



MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

GEMMA'S EXPANSION PLANS

A few years have now passed since the last of the physical expansions to the school premises under Frank Keenan's watch but current Headteacher, Gemma Ackred will be able to put her name to fresh bricks and mortar now that work has just started on yet another new classroom block to be completed in January 2019.

Part of a multi-million pound project funded by Southend Council to increase pupil spaces after a recent increase in demand amongst Southend schools, it follows a similar £3 million project at Southend High School for Boys.

The new block, which will be sited on the current playground, will offer both basic and specialist teaching rooms, as well as learning resource rooms and extra facilities for



young people who have special educational needs. Designed by property and construction consultancy Ingleton Wood it will also feature an internal fitness suite.

BRIGHTEST FUTURE

When commenting to the local press (from whom much of this article has been gleaned) our illustrious headteacher said, "We are dedicated to constantly im-

proving and investing in our facilities in order to provide the very best educational experience for all. We are delighted with the plans and look forward to opening the brand-new facility so that current as well as prospective students can have the brightest future possible."

The building, which is being constructed by Southend-based firm Davis Construction, will be fitted with mod-

ern mechanical and electrical installations, including solar panels, in order to ensure that it is as energy efficient as possible.

Southend Council has been set the target of providing ten extra classes of 28-30 children by 2019 and the expansion yet again of our alma mater will help contribute to this requirement with the increased pupil intake in September 2018 and 2019.

WORLD CUP BREAK TO REMEMBER

By the time we get to **THURSDAY 21ST JUNE** we'll be well into this year's World Cup Football Fest with England, no doubt, starting to pack their bags for the return home. But if the twenty matches that will have already taken place by then have left us feeling bereft of hope and longing for some alternative form of relaxation you might want to consider attending this year's Alumni Memorial Mass.

Far from being a sombre affair

the evening begins with a Mass that, this year, will be presided over by Parish Priest of Sacred Heart (and former Cecil Jones pupil), Fr Graham Smith. The two main features of the Mass that mark it as special for the occasion are the installation of our President and the much more important reading of the list of deceased. Bearing in mind that the oldest former pupils are only now entering their seventies it is somewhat poignant to think that there are over 90 names on the list, some of whom didn't even grow old enough to leave the school!

It seems a fitting and honourable thing to remember them on this one occasion each year and, in so many cases, that's exactly what those present are doing - actually remembering them being in the same classes as they were!

But as soon as the sober part of the evening is over the mood always turns to convivial conversation as the wine and beer flow freely and a sumptuous buffet is served. Plenty of acquaintances are renewed or made for the first time and former teachers, past pupils, wives, girl-

friends and partners get stuck into the business of socialising, reliving old memories, catching-up with the latest news and generally enjoying a balmy summer's evening.

The event on **THURSDAY 21ST JUNE at 8PM** in the school is open to all past pupils and staff, plus their partners, and is totally free.

So do give it some thought and pass the word around amongst others with a connection to the school. We'll return to the World Cup refreshed and better-equipped to deal with disappointment!

A MASTERFUL DINNER

More than thirty members of this esteemed association were joined by a few other former pupils at the Annual Dinner on 24th February to hear Treasurer, and former President, Kevin Thomas (1978) speak about his year as Master of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers.

Of course before Kevin could begin his very entertaining and informative speech those present enjoyed a superb five-course meal featuring poached chicken and panetonne bread and butter pudding which, as tradition dictates, had been washed down by copious amounts of wine and beer.

When he was finally allowed to take the floor Kevin informed us that there are no less than 110 livery companies in the City of London comprising a whole bunch of ancient and modern trade associations and guilds, of which his is one of the newest.

The origins of the concept date back all the way to the thirteenth century when young men wishing to learn a trade had to be apprenticed to a guild. These gradually came to be known as livery companies and they slowly evolved to become the organisations that, in effect, run the City.

Nowadays they own huge amounts of property within the City with combined assets in the region of £2-£3billion. Their modern functions include running apprenticeship schemes, providing networking opportunities, regulating their relevant trades and making huge annual donations in the region of about £45 million to charities. The approximate 30,000 liverymen also have the voting rights to elect the Lord Mayor of London each year and they organise the annual Lord Mayor's Procession which is 3 miles long, yet only actually



covers a route of 1½ miles.

Membership of a Livery Company is open to anyone and offers progression, after becoming a freeman of the particular livery company, to becoming a freeman of the City itself and all of the rights and privileges that go with it, including the option of being hung with a silk rope were one to ever be condemned to such a grisly fate.

There are 40 livery halls within the square mile, each one a gentle oasis of calm amidst the hustle and bustle of such a busy and thriving city. A few are extremely old, but many of the originals were lost in the Great Fire of London and, more recently, during the blitz of World War II. It is within these halls that the livery companies hold their various functions and, during his year as Master, Kevin managed to attend approximately 150 of these events. He also attended a Buckingham Palace garden party.

Attendees of note this year included former Headmaster Tony McDonald, who hadn't been inside the school since leaving in 1985, and former pupils Alex Merenda and Jannah Hartley who, together with the President's son very much represented the new face of recent leavers. Those present of a certain age were delighted to learn

that, in addition to being a former pupil himself, Alex is the grandson of former PE teacher John Tooley. This was, so we believe, also the first time that there had been two father/son pairs present with former Headmaster Frank Keenan and his son, former Head of English Tom Keenan being joined by President Paul Driscoll (1979) and his son James Driscoll (2014). There's no telling where these type of statistics will end-up if Alex can persuade his grandad to attend next year!

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

It's been fourteen months since the last edition of this esteemed publication, yet our Constitution calls for four each year! So why the delay?

Content is the simple answer—not as in mildly happy you understand, but rather as in lack of articles to include!

As you'll see from the title page this is actually the 54th edition of *Moreana*, but by rights it ought to be something like the 80th! In recent years it has become harder and harder for one hard-pushed editor to come up with original and fresh content.

BIG PLAYERS

We've done the history of the school, we've interviewed the long-serving members of staff, we've profiled the big players who've died and we've covered the current and future developments of the buildings. We've also been fortunate to be sent occasional articles ranging from insights into astronomy, experiences in religious communities in the Philippines, holidays in flood zones, visits to superstar's homes, treks up mountains, Austrian food recipes and a myriad other topics. But, sadly, such submissions have always been slow in arriving and are now rarer than an Italian Pope!

The original concept of *Moreana* was a newsletter for members by members. The editor's role was simply intended to be to fit it together every three months.

So please think of something to contribute, or failing that, simply suggest a topic that you would find interesting and the editor will see what can be uncovered.

ELECTRONIC OPTION

The other thing that you could consider doing would be to ensure that we have your up-to-date email address. If every member was contactable via email it would allow us to produce reduced-sized editions electronically more frequently. Rather than waiting for enough content to fill a four-page edition we could simply send single or double-sided pdfs just as soon as we had something to say.

But to do that now would crank-up the cost because of the printed editions.

So please do try and come to the rescue either with an article or suggestion or by simply providing an email address. Then we needn't be strangers any more!

THE VOICE FROM ABOVE



Some of our members who live in the Southend area may have taken the time to visit the impressive *Poppies: Wave* sculpture by artist Paul Cummins which was displayed on Barge Pier at Shoebury Garrison

LET'S ALL TRY AND KEEP UP

One of the interesting conundrums in this fast-paced world of instant communication, where virtually nothing goes by uncommented upon, is how to actually keep in touch with members of an association such as ours.

With a delightfully varied age-range amongst members and an equally varied range of both technophilia and technophobia we strive for a means of being able to get the word around effectively and efficiently, whilst trying hard to remain timely in all our dealings.

Clearly the postal service, whilst slow and ponderous, serves a purpose for some and whilst we still have members who rely on it we shall still insist on using it.

But more and more people now have email addresses, even if only to receive messages from relatives living halfway around the world or simply get the gas bill, and this is an appeal to ensure that, if you have one, you let us have it as well.

son between 12 April and 25 June last year. Part of the World War I Centenary commemorations, the sculpture was derived from the hugely successful *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* display originally at the Tower of London.

Shoebury Garrison was chosen as the first location of a national tour because of its important WWI history as a training school for the Royal Garrison Field Artillery where new weapons were tested.

The ten week exhibition culminated in a small concert by choirs and musicians during which the roll call of locals who were killed in action during the conflict was read

Likewise more and more people now have Twitter and/or Facebook accounts. Sometimes just to keep up with the banal rantings of fellow human beings, sometimes to seek out the rare and interesting musings of others.

We have accounts with both forms of social media:

@stmalumniuk on Twitter and stmalumni on Facebook.

Our most recent and tentative foray into the world of electronic networking has been to create a **Linked-In** site specifically for past pupils and former members of staff. **stmalumni-uk** so far has 37 members and is slowly gaining momentum with applications to connect gradually coming in from around the world. As long as the applicant attended the school in one form or another their request to link is accepted.

Finally, of course, there is that old stalwart of electronic information, the internet. Our own website www.stmalumni.co.uk contains a wealth of information



out. Of course a suitable local version of Richard Dimbleby was required for such a grave task and the spotlight fell on non-other than our very own retired Head of Lower School and History, David Milne.

Also spotted in the crowd was a certain ex-Deputy Head and Biology teacher!

in the form of back editions of this publication and reports of our various events over twenty years, as well as, of course, providing details of forthcoming events. It should be the number one go-to for anyone seeking information about the Alumni.

So please don't be a stranger. Join our Linked-In site, follow our Twitter site, like our Facebook page, visit our website and send your up-to-date email address to the address on the front page.

If you know of members who have changed their email address over time (as plenty of people do) perhaps you might check with them that they have remembered to let us know.

With such a plethora of communication methods now at our disposal it is inconceivable that we sometimes struggle to keep up-to-date so please do take the time to spread the word to other, non-members and, most importantly, let us know what you think of it all!

CATHOLIC UNITED IN SUCCESS

Long-time stalwart of this esteemed Association and former West Ham player Paul Marsh (1969), writes to tell us...

I was informed today by a Herts County Football Official that in our national game the most important football cup is the F.A. Cup followed by, for the lesser professional and semi-professionals, The F.A. Vase.

The most prestigious amateur cup is broken up into sections. Essex is grouped with London, Milton Keynes, and other neighbouring counties right up to the midlands and the trophy is called The Anagram Records Trophy.

I am delighted to inform you that last month Catholic United's 1st Team won this, the most prestigious cup in amateur football, beating Broadfields F.C. at the Herts County F.A. Headquarters 2-0.

Congratulations in getting the club to such a high standard must go to joint managers Dan Trenkle and James Paviour. Of course recognition must also go to the players who, under their command, have performed with so much distinction, on and off the field. At the last time of counting six or seven of whom were also past pupils of the school!



As one of CUF's sponsors for this season we are, of course, delighted at their success and wish them every continuation of it into the next season.

MEMBERSHIP AS AT MAY 2018

1961	Graham Lewis	1971	Bernie Brooker Mike Donovan Kevin Flynn	1978	Kevin Thomas	1995	Paul Bending
1962	Kevin Butt Michael Hughes John Lewis	1972	Paul Culleton David Thompson	1979	Pete Chambers Paul Clarke Paul Driscoll John Lawrie David O'Ryan Sean Tyrie	1998	Ben Gibson
1963	John Bowman John Sheehy	1973	Martin Carroll Phil Mahoney	1980	Sean Leggett Martin McKeown Nial O'Callaghan	2000	David Cook Martyn Rickard
1964	John Griffiths Ronald Patchett	1974	Kevin Bonham Paul McArdle Simon Millyard	1981	Sean Conlon Malcolm Patterson	2001	Chris Thompson
1965	Brian Dalton Alan Dobby Terry Knights	1975	Eamon Day David Ekers Keith Exley Chris Fairchild John McDermott Andrew McGregor Gerry Thomas	1982	Sean Corr Mark Harvey	2005	Jack Brudenell Jonathan Fenn
1966	Stephen Barker Patrick Clancy Bill Clegg Paul Hutchinson Paul Wenham	1976	Christopher Barber Laurence Blainey John Chambers Guy Francke Clive Knight Andrew McWilliam Simon Ravinet Martin Sullivan John Todryk James Tyrie	1983	Richard Allard Anthony Crowley Keith Traynor	2008	Jed Marshall Tom Wiltshire
1967	Tony Cane Paul Clancy Glen Sweeney Mike Thompson	1977	Phil Coath John Cobbold Mark Hidveghy Martin Hodson John Judge Liam Rand	1984	Michael Barry Mark Denton Stuart Humfrey	2011	Dale Claridge
1968	Martin Duggan Geoffrey Lewis			1985	Tim Allard	2014	James Driscoll
1969	Peter David Paul Marsh Chris McHale			1986	Iain O'Connell	Chpln	Rev Daniel Kelly
1970	Michael Davis			1987	Martin Corr Martin Diggines	Assoc	Matthew Hardiman Ben Micklewright Chloe Spillett Nick Spillett
				1988	Damian Dillon Justin Hennessey Paul Lynch	DateTBC	Peter O'Callaghan
				1989	Christopher Hull	H/T	Gemma Ackred
						F/T	John Askew Ian Britt James Devor Mary Donaldson Tom Kennedy Tom Mayhew David Milne John O'Connell* David Sims
						Hon	Frank Keenan Jan Lewis Helen Wigmore

TIME FOR REPLACEMENTS

It's that time of year again when this esteemed association holds its Annual General Meeting in the forlorn hope that someone new will stand for election as President!

The current incumbent, Paul Driscoll, has been president for the past seven consecutive years, having previously served as our first President for three consecutive years from 1998. This means that, over the length of time the

association has existed, he has been president for half of it!

The Constitution calls for the President to be elected annually meaning that we could be about to elect our 21st incumbent, but in reality there have only ever been four members to hold the post.

Paul is happy to carry on if nobody else stands, but for the good of the association and the sake of new, fresh impetus, it

really is about time that somebody else took over.

So do please consider putting yourself forward when the official notices arrive in the very near future. The current Membership Secretary and Treasurer will remain in office so you'll have plenty of support from experienced hands.

TUESDAY 5th JUNE is the date to remember at **7pm** in the school. It could be your big chance!

In Mem Richard Copley

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

HATCHES, MATCHES & DESPATCHES

It is with sadness that we report the death of former English and Maths teacher **Sybil O'Brien** who died in August last year.

May she Rest In Peace