



'FOR THE FREEDOMS WE KNOW THEIR LIVES WERE THE PRICE'



On 11th November, we remembered the people who served us through the years, fighting for our freedom and rights. We remember the fallen soldiers of our nation, and this year student members of various cadet forces marked the day by coming to school in their uniforms. Even through lockdowns and disruptions to everyday life we must keep the two-minute silence as a mark of respect for those who fought to keep us safe and bring us freedom.

Armistice Day or Remembrance Day commemorates the day World War One ended, at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, in 1918.

The poppy is used as the symbol of remembrance as they were one of very few flowers to grow on the battlefields throughout the war. They are a symbol not just of remembrance but of peace and hope for the future.

- Harvey Biggs, Edvin Jaimon, Year 11
and Eve Keys, Year 9

REMEMBRANCE DAY

by Eve Keys, Year 9

November 11th poppies galore,
Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen,
And so many more.
The Nurses and Doctors that
fought to save lives,
Of Husbands and Brothers and
Children and Wives.
So many service men made the
ultimate sacrifice,
For the freedoms we know their life
was the price.
We stop and remember with a
pause in our day,
That for our tomorrow they gave
their today.

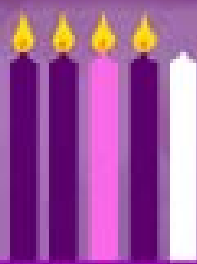


Students pictured:
Year 10 (main
photo) L to R:
Jack Barrett, Ben
Lowther, Joshua
Lucas, Sebastian
Hudson, Joseph
Rogers.

Year 11 (above) L to R: Connor
Cummings, Harvey Biggs, Edvin
Jaimon, Alicja Michalak.
Year 8 (left): Rose Jackson.

ADVENT PRAYER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Lord, this Advent we look back to the past when you brought hope into the world on that first Christmas night. We look to the future in the hope that peace on earth will prevail. And we focus on the present: that your promise of hope can shine light into the darkness, especially as we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Amen.



**Supersized
Dining Hall**

03

**Year 11 Make Up
For Lost Time**

06

**Textiles
Decs**

07



MR FLYNN HEAD OF KS3

I work closely with Mrs Hagan to ensure that our high expectations and standards are maintained, and with your support and the dedication of our staff, we will provide an orderly environment where each and every young person can achieve their ambitions. Our focus this year is to embed our expectations through STRIVE and ensure communication through Classcharts gives greater insight.



MEET OUR KS3 STAFF

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**Mr RAYSON
HEAD OF Yr7**

I love travelling and visiting new places in my campervan. I also enjoy all sports. It has been great to get to know my new year group who have transitioned so well. They are maturing quickly and are making great progress. I could not be more proud!



**Mrs GREEN
Assistant Yr7**

I teach DT and Art at STM, and outside of work you'll often find me stood at the sideline of a football pitch watching my two young boys play football. I am so impressed with the new Year 7s and how they have transitioned into school life at STM. They have adapted so well.

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I'm currently on my fifth year group as Head of Year, so may have even taught some parents reading this! I teach Maths and thoroughly enjoy a 10 mark quiz. I've been so impressed with how everyone has responded to this very 'different' year, and have enjoyed the job more than ever this year!



**Mr BRINDLE
HEAD OF Yr8**

I am a History teacher, and feel so lucky to have been able to come to school every day since September and work with our pupils face to face. It has been good to have the whole year group based in one area; I like being in our 'bubble'.



**Mrs ROBERTSON
Assistant Yr8**

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**Miss COOPER
HEAD OF Yr9**

I have really enjoyed strengthening my relationships with Year 9 by stepping up to Head of Year this year, having supported them last year as Assistant. Our new STRIVE initiative focuses on encouraging pupils to give their best effort, and I look forward to playing my part.



**Mr O'CONNOR
Assistant Yr9**

This year so far has been like no other, with many challenges in and outside of school. It has been great to have the full year group all together in one 'bubble'. It has been great to see how students have adapted to the new normal in school and have returned eager to strive to be their best!



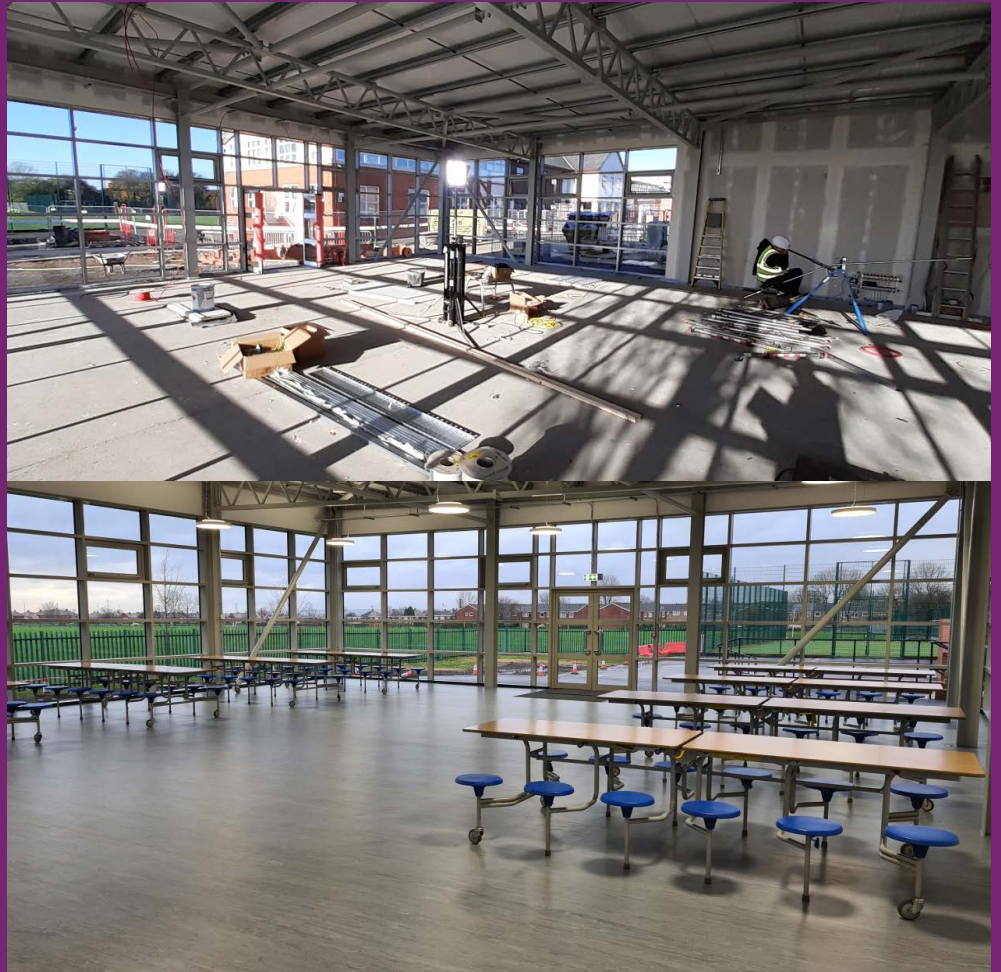
CAN I HAVE THAT SUPERSIZED PLEASE?

On Monday 7th December we opened our new dining hall extension. We have known for a number of years that the existing dining hall capacity of 320 students can make the lunchtime experience for students hurried and a little chaotic. We talked to our Student Council and Governors about this and everyone agreed we needed to do something about it.

The work began back in July and the 22 week project was completed in early December 2020, increasing the overall capacity to 580 students. Thanks to Eddison's (the Project Design and Management company we used) and Compass NE (the Principal contractor) the project went really smoothly, despite Covid-19!

This new space should make lunchtimes far easier for everyone, but also gives us valuable additional indoor space that we can use flexibly in the future.

— Mr Gollings, Business Manager



‘JUST CHANGE’ - FREE SCHOOL MEALS MONEY TO STAY IN THE POCKETS OF OUR STUDENTS

At the beginning of September, a new system was implemented in the School Dining Hall with regards to Free School Meals. Previously, any unspent Free School Meals allowance was not returned to the pupil. Now, any change a student has and any money accrued if a pupil is absent will now stay on the student's account during the term. This change has come following a regional campaign by leaders within Tyne & Wear Citizens, including members of our own school community.

We hope this change will make things easier for families, especially during the recent lockdowns and the situation due to the Coronavirus.

“If you don't get a lot of food at home, then if you come to school and you still have that money, you can buy more stuff to fill you up. The change is a good thing as it can help people who don't have much money and can help get the food that they need into their bodies.” - Year 8 pupil

“The easiest way to put it is that it's there. It doesn't get taken off. It rolls over. It just lasts, it is a lasting system. It is very effective because more people will have access to food.” - Year 11 pupil



BIOLOGY OLYMPIANS



Each year, the Biology department provide an opportunity for their A level students to enter the British Biology Olympiad, organised by The Royal Society of Biology.

The BBO challenges and stimulates students with an interest in Biology to expand and extend their talents. It enables students to demonstrate their knowledge and to be suitably rewarded with publicly recognised certificates and medals.

Despite additional challenges earlier in the year, our committed and hardworking students achieved a record number of awards. Well done to all.
- Mrs Woodman

Front row (L to R): Olivia Smith, Katelyn Brain, Patrycja Joskowska
Middle row: Thomas Ferguson, Mary Jane Piper, Annie Johnson, Selina Henderson
Back row: Benjamin Atkinson, Lucas Robinson, Melvin Cherian

MATHS WAITS FOR NO VIRUS

Every Monday, Mrs Coates posts a quiz on a different Maths topic for Year 7 and Year 8.

It could be arithmetic, algebra, shape, who knows! All you have to do to enter is open your school e-mail and click the link. There are usually 10-14 multiple-choice questions. It won't take long and you could win a prize! My favourite part is the bit of hope that I might win and hope is something we all need in these difficult times. - Alice Hodgson, Year 7

The weekly maths quiz is a good way to test yourself and practice your maths skills. I like entering the quiz because every week I can try to beat my highest score. The quiz isn't about getting the highest score it is about trying your best and improving your Maths. You don't have to get one hundred percent because the winner will be picked at random.

- Olivia Dickinson, Year 7



Just before lockdown back in February a group of Year 7 to Year 10 students took part in the 2020 Newcastle University Maths Challenges. This involved them answering several challenging multi-stage questions, demonstrating deep mathematical understanding.

With over 1437 entries, only 47 prizes and 44 certificates were awarded. St Thomas More performed particularly well with Rachel Bennett and Sirio Pozzi (pictured above) being prize winners in the Junior and Senior challenges respectively and certificates being awarded to Jonathan Gaukrodger and Macy Butler (Junior) and Aaryn McDonald-Brown (Senior). Sadly, the usual prize-giving ceremony had to be cancelled.

YOUR PASTORAL JOURNEY

At STM we take the welfare of staff and students extremely seriously. The Christian values of Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance are reflected in the work of the pastoral team and the school's commitment to pastoral care of students.

Research has shown a link between untreated mental health issues in young people and problems in adult life. We believe that through early intervention, issues can be resolved more efficiently. Our Pastoral Team (below) take a person-centred approach, helping young people to engage with their issues to generate understanding, solutions, coping techniques and

management strategies. Outcomes often focus on improving self-esteem, maximising resilience and encouraging a sense of personal autonomy.

Ambrose (our base) is a dedicated area available to students away from the hustle and bustle of the main school. It is a space for peace and nurture providing a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others.

- Orlean Harbinson

NICOLA CHANDLER

As Family Support Worker, I work with families and young people to resolve various different worries, financial, emotional, or physical. I love cooking, particularly West Indian food, and walking my dog Cookie. "Life isn't how many breaths you take, but it's the moments that take your breath away"



MICHAEL

I am here to support you whenever you need it. I love being involved in charity work and campaigning for minority groups, but I also love trashy TV (who doesn't?!). I started in Year 7 at STM in 2002, but have been school chaplain since 2015. "Don't be ashamed of your story. It will inspire others"



MISS DAWSON

As a Learning mentor I counsel students and also support the Young Carers in school. My interests are Sport and Fitness, and my favourite films are Gladiator and Braveheart. I believe anything is possible with the right attitude. "The best views come after the hardest climb" "Nothing worth having comes easy"



ORLEAN HARBINSON

I absolutely love my job as School Counsellor as no two days are ever the same. I work with individuals and groups including the Forget Me Nots and the LGBT+ group called Vegas. I want to change the world one piece at a time. "You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think"

MRS FORSTEN

As a Learning Mentor, I work to support students through many different issues and circumstances. I am also a Domestic Violence and Abuse Champion in school and across North Tyneside. I love horses and am studying for an MSc in Psychology. "Do one thing every day that scares you!"



MR WRIGHT

As a Learning Mentor I support students in school with any issues or barriers they are struggling with. I also teach Vocational Studies to Year 8 and Year 9. I love motorbikes, camping and music (listening to, not playing!) My favourite film is Die Hard. "My imperfections make me unique"



YEAR 11 MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME



I can see my friends for longer while working in our bubble. This makes a difference.



I don't have to fight my older brother for the laptop. It just makes my life so much easier.

In the last newsletter Ms Hagan rightly told us about the importance of following our school's mission, encouraging "everyone to strive to do their best." We are thrilled that our Year 11 students have responded so positively to the opportunities offered since September, with over 2000 positive referrals on Class Charts for attendance at revision sessions. They are working extremely hard to make up for time lost due to lockdown last academic year.

Covid-secure revision sessions are being taught in a range of subjects, with additional sessions offered in the run up to Year 11 mock exam week (week beginning 11th January). After school supervised study is available on Monday and Thursday, offering the chance to complete independent work such as homework, coursework and revision, with guaranteed computer access if they require it.

The revision session timetable is available on the school website at stmacademy.org.uk/year-11-revision-timetable/, with subject-specific revision resources at stmacademy.org.uk/gcse-revision-resources.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD TO STRIVE?

- Don't expect perfection. Do expect personal bests.
- Talk to them about their goals? Make it something concrete to work towards.
- Make sure they attend revision sessions wherever possible. No matter what they say, they are for them and will make a difference!
- Check Class Charts every day for homework and attendance at revision sessions.
- Ensure they regularly use online learning platforms and websites.
- Any questions contact Mr Merchant on amerchant@stmacademy.org.uk

The resilience of our Year 11 students in the face of all the challenges of Covid-19 is both humbling and inspiring. Keep it up, keep on striving! You are the best, now be the best! - Mr Merchant



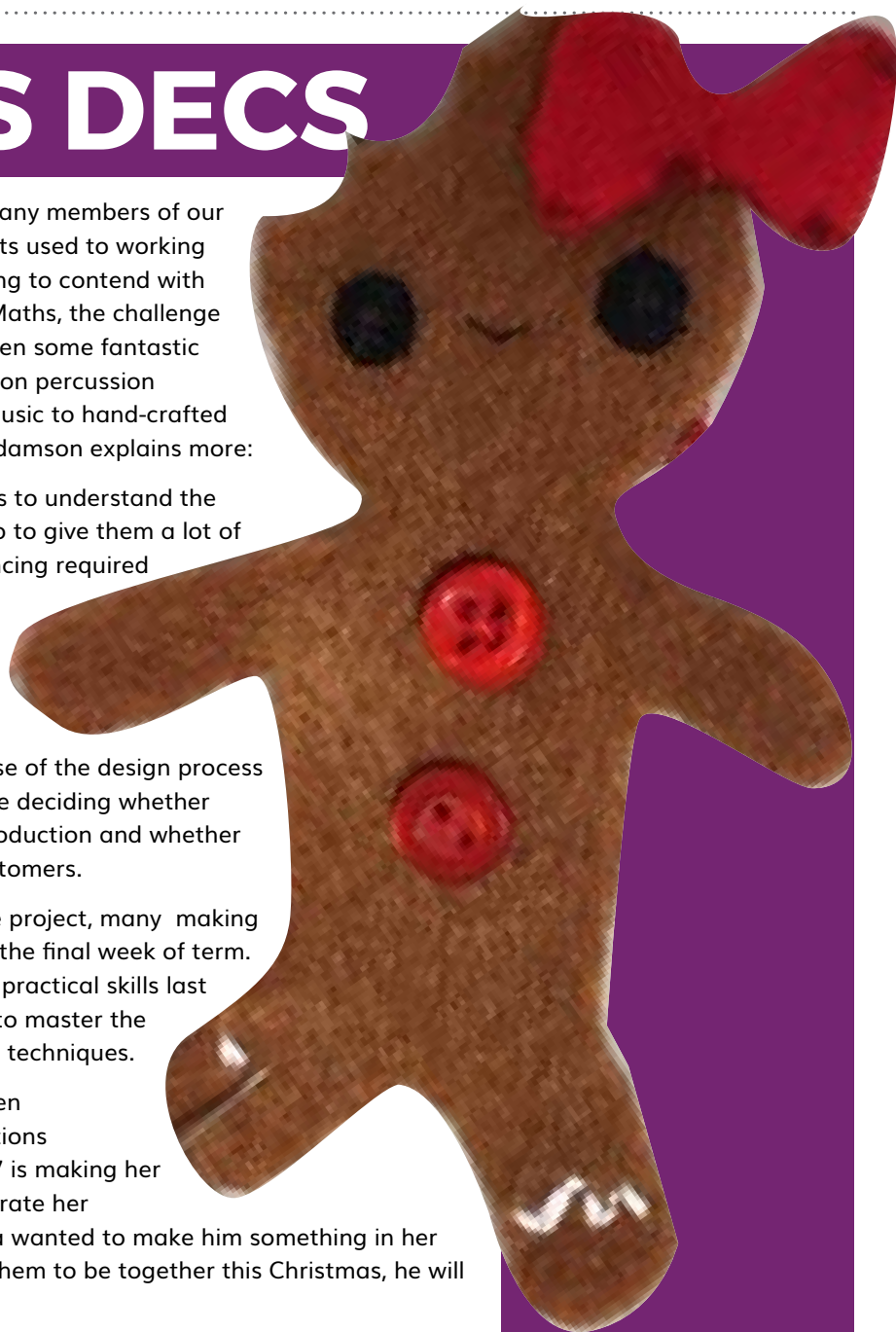
TEXTILES DECS

Yeargroup bubbles have been a challenge for many members of our school community this year. For practical subjects used to working in their own purpose-built classrooms, now having to contend with teaching Art in a History room or Food Tech in Maths, the challenge has been even more acute. Luckily there has been some fantastic innovation seen across the school, from a focus on percussion work using the desks as instruments in Year 8 Music to hand-crafted Christmas decorations with KS3 Textiles. Miss Adamson explains more:

The purpose of the project was to allow students to understand the design and make element of the course, but also to give them a lot of independence, particularly with the social distancing required at the moment and thus peer support required. They were able to use a range of decorative techniques and got to see the implications of their choices and techniques once constructed. This allowed them to be critical of their designs when it came to evaluation, really getting a sense of the design process in the textiles industry in all its glory, for example deciding whether certain techniques would be suitable in mass production and whether buttons would easily fall off before reaching customers.

Students in Year 7 and 8 have really enjoyed the project, many making their work for a family member to take home in the final week of term. Year 8 students who missed out on much of the practical skills last year due to lockdown have enjoyed the chance to master the basics then move on to more difficult decorative techniques.

Many of the stories for the decorations have been bittersweet, with some students making decorations for their grandparents. Ana-Sofia Berry in Year 7 is making her decoration to give to her Grandad to commemorate her Grandma, who is no longer with them. Ana-Sofia wanted to make him something in her memory so that even if restrictions don't allow them to be together this Christmas, he will know she is thinking of him.



Ana-Sofia Berry, Year 7



Matthew Gerber, Year 8



Charlotte King, Year 8





MADDISON MCGINTY DOES HER BIT FOR THE COMMUNITY

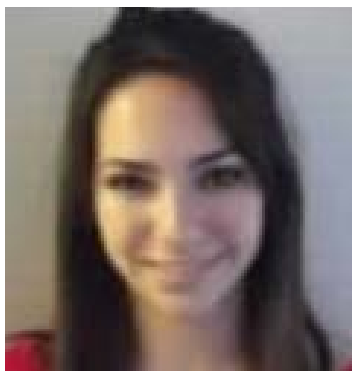
During these tough times, I decided to help out the local foodbank and collect advent calendars and selection boxes. My family helped by putting up posters around their workplaces. I couldn't believe how many people donated and I could not be more thankful. We ended up with 150 advent calendars and loads of other goods. When we arrived at the Bay Foodbank, the staff were very grateful. - Maddison McGinty, Year 9

EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We are always proud to show what our ex-pupils go on to do once they leave us, but a number of recent leavers have gone straight on to working in the medical professions, particularly important in 2020. If you or a member of your family would like to feature in a future issue, please e-mail alogie@stmacademy.org.uk.

AMY HAMILTON 2014-2020

I'm studying adult nursing at university and have recently started my first placement on an adult cardiology ward where I look after a variety of patients who have different types of heart conditions. I perform basic tasks such as observations, personal care, making beds, removing canulars and having conversations with patients when I'm not busy. I did get to actually go in and see a simple heart procedure this week though, which was excellent. Most of my teaching so far has been online, and I have attended university campus twice to take part in practical skills sessions, but the practical placement is the bit where I will learn the most and I am loving my course so far!



PAULA MARIN 2014-2016

When I arrived in Sixth Form from Spain, I could barely speak English. I remember the first day, sitting in the common room and not having a clue what anyone was saying! I didn't give up though. When I left I had to do a Foundation Degree, which I thought was the end of the world back then, but I have now achieved three academic prizes and am about to start the third year of a Medical Degree in Spain. I have also done research on a drug called Rucaparib, which was cut short due to Covid, but which will be carried on by PhD students looking into treatments for Ovarian Cancer. I spent lockdown gaining experience, working at Holmlea Care Home in North Shields before returning to university.



DANIEL THOMPSON 2011-2016

After leaving St Thomas More I started an Apprenticeship in Graphic Design, working at a local Signs and Graphics firm. I specialised in vehicle livery and wrapping, producing some work that I am very proud of and that will have been seen by most people in the local area (bin lorries!). More recently I saw an opportunity to come back to St Thomas More as an apprentice ICT Technician. Coming back to work in my old school was strange at first, but getting to know my teachers again has helped. The responsibilities of a Technician are challenging but rewarding, for example setting up something very visible like the displays in the library or dining hall.

NEXT ISSUE EASTER 2021

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