



# MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

## PAUL'S MILITARY MEMORIES

**Major Paul Rennie**, Officer Commanding the Rehabilitation Division of the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre - Headley Court, and who left the school in 1986 was Guest of Honour at the recent Alumni Annual Dinner.

Resplendent in his Mess Dress and wearing numerous campaign medals, Paul regaled us with tales of how he came to be in such a lofty and responsible position after receiving an STM education. Leaving the school after completing his 5th Year (Year 11 for younger members) since the 6th Form had yet to be created he went to Welbeck College for two years before joining Sandhurst from which he passed out as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Corps of Signals.

After a number of years in that regiment he resigned his commission and went on a worldwide "walkabout" before returning to education studying a Science Foundation at the Open University and then graduating from Bradford University with a BSc (Hons). He joined the NHS and it was whilst working in this sphere that he began to



Two Pauls: Major Rennie chats with our President

hanker once more after the military life and returned to Sandhurst, this time to be commissioned into the Royal Army Medical Corps.

He has since added to his education even further, gaining an MSc from UCL with a speciality in Rehabilitation.

His tours of duty have seen him in Bosnia, Germany, Malawi, Hong Kong, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Nepal—which he has visited 10 times! He spoke movingly of how the discipline and training of army life helped to keep him sane whilst Camp Bastion was under attack and he couldn't even 'phone his wife back in England to let her know that he was OK.

He paid tribute to the education he received at STM referring to David Milne as one of his heroes [*perhaps he is in training for some sort of military drinking competition—Ed*] and fondly recalled how he, as a big, burly hockey and rugby-playing 5th year had been asked to play a role in the school play as a woman—apparently to great critical acclaim.

He finished his extremely interesting talk by identifying the six key aspects of military life that underpin the philosophy of the British Army: Loyalty, Integrity, Courage, Discipline, Respect for Others and Selfless Commitment. Whilst he didn't say as much it's to be hoped that the begin-

nings of those values were sown whilst at STM with its clear Christian ethos and, as if to underline this, he finished by explaining that when visiting a war zone the army's attitude is that "*we're not there to kill everyone, we're there to influence everyone*".

## TOM'S LETTER FROM THE PHILIPPINES

*That stirring supporter of the Alumni, Tom Kennedy, heeded the recent plea at the annual dinner for submissions to this esteemed publication and sent the following very interesting account of his brother's life in the Philippines...*

A couple of weeks before Christmas 2013 Isobel and I made the two day journey to the Philippines to visit my twin brother Fr. Chris, a Salesian priest, who has been engaged in missionary work there since 1970.

On arrival at Manila airport we were met by a sea of people. Many Filipinos return home for Christmas and they are met at the airport by their whole families and picnic there. Congestion is so great that it takes more than half an hour to exit the car park.

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## ON TO GREATER THINGS

Whilst some may see being President as the pinnacle of their achievements (George W Bush, Nicolas Sarkozy and Dmitry Medvedev for example) others seek out even greater things, and so it was that in May last year our very own former President **Paul Hutchinson** (1966) was sworn in as Mayor of Chelmsford!

Chosen to be Mayor from the 57 elected Members of Chelmsford City Council to which he was elected in 2004, Paul moved to Chelmsford in 1974 and for the past 22 years has lived in North Springfield.

He retired in October 2007 and like most retirees finds himself busier, and happier, than ever. As well as the City Council he

has also been a Member of Springfield Parish Council since 2003, is a Trustee of both Chelmer Village Hall and Springfield United Charities, a Vice-President of both Chelmsford Theatre Association and Friends of Hylands House, has served as a Governor of various Chelmsford schools continuously since 1977 and, for the past three years, has been a Judge of the Basildon & Chelmsford Speak Out Challenge.

For three years within all of this he also found the time to be President of this esteemed association!

On his election as Mayor Paul said "*It is a huge honour to be Mayor of the city that has been my home for most of my life. I have seen Chelmsford grow and prosper*

*over the past forty years*" before making the theme of his year of office: '**Young People - Unleash the Potential**'.

We look forward perhaps, once he has time to breathe again when his year finishes, to hearing tales of his time of exultedness!

## *Tom's Letter From The Philippines (cont from page 1)...*

Our destination, Don Bosco Makati Technical College, has its own exit from the motorway which reads "DON BOSCO". Fr. Chris is the PP of St. John Bosco parish, a stone's throw away from the College, and resides in the community which serves the College as well as the Parish.

We discovered there are more than 3000 students, one third of whom are given excellent vocational training. The size of the Complex is astonishing. The Salesians have an arrangement with Ford Motor Co., Toyota and Honda whereby students are given mechanical training suited to the companies' needs and this ensures that approx. 1000 student are placed in employment each year.

The facilities are first class. More impressive than these is the enormous Printing Press which operates 24/7. All text books, not just for the college but for many other schools are printed here. Religious books, magazines, pamphlets, diaries, calendars, etc. are produced in abun-

dance. Some work is undertaken for local businesses. The parish has a large religious bookshop stocked entirely with religious books and magazines produced in the printing press. Then there is the provincial house which employs a large number of staff in order to deal with the numerous press publications.

Catholicism flourishes in the Philippines. We attended Mass at 4.00am and were astonished to find approx 1800 people in attendance!

Makati is one of seven cities which make up Manila. It is the business centre and has enough high-rise offices and tenement blocks to rival any city. The novel means of public transport is the "Jeepney"- an elongated jeep with a very low roof. Ideal for tiny Filipinos but uncomfortable for Europeans. Traffic is bumper to bumper and the numerous traffic police blow their whistles all day long but nobody seems to take notice. The shopping malls could rival anything we have in the west but only a little way from the main thoroughfare there is abject poverty. St Don Bosco is renowned for his work with poor and abandoned youth and it is heartening that the college gives free board and lodging and an education to 200 boys taken from the streets, each year.

Old Manila was built by the Spanish. Spanish architecture is evident in all buildings. The Cathedral the Bishops House and the Cultural Centre are particularly impressive. Just out-

side the City in Paranaigay is the Salesian Seminary, now an international seat of learning. Fr. Chris was Spiritual Director there for many years. Even more impressive, I believe, is the Salesian College in Bataalao where Fr Chris spent his first eleven years. We also took a sightseeing trip to Tagatay to view a volcano in the middle of a lake and were amazed by the number of shacks which lined both sides of the road for mile after mile. These are the homes of the migrants from many parts of the Philippines. Here fruit was available in abundance and some of the stalls were forty to fifty metres long. City dwellers drive there to buy their fruit.

Sadly our time flew by but we had seen enough to appreciate the many thousands of islands that make up the Philippines. We had also come to appreciate the friendly and fervent nature of the people. For all the poverty and deprivation they are a wonderfully happy race with a wicked sense of humour. I am proud that my brother was able to minister to them for nearly forty five years.

Sadly his health had been deteriorating since undergoing an operation the previous year and a few months after our visit - on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - he passed away. I was able to make a second trip to spend the last week of his life with him. His funeral in the Philippines took place on St. Patrick's Day with 83 priests and 2 bishops presiding. His body was flown back to Ireland for burial in his own parish.

## HELPING THE CHILDREN

*Interestingly, when this hard-pressed editor was scouring around searching for articles this one popped-in to his inbox without any need for solicitation...*

The Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, or **bccs**, is a charity that has supported and cared for children and young people in Essex and East London since 1984. We were previously known as Childcare and have worked in St Thomas More High School for over 10 years providing our counselling service.

At **bccs** we believe that every child should be loved and cared for. However, some children experience great hardship and suffering - from bereavement to bullying, from anxiety to abuse. **bccs** provides counselling for children and young adults whose wellbeing, and mental and emotional health, could be at risk. We employ dedicated Social Workers and Counsellors to deliver a caring service. We emphasize early intervention; our unique approach is to intervene as soon as problems are identified and work with the children for as long as it takes to put things right.

At **bccs**, we see our work as a requirement of faith and are proud of our Catholic foundation; the Bishop of Brentwood is our President and we enjoy much support from local Catholics. The work



we do not only benefit children we work with but also families, the school and local community. We work with children of all faiths and none, but we are still rooted in the Catholic Church.

Over the years **bccs** has been there for thousands of children, and we continue to provide our caring service in St Thomas More. If you or one of your school friends saw a counsellor during your time at school, they may well have been employed and placed there by **bccs**.

If you would like to learn more about **bccs** and see how you can get involved through fundraising events and initiatives, visit our website [www.bccs.org.uk](http://www.bccs.org.uk). You can also like us on Facebook and follow on Twitter / Instagram @bccs\_charity.

## SPRINGBOARD TO GREATNESS

It occurred to this hard-pressed Editor recently, whilst desperately searching for stories, that there seems to a recurring theme in the lives and lot of this esteemed association's past chaplains. Without exception they all seem to have moved on and up in status since handing on the baton.

Our very first chaplain, **Father Tom Jordan** who, at the time, was a parish priest in Basildon (goodness knows what the poor man had done to deserve that posting) went on to become the Dean of Havering and is now a parish priest in Romford

His successor, **Father Andrew Headon**, was parish priest in Eastwood and not long after standing down as chaplain was appointed to be Vice Rector of the English College in Rome. In that role he was featured as a member of one of the television commentary teams during the inauguration of Pope Benedict. He has now returned to our diocese and last year was made Episcopal Vicar for Administration.

Finally, our longest-serving chaplain to-date, **Father Kevin Hale**, was already the Dean of Southend while he looked-after our spiritual needs, but in January last year he was made Vicar General of the diocese. This means he is, in effect, the deputy bishop!

So what great things might our current chaplain **Father Daniel Kelly**, himself a past pupil of the school and currently an Assistant Priest in Basildon (perhaps such a posting is some sort of "Rite of Passage"??), expect for the future. Ordained in 2011 and our chaplain since then, I wonder if he looks good in purple or red?

## STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

Please remember **Fr Tom Jordan** in your prayers as he recovers from illness.

**MEMBERSHIP AS AT  
APRIL 2016**

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

**HATCHES, MATCHES  
& DESPTACHES**

Sadly, in this edition we have to report two deaths since the last Moreana, both of whom were tragically young.

February saw the sad passing of **Mitchell Thorne** who left at the end of Year 13 in 2015. Mitchell was diagnosed with Cancer while in Year 7 and bravely endured numerous bouts of treatment throughout his entire time at the school.

In March of this year the current Head Girl of the school, **Nina Clarke**, died of Encephalitis after suffering a very rare and serious complication three days after being admitted to hospital.

In addition to these recent deaths there have been another five names added to the deceased list since last year's

Memorial Mass, as news gradually reaches this association:-

Dominic Burrows  
Paul Claxton  
Kevin Harcourt  
Nicholas Simmonds  
and former governor Frank Blaker.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of their families. May their souls Rest in Peace.

**MAKE IT A DATE TO REMEMBER...**

The two most imminent dates for our diaries are:-

The **AGM** which takes place in the school at 8pm on **Tuesday 10th May**

and

The **MEMORIAL MASS & SOCIAL** which takes place in the school at 8pm on **MONDAY 20th JUNE**. Mass followed by a free buffet and drinks.