



MOREANA

NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS MORE ALUMNI

DINING WITH THE ELITE

The 2017 Annual Dinner on **SATURDAY 25th FEBRUARY**, will continue a tradition that seems to have entwined itself into the twenty-year history of these occasions—namely that of having speakers from the upper echelons of society! Many members will remember last year's guest of honour being a Major in the army and previous speakers have included an eminent QC, a Fire Chief and, of course, David Milne (not forgetting Frank Keenan, John Askew and Don McGregor).

The next such occasion sees no less than the ex-Mayor of Chelmsford, our very own former president **Paul Hutchinson**, speaking about his year as the County Town's First Citizen for 2015-2016.

Once again, and rather fittingly as we hit the milestone "twenty" mark, the meal will be served in the school dining hall.

As usual the occasion will consist of a sumptuous five-course banquet produced by our regular caterers who have always impressed, and the menu this year will consist of:-



Melon, Smoked Salmon and Prawn Salad topped with Quails Eggs

Tomato and Fresh Basil Soup with warm rolls and butter

Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding served with Roast Potatoes
Roasted Seasonal Vegetables
Fresh Brussel Sprouts
Garden Peas
Red Wine Gravy

Horseradish Sauce

Homemade Apple Strudel and Vanilla Ice-cream

Cheese Board, Crackers and Grapes

Coffee and After Dinner Chocolates

The evening will commence at **7.30pm for sitting at 8pm** and, as usual, the dress code

will be semi-formal with the wearing of Alumni ties positively encouraged (if you don't own one we'll have a supply there for purchase at £7.50 each).

Tickets cost a mere **£21.00** for members and **£26.00** for non-members (who must, of course, be former pupils or former/current teachers/governors).

Wine and beer will, as usual, be available for purchase at incredibly reasonable prices on the night.

To reserve a space please send a cheque payable to *St Thomas More Old Boys' Association* to **Membership Secretary, 19 Chelsea Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YL** or, alternatively, e-mail Liam at liam.rand@btopenworld.com and make arrangements for a bank transfer.

TURN ON THE TWEETING!

Don't forget to follow the Alumni Twitter account: **stmalumni** and post messages on it. This may well be one of the only ways that we have to "hold hands and contact the living" as far as younger former pupils are concerned!

Recent posts include a couple of professional football matches in which two former pupils were participating—one at Southend!



REMEMBERING WITH STYLE

Last June's Annual Memorial Mass took place on 20th June and, as usual, the list of deceased former pupils, staff and governors was read out by our President during the Biddings.

for many years to come and it is hoped that the invocation of their memory will inspire many to pray for them and the continued success of the school.

In keeping with tradition the Mass was followed by



The Memorial Plaques being blessed by Fr Daniel Kelly

This particular Mass also featured the blessing of four Memorial Plaques that this esteemed association had commissioned and installed at the exterior entrance to the school chapel commemorating the three deceased former Headmasters (**Henry Wilson Curry**, **Don McGregor** and **Dominick Fanning**) together with long-standing Head of Divinity and former Deputy Headmaster **David Finnigan**. Their names will be seen by anyone entering the chapel via this route

a sumptuous buffet with plenty of beer and wine to wash it down.

As we all slowly dispersed in to the warm summer evening one particular Old Boy (Anthony Crowley—1983) gave former Headmaster Frank Keenan a lift home in style!



TREKKING UP TOUBKAL

Declan Rague, a pupil in Year 11 (that's 5th Year in old money), has very kindly submitted the following account of an expedition that he, his father and a cousin undertook to Toubkal which, at 4,167 meters, is the highest peak in North Africa.

Day One

We were picked up at Marrakesh airport by our guide, Samir, and a driver in a 4x4 and driven for two hours across a plain with olive trees and a few old family homes called Kasbahs. Our driver took a detour up a narrow switch-back winding dirt track with no barriers and suddenly we were in the High Atlas mountains. We left the 4x4 and met our cook, muleteers and their mules, before putting on rucksacks and setting off along a dusty track, through a forest of old twisted juniper trees. Higher up, we could see small shelters. These are the summer homes of the nomad Berber people who move from the Sahara desert to the High Atlas and back each year.



We reached a small village surrounded by tiny terraced fields. The flat-roofed mud houses were built one on top of the other into the hillside. School had just finished and lots of children were out playing. As we passed through, we heard the call to prayer from the village Mosque. We asked these Berber people if they minded us taking their pictures. A couple agreed and we offered a small gift of money



to say thank you. Samir said that tourists don't always ask and use the images without permission. This seems very disrespectful.

Our campsite was beside a stream, about 2,100 metres above sea level. It was so quiet. Dinner was prepared by our cook and we all ate together sitting cross-legged on floor cushions in the square Berber tent. The food was spread out on the Berber rug and the tent was lit by candles. We drank "Berber Whiskey" - mint tea! - and watched the sun set behind the mountains as the nomads returned home with their flocks of sheep down the steep mountain slopes, dogs barking, shepherds and children shouting.

We went to bed early. The night was cold and, apart from the stream, there was no sound and no light except star light.

Day Two

An early breakfast of pancakes and bread was freshly made in the tent by our cook. We had more mint tea, packed for a long day of walking and set off up a steep track while the muleteers broke camp. The climb was hard and rocky, through more Juniper forest.

My Dad noticed the altitude first. He was slower than us and had to catch his breath when we stopped. Samir talked to us about a lot of things; he loves his job and is proud of his Berber heritage. The Berbers are different from Arabs, they have a different culture and tradition and their own language. They are a very tolerant people and accepting of other religions and beliefs outside of Islam. He told us of his home in the Happy Valley where the

people live simple lives. All of the homes are made of traditional materials. People don't have much but what they have is each other, a strong sense of identity and happiness. Samir explained that there are Berber Jews and Berber Christians. The Jews have lived there for 3,000 years; they are the same as his people who are Muslim. They are all friends and visit each other's homes. Some Jews became Christians and some Jews and Christians became Muslims. What is important to Samir is that everyone respects each other. Samir had strong views about modern, more fundamental Muslims who he feels are not following Islam. For example, his mother and sister would never wear the full veil. This isn't the Berber way.

As we climbed higher, it was harder for all of us. We rested at 3,600 meters above sea level and the views were amazing.

After several more hours of walking we camped outside the Toubkal Refuge. Our team were waiting for us with food and afternoon mint tea. We had a shower at the refuge in ice cold mountain stream water! As the sun sets it gets very cold, but the night sky is amazing. We could see the Milky Way and many shooting stars that looked huge. We slept at 2,700 meters to help us acclimatise for our ascent of Toubkal.

Day Three

It was dark at 5am when we got up and so cold that the

pebbles were coated in ice. After a hearty breakfast of pancakes and fresh bread we set off with head torches. The rocky path was difficult and we struggled to stay on our feet. The air was thin and it took a while to catch our breath. After 3½ hours of climbing we reached the top. It is amazing at 4,167 meters!

The trip down was tricky, harder than the way up. The frosty scree was difficult to walk on and we all fell over at times. We made good time and the whole trip from camp to the top and back took about 7 hours. We talked a lot with Samir who helped our muleteers and cook join in because they had little English. We watched them unpack prayer mats and pray in the evening.

Day Four

We walked down the mountain into the valley and the village of Imil. We passed a shrine and Samir explained that although Islam doesn't really approve of shrines, the Berbers like to visit it and pray for help with things like fertility.

We said goodbye to our team and mules and drove back to Marrakesh, very tired but with such a sense of achievement.

What an adventure and what a great story. We are grateful for Declan taking the time to submit it and would encourage other pupils to send articles for inclusion.



MR KEVIN VICKERS (1958–2016)

It is with sadness that we report the untimely death, at the age of 58 after a long illness, of long-serving Mathematics teacher Kevin Vickers who left the school in 2007. His friend and former colleague David Milne has kindly supplied the following obituary...

It is with great sadness that we heard of the death of Kevin Vickers, one of the school's longest-serving and most respected members of staff. Many past and present members of staff often comment that if, as often happens, one runs into a former pupil one of the first people they ask after and remember with true affection is 'Kev'.

After leaving Westcliff High school as a pupil he won a scholarship to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and from there he served for a number of years in the Navy before gaining a degree at the City University.

Kevin was the last member of staff to be appointed by Don McGregor (headmaster 1964–1981). His career started a little shakily when he lost his front teeth in a staff v boys

match and then contracted chicken pox! However it was uphill from then on. A hugely popular and hardworking form tutor and a long-serving and successful St Andrew's housemaster, his attention to detail made him the ideal Assistant Examination Officer.

He served the Mathematics Department diligently and loyally as second in department for many years and he initiated the teaching of both Nautical Studies and Statistics at the school.

His extra-curricular activities included being a keen cricket manager and umpire, helping out on Geography field courses, demonstrating his prowess on the squash court, and, of course, his never-to-be-forgotten and much-anticipated cameo roles in the school play!

In conclusion he was, what is called, an 'old fashioned schoolmaster', dedicated to his subject and to the well-being and success of his students. He helped to make St Thomas More High School what it is and will be sorely missed by his many friends and former pupils.

Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family at this time. May he Rest In Peace.

MEMBERSHIP AS AT JANUARY 2017

1961 Graham Lewis

1962 Kevin Butt
Michael Hughes
John Lewis

1963 John Bowman
John Sheehy

1964 John Griffiths
Ronald Patchett

1965 Brian Dalton
Alan Dobby
Terry Knights

1966 Stephen Barker
Patrick Clancy
Bill Clegg
Paul Hutchinson
Paul Wenham

1967 Tony Cane
Paul Clancy
Glen Sweeney
Mike Thompson

1968 Martin Duggan
Geoffrey Lewis

1969 Peter David
Paul Marsh
Chris McHale

1970 Michael Davis

1971 Bernie Brooker
Mike Donovan
Kevin Flynn

1972 Paul Culleton
David Thompson

1973 Martin Carroll
Phil Mahoney

1974 Kevin Bonham
Paul McArdle
Simon Millyard

1975 Eamon Day
David Ekers
Keith Exley
Chris Fairchild
John McDermott
Andrew McGregor
Gerry Thomas

1976 Christopher Barber
Laurence Blainey
John Chambers
Guy Francke
Clive Knight
Andrew McWilliam
Simon Ravinet
Martin Sullivan
John Todryk
James Tyrie

1977 Phil Coath
John Cobbold
Mark Hidveghy
Martin Hodson
John Judge
Liam Rand

1978 Kevin Thomas

1979 Paul Clarke
Paul Driscoll
David O'Ryan
Sean Tyrie

1980 Sean Leggett
Martin McKeown
Nial O'Callaghan

1981 Sean Conlon
Malcolm Patterson

1982 Sean Corr
Mark Harvey

1983 Richard Allard
Anthony Crowley

1984 Michael Barry
Mark Denton
Stuart Humfrey

1985 Tim Allard

1986 Iain O'Connell

1987 Martin Corr
Martin Diggines

1989 Damian Dillon
Justin Hennessey
Paul Lynch

1990 Christopher Hull
Ben Micklewright

1995 Paul Bending

1998 Ben Gibson

2000 Martyn Rickard

2001 Chris Thompson

2005 Jack Brudenell
Jonathan Fenn

2008 Jed Marshall
Tom Wiltshire

2011 Dale Claridge

Chpln Rev Daniel Kelly

Assoc Matthew Hardiman
Chloe Spillett
Nick Spillett

DateTBC Peter O'Callaghan

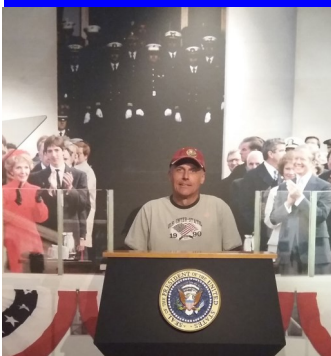
H/T Gemma Ackred

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

In Mem Richard Copley

PRESIDENTIAL PICTURES



Ever with an eye to increasing the kudos and awareness internationally of this esteemed association, our president Paul Driscoll was in Washington recently at a certain inauguration where he was given special



permission to try out a rather special podium. After being released by the local law enforcement authorities he was then accompanied by his secret service detachment as he boarded Marine 1

for the flight back to the airport.

Of course none of this is true, but the president did pay a flying visit with his "bodyguards" (his two sons who are both former pupils) and the rest of his family to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California during the summer where he not only paid his respects at the graves of the 40th US President and First Lady but also picked-up some tips for future modes of transport for members of our own Executive in a bid to increase nominations to replace him at this year's AGM.

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

DON'T FORGET 22 JUNE 2017

In a rare moment of planetary alignment (or some other such coincidence) this year's Memorial Mass and Social will be held on the actual feast day of our patron saint—**THURSDAY 22nd JUNE**—in the school, commencing at 8.00pm.

Open to all former pupils and staff the evening is free and includes a lavish buffet and drinks.