



Today coronavirus is society's biggest fear, but how has it affected us as students? Year 7 students Ellie, Lexi and Cameron have been investigating.

Starting Year 7 at St Thomas More is very different to what we had expected it to be. All year groups are in bubbles and have to socially distance, but we have found that this has allowed us to focus on meeting new people and getting to know them better. Also, because of the bubbles we have to stay in zones, which means there is less chance of getting lost.

Ellie says, "It is bizarre having to wear a mask constantly, although I have found each individual mask shows a small part of a person's personality. I thought that wearing masks would be uncomfortable and that I would feel really silly but when everyone wears them it doesn't feel uncomfortable at all. It does however look like a flood of colours and patterns pouring out of the classrooms."

Since March we have not been able to see our friends (apart from on Facetime), so being able to see everyone again when we started school was great. At lunch we are allowed to

## ADAPTING TO A NEW NORMAL

sit outside and there are even benches in place so that we don't have to sit on the floor. All of the changes may feel very different but it is still great being at St Thomas More.

Lexi says she is happy to wear a mask to stop the spread of Covid-19. "My life has been affected by this global pandemic and I'm sure it's the same for all children round the world. I can't visit my grandparents. Sadly some children are much worse off and may have lost a friend or family member."

Cameron has been out and about talking to members of staff about the new regulations. Michael Thompson (School Chaplain) reported that the students had adapted well to the restrictions and changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have got into the spirit of wearing a mask and keeping to their zones. Mrs Jones

(Student Support) commented that if school did have to close again it would have a massive effect on the education of children and would be a huge disappointment for everyone after settling back into the new school routine.

Wear a mask to prevent the spread, please!

- Ellie Henderson, Lexi Young and Cameron Quinn, Year 7

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# STRIVE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR NEW ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER MRS HAGAN

As our new Assistant Headteacher, what is your role within the school?

My new role within school involves overseeing the pastoral care of all our students from Year 7 to Year 11. On a daily basis I will be ensuring that our expectations are high and that our students meet these expectations. This will allow everyone the opportunity to reach their full potential in a calm and ordered environment, where effective teaching and learning can take place. I will also ensure that interventions are in place for any students who may face difficulties. I will work closely with Mr Flynn who is the new Head of Key Stage 3 and who oversees Years 7-9.

What is your priority for this year?

My main priority this year will be to see STRIVE embedded. Our ethos states that we want all of our students to strive to be the best they can be. Therefore our expectations this year are based around this:

S - Standards of uniform

T - Timeliness

R - Respect

I - Independent Learning (Homework)

V - Value Learning (Classwork)

E - Equipment

Evidence shows that students who arrive to school with full uniform, show respect for themselves and others,

complete homework on time and with effort, work well in all lessons and are prepared for the day ahead will be successful in school and then will go on to be successful in their future. We will reward our students who meet these expectations but also intervene when some may fall short to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to strive and reach their full potential.

We have extended Classcharts so that parents can now see positive points awarded by staff but also any negative points. I hope that this will allow parents to have a clearer picture of how their child is doing in school every day.



How do you think the current Covid-19 restrictions are impacting on students?

The last six months have been unprecedented and some of our students and indeed staff have found the lockdown period very challenging. However, the majority of our students have been excited to return to school and have thrown themselves into all the opportunities on offer! School has seen many changes due to restrictions but our students have responded in such a positive manner and just adapted! This is great to see and many have enjoyed the new zones in school, which have allowed them to spend more time within their own year group community. This is of course vital to keep everyone safe and well. It has been wonderful to see all of our students return and I feel they are even more appreciative of the school environment after their long break. They are really settled and working very hard.

## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

If you feel you may be entitled to free school meals for your child please contact North Tyneside Council.

Applications can be made [here](#) or by calling (0191) 643 2288. If you would prefer, there are also paper copies of this application form available at the main school office.

As well as a daily free nutritious meal for the student, the school also receives significant additional funding from central government for every child who is signed up for a free school meal. We would therefore encourage all parents who believe their child may be eligible for a free school meal to apply – even if you think this may be for only a short period of time.



# DESTINATIONS 2020

This year's results were a challenge for everyone involved, and we are so proud of our Year 13 leavers for the positivity that they showed throughout the uncertainty, firstly over exams then over results and destinations. Final grades show a 100% pass rate, with 36% of grades being awarded at A\*/A, a fantastic set of results that rewards the hard work shown by a fabulous yeargroup.



Thankfully, as the map shows, we have been able to send students all across the country and beyond, and we wish them every success in this new chapter of their lives.

Bethany Taylor, one of St Thomas More's 2020 graduates, wrote that "this year's results were like a maze, with a twist and a turn after every step. For many, these challenges led them to receiving the grades they worked hard for and deserved. Meanwhile, it wasn't all happy faces on results day. Luckily, after a stressful few days and a government u-turn, most got where they wanted to be. Each of us have gone different ways, but if it weren't for the constant support of St Thomas More, it would have been a very difficult struggle." Bethany is currently working at Diesel Marine International in North Shields and is investigating joining the Royal Navy.

Sophie Dixon wrote that she can't wait to continue her language studies at Durham University. She chose to "continue studying German, after doing it at GCSE and A Level, and pair it with a beginner's course in Russian. Most importantly, I feel so welcomed at college, and look forward to exploring more of the beautiful city."

Emma Charlton probably wins the award for travelling the furthest, and has already begun a degree in Psychology with a Tennis Scholarship at the Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, USA.

One of many parents of graduates that has been in touch said that "we can't thank the teachers at St Thomas More enough for all the help and encouragement that you have given our [young adults] at this challenging time in their lives."

## STM's FIRST EVER MEDSOC



STMedsoc is a newly founded society run by a group of enthusiastic Year 13 students. We aim to help younger pupils interested in medicine, by breaking down barriers in the demanding application process. Every meeting will have a different focus, ranging from entrance exam tips to volunteering and work experience.

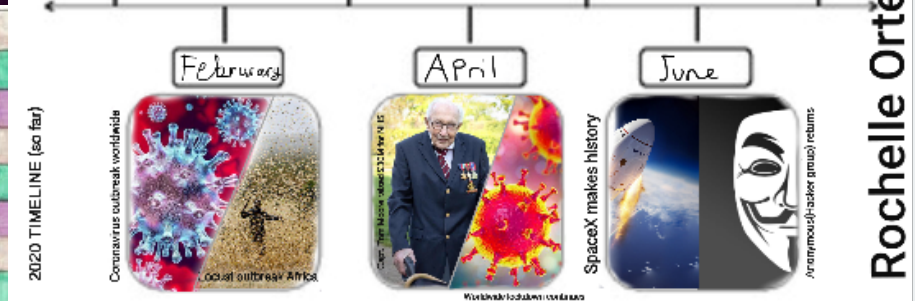
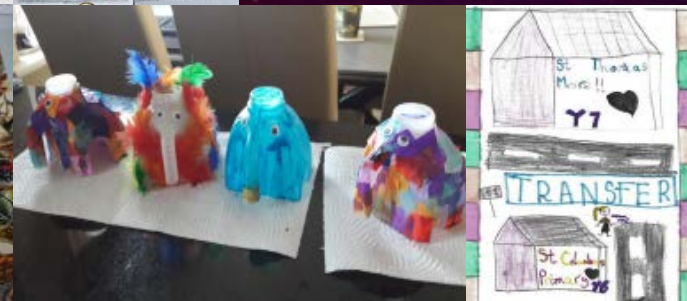
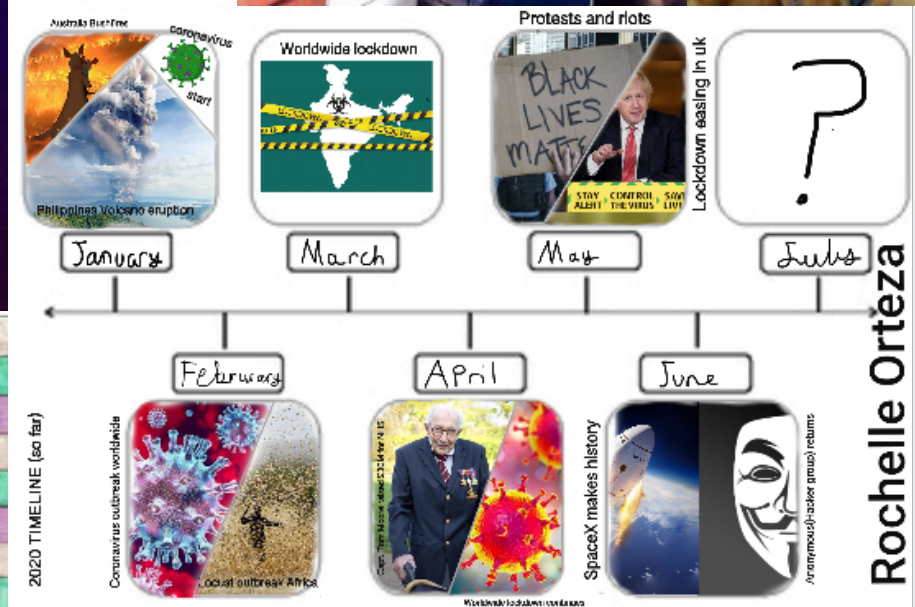
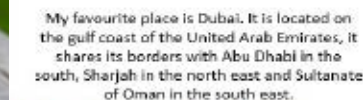
We want to make a difference to the next year of applicants and hope our efforts continue through them!

- Shruthi Sathish, Year 13

Shruthi is one of 8 students in Year 13 currently applying for Medicine. She recently completed the University Clinical Aptitude Test, part of the Medicine application process, with her score putting her in the top 1% of applicants in the country.

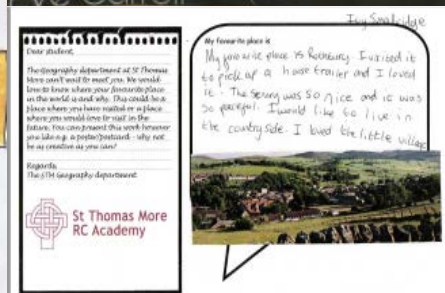
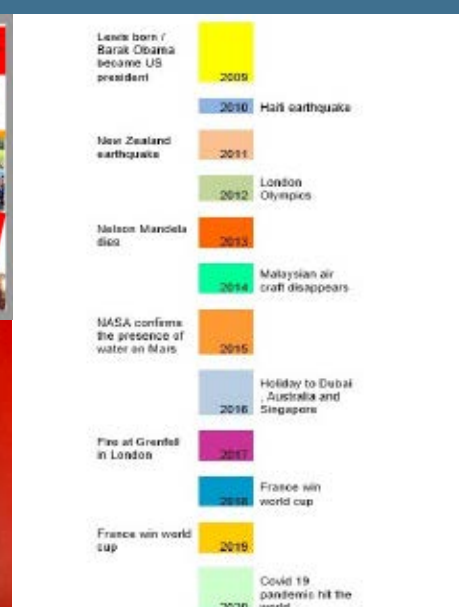
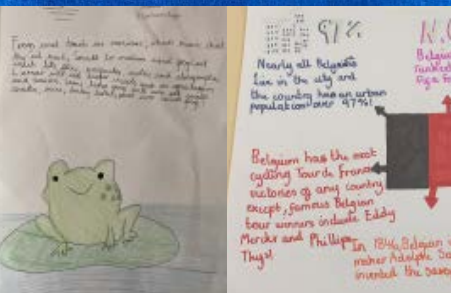
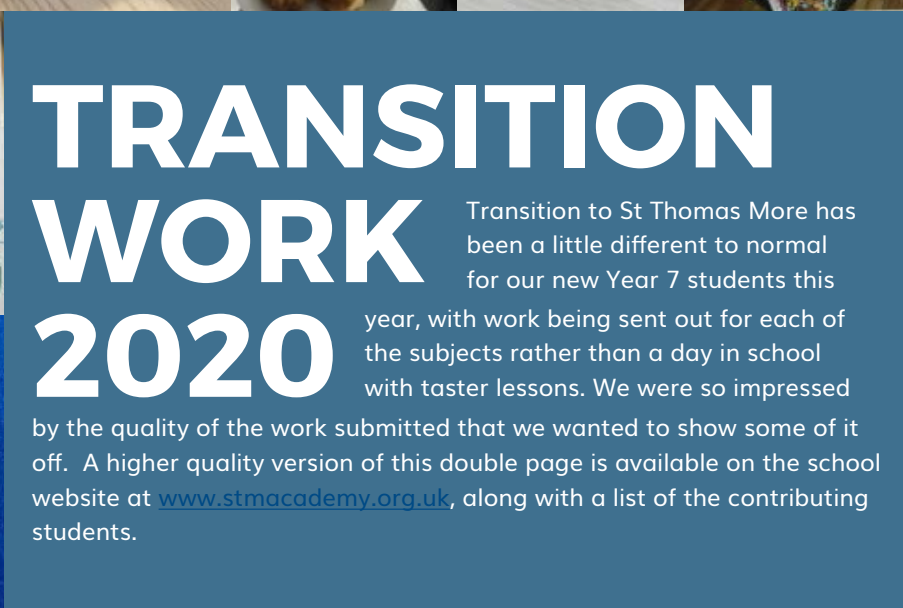
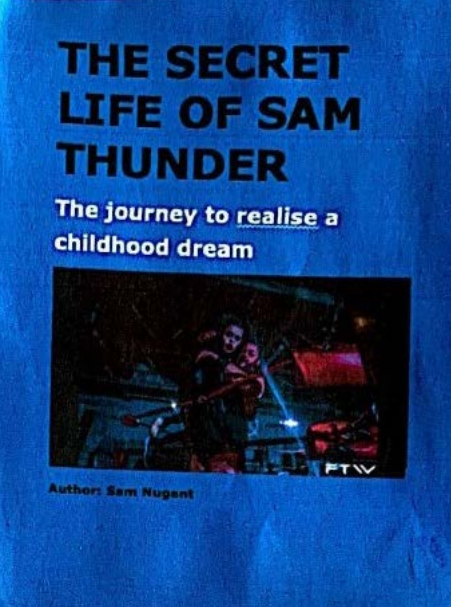






**K** Transition to St Thomas More has been a little different to normal for our new Year 7 students this year, with work being sent out for each of the subjects rather than a day in school with taster lessons. We were so impressed

by the quality of the work submitted that we wanted to show some of it off. A higher quality version of this double page is available on the school website at [www.stmacademy.org.uk](http://www.stmacademy.org.uk), along with a list of the contributing students.





# GERMAN EXCHANGE



Sadly this year's return visit to Germany has had to be cancelled. Students and staff were all disappointed, and some of the Year 10 students have written how they feel about the cancellation and what they will miss:

Niamh Paolozzi: I am so sad that the German exchange had to be cancelled, I was really looking forward to meeting my partner again and spending a full week with her family! I was also excited to try new and exciting foods such as schnitzel. The thing I was most looking forward to doing was going to the chocolate factory because I love chocolate!

Jasmine Loxton: I am very disappointed the German Exchange was cancelled. I was so excited to explore Oer-Erkenschwick with my friends, learn and practise some German. I was looking forward to seeing my German Exchange partner Daya and meeting her family too. I hope we get to go another time and that everyone is keeping safe in Germany.

Daniel Swabey: Unfortunately, as the exchange was cancelled, we can't visit our German partners right now, but in the future we can look forward to meeting again. I would have liked to have had lunch with the mayor to find out more about the local area of Oer-Erkenschwick. I was also looking forward to visiting the city of Cologne, from photographs I have seen of the cathedral and the river, it looks like a nice place.

Rachel McInnes: Ich bin sehr enttäuscht weil ich so aufgeregt war. Ich habe mich auf Kennenlernen und lernen über ihr Kultur. Auch, wollte ich Deutsch sprechen und Spaß haben. Aber, hoffe ich das ich werde bald gehen noch mehr Spaß haben.

From our German partners: To our dear friends in North Tyneside, we wish we had had a chance to show you Oer-Erkenschwick and its surroundings last month, but we did think of you and hope we'll get a chance to see you again soon. Your friends from the WBG.

## FAMILY SUPPORT

We understand that, especially with current events, things can be very tricky financially, and circumstances can also change quite quickly. We do not want any family to be worried that their child cannot fully participate in school life due to financial difficulties. If you feel that this might be you, please make us aware and we will try and help.

Please email:

[familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk)



# IN OTHER NEWS...



## YEAR 7 GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGES

Looking for some inspiration for what to do with your family between now and Christmas? The Geography Department have set all Year 7 students 16 challenges to try including a walk in the countryside to reading one of our excellent recommended Geography texts available from the school library. Over to you young aspiring Geographers. We very much look forward to hearing about your adventures. Prizes to be won too!!!  
– Mr Murray, Head of Geography

## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY THROUGH READING

To mark Black History Month in October and also to explore greater diversity in students' reading, Mrs Feeney (English) and Miss Edwards (Library) have been busy compiling new booklists for KS3 and KS4 students. This library collection will explore diverse perspectives, be inclusive and encourage young people to consider different cultures, histories and communities. The booklists will be available on the library website soon and will feature these titles and more!



## COVID-19 WON'T STOP COMMUNITY ACTION!

It is a little harder to meet up at the moment, but Tyne & Wear Citizens ran a virtual meeting in June, with the aim of channelling people's anger from watching coverage of the racial discrimination in the USA, and directing it into making positive changes. Several staff, ex-pupils and current students attended and shared their personal experiences of racism, and St Thomas More is now one of several schools involved in the development of a Racism Action Team, who are currently gathering testimonies and developing an action plan. Check out [Tyne & Wear Citizens](#) - Orlean Harbinson, School Counsellor

## PAINTING THE READING TREE

A family friend works in a nursery in Durham and when they wanted a reading tree painted on the wall, she asked if I could design one. I was really excited and agreed, did some research and designed a tree with space for book leaves and book of the week. I nervously sent them my design, but they loved it and arranged for me to go to the nursery to paint it on the wall! It took nearly 4 hours to complete but I am so happy with the finished painting. – Roisin Sharp, Year 7



## PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The challenge of taking a subject on to A Level is always a big one but this year, with all the additional Covid-restrictions, students are having to show even more resilience. The Psychology department's 'Student of the month' recognises those students who have gone the extra mile. For September,



the following students have been honoured: Leila Zafarani and Parsina Hanna (Year 12) and Joshrem Te, Grace Garfoot and Jaydan Ford (Year 13). Keep up the good work.

– Mr Clifford,  
Head of Psychology



# EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We are proud to continue sharing successes from our ex-pupils. If you or a member of your family are a former student of St Thomas More and have a story to tell, please let us know at [alogie@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:alogie@stmacademy.org.uk) and you could feature in a future issue of More Life.

## ANTHONY TUNMORE

### 2004 - 2011

After leaving STM I moved straight into employment through an administration apprenticeship, despite achieving the grades required to attend University. I was conscious very early on that I was more motivated to begin work and continue my education there rather than spend another three or four years in formal education. After completing my apprenticeship I moved into finance, spending over 6 years in the engineering business sector, working in the UK as well as the USA. In 2018 I moved into Corporate Finance, assisting clients with financial and investment activities before being recruited by one of my firm's leading clients 'Cascade Cash Management' to head up their finance department. Aside from my work, I have continued to study; I have various professional qualifications and am currently studying for a BA (Hons) Degree in Finance Management with Derby University. What I have learned is that no one is the finished product. It is important to have the initiative to explore and eagerly greet new opportunities, new techniques and new ideas, whether that be within the education system or in a work environment.



## ANDREW HALE

### 2005 - 2012

I wasn't originally going to apply for University, but after some encouragement from my Head of Year I went on to study Business with Marketing at Northumbria University. I graduated with a first in 2016 and spent a year travelling Australia, working in everything from Human Resources to odd job man in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. Since 2017 I've been the Learning and Development Coordinator for the British Engines Group; a large engineering company based in Newcastle. I manage the company apprenticeship scheme of over 100 apprentices and lead on training and development for about 1400 staff. I also manage our schools programmes, getting young people interested in STEM and apprenticeships.



## ALEX KEMPSTER

### 2006 - 2013

I played for Whitley Bay FC during my Sixth Form at STM, where I studied Btec PE and Business, passing both to be accepted onto an Applied Sports Science with Coaching at Northumbria University. I graduated in 2016, having kept up playing part time for Whitley Bay on weekends, and having had some unsuccessful trials with bigger clubs. After university I taught for a while at a local college, whilst working in a bar on the evenings, and in 2018 I was scouted by York City FC whilst playing for Whitley. I scored a hat-trick on my trial game and was asked to sign straight away.

## NEXT ISSUE CHRISTMAS 2020

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