



MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

MEMORIAL MASS 2023

The date for this year's Memorial Mass, which will once again be held in the school, is **THURSDAY 22nd JUNE**, at the slightly earlier time than normal of **7.30pm**.

Last year we took the unusual step of using the school chapel rather than our more traditional venue of the Concourse Area. Whilst there are some drawbacks it does have the big advantage of being set-up for streaming. This

means that we are able to welcome former pupils and teachers from overseas (and elsewhere in this country). Having trialled this in 2021 during our Covid-enforced exile at Sacred Heart church and receiving positive feedback from people who had joined in from as far away as Australia and Italy, we feel that this is a positive development. Consequently we shall again be using the chapel this year.

HOWEVER, that doesn't mean to imply that we should all just stay home



Towering above...our Chaplain Fr Daniel Kelly (who left the school in 2000) with Headteacher Gemma Ackred

and tune-in. Please do give every consideration to attending in person to pay your respects to those deceased past members of the school community.

There will, of course, be the usual buffet and drinks afterwards allowing the opportunity, after the formality of the Mass, to relax and renew acquaintances with others present.

ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END

After 25 years it seems that the end of this esteemed association may be only just around the corner.

Of course such a situation is extremely sad, but it's simply a natural progression.

However, before we all start having a fit of the vapours and throwing our hands up in horror let us, take a leaf out of the book of America's Founding Fathers and state the facts to a candid world.

The Alumni was founded way back in the late nineties when the school had only recently started to morph into the behemoth that it is today.

Such things as social media were, as yet, unheard of and even the internet was only just flickering into people's consciousness. Keeping in touch with people was still very much an investment of time and effort which meant it wasn't anywhere near as easy as it is nowadays and, consequently, wasn't done as frequently.

In 1998 the school was still only in its third dec-

The Way We Were: the school in the late 1970s...



ade of existence, which meant that the thirteen years in which the school had only been two-form entry represented a whopping third of its history.

Not only that, but pretty much all of the past pu-

pils from those years were still very much in the workforce, leading active and busy lives.

They, and those who came after them during the rest of the 1970s, had fond memories of the school as a fairly small, familiar insti-

tution where many happy memories had been made and friendships forged.

Getting together again with others, perhaps not seen for many years, was appealing. There was a fair amount of catching-up to be done and acquaintances to be renewed.

Now fast forward to 2023 and the school is barely recognisable to most of us. With seven year groups and 6-forms in many of those it has grown to resemble nothing like those early stalwarts knew.

For many years there has been absolutely no desire amongst leavers to join a semi-formal organisation such as ours. Staying in touch or re-connecting with old friends is just a few clicks away on social media.

Our own membership, perhaps as a result of aging, is becoming less and less connected with the life of the association.

The appeal in the last edition of *Moreana* for ideas to help celebrate our silver jubilee garnered zero response and encouraging

attendance at the annual dinner or Memorial Mass is becoming harder and harder. As for recruiting volunteers to stand for Executive offices...we've had the same president for over half the life of the association and it's supposed to be a one-year appointment!

All of which leads us to the conclusion that the Alumni has outlived its purpose.

Consequently the Executive will be proposing at this year's Annual General Meeting that we consider formally winding-up the Alumni.

This does, of course, leave the question of what to do with the Alumni's various assets—namely the bank balance and the various social media accounts.

The proposal will suggest that the stewardship of the *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *LinkedIn* accounts be transferred to the school (should they be interested in them).



As for the bank balance (which is currently sitting at around £4,000) there are a few realistic options:-

- 1) Donate the entire balance to the school
 - 2) Distribute it equally amongst the membership
 - 3) Donate it to a charity (suggestions would be welcome)
- OR, perhaps the noblest idea yet,**
- 4) Investigate apportioning a percentage of it to a local parish in return for celebrating, in perpetuity, an annual Memorial Mass on, or around, the feast of St Thomas More. This would at least allow the tradition of honouring and praying for deceased alumni that has continued unbroken since 1980 to

continue long after we have gone.

Now we realise that this may all have come as a shock to most of you, but we are simply attempting to be realistic.

So please do make every effort to give this whole issue some serious thought and take a few minutes to let the Executive know your thoughts on the whole issue of winding-up the association. Most importantly, of course, let them know your thoughts on how to disperse the bank balance!

None of this should be seen in a gloomy light. It is simply a fact of life. As one of our own Founding Fathers, David Finnigan, was fond of saying, "*Omnia mutantur et nos mutamur in eis*" which, for those of us who are not Latin scholars, translates as "*All things change and we must change with them*".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

The date of this year's Annual General Meeting is **MONDAY 19th JUNE at 8pm.**

As with recent years this will again take place via a **ZOOM meeting** in order to give as many members as possible the chance to participate.

The link can be clicked on [here](#) and will also be included in the formal notification being sent out.

This could well be our final AGM (see above) and the Executive would appreciate as many members as possible attending to voice their opinions on the proposal to wind-up the association.

GEMMA'S IN THE FRAME

As an example of yet further future-proofing (see above) the Executive took the step recently of commissioning the next portrait of a previous headteacher.

Now it is to be fervently hoped that current headteacher Gemma Ackred will remain for

many years yet continuing her impressive tenure at the helm. But, regardless of the AGM decision, it's possible that the artist may be retired when she does eventually decide to hang up her mortar board. Hence the decision to proceed.

Of course the world will have to wait for that dreadful day of departure to actually dawn before the portrait can be revealed!