

# MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

# A DIAMOND OF A PARTY!

Next year sees the 60th birthday of the school!

We realise that, to some, it seems as if it's been around for ever, and to others it seems like only yesterday that it was flinging open it's hallowed portals to welcome them into its embrace. But the Diamond Jubilee looms large on the horizon nevertheless.

This roving reporter can reveal that his investigations have uncovered fledgling plans for a number of events to mark this auspicious occasion, some of which will involve opportunities for past pupils and members of staff to also join in the celebrations.

Perhaps the most elegant and grandest of all will be the 60th Anniversary Diamond Ball to be held at Stock Brook Country Club in Billericay on Saturday 9th May.

This prestigious occasion is being planned by the Friends of St Thomas More High School (formerly the PTA) and provides the perfect opportunity for everyone to dress up in their finery for a sumptuous celebration.



The evening will feature

- ·Welcome drink
- ·3 Course meal with wine
- ·Live band
- ·Table Magician
- Disco
- Photographer
- $\cdot \text{Memento gift}$

Members of the Alumni are being actively encouraged to attend this glittering occasion with their partners.

Tickets are priced at £62 per person and payment may be made in three instalments. A deposit of only £20 is required to secure your place.

When booking your tickets be sure to state that you are members of the Alumni if you wish to be seated on one of our tables

Word is being spread far and wide and the very real ambition is that, amongst the guests, will be a good smattering of former teachers and past pupils mingling with today's teachers and the parents of current pupils.

Sarah Burns, the Chair of the Friends, has paid this esteemed association the honour of inviting our President to co-host the occasion in order to represent those who have passed through the school during the past six decades. They very much hope that he will be accompanied and supported by a large contingent of our members to endorse that sentiment.

To book simply email Sarah

fostm@st-thomasmore .southend.sch.uk or call 07703 128827

Let's see if we can't make this an occasion to rememher!



# FREE AT LAST, WE'RE FREE AT LAST!



A message from the President...

As members will recall, the big lead article on the front page of the last edition of *Moreana* was all about the need for this association to change and adapt to the needs and trends of today's world.

Consequently, at one of the best attended AGMs in recent memory those present discussed long and hard the arguments for and against removal of the annual membership fee.

The main thrust of the discussion hinged around the need to retain existing, and recruit new, members.

Which in turn, of course, boils down to the simple

questions of "Why would you join?" and "What does the Alumni offer that can't be got elsewhere?"

The answer to those ponderables is increasingly difficult to determine given the ready availability of social networking opportunities nowadays... Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and others all provide easy ways of maintaining contact with like-minded people. And none of them require the completion of application forms or the parting with cash for the privilege of joining.

So after lengthy and informed debate those present voted unanimously to remove the annual fee for membership as from June this year.

All existing members at the time were then contacted with this news and invited to cancel their Standing Orders if they wish to.

So what will happen now? Nothing much will change

in the ambitions and structure of the Alumni. We shall still aim to organise and hold an annual dinner and the Memorial Mass, supplemented from time-to-time with various ad-hoc and memberorganised events. But the pricing structure may change to reflect not only the need to keep a closer eye on finances, but also to embrace yet more shifts towards becoming more appealing.

Check out the article concerning our new Facebook page and, if you haven't already done so, become a "friend".

Finally, is any of this going to work? The simple and blunt answer is we don't yet know. But if the fact that since the AGM we have received applications from at least six new members is anything to go by, then the signs are certainly looking good. That's six more than we had at the same time last year!

#### Paul Driscoll

# A NEW BLOCK AND A NEW LOOK

September saw the latest addition to the property portfolio open in the grounds of the school when a posh new edifice opened on the site of what used to be the cricket nets!

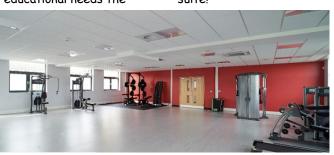
Featuring basic and specialist teaching rooms as



well as extra facilities for those with special educational needs the



building also boasts its very own internal fitness suite!



# YOUR CHANCE FOR SOME REAL INPUT

Every year since this esteemed association was formed back in 1998 we have held an annual dinner for the enjoyment of members. That's 21 dinners, a lot of food, an even greater amount of beer and wine and over 60 rounds of Intercourse Bingo!

In all that time only two major things have ever changed: The venue and the time of year!

The very first dinner was held at Southend Hockey Club, and every one since has taken place in the school.

For about half of this time we held the dinner in October and then, after seeking feedback, moved it to it's current month of February.

Every dinner has consisted of a four or five-course meal and finished with a speaker from our membership giving a brief talk about either their job (a barrister, a military medic, a Hollywood screenwriter and so forth) or something unusual that they have done (participated in a round the world yacht race, been a volunteer at the Olympics, experienced a major flood, etc).

We've always played a few rounds of a fun, fundraising game that's almost become our own: Intercourse Bingo.

But as the song says: the times, they are a-changing. So, in a spirit of genuine interest in making effective adjustments where required the Executive would really appreciate all members taking the time to complete and return the questionnaire on the right. Even if you've never attended your opinion is important...it may be that if things were changed you would attend in the future!

If enough people respond wanting to keep things as they are then that's exactly what will happen, but if changes are wanted then every effort will be made to accommodate them.

You can either simply tick the boxes, tear out this page and post it back to the address on the front page or, for the more tech-savvy amongst us, simply send an email to the address on the front page succinctly giving your answers to question numbers.

The important thing is to respond by 31st October so that the Executive have still got time to arrange something before the current association year ends in June next year.

### FACING UP TO FACEBOOK

Dispel those fears, head for the internet, search Facebook and connect to <a href="https://www.facebook.com/stmalumni.southend.7">www.facebook.com/stmalumni.southend.7</a>

There is a private group which "non-friends" cannot see and on which we post stuff that is intrinsically linked to us.

The page currently has 94 "friends", so let's see how many more we can get!

<ul><li>1. Which month would you prefer the dinner to take place (indicate your top three</li><li>choices in order):</li></ul>
1)
2)
3)
2. Would you prefer the event to take place in:
The school Dining Hall
The school Main Hall $\square$ Elsewhere NOT in the school $\square$
3. How many courses would you prefer?
Three
Four □ Five □
4. What style of food/menu would you prefer? (tick all that apply)
Formal, roast with all the usual trimmings
Pie/pub grub □  Gastro pub □
Other (please specify)
5. Should we have a speaker to round-off the evening?
Yes - a member of the Alumni □ Yes - an outsider paid to deliver an after dinner speech □ No □
6. Bearing in mind your preferred choice of menu style, how much would you consider a fair charge for the evening? (Circle your answer)
£20 - £24 £25 - £29 £30 - £34 £35 - £39 £40 - £44
7. If you think that the dinner should be elsewhere from the school please suggest some alternative venues
8. Do you think attendance should be for:
•STM Alumni members only □ •Any former pupils or staff of STM, regardless of whether they are a member of the Alumni □
9. Should partners be allowed to attend? (Circle your answer)
Yes No
10. Should our traditional Intercourse Bingo be continued? If not please feel free to suggest an alternative form of entertainment
Yes 🗆
Alternatives:
Your Name:

MEMBERSHIP AS AT OCTOBER 2019		1970	Michael Davis	1978	Richard Clegg Sean Cray	1990	Christopher Hull
1961	Graham Lewis	1971	Bernie Brooker Mike Donovan		Kevin Thomas	1995	Paul Bending
1962	Kevin Butt		Kevin Flynn	1979	Michael Ashkuri Pete Chambers	1998	Ben Gibson
	Michael Hughes John Lewis	1972	Paul Culleton David Thompson		Paul Clarke Paul Driscoll John Lawrie	2000	David Cook Martyn Rickard
1963	John Bowman John Sheehy	1973	Martin Carroll Phil Mahoney		David O'Ryan Sean Tyrie	2001	Chris Thompson
1964	John Griffiths Ronald Patchett	1974	Kevin Bonham Paul McArdle	1980	Sean Leggett Martin McKeown	2005	Jack Brudenell Jonathan Fenn
1965	Brian Dalton		Simon Millyard		Nial O'Callaghan	2011	Dale Claridge
	Alan Dobby Terry Knights	1975	Eamon Day David Ekers	1981	Sean Conlon Malcolm Patterson	2014	James Driscoll
	Frank McEvoy		Keith Exley Chris Fairchild	1982	Richard Chadon	2015	Ethan James
1966	Stephen Barker Patrick Clancy		John McDermott  Andrew McGregor	1702	Sean Corr Mark Harvey	Chpln	Rev Daniel Kelly
	Bill Clegg		Gerry Thomas			Assoc	Matthew Hardiman
	Paul Hutchinson			1983	Richard Allard		Jed Marshall
	Paul Wenham	1976			Anthony Crowley		Ben Micklewright
1967	Tony Cane		Laurence Blainey		Keith Traynor		Chloe Spillett
1707	Paul Clancy		John Chambers Guy Francke	1984	Michael Barry		Nick Spillett Tom Wiltshire
	Glen Sweeney		Clive Knight	1904	Mark Denton		TOTAL VIITSTILLE
	Mike Thompson		Andrew McWilliam Simon Ravinet		Stuart Humfrey	DateTBC Peter O'Callaghan	
1968	Martin Duggan Geoffrey Lewis		Martin Sullivan John Todryk	1985	Tim Allard	H/T	Gemma Ackred
	Peter Mahoney		James Tyrie	1986	Iain O'Connell	F/T	John Askew Ian Britt
1969	Peter David	1977	Phil Coath	1987	Martin Corr		James Devor
	Paul Marsh		John Cobbold		Martin Diggines		Mary Donaldson
	Chris McHale		Mark Hidveghy				Tom Kennedy
		1	Martin Hodson	1989	Damian Dillon		David Milne
WHO WAS THAT			John Judge		Justin Hennessey		John O'Connell*

# WHO WAS THAT GUY?

Avid readers may recall in the last edition of this sought-after publication that we ran a couple of images of Bishop Casey blessing the Concourse Area back in 1973 and posed the question: Which of our members can be seen in the picture?

The answer was John Lawrie (1978) who was enjoying (or was it enduring?) his first year at the seat of learning. He can be seen



singing his heart out second from right!

In fairness to John, he himself coughed to being the subject of our inves-

Hon Frank Keenan Jan Lewis Helen Wigmore

David Sims

In Mem Richard Copley
Tom Mayhew

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

tigation and is now eagerly awaiting his consignment of Spangles, Pacers, Bar Six, Aztec and other 1970s delicacies!