



MORELIFE

St Thomas More
Catholic High School

SUMMER 2025

OUR MENTOR, OUR HERO: CARLY AWARDED MBE FOR HER WORK ON KNIFE CRIME



Reporting by Rachael Oni-Johnson, Year 12

Many students may have walked past Carly Barrett in the hallways, unaware of the indisputable resilience and courage she embodies. After the devastating loss of her 18-year-old sister, and former STM student, Samantha Madgin in 2007, Carly channeled her grief into action. With the launch of 'Samantha's Legacy' in 2019, Carly, along with her mother and her cousin, has worked tirelessly to prevent other families from experiencing the same despair of losing a loved one to knife crime.

Despite still navigating their own grief, the organisation has achieved astonishing accomplishments, including the Prime

Minister's Points of Light award and, more recently, a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) award. This prestigious award recognises Carly's unwavering dedication and strength in the face of immense personal tragedy. Carly, shocked and overwhelmed by the news, described receiving the award as 'bittersweet' and expressed how it fuelled her fervour for what she does. So when you do pass her in the hallways, remember to congratulate her for her remarkable achievements.

Motivated by support from the community, family, friends and an aspiration to protect her sister's son - who was only 10 weeks old at the time of her death - Carly advocates for the education of young people about the calamitous impacts of knife crime. This August, that baby boy, Callum, now 18, is heading off to St. Thomas University in Miami to study Business and play Rugby on a four year scholarship. His journey is not only a source of pride for Carly and her family, but a moving reminder of the love, strength, and determination that can grow even from the darkest of places. Carly's desire to uplift the community has led her to deliver numerous anti-knife crime workshops and awareness sessions, as well as opening a victim's retreat. The latter, which was established in 2022, is one of the very few victim retreats in the North East offering families affected by the loss of a loved one a haven to process their trauma. A guest at the retreat described how it allowed her and her

family to 'settle down and be at peace'.

'Samantha's Legacy' aims to amplify the voices of the community and protect future generations by listening to the youth who are frequently dismissed. Their purpose is not public recognition, but to create a meaningful impact in society. Carly carries an admirable eagerness to do more, falling asleep at night with new ideas for doing more filling her mind, including opening more victim retreats in various locations.

So, let us not see Samantha Madgin as a mere statistic but remember her as the beautiful and beloved daughter, sister, cousin, and mother who possessed the ability to light up a room with her vibrant personality and left her strength behind for her loved ones. To learn more about the mission of 'Samantha's Legacy', visit: www.samanthaslegacy.com

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STM FEAST DAY BATHED IN SUNSHINE!

The annual Feast Day celebration, this year on Thursday 19th June, honours the school's mission 'to follow the example of Jesus in their work, worship, and relationships.' The Mass itself celebrates our relationship with God – a visible demonstration of faith being at the heart of our school.

Afterwards, a celebration took place in the grounds of St. Columba's, where parishioners and parents had the opportunity to meet students and

discover more about their academic excellence, but more importantly, the quality of the relationships that underpin our community. Stands were set up for informal chats over burgers, covering everything from our latest musical production to our status as a School of Sanctuary; from the work of the School Council to the success of our sports teams.

These gatherings radiate genuine joy. The evening serves as a reminder of the school's heritage and the enduring truth that 'people need people'.

- Mr Merchant, Assistant Headteacher



BRAVO TO THE BRASS

After several years without performing brass, we are thrilled to announce the arrival of a new brass teacher to our peripatetic music department: the immensely talented and experienced Ian Sankey. Ian is an accomplished trombonist who regularly performs as principal trombone with the prestigious Royal Northern Sinfonia, but is also deeply committed to music education. Working as a mentor for the charity Hand Of, he works with vulnerable children not currently in formal education, using music as a tool for empowerment and expression. We are incredibly fortunate to welcome



someone of Ian's calibre and enthusiasm into our school community. Huge congratulations to our inaugural players: Oliver Murphy and Andrew Douglass on trumpet, and Elliot Harding and Will Nugent on trombone. Bravo to all involved! - Mrs Gleeson, Music Dept





"I have found my experience in Lourdes to be really inspiring. Lourdes has given me a new perspective on the lives of others and hugely deepened my faith in God. I loved spending time with so many new and different people, embracing the presence of joy in Lourdes."

- Emily Ainscough, Year 12

LOURDES 2025



"This has been the most reflective and informative experience of my life. When people first discussed the 'Lourdes Bug', I had my doubts – particularly not being of faith. Despite this, Lourdes has changed my whole perception of religion. From the beauty of the torchlight and singing 'As I kneel before you'; the smiles on the faces of children who never usually smile; to the unbelievable kindness of Fr Joseph O'Brien, Lourdes has really shown me the wonderful side of Catholicism."

- Joe Eggett, Year 12



"Lourdes is a place of magic. It sounds like a cliché but somehow it's true. Lourdes brings together people who may never have spoken to each other back home; it brings people into conversations and activities that lead to the formation of a strong shared bond. It has been an honour to be a member of 714. Every day I have worn my pink clothes and lanyard I have walked with my head held high."

- Isaac Pottinger, Year 12



"Lourdes has been an incredibly heart-warming experience. Seeing such community amongst strangers at Masses and torchlit processions brought a new perspective to religion. The smiles and tears I saw throughout the week gave me hope that, at some point, this kindness could spread across the world and everywhere would become a safer and more loving place, like Lourdes."

- Abigail Tindle, Year 12

A BRUSH WITH BRILLIANCE



On the 23rd June my sister Grace (former STM student, now studying childcare) and Bernie, the parish secretary at St Columba's, went with Fr David to Daft as a Brush House in Gosforth. We have recently sold raffle tickets and served tea and coffee, raising £732.20 for them. Once we arrived I got the opportunity to meet the founder of Daft as a Brush, Brian. It was an amazing experience getting to know a bit about him and his background. Daft as a Brush is a charity who transport people living with cancer to and from their hospital appointments and will accompany people to their appointments if they wish to have that support. It was a wonderful experience to be a part of. - Ashleigh Sales, Year 9

FROM OUR SIXTH FORM TO KENYA



During Lent, Sixth Form students raised £350 to sponsor Carlos, a student at school in Muhoroni in Kenya. £350 will pay for a uniform, his tuition and his breakfast and lunch for an entire academic year. Carlos is already back at school due to the support coming from STM. Well done and thank you very much for your hard work. - Mr O'Connor, Head of RE



YEAR 13 PROM



They say that all great things must come to an end. This isn't necessarily true. My experience here at STM Sixth Form has been an incredible adventure, punctuated by some of the most incredible people. Whilst this leg of the journey has reached its end, the



relationships between my fellow students and I will continue on and develop, little by little, as we all take the next step on that journey of our lifetime.

From Sports Day to Pink Day, Pyjama Day to Prom, the immense happiness and joy created by all the teachers and

my peers is something that cannot be recreated elsewhere. I will forever remember and cherish all the silly memories we made, and be grateful for all of the staff that helped make my time here come to life. STM is a school that cannot be surpassed and it will be missed by so many.

- Nyasha Chhina-Chonyera, Year 13

STAFF AND SIXTH FORM BATTLE FOR A DRAW

The Year 13s went into this huge occasion with shredded nerves, fully aware of the staff's unbeaten record in this fixture over the last five years. However they were magnificent and thoroughly deserved a share of the spoils - the aged staff welcoming Mr Wilkinson's final whistle much more than their sprightly opponents! The football on display that evening from the Sixth Form was like watching the 1970 Brazil team in full flow - the staff XI's comparison would probably have to be the Wimbledon Crazy Gang with chopper Merchant acting as the Vinnie Jones enforcer.

Most impressively the Year 13s showed wonderful leadership and teamwork - ensuring that their whole squad were given plenty of game time, and the sportsmanship on display was wonderfully typical from this brilliant bunch of students. - Mr Burnett, Head of Year 12



ICELAND

Iceland was beyond an amazing experience! We thoroughly enjoyed our time visiting the spectacular sites with our tour guide Leif. We started with a tour of the capital, Reykjavik, and our sleep deprivation was helped by Mr Murray's much-needed enthusiasm. The 'Golden Circle' tour on day 2 gave us a chance to 'chill out' at the secret lagoon, then visit greenhouses where they grow tomatoes that taste like sweets - a very delicious stop. On day 3 the rainy weather hit and the waterproofs came out. This didn't

falter our spirits as we experienced extraordinary panoramic views of the geothermal hot springs, then visited a ghost town and the two-year-old lava field that had led to its evacuation. On our final day, the 'South Shore' day saw us scale the 400 steps to the top of Skogafoss for the most magical view. The biggest thank you to all the teachers who made this trip possible.

- Sophia Dodds, Eloise Chandler and Belle Garbutt, Year 10



PARIS

After a delayed journey that saw us taking two buses to only get as far as Darlington, our first proper day in Paris took us straight to a boat trip on the River Seine. It was so pretty seeing all the famous landmarks such as Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower from the water. That evening, we all enjoyed a traditional French meal at a restaurant called Bouillon Chartier and went up the Montparnasse Tower, where we got an amazing view across the whole of Paris as the sun set over the city (temperature at 9pm = 37degrees!)

On the second day we started at a street market where we bought food for the picnic, before heading to Notre Dame Cathedral to attend the 12 o'clock mass, which was so nice to be part of. Later on, in Montmartre, my friends and I put lockets on the fence and



had dinner at a pizzeria. On the last day we all went to Disneyland where we rode Hyper Space Mountain and the Tower of Terror. The whole trip was such a brilliant experience and the teachers were amazing. - Millie Clennell, Year 11



BERLIN



Our recent trip to Berlin was an incredible experience, offering us an invaluable insight for our GCSE and A Level History and German studies.

We began our adventure with a visit to the iconic TV Tower, where we enjoyed breathtaking views of the city from its observation deck. From

there, we journeyed through the chilling Topography of Terror, where we explored the remnants of the SS and Gestapo headquarters, learning about the dark days of Nazi rule. The nearby Führerbunker, where Adolf Hitler spent his last days, left a lasting impression on us.

The days were balanced with lighter moments - bowling and trying Berlin's famous currywurst, schnitzel, and apple strudel.

Our visit to the infamous Stasi Prison shed light on East Germany's oppressive surveillance state. The trip not only enhanced our understanding of history but also offered a unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in Berlin's vibrant culture and heritage. Berlin truly brought our History and German lessons to life!

- Mrs Mole, History Dept,
Mrs Fisher & Mr Hill, MFL Dept



GRASSROOTS TO GREATNESS

CELEBRATING SPORT AT EVERY LEVEL



St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Dear Year 9 and 12 Sports Leaders,
Our Year 2 children came back on Wednesday absolutely buzzing from the athletics event at St Thomas More because of everything you and Mr Burnett organised and ran. Mrs Cottiss said you were all brilliant at leading, demonstrating, talking and laughing with our students. You probably don't realise it, but for our primary school children, this is the very start of their early transition to St Thomas More, and you and the school staff have left our children wanting more. Our students and staff also love seeing you around school, you always stop and chat to us and are always happy and a credit to the school. We fully appreciate everything you do for our children, and you are fantastic role models, our children really look up to you all.

Kind regards,

Mr Dillon, Headteacher, St Cuthbert's Primary

On Wednesday 18th June, our feeder primary schools came together at St Thomas More for the sixth and final sports festival of the year. What a day! The Year 2 children were a credit to their wonderful schools, showing bucket-loads of talent, resilience and kindness.

Throughout the festival period our Year 9 sports leaders have been central to the success of the events. Autumn, Emma, Isabella, Evie, Lily, Megan, Romy, Summer, Maggie and Isla have been superstars. Due to the size of this festival, some amazing Year 12s were also there to make everything run smoothly - thank you so much leaders!

YEAR 2 SPORTS FESTIVAL



"I loved being at St Thomas More. We got to race with lots of other schools, but it really didn't matter who won. We all shouted and clapped for each other." - Dolcie, Year 2

"My best bit was high fiveing the STM sports leaders at the end. I want to be one of them when I grow up." - Ollie, Year 2



"I've never ever done the long jump into sand before. At St Cuthbert's we do it on our field. At St Thomas More they have a real sand pit you can land in, I love it!" - Harper, Year 2

"Mr Burnett is the best! He teaches my big brothers and they love him. He makes us all feel happy and that makes us all want to go to STM when we're bigger." - Rose, Year 2



"The children were always so polite and they made the festivals so much fun." - Isla Sutcliffe, Year 9

"It was so lovely to see the young girls play and also see them encourage each other. The festivals have made me enjoy Year 9 so much more." - Emma Clarke, Year 9

"I would definitely recommend becoming a sports leader to Year 8s who get the opportunity next year." - Lily Guest, Year 9



FUTSAL COUNTY CHAMPIONS

Earlier this year, our Year 9 Boys Futsal team competed in the North Tyneside qualifying rounds of the Futsal County Cup and were comfortable winners. This resulted in the team being invited to the County finals at Benfield school. The competition was extremely competitive, with some excellent schools taking part. Our team were fantastic, scoring 20 goals in 4 games, which resulted in them being crowned Northumberland County Champions. An amazing achievement which adds to an already outstanding season on the football pitch. Well done to the team on a very memorable season! - Mr Knowles, PE Dept

YEAR 7 TYNE & WEAR CHAMPIONS

The Year 7 girls football team were crowned joint Tyne & Wear 7-a-side champions after drawing with St Joseph's in the final. On a hot and sunny afternoon the girls performed admirably, winning two games in the group, 2-0 v Thorp Academy & 3-0 vs St Anthony's, drawing 1-1 vs Gosforth and losing to St Joseph's. This was enough to see St Thomas More qualify for the semi finals, where they defeated the other group winners, Whitburn, 1-0. The closely-fought final saw no goals and the organisers decided to share the trophy. Amelia Alexander bagged five goals on her way to be St Thomas More's player of the day. - Mr Anderson, PE Dept





NETBALL SUCCESS

Back in March, we sent a strong cohort of teams to North Tyneside Netball tournaments. The U13 team finished 3rd in their division, while the U12s were 2nd and the U15 team won their age group. - Mrs Johnson, PE Dept



U14 GIRLS FOOTBALL

On Wednesday 7th May the U14 Girls Football Team played in the Northumberland County 7-a-side tournament final at John Spence. We'd been playing rounds since September, and St Thomas More finished second in the league, putting us through to the last round.

After a 1-0 loss to Prudhoe, the team who knocked us out in the County cup semis, we drew every other game including against Ponteland, who went on to win the tournament. We were very unlucky in several of our games but hopefully in future tournaments we will turn our draws to wins! - Romy Nathan, Year 9



WILL TUMBLES TO SILVER!

"In July, I travelled to Portugal with the GB tumbling squad for 6 days to compete in the Coimbra Gym Fest. We won team gold and I won an individual silver medal. In August I am attending a training camp with the GB squad in Denmark. I have also made it through to the British Championships in October, which will take place in Telford." - Will Potts, Year 8



COUNTY ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

From Year 13, Hugh Fenwick won the 3000m in a time of 9.18, while Lucy Fitzpatrick finished second in the Triple Jump with 9.65m and third in the Long Jump with 4.70m. Zac Brannon in Year 12 smashed the 800m, winning it in a time of 1.52! (World Record pace is 1.40)

Alexa Hastie in Year 10 (pictured left) won both her 300m race in 42.7s and her Triple Jump with 9.95m, and has qualified for the England Athletics Age Group Championships in Birmingham in August. Best of luck Alexa!

In addition, there were excellent performances from Lily Scorer, Joe D Brown, Harry Carter and James Sturman from Year 10, and Evie Fraser, Sophia Adamson, Megan Marlborough in Year 9. James was particularly unlucky, comfortably leading his 1500m race with one lap to go but sadly had to pull out due to injury! - Mrs Plummer, PE Dept



ENGLISH SCHOOLS NATIONAL ATHLETICS

On the weekend of 12th and 13th July, three of our athletes competed in the English Schools Nationals. Luke Pichler in Year 12 finished fifth in his 110m hurdles heat (Day 1 at 4 minutes 30s),

Macy Cunningham in Year 10 was fourth in her 300m hurdles heat (Day 1 at 5 hours 1 min), while Zac Brannon in Year 12 qualified for the 800m final on Day 2, where he finished sixth in the country! (heats on Day 1 at 7 hours 32 mins and final on Day 2 at 2hrs 38mins). [Day 1](#) [Day 2](#) (YouTube: "ESAA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025")

"I had a great time with the rest of the team and it was an honour to be the team captain! I enjoyed supporting everyone competing for Northumberland, they all did amazingly." - Luke Pichler, Year 12



1 SPORTS DAY 2025

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Sports Day 2025 was a huge success. 900 STM students travelled to Monkton Stadium to run, jump and throw, all earning points for their form class. PB's were gained, lots of happy smiles and new friendships made. Thank you to everyone involved! Despite the weather, the following students still managed to reach new heights:

Seth Rowland (7E) - Year 7 boys 200m year group record

Evie Maughan (7M) - Year 7 girls 1500m year group record

Results for Year 7 saw 7E in first place with 209 points, 7T in second with 198 and 7C in third with 172. In Year 8, 8T triumphed with 183, with 8A on 180 and 8E on 170. In their final Sports Day, 9O won with 202, followed by 9C with 192 and 9R with 181.

- Mrs Plummer, PE Dept

BEYOND THE BOOKS: NIAMH'S A-LEVEL ENGLISH EXPERIENCE, FROM WRITER'S WORKSHOP TO HAWORTH

The writer's workshop was such an enriching experience, not only did we learn how to level up our academic writing skills to a university standard, but we also learned about many different writing styles. Mark was incredibly helpful and told us about his own experiences and the mistakes that previous students had made, so we could avoid doing the same.

We analysed different pieces and identified which were more professional and academic, which will aid us in writing our own pieces, as we know now which traps to avoid falling into. Furthermore, we were given a short story written by a famous author and had to debate whether or not it was a successful story. I was on the 'Yes' team; it was fascinating to see just how many arguments you could create to support a story, even if it seemed extremely blunt and simple.



Mark Morris is a renowned fiction writer and has also been involved in writing for TV series such as Dr Who. 'The Bridge' workshops are run by the Royal Literary Fund.
- Mrs Feeney, English Dept

Later in June, the A-level English Literature classes travelled to Haworth in Yorkshire, home of author Emily Brontë. We began our jam-packed day with a lecture about Emily's upbringing and her experiences as a woman in the 19th century. It was amazing to learn about her schooling and the struggles she had with her behaviour. You would never think this of such a successful author, although her wildness does reflect in the character of Cathy in Wuthering Heights, which was an extremely interesting link to make.

We were privileged enough to take a tour around the Parsonage, the home in which she lived and wrote. We were able to see the very desk on which she wrote; I now have a real image in my head of her life and how she would've spent her time.

The final, and in my opinion most riveting activity, was that we went 'rambling on the moors', much like Emily Brontë would've done and would've imagined Cathy and Heathcliff doing. Once we made the climb to the top, we looked out on the bewitching view of the 'fertile valley' and the 'eternal rocks beneath'. It was stunning to see the image come to life, and really be able to imagine the world in which the masterpiece of Wuthering Heights was created.

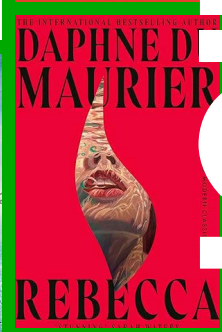
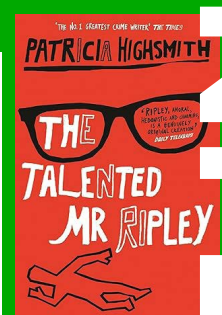
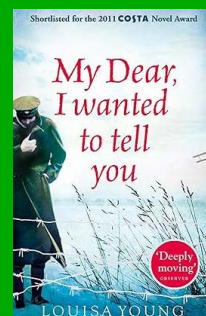
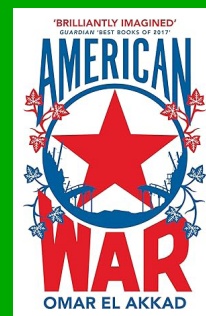
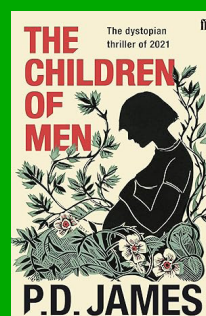
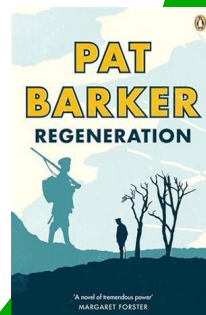
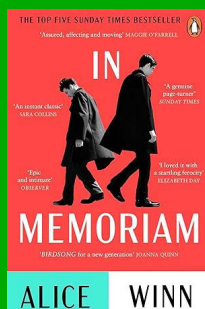
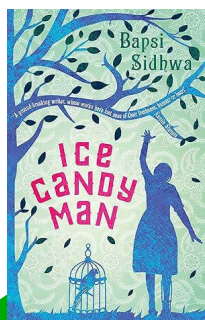
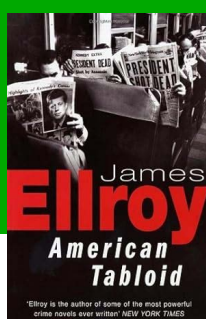
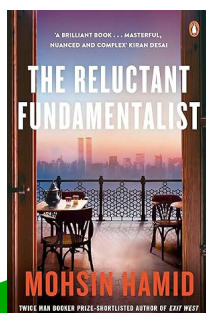
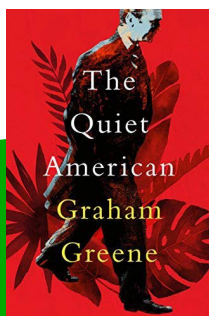
- Niamh
Dallat,
Year 12

For our final instalment of novels that have shaped our world, we are looking at the theme of Crime and Conflict. The impact of war, violence, crime and struggle unite these ten novels, from Bapsi Sidhwa's exploration of partition in Ice Candy Man, to the second civil war of Omar El Akkad's American War, and Holmes and Watson's fight against the seemingly supernatural in The Hound of the Baskervilles.

We hope you have enjoyed these lists of important novels, to find out more go to:



Crime and Conflict Novels:
American Tabloid - James Ellroy
American War - Omar El Akkad
Ice Candy Man - Bapsi Sidhwa
Rebecca - Daphne du Maurier
Regeneration - Pat Barker
The Children of Men - P.D. James
The Hound of the Baskervilles - Arthur Conan Doyle
The Reluctant Fundamentalist - Mohsin Hamid
The Talented Mr Ripely - Patricia Highsmith
The Quiet American - Graham Greene
My Dear I Wanted to Tell You - Louisa Young



WE ARE A SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY

We are proud to announce that our school has officially been recognised as a School of Sanctuary, joining a growing network of more than 1200 primary and secondary schools, nurseries and sixth forms across the region and the UK, all committed to creating a culture of welcome, understanding and belonging for those forced to flee.

Being a School of Sanctuary means more than just a title. It reflects our commitment to our inclusive and welcoming environment for all students and families, regardless of their background or journey. We believe every young person deserves to feel safe, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Over the past year, students and staff have worked hard to deepen our understanding of issues facing refugees and asylum seekers. This has included tutor time prayers, dedicated PSHE lessons, creating displays, lesson activities and assemblies to celebrate Refugee Week, not to mention the creation of the Schools of Sanctuary student group who are focusing on how to make St Thomas More an even more welcoming place. We are really proud of what we have achieved so far and are committed to continuing our work next year. - Mr Hill, MFL Dept



School of
SANCTUARY AWARD
Welcoming People Seeking Sanctuary



FRENCH FRIENDSHIPS

This term, a group of Year 8 and Year 9 students took part in a letter exchange with students from Collège Emile Zola in Rouen, France.

Writing in French, our students introduced themselves, shared their hobbies and interests, and were thrilled to receive responses in English from their new pen-pals. It was exciting to open the letters we received - many students commented on the neat handwriting of the French students!

The letter exchange sparked connections and showed how much we have in common. It was a fun way to use French in a real-life context, and we're proud of our students for giving up their own time to embrace this challenge. - Mr Hill, MFL Dept



GOD CAMP

This year 29 students from Year 9 attended the YMT Summer Festival (aka 'God Camp'), along with Miss Kelly, Mr Miles and Mr Bond. The theme this year is 'Fear Less, Hope More'. Students camped out on the fields of the Youth Village and spent three days listening

to inspirational speakers, live music and many more activities, along with a visit from Bishop Stephen, Mass and times of prayer and reflection! Students were, as always, a credit to our school. - Mr O'Connor, Head of RE



HERE TO HELP

HERE TO HELP

We are here to help - We do not want any family to be worried that their child cannot fully participate in school life due to any change of circumstance or difficulties.

Please make us aware of any concerns around school-related costs and we will try and help where possible. Contact us at: familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

You may be eligible for Free School Meals. If you feel you may be entitled to free school meals for your child please contact North Tyneside Council. This is only for new applications - you do not need to reapply if you already benefit from Free School Meals.

Applications can be made online [HERE](#) or by calling (0191) 643 2288.

WELLBEING HUB

We are delighted to share that all pupils at St Thomas More Catholic High School now have full access to The Wellbeing Hub - an excellent online resource designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

— The —
**Wellbeing
Hub**
— from Teen Tips —



Thanks to support from Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, this offer has now been extended to parents and carers, who can access the platform completely free of charge.

The Wellbeing Hub offers a wide range of practical and expert-led resources, including:

- Parenting courses
- Webinars and podcasts
- Blog posts and wellbeing tips
- Tools to support children's emotional and mental development

We strongly encourage all families to take advantage of this fantastic platform. To see what's on offer, you can watch a short 5-minute tour video [HERE](https://vimeo.com/1003650703/3a75b1d035) (https://vimeo.com/1003650703/3a75b1d035)

Register now for your free parental account using this link: <https://club.teentips.co.uk/register/parents/?ca=02e5fe2a9fca32fc565d4b7d9bced092>

If you have any questions about access, please contact the team directly at hub@teentips.co.uk.

At St Thomas More, we are proud to promote a whole-school approach to wellbeing - supporting not just our students, but their families too.



TOM TAKES A BITE OUT OF HOLLYWOOD



Last year I had the incredible opportunity to body double for Alfie Williams, who plays Spike in the recently released film, '28 Years Later'. Working on the film was such an honour. Getting to meet and work with Jodie Comer and Aaron Taylor-Johnson was genuinely surreal, they're incredibly talented, but also just really grounded, kind people. I learned so much just being around them. And working under Danny Boyle, that was a dream. His energy on set is infectious, and he makes everyone feel like they're part of something important. The 'Infected' were terrifying, I didn't have to pretend to be scared of them because they were genuinely petrifying. During one day, I actually got dragged through a causeway the crew had made in a studio up in Sunderland and ended up completely drenched. Wild day, but totally worth it.

I have to say a big thank you to school and to my tutor on production, they were phenomenal. Thanks to all the support, I got to do what I love without falling behind. - Tom McQuillin, Year 9

EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

For many of our readers, the stories from our ex-pupils is one of the highlights of the newsletter. We are so proud to see what people have done with their lives, and how things have worked out. If you or someone you know would like to feature in our ex-pupil section, no matter how big or small your success, please contact alogie@stmacademy.org.uk.

RACHEL HEPPLER

2009 - 2016



I was sport-obsessed during my time at STM and the PE department provided me with the opportunity to take part in every sport possible. I always dreamed of being a PE Teacher, so once I completed my A Levels I moved away to Liverpool Hope University and completed my Sport and Psychology degree there.

Returning to the North East was always the plan, so I came back to train to teach where I grew up, because I know how much schools in the North East value PE and extra-curricular activities.

I trained to teach PE and Maths through the NEP SCITT and was offered a job teaching both at Park View School in Chester-le-Street. I am now in my fifth year of teaching and now teach PE full time, aiming every day to give students the PE and Sport experience that I had at STM!

CALLUM ROSS

2006 - 2011

I loved my time at St Thomas More! After leaving aged 16 to attend Monkseaton Football Academy, I moved to the USA for

a football scholarship and lived there for seven years. After completing my degree and playing second division stateside, I moved home in 2020, shortly before life came to a standstill during Covid.

Alongside trying to continue playing football and working, myself and my best mate started our own football coaching company with the extra time on our hands. Football Zone Performance focusses on small groups and private one to one sessions, working with Wallsend Boys club, Goals Gosforth and Goals Sunderland, so please get in touch if you would like to get some extra training in!

I currently work full time, play semi-professional football for Spennymoor Town FC, continue to run our coaching business, and have a beautiful ten month old baby who hates to sleep! Some of my best friends now are from my time at school and I cherish my time there. Make the most of it because soon it will be something you wish you could do all over again.



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