it was our first national event.

The season culminated with the English Schools Cross Country Championships, where myself and James Sturman (Year 10) made the 16 hour round trip to Ardingly in Sussex to represent Northumberland. Being two of the most anticipated races in the Cross Country calendar,

the atmosphere was amazing, as was the standard of competition. As a Year 13, qualifying for these events at the final chance was a huge personal milestone, clearly displaying the depth of talent and ability of my peers, setting the foundations for many successful seasons to come.

Being part of the Cross Country team for the past seven years has been a highlight of my time at STM; it is something that I would highly recommend to athletes in younger years. A huge thank you to Mrs Plummer, whose constant support and organisation is invaluable to the team's success.

I was lucky enough to go on the ski trip to St Johann in January, and it was an unforgettable experience. From the moment we arrived, I was blown away by the breath-taking scenery. The mountains were covered in snow and every morning we woke up to the most stunning sunrise over the peaks. The colours in the sky were incredible, and it made every day feel magical.

I'd never skied before so I was very nervous. The skiing itself was a challenge at first, but the instructors were fantastic and helped me build my confidence until it just clicked. By the end of the trip, we were using the gondolas to climb the mountains and ski down red runs with huge smiles on our faces! But it wasn't just about the skiing - what really made the trip special

were the friendships and the laughter. Spending time together with friends, sharing stories, and laughing together in the evenings was so much fun. We had a game night, a talent show, a disco, shopping trips, swimming and even a ski show from the professionals.

The whole trip was full of joy, adventure, challenges and unforgettable moments. I loved every second of it - the breath-taking views, the thrill of skiing, and the bonds I made with my friends. I have fallen in love with snow and skiing.

– Molly Milner, Year 8



Molly in action on race day

MEMORIES OF ST JOHANN



EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

Many of our recent ex-pupils have been of the sporty variety, which has been fabulous. However, regardless of where you've ended up, if you went to STM we'd love to hear from you. Please contact alogie@stmacademy.org.uk if you have a story to tell. All we need is a few sentences and a recent photograph, we'll do the rest. We look forward to featuring you very soon.



TOM ROBERTSON **2012 - 2019**

Having had a love of sport and fascination with the science behind it, it felt natural for me to pursue a degree in Sport Science at Newcastle University. I thoroughly enjoyed my course, during which I completed a placement year at Newcastle Falcons RFC as a data analyst, returning for a part time job during my final year on the strength of the skills and connections I had built.

After completing my degree, I was offered a permanent job at the Falcons as the data scientist within their athletic performance and medical departments. My role covers data collection and reporting in areas of athletic performance and injury management, alongside research into concussion, fitness testing and injury causes. In addition to my work at the club I also provide guest lectures on data science in sport for my former department in Newcastle University.

My time at STM began this journey, with fantastic teaching from Mr Towns, Mr Burnett and Mrs Henderson in my PE A-Level. I'd also like to thank the Maths department for giving me the foundations of my statistical knowledge during my GCSEs and A-Levels and the History department for being patient enough to improve my academic writing capabilities.

CHRISTINA McILDUFF (née KERRIDGE) **2002 - 2009**

I always knew I was going to pursue a career in Performing Arts, so I took every opportunity that STM offered, performing in dance festivals and after school dance clubs. Even when I broke my leg, I would still try to participate and I cannot thank the PE department enough for supporting me through that time! I completed my A-levels and attended Bodywork Company Dance Studios, Cambridge to study Musical Theatre.

After a couple of years as a professional performer, I found my next venture, the Aerial Arts. After completing a professional aerial arts course, I performed when I could, but also started teaching adult and children's aerial silks classes where I had trained. Highlights of my time in London were performing at the Olympia Horse Show and The Brit Awards 2019, in the opening 'Greatest Showman' number alongside Hugh Jackman.

After the pandemic, I moved back to North Shields and started my own Aerial School called Aerial Beats. I am also in my final year of a Masters in Chiropractic (another option if you've ever considered Physiotherapy!) I am a firm believer that it is never too late to start or make a change! I am so excited to continue my Aerial business, start my new career as a Chiropractor and, with my husband Ross, welcome our first child into the world later this year!



NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2025

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