



MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

FRANK'S KEENESS MADE FOR A FUN DINNER



Saturday 15th February saw one of the largest turn-outs to ever grace an Alumni Dinner gather to

hear ex-Headmaster and French teacher Frank Keenan pass on his observations and insights into the school's formative years.

He did this, of course, with his usual dry wit and aplomb and kept the entire group fully-engaged for about 30 minutes [*good value when you consider he was only booked for 10—Ed*].

He was ably assisted by the presence of former

colleagues such as John Askew, Tom Kennedy, David Finnigan and, for the first time, David Sims to whom he referred occasionally for verification of his tales. These included the first-ever welcome of STM boys in Dijon on the French Exchange when their Headteacher encouraged the French students to display a warm welcome by giving our boys "the Burgundian clap!"

It was a delight to see

three of the current staff present: Headteacher Gemma Ackred, Head of Sixth Form Elsa Genovese and Pupil Progress Director and geology teacher Matt Hardiman (who is also an ex-pupil)

A first was also achieved by Jed Marshall who was present as a former pupil, undertaking his teacher-training placement at the school and who had, whilst still a pupil, served as a waiter at a previous dinner some years ago!

KEVIN'S A CRACK-SHOT



That stirring supporter of Alumni events, permattanned Kevin Bonham (1974) has rather bashfully admitted to being one of the best shots with a .22 air rifle in, not just the county, or even the country, but the entire world!

He finished 11th out of a field of 1500 competitors at the Hunting Field Target Tournament held in Northampton in April.

When your illustrious editor asked him how long he had been shooting he reflected for a moment and then suggested, "*About five years with an air rifle,*" before adding casually, "*but donkey's years with live ammunition!*"

As member of the territorials he was trained to shoot with 50 calibre machine guns, but now fires air rifles as a member of Rochford Air Gun Club.

We congratulate Kevin and will try not to upset him!

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

We are delighted to announce that the Alumni Hardship Fund was finally launched on 19th May this year.

As members will recall, this is a ring-fenced amount of money from the association's funds that is earmarked for current pupils in need.

If the school identifies a potential case they will suggest that the relevant pupil and their parents complete an application form which will then be considered by the Alumni Executive together with one additional Alumni

member drawn from a specially-created pool.

Strict guidelines have been drawn-up by the association in consultation with the school and a list of criteria must be met in order for any reward to be made. This year's AGM agreed to ring-fence £500 this year and some members have already indicated a desire to donate additional money specifically to the fund.

This is a tremendous way for those of us who have benefitted from the school to be able to give something back to those less fortunate than ourselves in order that they too may benefit from their time at STM.

**DAVID MICHAEL
FINNIGAN**

**25th March 1937 —
19th July 2014**

It was with great sadness that this esteemed association announced the death on 19th July of one of its Founding Fathers and long-time member of the school family, **David Finnigan**.

David's association with STM goes right back to 1962 when he joined the fledgling school as its first Head of RE.

After two years National Service in the RAF's Admin Section (which he laughingly referred to as *The Chairborne Division*) he entered St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, where he trained as an RE teacher.

STM was only his second appointment after graduating (the first had been in Halifax at a senior school also dedicated to St Thomas More) and he relished the opportunity to design the school's RE syllabus [*no such thing as the National Curriculum in those days - Ed*]. This was at a moment of major change in the universal church as the Second Vatican Council was underway. He introduced a curriculum that majored on scripture, (both Old and New Testament), at a time when Catholics traditionally regarded such things as somewhat suspicious and that also considered Christianity's roots in Judaism. As part of this David would lead First Year students in a Passover meal each year as a means of explaining the origins of the Mass. In later years he was frequently invited by parishes



throughout the diocese to repeat these celebrations for adults (avoiding the need to substitute *Ribena* for wine on such occasions).

He also led many pilgrimages and trips of a religious nature from the school to such places as Rome and Mount St Bernard which are remembered with much fondness by those who went on them.

During the 1960s he was a regular visitor to Nazareth House where he gave weekly lessons in Latin to the boys and to local students who were considering a vocation to the priesthood.

Liturgy had always been his particular interest within the church and he set about developing it within the school. One of the first things that he helped establish was the annual celebration of St

Thomas More Day, for which he wrote the school hymn! He was always at pains to ensure that liturgical celebrations within the life of the school adhered to established principals for the seasons rather than simply replicating what everyone else did. Examples of this would be his Advent Carol Services which were devoid of Christmas Carols (*"It's Advent,"* he would say, going on to explain that Carols should only be sung from Christmas Day itself) and the Passion Service at the end of the Easter term which would focus very much on the scripture of Holy Week.

He was Senior Master at STM for many years and could regularly be seen leaving his smoke-filled office (he was a 60-a-day at the time), academic gown billowing behind him as he charged purposefully up the corridor towards either the staff

room or the RE classrooms.

In 1985 he was made Deputy Headmaster and took to the challenges of his new position with his usual enthusiastic thoroughness. Sadly, however, his tenure in the position was cut short when, in 1989 at the age of only 52, he was advised to take early retirement due to a heart attack.

He had always been a popular teacher amongst the boys and was respected as a strong disciplinarian, both of which achievements are all the more remarkable for a teacher of RE, a subject that would traditionally be seen as a soft target for trouble-makers. Even with his hearing difficulty he was able to control not only the behaviour of the class, but also the interest of those in it, which says a great deal both for the way in which he structured his lessons and for the enthusiasm that he brought to them.

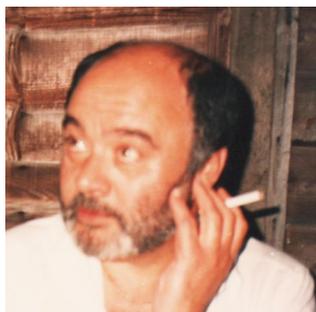
The enforced change of direction brought about by retirement, which he referred to as a "Rite of Passage", gave him the opportunity to devote large amounts of time to his involvement in the Diocesan Liturgy Commission. In 1978 he had spent a year's sabbatical studying for a Diploma in Sacred Liturgy in Ireland and when the relatively new Bishop of Brentwood, Thomas McMahon, appointed him Diocesan Master of Ceremonies in 1981 he became the first ever layman to hold the position (possibly in the entire Country)!

For over 30 years he oversaw all of the major liturgical events within the diocese, visiting most of the parishes at one time or another to MC priestly and diaconal ordinations, dedications of churches, priest's funerals and the liturgical aspects of diocesan pilgrimages. He introduced a great many developments in the liturgical life of the diocese and his knowledge of liturgy made him a sought-after speaker at many courses and training events.

When planning began for the new cathedral at Brentwood he became heavily involved in its liturgical design, and oversaw the planning of the actual dedication for which he was the Master of Ceremonies in May 1991.

In 2005 he was honoured by the church with a papal knighthood when he was made a Knight of St Gregory.

Despite having retired from St Thomas More High School 25 years ago he had always remained a steadfast supporter of the school. He was a governor for 12 years, serving as Vice Chairman for many of them, and one of the group of four that originally set-up the school's Alumni association in 1998. He always enjoyed meeting past pupils and colleagues and both reminiscing about old times and finding out how their lives had developed. He was an extremely popular guest at Alumni functions where past pupils would fondly remember him from their days at the school as a strict disciplinarian, but



As many of us remember him—cigarette in hand!

with a fine underlying sense of humour, who was able to make his subject interesting and relevant.

His main hobby was cooking and, before ill-health began to take its toll, he enjoyed nothing more than entertaining friends to lavish meals always served with fine wines. His well-stocked wine cellar was the toast of those who knew him well.

His other interests included travel (he especially enjoyed visiting France and Italy), live theatre and opera and he was particularly keen on classical music concerts, being a regular attendee at the local theatre. He enjoyed history, particularly medieval and Roman (especially if it involved the history of the church), reading, doing *The Telegraph* crossword and "stopping for coffee" - something that he increasingly indulged in as the years progressed.

He has been described as "a great human being" and he rejoiced in all that being human means. As a person he always possessed a clear understanding of the true meaning of humility and strived hard to use the gifts that God had given

him to live a life as true to the Gospels as possible. In the early 1970s he used to assist the Simon Community working with the homeless on Southend seafront and throughout his adult life, both through his work as a teacher and by his example, he would take every opportunity to explain and demonstrate that, as Christians, we are called to reject selfishness and embrace a selfless love for others. This attitude manifested itself not only in his generosity both with gifts and with his time, but also in the way that he would typically accept life's routine financial setbacks, such as a favoured possession getting smashed or broken, by calmly declaring that "*it was only a material good.*"

David was born in Halifax, West Yorkshire, the eldest of Annie & Jimmy Finnigan's three children. He grew-up with his sisters Christine and Margaret in the village of Luddenden Foot and was educated at St Bede's Catholic Grammar School in Bradford. Being a Yorkshireman, a fact of which he was immensely proud, he always insisted on speaking his mind. But there was never any malice in any strongly-held opinions, just an overriding desire to share his knowledge, particularly in matters of liturgy and education. He was always keen to help people come to a greater understanding of the central message of Christianity and certainly saw liturgy as, in the words of the Second Vatican Council,

"the source and summit of the Christian life."

He never married and leaves behind his one remaining sister Christine and her husband Rodney, four nephews - Russell, Daniel, Robbie and Paul - and a large family of great nieces and nephews; great, great nieces; numerous cousins and a vast number of friends all over the country.

His funeral was held, fittingly, in Brentwood Cathedral on 6th August with the new Bishop of Brentwood, Alan Williams, presiding. The Bishop Emeritus, Thomas McMahon, with whom he had worked so closely for so many years, preached a moving homily that, as so many present commented, perfectly captured so much about David. The bishops and David's family were joined by about 10 other priests and also by former colleagues both from school and the diocese, numerous friends and acquaintances, and a large number of past pupils some of whom had travelled large distances from Scotland, and even Italy, to be there.,

He will be sadly missed by so many people but, as he was fond of saying, "*Omnia mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*" - *All things change and we must change with them!*



Back home in Luddenden, W Yorks

MEMBERSHIP AS AT SEPTEMBER 2014

Our hard-pressed and diligent Membership Secretary, Liam Rand, is busily chasing payments from a few members, but imminent cashiering notwithstanding, current membership is:-

1961	Graham Lewis	1970	Michael Davis	1979	Paul Clarke Paul Driscoll David O'Ryan Sean Tyrrie	2005	Jack Brudenell Jonathan Fenn
1962	Kevin Butt Michael Hughes John Lewis	1971	Bernie Brooker Mike Donovan Kevin Flynn	1980	Sean Leggett Martin McKeown Nial O'Callaghan	2008	Jed Marshall
1963	John Bowman John Sheehy	1972	Paul Culleton David Thompson	1981	Sean Conlon	2011	Dale Claridge
1964	John Griffiths Ronald Patchett	1973	Phil Mahoney	1982	Sean Corr Mark Harvey	2012	Sean Jones
1965	Brian Dalton Alan Dobby Terry Knights	1974	Kevin Bonham Paul McArdle Simon Millyard	1983	Richard Allard Anthony Crowley	2013	Fadzai Biti Vanessa Chinoo Jack Collins Matthew Hedge Valentine Mabondla
1966	Stephen Barker Patrick Clancy Bill Clegg Paul Hutchinson Paul Wenham	1975	Eamon Day David Ekers Keith Exley Chris Fairchild John McDermott Andrew McGregor Gerry Thomas	1984	Michael Barry Mark Denton Stuart Humfrey	Chpln	Rev Daniel Kelly
1967	Tony Cane Paul Clancy Glen Sweeney Mike Thompson	1976	Christopher Barber Laurence Blainey John Chambers Guy Francke Clive Knight Simon Ravinet Martin Sullivan John Todryk James Tyrrie Andrew McWilliam	1985	Tim Allard Karl Streamer	Assoc	Matthew Hardiman Chloe Spillett Nick Spillett Tom Wiltshire
1968	Martin Duggan Geoffrey Lewis	1977	Graham Axe Phil Coath John Cobbold Mark Hidveghy Martin Hodson John Judge Liam Rand	1986	Iain Oconnell	DateTBC	Peter O'Callaghan
1969	Peter David Paul Marsh Chris McHale	1978	Kevin Thomas	1987	Martin Corr Martin Diggins Steven Hurren	H/T	Gemma Ackred
				1989	Damian Dillon Justin Hennessey Paul Lynch	F/T	John Askew Ian Britt James Devor Mary Donaldson Tom Kennedy David Milne John O'Connell* David Sims
				1990	Christopher Hull Ben Micklewright	Hon	Frank Keenan Jan Lewis Helen Wigmore
				1995	Paul Bending		
				1998	Ben Gibson		
				2000	Martyn Rickard		
				2001	Chris Thompson		

*John O'Connell is currently a member of staff having previously left.

Please ensure that any outstanding membership fee is paid by the end of October, before the culling of the list occurs!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



The dates for the association's two fixed events

have now been arranged.

The **Alumni Dinner** will be held in the school on **SATURDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2015**

The **Memorial Mass and Social** will be held in the school on **MONDAY 22nd JUNE 2015**.

In addition, we are exper-

imenting with a new, informal event to be held at **The Exchange pub** in Southchurch Road, Southend, possibly in **November** this year.

This will be a simple "night in the pub" with our very own buffet and will be open to members and their partners. No frills, no drills, just an

opportunity to enjoy a pint, have something to eat and chat to friends.

Watch out for further details arriving via e-mail and being posted on the website.