

THE UTOPIAN

Reflection, Reframing, Resilience



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Editor and Designer
Bonnie Meacock

Photography

Eye Candy
Students and Staff

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Cover Image: ... celebrating Valedictory dinner.

STMC Social Distancing Photo Valedictory Dinner



Please direct all correspondence to:

The Editor
St Thomas More College
48 Mounts Bay Road, Crawley
WA 6009

+61 8 9386 0111
b.meacock@stmc.uwa.edu.au

Head of College

Well That Was Different...

There have been a number of trials along the way in 2020 and the College Management Team (CMT) has had to be flexible in its thinking; and adapt to challenges as they presented themselves. The College filled all 400 positions before the end of the 2019 calendar year and had some 40 students still apply after capacity had been reached and before the commencement of Semester 1, 2020. This situation was unprecedented but it was not going to be the only situation fitting that description in 2020.

Throughout January and in particular, at the start of February 2020, it was becoming clear that COVID 19 (COVID) was going to have a significant impact on the College and indeed the world. By the start of March, a good number of our international students began departing College as they were losing their insurance coverage to remain in Australia with the rapid spread of COVID around the world. Many international students here on exchange or study abroad programs were being called home by their respective governments and universities.

Some domestic students from the regions were being called home by parents and subsequently withdrew. Others were called home by their parents but wished to remain a part of the College and continued to pay at a discounted rate in the studio apartments. The College also took the health-driven decision to provide an eight-week suspension of contracts for students in the standard rooms where facilities are shared and physical distancing was going to be very problematic. Those that withdrew were permitted to do so with a minor financial penalty rather than being held liable for the full lease/contract.

The decisions taken were very favourably received for the most part and represented an investment in our long-term relationship with students and families, particularly in the regions.



“The solidarity between all at the College was palpable, comforting, and reassuring.”



While occupancy at the College changed on a daily basis in Semester 1, the average occupancy was approximately 335 students, representing 84% of capacity. In Semester 2, occupancy stabilised at around 295 students or 74% of capacity. Overall in 2020 the College has averaged somewhere around 79% occupancy.

Recent discussions at the Federal Government level with respect to international students gives some hope about the prospect of seeing this cohort back in Australia at some stage in 2021, albeit that it will likely be a cautious reopening with limited numbers.

While we remain optimistic, this reopening is by no means guaranteed, especially in Western Australia. The falls in occupancy and the decisions taken to preserve the long-term relationship with students and families have had a significant financial effect. The upside is that the feedback from the regions has been very positive. A further uptick in terms of domestic applicants for 2021 was likely aided by the strategy adopted in 2020 and firms up STMC's position as the preferred College for domestic students. I cannot over-state the stoicism and dedication of all of our staff members during the peak period of the pandemic and lockdown. Their courage to continue to assist our students while managing their own concerns about how the situation might unfold, was amazing.

Recently we celebrated our Christmas lunch together and it was obvious that, as a collective, we have achieved something monumental in 2020. We do not want to do it again though!! The students of Tommy More showed once again in 2020, that the College remains very firmly their home away from home. The solidarity between all at the College was palpable, comforting, and reassuring. Well done Tommy, one for the archives for sure...

- Tom Mitchell, Head of College

Deputy Head of College

We made it. We made it through what has felt like an extended year. A year where a pandemic forced everyone to celebrate in unconventional ways and to get creative with how we interacted. Born was the fist bump, the elbow tap, the foot shake and above all the social distancing measures of 1.5m between us. How do we make college living welcoming, fun, SAFE and above all, easy for those who would make the first move into living out of home in such uncertain times?

We entered O'Week with such certainty that this year would be one to remember and in the background the possibility that the virus would come our way. And it did. The virus shut down all College events and social interactions much like it did in the wider community. We lost many international and domestic students due to border closures and university shutdowns. University went online and it almost became the norm to interact through FaceTime and social media.

Although we had hoped to remember 2020 as the amazing year it could have been, it will no doubt be a year never forgotten, the bad and the good. If you had asked me 3 months ago where College would be today, I would have never imagined that it would almost be back to normal. With immense tenacity, cohesion and resilience the wider public of WA has created an environment that has allowed us to get back to a level of normality.

We are slowly seeing the vibrant life of College come back. I am proud of our students and the way in which they have handled this year.

After frantically working together virtually and at distance, the student club and RA's have done an outstanding amount of work. Over the past couple of months, they have been preparing events to ensure those at College (almost) had the real experience of what College life is all about. And boy-oh-boy did they make up for lost time.

As many of you will remember College embodies the values of friendship, generosity and passion for living life to the fullest which is greatly personified by those that live here. The hardships faced at the start of the year seemed distant as we came together in celebration of what College life encompasses. Completing most of the competitive IC sports, the ball, and my favourite event, the Valedictory dinner, we were able to reconnect with one another. Creating distance between the virus and not us.

In this edition of The Utopian we celebrate the resilience of our students and the importance of reconnecting with yourself, your surroundings and the things that bring you joy. If there is one thing we should take from the lessons of Covid, it is the importance of creating memories with those we love.

Resilience seems to be at the core of humanity. We push through the tough times, we are there for one another and more importantly we need to be there for ourselves. We need to be understanding, forgiving and resilient. We have had an overwhelming amount of support and I cannot thank everyone enough: the students, the RA's, the student club, parents, alumni and more importantly the staff for allowing this year to continue.

2020, with its challenges has been eye opening as we have seen the younger generation blossom with great generosity, optimism and finesse. With one great challenge comes an even bigger opportunity, bring on 2021.



College Chaplain: Resilience in the Face of Adversary

The event which happened in April 1975 had been considered a historical event for many Vietnamese people living in the South of Vietnam. The event brought much sadness and change to the lives of the people as Communists took over the country.

Nearly a million South Vietnamese soldiers had been captured and put in concentration camps throughout the country. More than a few hundred thousand clergy, religious men, women and seminarians had been detained in jail and re-education centres to be brainwashed. Among these people perhaps 60% of them died in these camps never allowed to be visited by their families, friends or relatives. They lived as though they had been forgotten.

I was born during the war when the American's had arrived in my country during 1960. Surrounded by chaos during my childhood years I was very sad to see many people of my country tragically die, leaving their loved ones behind. I felt deeply for the orphans and the widows whose fathers and husbands had been killed during battle. At a mere 15 years old the war between the North and the South came to an end but this was not the end of our story.

Since the Communists took over our country so many things had been turned upside-down. We were constantly under persecution for our faith. There was virtually no freedom at all and we were always living in fear. We did not know what would happen to us tomorrow. Our fate depended totally on the hands of the members of the Communist Party.

In these circumstances I felt the call of God. Initially I reacted against it strongly because I knew it was impossible for me to follow. There was no seminary to study and it would be dangerous if the government were to find out putting you and your family at risk. Ultimately I felt that I wasn't worthy of becoming a disciple of Jesus however God has his own way of bringing about his plan.

I joined Vietnam's (underground) seminary in 1979 and after sixteen months, the local police had discovered that I wanted to become a priest. They forced me to join the Communist Army with beliefs that after four years of service I would give up the idea of becoming a priest.

Since I had no choice and no other options available at that time I was involuntarily in the army and stayed for six months during my training. At the end of that period, I was informed through a very good friend that those in the army would be sent to fight in Kampuchea (Cambodia as it is called nowadays). I knew at that time that 80% of the soldiers who went to fight in Kampuchea would never return. I was scared of the prospect of war so I planned to leave the army camp. I was fortunate enough to escape successfully, but was not able to stay with my family, for if I did I would risk their lives. I would now be forever chased by the military police.

I had to hide myself and managed to do so by travelling from place to place. Sometimes I could not physically go out of the place where I was hiding as I was afraid someone had seen me and reported my place of hiding to the police. In the end, I could not do it anymore, I decided to hide in the jungle. I managed to build a hut for myself and clear the ground beneath so I could plant vegetables to survive (corn and sweet potatoes for my basic nourishment).

After 12 months of hiding, my family told me that it would not be safe for me to stay there anymore and the best solution for me was to escape from Vietnam altogether. I had no alternative option but to act accordingly to my families request. I was lucky to find someone who knew the organiser of an escape.

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I got in touch with him and we planned our way out. One night under secrecy after midnight we loaded onto our wooden boat. It was a really small fishing boat of which 50 people had to fit onboard, from young children to the elderly.



We began to sail across the open seas not knowing the exact direction we were heading in, only a vague idea of where we wanted to go. We sailed for four days on rough sea, encountering a storm and terrible weather. We had all but given up hope and accepted the possibility that we might not be able to survive or perhaps would never arrive at our destination, forever lost at sea.

Overjoyed with relief we had arrived safely at a small island in Malaysia called "Pulau Bidong". I was there for eight months in a refugee camp before leaving for Australia. On my arrival in Australia I began studying English with the intention that one day I would be able to go back to the seminary and continue my study for the priesthood. The one thing I had always longed for in my heart.

It was not easy for me in the beginning. I found myself living in an almost completely different culture. Here the customs were alienating. People talked, behaved and related with one another in completely different ways from what I had experienced. The difference in language proving my biggest challenge at the time. I felt myself cut off from the rest of society because I could not understand what was being said. I was unable to understand the language nor able to communicate eloquently with anyone as my English was not good enough at that stage.

Sometimes I just wanted to scream loudly so I could get rid of my frustration and my depression. I felt lonely and isolated, I had no family here, no friends, no money and with these difficulties I somehow had to start a new life. But God has always been my companion, He has given me the strength and the courage to continue to live despite my difficulties. He has guided me through the darkness of my life although I sometimes would not recognise his presence. He is always there for me whenever I need Him.

I wouldn't have come this far without Him and all I have achieved so far in this life is by the grace of God who, had loved me and has given me the power to do so. I am always grateful to God particularly after what I have been through over the past three decades. I am convinced that there is nothing in life we cannot overcome by the grace of God as nothing is impossible with God. As a result let us put our trust in God and focus on the spirit of resilience when we are faced with adversaries in our lives. Especially in today's times as we face the adversaries of the virus together.

- Fr. Peter Hung Tran, College Chaplain

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Student Club Committee

Of all the things to come out of the year, semester 2 might be the most redeeming, not completely, but more than other things. The student club's calendar was largely unimpeded by changing restrictions and so our social and cultural lives could come out and get some sun again at last.

Killer week went off as usual, with someone trying to bend the rules of immunity and witnesses. We tried an opt out system for Angels and Mortals week which seemed to reduce the number of mortals with no one looking out for them.

The wedding saw some ambitious Freshers try to prove themselves with some impressive story lines and editing skills and the Crawl afterwards was great to strengthen the Tommy collective and opened my eyes to a new world of potential in Perth that I was not previously aware of.

It was a big few weeks when we had 3 of the most awaited events crammed together. Despite the wind and the boy's boats exposure, the River Cruise was wonderful. After months of separation it was a pleasant surprise for many to see the familiar face of the Cap S DJ making us dance.

The Ball was fabulous and beautiful, perching us up at Frasers overlooking the city lights and beautiful serenity that is Kings Park. This location will be a hard task to beat in future years. Despite the disappointing result at Battle of the Bands it was still good to finally have Tav shows back again.

A relatively swift AGM was a relief for those who knew what it could have been and Lachie, who had put so much effort into the Constitution.

I hope that the 2021 Committee has been paying attention to what we've done in 2020 and learnt from both our successful decisions as well as those that were less so. I wish you all the best and pray that you have it easier than we did.

- Charles Reddin, Student Club President



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Student Club Committee teaching the Fresher dance

2020 CALENDAR OVERVIEW

February

17.02 - O-Week Commences
25.02 - Welcome Dinner 1
21.02 - Casino Night

March

05.03 - Nerd Night
08.03 - Tommy Market
13.03 - IC Campus Run

July

05.07- NAIDOC Week
11.07- Ronald McDonald
House

August

05.08 - RSD Tav Show
05.08 - Christmas in July
Dinner 1
07.08 - Christmas in July
Dinner 2
14.08 - Dodgeball
21.08 - Frisbee
22.08 - The Great Escape
30.08 - Cambodia run (Kings
Park Half Marathon)

September

04.09 - IC Basketball
05.09 - The Wedding
08.09 - IC Debating
09.09 - International Formal
Dinner
11.09 - International Formal
Dinner
15.09 - Tell me More Session
19.09 - River cruise
20.09 - IC Netball
24.09 - Battle of the bands
26.09 - Tommy Ball
28.09 - AGM

October

03.10 - Ronald McDonald
House
07.10 - RSD Tav Show & IC
Swimming
11.10 - Relay for life
14.10 - Outreach Dinner
16.10 - IC Soccer
19.10 - Brownlow Night
21.10 - Valedictory Dinner

November

20.11 - Alumni Sundowner



Take me away to a Winter Wonderland

The annual Student Club Ball was held at Frasers in Kings Park and it seemed only fitting that the theme this year was winter wonderland. With the perfect location, enchanting setting, great food and amazing service the students greeted the ball with open arms. Welcoming the opportunity to celebrate a year of hardships fought together.

The students looked glamorous as they rocked up in full frock outside of the walls of Tommy. Each one ready to sit back and relax, eat, dance and commemorate the year that was 2020. Some students were awarded on the night with the honour of college bromance, beau and belle of the ball, cutest couple, Mr. and Mrs. Congeniality.

The ballroom setting was decorated with trees lit with fairy lights, deep green shrubs and vines, and decadent centrepieces, transporting the students into their very own wonderland. A candy buffet sparking joy to those who saw it and igniting the kid within.

"A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest ... Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairytales again." - C.S. Lewis.

Well done to James Granger and the ball committee for organising such a magnificent and memorable night. It is fair to say the night was enjoyed by all those who attended.



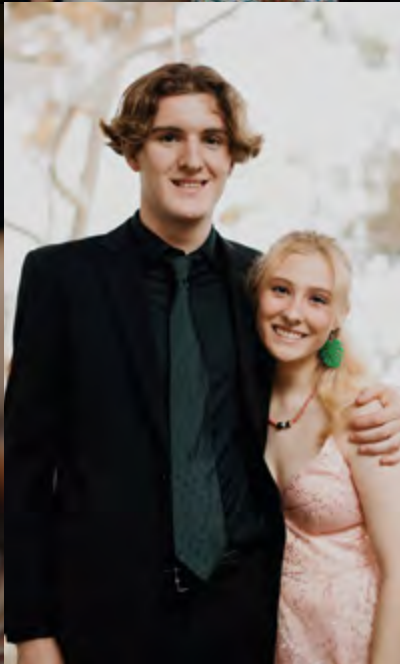
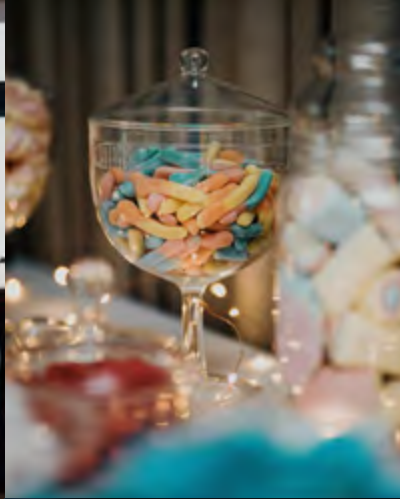


"In friendship...we think we have chosen our peers. In reality a few years difference in the dates of our births, a few more miles between certain houses, the choice of one university instead of another, the accident of a topic being raised or not raised at a first meeting.

"Any of these chances might have kept us apart. But, for a Christian, there are strictly speaking no chances. A secret master of ceremonies has been at work. Christ, who said to the disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," can truly say to every group of Christian friends, "Ye have not chosen one another but I have chosen you for one another."

"The friendship is not a reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each of us the beauties of others."

- C.S. Lewis





Tommy Ball Twenty-Twenty



The Tommy More Kings Park Half Marathon

Arrupe x Tommy

Each year selected students and staff travel to Cambodia to participate in the Angkor Wat International Half Marathon. The collaboration held between Tommy and the Arrupe Centre is something we hold dear within our hearts. It is a chance for us to give back to a community that is unfortunately ridden with poverty. Years after, the Cambodia Genocide landmines are still affecting communities and impacting the lives of many people. Tommy's Cambodia collaboration, as you may already know, supports two ventures in Battambang. We aim to get disabled and landmine affected children to the Angkor Wat marathon and we assist in the funding of the Lidy House Welcome Centre (a home for vulnerable people).

It was with heavy hearts that this year's marathon was cancelled and our students were unable to participate in what is widely described as an eye-opening and incredible experience. As borders were shut down and flights cancelled, travelling became unrealistic and unsafe. The strong connection we have built with the Arrupe Centre over the past several years left us feeling helpless and in that moment we got thinking about how we could do our part, here, at home. So born was Tommy's very own half marathon.

On August 30th our biggest Outreach event took place as residents and staff participated in 3km, 5km, 10km and 21km races. Many gathered to show their support to those running and to help raise funds. Five residents took on the challenge of the half marathon completing 21kms around College and along the Kings Park tracks. This was a great effort that was commended by all who attended.



We were overjoyed by the generosity and drive of our community to help others in need during what is currently a tough time for all. We raised \$9,690 which exceeded our expectations during the pandemic.

These funds are provided directly to the prefecture, ensuring they are not diminished through red tape and agencies.

You can see how we are helping young people in Cambodia by visiting our website and heading to our outreach page.



Tommy Sports

What a year! If you had said to us that Inter-College Sport would be put on hold for six months, we would have never believed you. But here we are at the end of a challenging year that started with six months of no sport and ended with jamming all that we could into the final semester. **We've done it.**

In a Covid-19 riddled year, Tommy experienced success taking home the Nicholson Cup, were overall trophy winners and multiple flag bearers. The Tommy camaraderie and spirit shone through the dreaded start of what 2020 was as we comfortably held the greatest participation and spectatorship throughout the year.

Before the enforced Covid-19 break, Tommy demonstrated the best of the Tommy spirit by rocking up to the cross campus run in record numbers. With over 100 Morons sticking their hand up to participate in the cross campus run, Jesse Evans and Kiera Albertson lead Tommy to a four-way tie with St Georges, St Cats and Trinity.

Semester two saw the return of Sport and the return of Nell Eastough replacing Indi Quinlan (who unfortunately departed the College during the year). While the world around us was different, Tommy's performance on the field was the same. Dodgeball and ultimate frisbee were the first two sports. Many people rocked up to play and spectate, the funny yet competitive nature of both sports, watching both the men and the women's team place 1st.

We next turned our attention to what some would say are the most popular sports of the year, basketball and netball. The prowess on the court demonstrated by all lead to games of humble defeat and great triumph. The Tommy boys continued their success by taking home both the flags for netball and basketball. These wins extended the boys lead in hopes of winning the Nicholson Cup. Our girls did us proud and were humble in defeat going down to St Georges in a close nail bitter. The final two sports, soccer and swimming, saw Tommy learn a few lessons. Specifically, that we are land mammals. Unfortunately, it was not our day, with both teams experiencing serious injuries, leading to a bottom of the ladder position.

Overall, it was a highly successful year. Winning two trophies and a number of flags, demonstrated that our success was a team performance, led from the front by our overall sportspeople of the year, Ewan George and Sophie Lynch. Congrats to you both. We would like to wish James Forkin and Kalira Docherty good luck as the new male and female sports reps for 2021. I know the College will support you as they have supported us this year.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee. Your support was awesome and we couldn't have had the success we experienced without you. And to the student population, your participation in the inter-college program this year was phenomenal and is the number one reason behind our success, thank you.

With a strong passion for sport it was upsetting to see so many sports cut from the year, however we are very blessed we had the opportunity to compete and thankful some of our favourites were able to go ahead. It has been a privilege to be your sports reps this year and we hope you all enjoy your summer.

- Lachlan McLean and Nell Eastough, 2020 Sports Representatives

Brownlow Awards Night

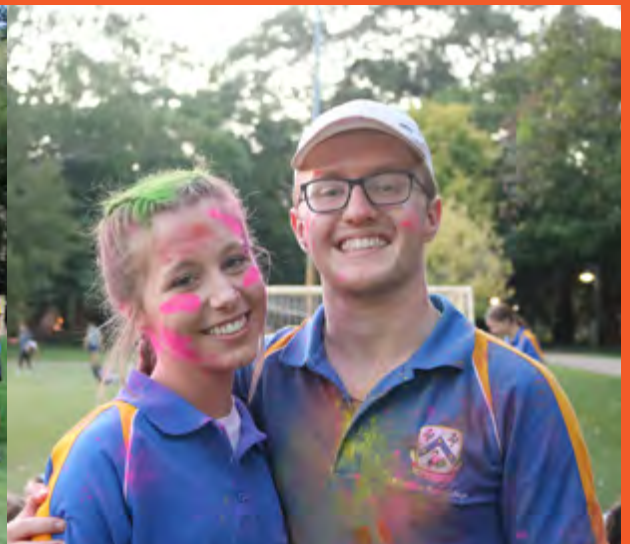
The Tommy Brownlow medal count is a night to celebrate the camaraderie between each sportsperson and to express gratitude towards those who participated in the sport and spectated throughout the year. It was a successful night which showcased Tommy's competitive yet humble nature.

Although we congratulate all participants and MVP's, there were a few special awards given on our Brownlow night. These special awards were:

- Moment of the Year - Ben Starling who single handedly won the men's dodgeball GF against St Cats;
- Geriatric Award - Liam Tilbrook for being way too old for intercollege sport;
- Cover Girl Award - Ewan George for being able to find the camera no matter where it was;
- Golden Wooden Spoon - Viv Noonan for worst on field performance as she scored more goals for the opponent than for Tommy during IC Soccer; and
- Most Painful Supporter Award - Lachlan McLean for his relentless nail-biting and stressful stances throughout all sporting events.



Tommy Students enjoy the Brownlow Awards Night



Inter-College 2020 Sports Results

	M	W	Mixed
Cross-Campus Run	1st	1st	-
IC Frisbee	1st	1st	-
Basketball	1st	2nd	-
Netball	1st	2nd	2nd
Dodgeball	1st	1st	-
Soccer	5th	5th	-
Swimming	3rd	5th	-

College Rankings

- Tommy 1st
- St Cats 2nd
- Trinity 3rd
- Georges 4th
- Uni Hall 5th



Jessica Fenton, SRA



If only we were characters in the early moments of a science fiction cliché

2020 has been a memorable year making it my fourth and final year at Tommy as well as my second effort around the sun serving as Senior Residential Advisor. Despite an entire year of experience under my wing and the intention to make it the best year yet, it seemed the universe had different plans altogether.

When news of the emerging virus arrived it felt as if we were characters in the early moments of a science fiction cliché. This comical outlook soon disappeared with word that many of our international students would struggle to enter Australia. Thus began the long path of uncertainty and discomfort that 2020 had laid out.

From the perspective of SRA this was extremely turbulent times, as my previous year had taught me the integral value of unity when working in a team. As a result, technology truly proved its worth with the use of zoom, FaceTime and Facebook in an effort to reduce the distance between our leaders at college, and our leaders that had been marooned overseas. Despite rough beginnings in P-week the crisis was quickly averted as all unaccounted members arrived just in the nick of time - and well prepared.

I would like to take the moment to acknowledge both Haochen Hao and Sophia Li for their sacrifices during this period. It was their motivation to overcome adversity that set a precedent for all members of our leadership team this year. You both have been a true inspiration and source of strength to all of the international and domestic students. Thank you.

Now, as I'm sure we are all aware, COVID-19 did not simply stop in the early months of 2020 - Thus we were faced with a steady plethora of obstacles unseen in previous years at Tommy. With new restrictions placed nationally, many of our beloved events had to be canned or postponed. This caused a great deal of strain trying to uphold Tommy spirit and belonging. Many of our residents went home to be with their families once the university made the wise decision to switch to teaching online. For the few collegians that still remained, there laid a necessity to band together and endure (with social distancing of course).

During this period, the residential advisors were really pushed to their limits serving as the eyes, ears and enforcers of all things COVID safe. If you thought telling someone to go to the back of the dining-hall line was fun, try telling a group of four besties that one of them needs to get out of the elevator.

Despite discomfort, our leaders pushed through and the residents begrudgingly learnt the new college rules - after all it was for our own health and safety.

On that note, I would also like to appreciate a new level our RAs brought to the phrase "cleaning up the college" with the institution of "Welfare duties" that required RAs to clean all surfaces of the college, every night. Even if COVID was a massive concern here in WA, it was simply no match for Liam Chick and his spray and wipe.

I would like to thank all our RAs that served toilet paper duty, selling toilet paper rolls at dinner each week. If COVID hadn't given us enough strange memories to reminisce upon I'm sure this one would've taken the cake.

I would like to say a massive thank you to all the people without whom we would not have made it this far. To my 2020 RAs thank you for being strong, resilient leaders. It wasn't exactly ideal conditions but we pushed through! To the 2020 Student Club Committee, you have brought new meaning to the words "Tommy Spirit", thank you for all your efforts. To the college administrative team, ground staff and the kitchen, thank you for all your planning, flexibility and kindness that you have carried with a smile to each and every one of us.

Finally to Bec and Tom, I know this year has pushed the both of you to your absolute limits. The countless hours behind the scenes that the two of you have dedicated whilst also balancing a family will never truly be repaid. Your strength, wisdom, resilience and kindness has served as a shining example to all of us for what we should strive to be. Thank you for all you have done and for who you have shaped me to be during my time here at Tommy - I am forever indebted.

- Jessica Fenton, Senior Residential Advisor



A celebration of our resilience and reconnecting with each other

Valedictory dinner is a very special night enjoyed by all. It is a night of celebration, reflection and acknowledgement of what the year has been. It is a night for all students and staff to commemorate the years ups and downs in sophistication, laughter and maybe a few tears as we bid farewell to those who leave the nest.

Reminiscing about their time at Tommy, students and staff were in fits of laughter and tears. Those who had speeches prepared took to the stage to express gratification towards those that had made their time at the College so enjoyable and reflected on the last couple of years. Almost every speech could have started with - "Wow what a year, none of us saw that coming, but we are here and we have made it."

Highlighted was the importance of acknowledging how lucky we were to be able to come together in the final months of the year and reconnect, unlike so many other states and countries who continued strict shutdown rules to reduce infection rates.

Fr Peter Tran began the night holding a Chapel service followed by the tradition of the whole College photo on the piazza steps. Head of College Tom, and Deputy Head of College Bec, started the formalities of the night introducing the new RA's and student club committee for 2021 and commended the endeavours of the 2020 committee, RA's and the staff. Students were presented with medallions and those who qualified were inducted into the Eagles Society.



Student's who spoke about their time at Tommy were:

- Jessica Fenton - Senior RA
- Maggie Biffin - Residential Advisor
- Sophia Li and Jesse Musitano (duo speech)
- Blake Griffiths - Indigenous Student Representative
- Lachlan McLean - Male Sports Representative
- Charles Reddin - Student Club President
- Nadia Fang - International Student

Performances on the night were outstanding. All of which enticed dancing and some sort of audience involvement. Thank you to:

- David Clarke - Singer and Performer
- Matt Hale - Hypnotist

A very special end to a very tough year.

Graduate Maggie Biffin (A grab from her Valedictory speech)

"I have been lucky enough to have spent the last 3 years at Tommy and never in a million years did I think it would be finishing up this way ... In true Tommy spirit we adapted and became stronger, more creative and better off for it. Thankfully, we managed to minimise the spread allowing for an absolute banging second semester."

"In my time here I have seen people come and go, and even some come back again because they couldn't get enough (a bit like seconds on chicken parmi night). I have always thought about how hard it must be to readjust to what is considered a normal life after having lived with 400 people. What is it like to not have dinner with your mates every night? How will I have a social life without a student club there to organise events for me? How do I study when not in a study room? It has come to my realisation that these questions will be answered in a short month. And although I am not at all prepared for it, I will adjust and life will go on ...

"To those who are staying here are some tips for you. Some of these I have learnt and others I am still yet to master ...

- Don't be afraid to try something new, whether it be a new food in the dining hall or a new IC sport you have never done before. You never know it might be great.
- Don't be afraid to spend a night by yourself every once in a while, whether it be watching something on Netflix, studying or having a chat to your family on the phone... oh that reminds me, call your parents, they probably miss you.
- Go home often but not often enough to never have to use the Tommy laundry.
- Don't be afraid to say hello to people in the hallways. These people are your neighbours and you never know you might find you can network with them one day.
- Be there for your friends but also be there for yourself first. You can't get water out of an empty cup, same goes for an empty person.
- Go to at least one Inter-College sport a year, even if it's just to support. Chances are you will have at least one mate playing and sport is always more interesting with a rowdy crowd, especially against Cats and George's.
- Make mistakes and own them. My music teacher used to always tell me if you're going to play the wrong note, at least play it properly.
- And finally go to your classes. A wise boy once told me that it is always easier to keep up than catch up.

"I want to leave you with this quote."

"I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you actually left them." - Andy Bernard, The Office.



Valedictory Dinner Twenty-Twenty





NAIDOC Week Celebrated at Tommy

Although COVID cancelled many events earlier this year, we were very fortunate to be able to hold our own NAIDOC week at Tommy. Even though restrictions hurt our numbers it was good to see so many people come to the events that were held each day and night.

This year's NAIDOC theme was "Always was, always will be", which acknowledges that the first people of this country have lived here for over 60,000 years. Throughout this country's history they have developed a deep connection with the land, a great understanding of how it works and comprehensive knowledge of how to manage it, so that they may live on it without damaging it.

The week started with guest speaker, Danny Ford. He delivered a workshop that received a lot of great feedback. Everyone who attended retained a greater understanding about indigenous culture, history and the problems and barriers they still face today.

A 'Tell me more' session was held by Iesha Dakota Brown and was highly received with nearly all of the Indigenous students and others attending.

On Wednesday night, a few of us gathered in the rainbow room and watched the documentary "The Australian Dream" starring Australian of the year, Adam Goodes. The film examines Australian Aboriginal identity and racism in modern Australia through his experience. A film that should be watched by all.

Thursday was another popular night as students and staff of Tommy painted and listened to some music by indigenous artists until all hours of the night. We finished the week with a quiz night of which everyone left as a winner.

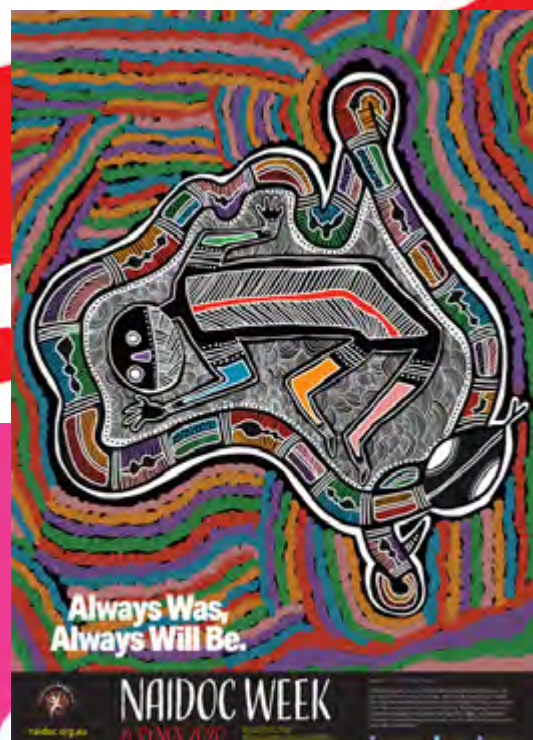
I hope to see NAIDOC 2021 bigger and better, utilising my knowledge of how things were run this year, what was highly successful and honing in on generating a better understanding of where I come from for those who aren't Indigenous. I hope to see everyone at our 2021 NAIDOC week (COVID restrictions and all).

-Blake Griffiths



**Always Was,
Always Will Be.**

8-15 NOV 2020



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Indigenous Student, David Clarke, performing at the STMC Valedictory Dinner

Outreach in 2020

Not in any unordinary way (for 2020), this year has brought many challenges upon the Outreach Program. Throughout the year these challenges evolved to become something beyond the negative hardships that have strongly defined this year. The challenge of 'social distancing' stopped us from physically engaging with people at charity events yet contrastingly, it happened to strengthen our spiritual and emotional connections with the people around us. This opportunity dared us to reflect on the roots of the program in connections to place and community, which should not only be explored through physical means, but also through social and virtual avenues.

Although it has been challenging, this evolution to beyond more than physical connections has been an exceptional one. The shift to virtual events such as our World's Greatest Shave Goes Virtual and the adoption of contactless community outreach including Blood Drives and Wheelchairs for Kids for semester 1 (at the height of WA's lockdown) kept us all connected and continuously giving back.

As WA gradually transitioned into a state of 'freedom', more opportunities began opening up for the program. The college community was awarded the choice of a variety of initiatives to get involved in and get involved so they did. This semester's program following on from semester 1 was extremely successful and facilitated a true display of college spirit. This program reaffirmed its place as the leading characteristic that makes Tommy stand out from the crowd. The theme of privilege was prevalent as the understanding of how blessed and lucky we all are to live in WA in such times as COVID-19 truly drove the college community to give back and support the wider Perth community in times of hardship.

This year, due to the monumental efforts of the college community, the program raised a total of \$20,621 across all our fundraising based programs, with \$7,979 of that total going towards our Cambodia Collaboration. In such hard times financially, these funds are the output of much dedication from the students and their families, it was extraordinary.

We ended the Outreach calendar year with the annual Outreach and Social Justice Celebration Evening at which time we thanked and congratulated all the participants of the Program for the year. It is also the night we celebrate the few award recipients who are those that have made a significant and outstanding contribution to the program this year. The annual Tommy Peace Prize was given to Lauren Henville and the newly introduced Wen Pirulo award was given to Thea Walker. Both these two wonderful people truly embodied what the program stands for which shines through in their passion and commitment to Outreach and community engagement.

As 2020's Outreach and Social Justice RA I have further explored what social justice truly means to me. With the unwavering support of the Outreach committee we have been able to provide the college community with a great range of events to get involved in. I have been very blessed in my position this year and I wish all the best to Darcie Bowden as the incoming Outreach and Social Justice RA for 2021.

- Grace Bowdidge, Outreach and Social Justice RA



Haochen and Naqia



Outreach Award Recipients



Laura and Trinity

Alumni News

As per most college events Alumni evenings were put on hold for the first semester hindering our ability to touch base and connect with one another. We look forward to welcoming you all back to St Thomas More College in 2021 and are hopeful our Alumni events will be back to their normal regime.

Alumni Sundowner

On 20 November STMC hosted the annual Alumni Sundowner, an after work catch up to celebrate the end of the year. Past years residents rocked up for a delightful evening with drinks and nibbles. It was a pleasure to welcome more than 40 Alumni back to the grounds. The sundowner is a great evening to catch up on the progression of the college and to reconnect with past Alumni, finding out the journey and paths those who started at Tommy have taken.

Head of College, Tom Mitchell, began the night by welcoming everyone and thanking all for their support over the year that was 2020. Tom spoke about how vital it was for these Alumni events to continue in order for us to acknowledge how far residential living has come and to recognise our heritage and how we started.

Manager of Marketing and Alumni Relations, Robyn Birkin, highlighted how lucky we were to be able to come together in such times. Robyn touched on initiatives such as the memory lane morning tea of which was postponed until 2021 due to the virus. All of which will recommence in 2021 regulations permitting.

We ask all those who did not receive an invitation to the Alumni Sundowner to update their details with us, either through the Alumni portal or directly to our Alumni email address. It is so important for us to remain in contact with you all and we hope to see you at our next Alumni event.



Alumni attending the sundowner 2020

Farewell Mr Bruno Camarri

It does not matter when he attended Tommy More, how long he stayed at Tommy More or who he attended Tommy More with. It does matter that he cares about Tommy More! And that is Mr Bruno Camarri AM, the outgoing Chairperson of St Thomas More College Council.

Bruno has been at the helm of Tommy More during what would most likely be described as the most dramatic era of change in the College's history. He was part of the Council when the first lay Head of College was appointed. In 2016 he became Chairperson of the College Council although he had been acting in the role



Bruno was instrumental in securing the most important funding in the College's history to facilitate the largest development at the College (to date) under the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Not surprisingly construction ran late and we were opening our doors to students while the College was still a construction site. Bruno presided over a myriad of other challenges including trying to fill College rooms when rents were at an all-time low. Under Bruno's "captaincy" the College filled and was oversubscribed. On November 18, 2020 Bruno Camarri moderated over his final College Council meeting, nine years and five months since he first joined the St Thomas More College Council.

Without a doubt Bruno has been a force to be reckoned with in his dedication to ensuring the longevity and success of Tommy More College. His expertise, courage, passion, prudence and wonderful sense of humour will be greatly missed. In recognition of his leadership in this pivotal period in the College's history, Building A is now known as the Camarri Wing.

Bruno has handed the reins of St Thomas More College Council Chairperson over to me. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of such inspiring leadership.

- Fran Farrington , Chairperson, St Thomas More College Council



2020 through the eyes of Tommy Alumni, Paul Higginbotham

Looking back on my Tommy More years (1972-74) we had Vietnam War protest marches, conscription, the first ALP Government in 23 years, the Georgi Ermolenko Affair (Google THAT one young people) – it wasn't exactly dull but by comparison it pales a tad. My post-Tommy life has been in education, firstly as a Teacher of the Deaf, then in ESL, plus 20 years as School Principal. Since 2007 though I have spent my time working on ear health issues in Aboriginal Australia and I'd like to share our COVID-19 experience.

In 2013 two former colleagues and I set up Earbus Foundation of WA to address the disastrous state of Aboriginal hearing health. Aboriginal kids have the worst ear disease in the world; on average Aboriginal children spend 32 months of the first five years of life with ear disease. For non-Aboriginal kids the average is 3 months. This disease causes a totally preventable hearing loss – significant because kids who can't hear, can't learn. And kids who can't hear well in the first years of life face a lifetime of learning impairment – school disruption, fewer employment opportunities, welfare dependency and more.

It's been our great privilege to work across regional and remote WA for the past seven years, from Wyndham to Esperance and pretty much everywhere in between. We have been amazed at the resilience, the generosity of spirit, the support and understanding of Aboriginal families and communities wherever we have gone. We take doctors, nurses, audiologists, specialists and students out to remote schools and communities to triage and treat ear disease. Earbus Foundation visits the regions monthly, usually a week at a time via regional airports like Port Hedland, Kalgoorlie, Paraburdoo and Kununurra. Many of these communities were deemed high risk for coronavirus and were locked down with access strictly controlled.

The new COVID-19 reality forced us to re-think existing paradigms and priorities. We significantly increased already high levels of vigilance around hygiene and set up new protocols for ensuring all work environments were regularly cleaned. This included our Northbridge clinic and our buses in Kimberley, Goldfields, South West, SE and Metro regions.

All Earbus clinical and contact staff renewed and updated hand hygiene certification and qualifications. Staff relocated to work from home; those who did attend had daily temperatures taken, monitored and recorded, including all staff on Outreach trips. Trips continued in a modified format with reduced staffing and we respected those communities who asked for no visiting services at that time. No Earbus staff were released or made redundant in fact we increased our staff numbers and in some communities we were the only visiting service allowed in. We obtained biosecurity clearance to allow travel across internal state borders and into restricted communities. I thought it was vital to keep services running for unwell children and their families; we also distributed free supplies of tissues, hand soaps and sanitiser as widely as we could. Sometimes we drove if we couldn't fly.

We rejoice and celebrate that to date these highly vulnerable communities have remained untouched by coronavirus. It's a testament to high levels of health literacy we have seen first-hand in Aboriginal communities, their compliance with social distancing and the overwhelming community determination in WA to do the right thing and keep each other safe. Our services are now almost back to normal – this year we will triage and treat around 6000 Aboriginal children across 120 sites. Our dream is an Australia where all children have the same start in life and the same opportunity to reach their innate potential. Not even a global pandemic can derail that dream. Don't let it derail yours either.

You can find Earbus, our people and our work at www.earbus.org.au



Paul Higginbotham (seated) with Earbus Perth Metro team.



Earbus Nurse Charlotte and Audiologist Tim on an Outreach trip

Bidding Farewell is never an easy thing for students and staff ...

At the end of 2020 we bid farewell to two of our loved staff members, Fiona Hughes and Robyn Birkin.

While we will miss you both and have fond memories of the work you have done with us, we wish you both well and hope you attain all the success you deserve. Your dedication and work ethic have been an inspiration to us all.

Your farewell is just an end to yet another chapter in your life. There are opportunities that are waiting for you as you step ahead in your life. We wish you all the best for your continued success, we will miss you.

Fiona Hughes has spent the past several years working at STMC and has seen the College develop both in student numbers and through the development/construction of what we see as College today.

Her expertise in helping run the admissions department, scheduling, tours, updating our reporting systems and her connection with the students will be dearly missed. Fiona has left a huge mark on the College and has inspired many to continue their time here.

Thank you Fiona for all you have done over the years.



Robyn Birkin has been with Tommy for the past 4 years as the Manager of Marketing and Alumni Relations. At the start of 2016 Robyn was tasked with re-imaging the Tommy brand into what you see today.

She has embodied our logo with the ethos of the College through use of colour and creativity. Not only has she changed the image of the College, she has developed a strong online presence and created connections with the students of Tommy to incorporate their vision of what College is and should be.

Thank you Robyn for your work over the years - you too will be missed.

Words from those Leaving the Tommy Nest



Coming from Bunbury, living at St Thomas More College has provided me with the structure and guidance that helped ease the transition from home and high school life, to university life away from home and ultimately to life outside of College.

The environment fostered by Tom, Bec, staff, the team of residential advisors and the Student Club Committee made me feel comfortable in settling into my home away from home and was an instrumental part in my personal development over my years at College. Opportunities in volunteering, outreach work, on the student club committee and as an RA were something that out of high school I never expected to tackle. Thanks to the support of the friends I have made these felt like just a natural progression of being at College.

I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know more people than would have ever been possible outside of Tommy. Coming from Bunbury, naturally all my friends were from there but I can now say that a majority of my friends come from places other than my home town.

Ultimately Tommy prepared me for life outside of College without me really even knowing it. The time I had here will always be some of the best years of my life, and I am beyond grateful for my time at College and the people I have met.

- Liam Tilbrook



I guess you could say my College experience started exactly how it was supposed to with O'week and the fresher festival. However, by week 3 we were in lockdown and university was on the verge of going fully online.

My College experience along with my fellow freshers was a little different from what previous years had gone through. My home away from home became a ghost town which was something I never expected. The reality of this year had sunk in. By the end of March all College and university events had been cancelled, university classes were no longer face-to-face and basically all social aspects of College had to cease. This year started promisingly, was "how-ya-going" in the middle and finished with an absolute bang.

I leave Tommy this year knowing that the past six months have exceeded my expectations of what College life would be like. A jam packed last semester saw many of us with tired eyes ready for the end of semester break. We managed to fit in almost every sport and social event for the year creating memories together that I will keep forever.

To anyone thinking about whether they should live on campus I recommend it. College does become a home away from home. I felt welcomed and in the little time I was there I found it truly made it easier to move out of home and in my case, to a new place. The way in which Tom, Bec, staff, the RA's and the student club committee managed to hold fort and bring back the spirit of College living in the last semester, is a credit to how hard they work.

Once a Moron always a Moron.

- Laura Williamson

My journey at Tommy started in 2018 with a busy year learning how to balance work, study and college life. Meeting people from all over the globe and experiencing everything Tommy has to offer has to be the greatest part of my time at a residential college. I'll miss the table tennis sessions that last until 2am, the 1v1 matchups on the Tommy basketball court, Frisbee in the quad, Cap S every Wednesday, the lunches that last for an hour and a half, but mostly the people I've met. It has been a good run.

College has given me the opportunity to grow as a person and I firmly believe that this was achieved through getting involved as much as I could. Experiencing college as a fresher, on the committee, as an RA and experiencing college over the challenging time that was 2020, makes me feel as if I've experienced it all. College is what you make of it and I recommend throwing yourself into the Tommy way of life and just seeing where it takes you.

Being male sport rep in 2019 and playing most of the IC sports over my time at college has resulted in losing quite a bit of time that could have been spent studying, however I do not regret it. It's tough to beat the feeling of winning a flag with a bunch of people that you may not know all too well the week before. The sheer will, college spirit and desire of each sportsperson to go out there and get the dub against another college is an experience I'm never going to forget. Every flag has a story behind it and different people who experienced it leading to a great memory. Particularly the IC Frisbee grand Final against St Cats. It has got to be one of the best wins I've ever been a part of. To this day those of us who were on the winning team talk about it for hours and often.

The Cambodia collaboration service trip was another great experience that I recommend to anyone at college. It's an experience that you can't put a price on. A great opportunity to be a part of. To be given the ability to do it at college is one not to be missed as you may not get the opportunity elsewhere. To all the people that I've met over the last three years, thank you for making my time at college what it was, I've had a blast. Good luck to you all and your future endeavours. Peace out Tommy!

- Ewan George

Liam Tilbrook, Ewan George and Lachlan McLean



Upcoming Events

28 March	Tommy market	Check Facebook
21 April	Memory Lane Morning tea	Invites via email
18 June	Young Alumni Breakfast	Invites via email
TBA	Quiz night	Check facebook



Celebrating OUR Alumni:

A huge congratulations to two alumni who celebrated marriage to their partners this January. The heart always finds its better half. Congratulations to you for finding love!

Monique celebrated her marriage to her wife Cass, and Gabby Somma celebrated her marriage to her husband Joshuah.

Are you interested in becoming a career mentor?

We are always seeking Alumni who are interested in contributing to the career development of our students. If you are interested, we have a variety of options for you to stay involved.



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Visit stmc.uwa.edu.au/alumni to add your name to our Alumni mentor database.



Join us March 28

10am - 2 pm



Our Socials

Use the camera on your mobile phone to hover over each QR code.



Instagram



Facebook



STMC Website

Would you like to get involved in the Tommy Market?

Head on down to Tommy More on Sunday 28 March for some live entertainment, food stalls, retail stalls and other activities.

Sponsorship is available and further details can be provided upon request. All proceeds are given directly to the Arrupe Centre as the market supports our collaboration with them by raising funds for the Lidy House Welcome Centre.

Share your news

We love to hear about the things our past residents are up to and enjoy sharing them with the Tommy community, so please keep in touch.

Send us a photograph along with your news to alumni@stmc.uwa.edu.au and let us know if you're happy for your news to be published in an upcoming edition of *The Utopian*.

Do we have your details?

Make sure we have your current details so you don't miss out on news, networking events and reunion invitations. You can update them on our website or call us on 9386 0111.



St Thomas More College

CRAWLEY WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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48 Mounts Bay Rd,
CRAWLEY WA 6009
www.stmc.uwa.edu.au