



From the Headmaster

Dear Parents

The official opening of the new Stewart Building two weeks ago was a wonderful success, with many distinguished visitors returning to the school including our official Visitor, Prince Michael of Kent. Prince Michael was much impressed with all that he saw, including our Formula E racing car. As a Grand Prix enthusiast, he was especially pleased to hear of our victory in the Schools' Series last summer. The prize giving ceremony which followed was, as ever, an opportunity to celebrate the many achievements of our pupils last year. The final prize of the evening, however, was awarded by Prince Michael not to a pupil but to our outgoing Chairman of Governors, Ian Russell. Ian has been a constant source of support to me and my colleagues throughout his nine years in the chair. His lasting legacy includes a closer relationship with the Leathersellers' Company than we have had for many decades. The Leathersellers' generosity is most obviously reflected in their recent donation of £1 million to our bursary fund. Other forms of support are not so easily quantified, but they are many and various. I am delighted that Ian will remain on the board as a governor, having handed the Chairman's baton to Matthew Pellereau, a Past Master of the Company.

The Stewart Building was also a central focus of last Saturday's Open Day. The Sixth Form facilities in particular put us well ahead of our competitors in the independent sector. Record numbers came to the school in glorious sunshine and interest in entry to Colfe's at all levels is at a higher level than ever. Year 7 pupils who joined the senior school just a month ago are already in the Lake District for Outdoor Pursuits, also enjoying the Indian summer. Even the arrival of the Headmaster, exceptionally, failed to bring the rain on this occasion and I was delighted to see how successfully all our new pupils have settled in. I am particularly grateful to Chris Cherry and his team for sending regular bulletins, complete with photos, to Year 7 parents. Prior to departing for the Lake District, Chris Cherry led the Year 4 trip to Grangewaters in Thurrock, reflecting the importance of Outdoor Education throughout the age range.

U6th students are already well-advanced in their UCAS applications, with many able to quote valuable work experience completed during the summer. I am extremely grateful to all the Colfe's parents who offered such valuable opportunities and hope that you will continue to work with us in this important area next year and beyond. Medicine looks set to be our most popular choice of degree course this year and we were accordingly delighted to welcome Professor Susan Standring back to Colfe's on Tuesday evening to address the John Glyn scholars' society. Since retiring from her chair in the medical faculty at King's College London, Professor Standring has chaired the editorial committee charged with updating Gray's Anatomy, the 41st edition of which was published less than a week ago. The subject of her lecture was the History of Anatomy, starting with Hippocrates and finishing with keyhole surgery via Aristotle, Galen and many subsequent anatomists.



Pupils in the Pre-prep and Nursery have specialised in Geography recently, immersing themselves in a subject which has become one of our most popular and successful in the senior school: 68% of A level entries in Geography this year were graded A* or A. Meanwhile Sixth Form students of Art and Graphics spent a weekend in Margate at the start of their A level courses to gain inspiration from a landscape most famously associated with Joseph Turner.

Last week's House Drama competition in the senior school was a particularly good advertisement for the house system, with 6th Form pupils directing their younger counterparts. Upwards of 100 pupils were involved in one way or another. The victorious production, Bramley's version of Cinderella, was clever and entertaining in equal measure. Shortly afterwards, however, the House Maths Challenge was won by Norton. The equally competitive Modern Languages department celebrated the European Day of Languages with a Senior/Prep School languages competition: congratulations to Aquila/Prendergast and special mention to Edward Honeyman, Alexios Philalithis and Sahil Chitre (all Year 6) who won individual prizes.

The serious matter of "legal" highs was the subject of a presentation to senior school parents last week, jointly organised by PAFA and the Personal and Social Education department in the senior school. It was good to see the event so well attended, given the growing challenge presented by this new generation of recreational drugs which seems to be forever a step ahead of the relevant legislation.

On the sports field our Year 7 rugby players did very well in their first game this season – a block fixture against Brentwood with convincing wins for the U12 A and B teams. Not to be out-done, the Prep School U10 team won their annual fixture with St Christopher's in a tightly fought game. The eventual score was 15-10 in our favour with excellent tries scored by Louis Manning and Luca Droghieri. Netballers have also started the season well with U9's (Year 4) playing well against Farringtons and securing a 9-2 victory. Every girl in Year 7 was out on the netball court last weekend playing their first competitive game for the school with our Gold squad beating Blackheath High A team 9-1 and our Navy Squad winning 3-1, whilst in hockey our U13 girls reached the semi-finals of the Sevenoaks Tournament. Prep School swimmers won their first gala of the season, victorious over five other schools, including Blackheath Prep and Merton Court. Congratulations, in conclusion, to all the Colfeian athletes throughout the school who took part in the world's largest children's triathlon at Hever Castle last weekend. There were some outstanding performances including Luca Thurlow (Year 6) who achieved second place - completing the event in 27.44 minutes.

Other individual achievements over the last two weeks have included the following:

- Music scholar Ruby Collins (Year 12) collected a national music award at the Royal Albert Hall as part of a quintet who beat 300 other UK entries to win the Music For Youth Chamber Music award - scooping a classical recording session.
- Show Jumper Georgia Noone (Year 11) has competed in the end of season national Derby Show at Chepstow against over 100 competitors, taking part in each class.
- Luke Wilkes (Year 13) has qualified to compete at a horse riding national event at Hickstead later in the year.
- Jacob Jarman (Year 4) designed a new survival knife (which his brother Ben, Year 7 helped him to draw). Jacob sent it to Bear Grylls and received an acknowledgement and signed photos.
- Old Colfeian brothers Max and Henry Dunmore have been enjoying great success as incipient entrepreneurs. Max is the face and half of the creative force behind a new protein bar, selling over 350 a week with a factory now set to commence mass-production, whilst older brother Henry is opening 9 smoothie/juice bars for Reebok Gyms.

Best wishes

Richard Russell
Headmaster