



## From the Headmaster

Dear Parents

Leading Irish Historian, Professor Paul Bew, came to Colfe's on Wednesday to address the John Glyn Society. His purpose was to place the 1916 Dublin Easter Rising in perspective in this, its centenary year, and to identify some of the more important aspects of its legacy. Having opened with the claim that the rebellion was not in fact necessary, arguing that Ireland in the early 20th century was on a continuum towards independence regardless, he went on to cover a remarkable historical landscape, presenting a vivid picture of modern Irish history to an audience for whom this was largely uncharted territory. Having recently retired from his chair in Irish Politics at Queen's University Belfast, Lord Bew currently combines his academic work with chairmanship of the Committee for Standards in Public Life as a cross bench peer in the House of Lords.

Colfe's debating sustained its recent upward trajectory last Sunday with a highly successful inaugural Colfe's competition which attracted 40 entries from schools across the South East – both independent and state. The Colfe's competition is one of only three such events nationwide, the other two being hosted by Dulwich and Eton. Lower Sixth debaters had previously travelled to an international debating competition in Bratislava over the Easter holidays. David Battersby, Maria Mobio and Natasha Dixon all performed extremely well and won four of six high-level debates which placed them tenth out of the 36 countries taking part. I am grateful to Mr Dunsmore who has so successfully driven the resurgence of senior school debating in recent years.

Other successful Easter trips included a geography field trip to Iceland and two ski trips. 60 staff and pupils in the senior school went to Les Menuires in the Three Valleys and a Prep party of 46 went to Serre Chevalier in south-eastern France, the largest prep skiing trip in recent memory. More recently, Year 5 pupils have visited the Science Museum. Highlights included a talk from an astronaut. Year 5 have also been busy preparing for their first residential outdoor pursuits trip next week the Kingswood Outdoor Education facility in Ashford. Meanwhile senior school cadets are leaving today (Friday) for their CST training at Folkestone. This will prepare them to lead the next generation of cadets which will be recruited from year 8 later this term.

The prospect of public examinations is of course the key priority in the senior school in the Summer Term and pupils in the top three year groups are working with focus and purpose, employing the strategies and study techniques which we have developed in conjunction with the Tougher Minds consultancy which is now also engaged in a new pilot programme with Year 7 pupils. As ever, places at the top courses in the top universities will require top grades and I am delighted that our U6th pupils have set their sights at a suitably high level, with six Colfeians now holding conditional offers to read Medicine and three with offers from Oxford and Cambridge. The application process for the L6th year group will soon commence. Extended essays (EPQ) produced by the U6th have included studies on gender inequality in comedies, the Spanish economy and Brexit.

The semi-finals of the Prep School poetry competition are now under way, managed and directed by Mrs Tullis. Every pupil took part through learning and performing a poem of their choice and the four finalists will perform in front of the whole school next week. This has been a fantastic initiative which has fostered important learning skills and confidence in public performance.



# COLFE'S

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## Newsletter

Prep School pupils (Lynx House) are also raising money this term for the British Heart Foundation. They will be pleased to hear that the Leathersellers' Company has committed to matching whatever funds they raise, as is the case with other school charitable activity, thus doubling our contributions to a range of deserving causes. We are now embarking on a senior school initiative to raise money for Scope, a charity for the disabled which is led by David Brinson, Old Colfeian, who addressed the whole senior school in assembly last Monday.

In sport, our PE and games coaching staff spent the staff training day prior to the start of this term with Olympic decathlon champion Dean Macey. External input of such calibre is of immense benefit to teachers and ultimately reflected in the performance of our pupils who have made a good start to the term. In particular, Colfe's tennis players (boys and girls) in Years 7 and 8 had a good start to the Kent Schools tournament beating Bexley Grammar School in the first round. Year 9 and 10 girls narrowly missed out on a win, losing on a tie break, and our outstanding U18 netballers eventually ran out of steam against Cheadle Hulme in the quarter finals of the National Plate competition. For the U6th players in this team, this marks the conclusion of their netball careers at Colfe's, in some cases spanning more than a decade. All these girls have been outstanding role models throughout their time with us and their legacy will doubtless be reflected in future trophies to be won by succeeding generations.

Colfeians of all ages (pupils and teachers alike) took part in the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice Mini Marathon at the weekend. The field included Pre-Prep and Nursery pupils who deserve special mention. Luca Thurlow (Year 6) was placed 8th in the London Schools cross country competition and therefore qualified for the National Schools Championships. Meanwhile Prep School swimmers took part in the annual Individual Gala, with pupils in Years 3 to 6 competing against each other in 25m events in Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Butterfly. A total of 100 pupils were involved in this competition which may be a record in itself. Noteworthy performances were recorded by Noemie Klanga, Leo Walker, Jack Murphy and Emily Deveney who were our Year 3 and 4 Individual Gala winners. Winners in the Year 5 and Year 6 competitions were Roshanak Li-Sue Foulds, Jacob Walker, Alexios Philalithis and Daisy Porter.

We also took three pupils to the London Schools Swimming Championships for the first time in four years. Ben Jarman, Panos Philalithis and Denny Ashison all qualified for the 50m Butterfly and Denny also qualified for 50m Breaststroke. Both Panos and Denny improved on their personal best times and Ben finished within seconds of his. Meanwhile Mrs Pearson, Year 5 teacher and Head of Girls' PE and Games in the Prep School, is now a British swimming triple gold medallist (backstroke) as a result of her outstanding performance in the British Masters in Sheffield. We wish her well for the European Championships in May.

Other individual achievements so far this term include:

- Ela Ertan (Year 12) achieved a distinction in Grade 8, solo acting for LAMDA.
- Music scholar Ruby Collins (Year 12) joined world renowned conductor Dominic Wheeler to play bassoon and contra-bassoon for a sell-out performance of the Opera Oberon by Weber at the Barbican.
- Nicholas Orde (Year 11) successfully sat the European-wide Kangaroo Maths challenge only just missing out on getting into the top 25%.
- Arthur Drury (Year 9) impressively achieved a Merit in the national Cayley Mathematics Olympiad. He achieved full marks on two of the questions from the six set.
- Former Colfeian, Elliot Roofe (studying History at Exeter University) played for the Exeter Braves (the Exeter Chiefs reserve squad) against Wasps in Rugby Union last Monday – beating them by an impressive 47-0. Exeter Chiefs are currently 3rd in the Aviva Premiership League.
- Biology teacher, Dr Jonathan Lappin is running the Hackney Half Marathon on the 8th May and the Copenhagen Marathon on the 22nd – an impressive 39.3 miles in total.

**Richard Russell**  
Headmaster