



December

From the Headmaster

Dear parents

As we come to the end of the autumn term, I am delighted to be able to reflect on so much activity and achievement across the school.

A record number of Colfeians, past and present, attended our annual Remembrance Day service at the Horn Park War Memorial on the 11 November. This year was particularly poignant as the service commemorated 100 years since Armistice Day. Major Cherry read out the names of the 128 Old Colfeians who lost their lives during The Great War.

Old Colfeians of the modern era who have recently distinguished themselves include Tom Gregory who was announced the winner of the William Hill 2018 Sports Book of the Year Award. Tom released his first book, *Boy in the Water*, earlier this year detailing his extraordinary journey to become the youngest person to swim the English Channel aged 11 – a record that can now never be broken thanks to subsequent health and safety legislation. We look forward to welcoming Tom back to Colfe's in January to speak to both Junior and Senior pupils about his remarkable achievement. Meanwhile Oliver Robbins CB, erstwhile Colfe's School Captain, continues to lead the Brexit negotiations on behalf of the UK.

Junior School

Junior School pupils have impressed us all with their Christmas productions over the last two weeks. Nursery and Reception children gave a heart-warming performance of *A King is Born*, whilst KS1 provided light entertainment with their alternative nativity, *The Inn-Spectors*. Mrs Higgs wrote and directed an original script *Foxy Stallone* for Year 3 and 4 pupils, which was an all-singing, all-dancing affair for the huge number of children involved. Well done to our youngest pupils for performing so confidently and enthusiastically and to the Junior School staff, Mrs Hall in particular, who work so hard to make these performances so memorable.

Other musical highlights of the term have included the KS1 and KS2 choirs singing in front of an audience of over 200 at the Beckenham Music Festival. The KS1 choir gave a beautiful rendition of *Any Dream Will Do*, along with a song from this year's Harvest Festival and as a result were awarded the prestigious Margaret Cooper Cup for the third year running. The KS2 choir performed three pieces and received some excellent feedback from the competition judges.

Academic

A number of Colfe's alumni returned to the school last month to help with a very successful evening of mock interviews for our prospective Oxbridge applicants. University offers have already started to come in for our Year 13 students and will continue to do so until the early New Year. One of the highlights thus far has been the success of our six applicants for Medicine, all of whom have been called to interview. Parents of Year 11 and Year 13 pupils will have received advice on revision guidelines in the run up to the mock GCSE examinations in January – you can find links to these on [MyColfe's](#) and [FireFly](#). Guidance on effective revision was also provided by our Tougher Minds consultants last week, including a joint session for pupils and parents.

We welcomed Dr Clare Chandler, Co-Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's Antimicrobial Resistance Centre, to speak at the recent John Glyn Society lecture. Her presentation focused on antibiotic resistant bacteria in Western cultures and the interface between anthropology and modern day practice of medicine.

It has been another term of huge success for our senior Maths Department. Year 13 students Lara, Simone and Eddy won Distinctions in the Mathematical Olympiad for Girls, run by the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust. As a result, Eddy will be the first Colfe's student to be invited to sit the highly prestigious British Mathematical Olympiad paper. A team of four came top of their group stage in the prestigious Hans Woyda Mathematics Competition. Following a run-away success against Bromley High School, Simone (Y13), Dan (Y12), Panos (Y11) and Isha (Y9) will go through to the knockout phase, which starts in January. The team defeated both Alleyn's and Eltham College in the group stage earlier in the term.

Colfe's pupils also triumphed at international book quiz competition 'Kids' Lit'. Two teams entered the Thames Gateway heat in November, finishing first and third following a tie-break for second place. The winning team – made up of Isaac (Y8), Katie (Y8), Nico (Y8) and Paloma (Y8) – were invited to compete in the National Final along with 17 other teams. Colfe's finished in third place, losing only narrowly to Kings College School Wimbledon and Enniskillen Grammar School. A fantastic result for the school's first year in the quiz and many thanks to Librarian Mrs Englefield for all that she does to champion the cause of reading within the school.

Art, Drama & Music

Year 12 Art students benefitted from an engaging session with BA students from Goldsmiths, University of London, during which they had the opportunity to discuss their work in a tutorial-style environment. The Art Department also hosted a very successful coursework day for Year 11 pupils with visiting artist and contemporary printmaker and sculptor, Kirsten Baskett.

This half term has been a musical spectacular at Colfe's. The annual Autumn Concert was a resounding success with over 100 pupils, parents, staff and friends joining for a magnificent rendition of Vivaldi's Gloria. The programme for the evening included compositions by Year 13 music scholars, *Schubert's Unfinished Symphony* performed by the Senior School Orchestra and *Chanson de Matin* performed by the String Quartet. Year 13 soloists Max and James also

gave beautiful renditions of *O del mio dolce ardor* and *Amarilli mia bella*. Aside from many hours of rehearsals, preparations included a choral workshop with Christopher Hann, assistant conductor with the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. The Music Department have also hosted the Winter Recital and Year 7 Concert in recent weeks – many thanks to Director of Music Benedict Holmes and his team for their hard work in bringing all these performances together, including the Carol Service at St Mary's, Lewisham earlier this week in which choirs of all ages performed to great acclaim.

In Drama the newly refurbished Beardwood Theatre was transformed into the Starship Albatross for the Senior School production of jukebox musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. Based on *The Tempest* and the 1956 science fiction film *Forbidden Planet*, the show proved to be a high-energy combination of acting, singing, music and dancing – not to mention some memorable roller-skating. Thanks to Director of Drama Natalie Maher and the Drama Department for another fantastic production and to new Drama Technician Ben Freer for such an impressive set.

Sport

In girls' sport, the U14 Netball team has achieved highly this half term winning the Bromley Schools Tournament and qualifying for the Kent Schools Final. After a great display of teamwork they ended the competition in third place. Old Colfeian and footballer Claire Rafferty held a session with Year 7 girls about her experience as an England and West Ham player and GB hockey player Grace Balsdon – fresh from the Champions Trophy in China – also led an interactive masterclass for the U12, U13 and U14 teams.

In boys' sport, the Colfe's first XV played Bradford Grammar School in the annual Friday Night Lights game at Blackheath Sports Club. After a closely fought match Bradford Grammar took the win with 19 points to Colfe's 17 points. This was widely acknowledged as the most impressive performance of the first XV at the end of a tough season and I congratulate them all. Both the U12 and U14 boys cross country teams became Greenwich Borough Champions – congratulations to the U14 boys who have also qualified for the national finals.

In other news, 20 pupils travelled to Lee Valley Athletics Centre for a training session where they had the opportunity to take advantage of an introduction to indoor track and field – including Pole Vault and Hurdles – culminating with a 7x200m relay. The annual Colfe's Cross Country Championships took place last week where Year 7 captains Emily and Justin both won their races, adding to their Borough Champion titles. Other notable performances came from Isabella (Y8) who came second in the Junior Girls event and Thomas (Y9) who took the Inter Boys title.

In aquatics, the U15 Water Polo team have been working extremely hard showing great displays of teamwork, resilience and determination, competing against tough competition in the first round of the English Schools Tournament. The U13 A and B swimming teams performed superbly in their most recent gala, with both boys and girls coming first against JAGS, Bromley High, St Dunstan's, Eltham College, Farringtons, St Olave's and Alleyn's.

Outdoor Pursuits & Trips

The 16th annual expedition to the Kotu Senior School in The Gambia took place over the half term break. 16 pupils assisted with on-going building work, developed new friendships with our hosts and visited a number of historical and cultural sites such as Kunta Kinteh Island, long-time hub of the Atlantic slave trade.

Individual Achievements

- Ms Li-Sue, Head of Prendergast House, raised over £2,000 for Young Minds UK by cutting her hair off on stage in front of an audience of pupils
- Jonathan (Y7) achieved a gold medal at his second archery competition to date, following a discovered talent whilst attending the Colfe's Year 5 Outdoor Pursuits trip
- Roshanak (Y8) has been selected for the Kent U15 Netball team
- Sam (Y8) was awarded a Brown belt in Karate
- Jack (Y8) has been selected to represent Colfe's in the Kent Golf Championships
- Mehul (Y10) has been selected to attend the Aspire squash programme, focused on enhancing players with potential above county level
- Georga (Y12) competed in the Welsh Judo Open in the U21 category, leaving with a bronze medal. Georga also represented Great Britain in Slovenia at the U18 European Judo Cup, where she received a silver medal

Notices

The PAFA Christmas Fayre earlier this month was very successful raising over £3,000, which will be split evenly between Demelza Hospice for Children and the Lewisham Foodbank. Many thanks to the PAFA committee for their hard work and to all the parents for their donations and support on the day. A date for the rescheduled Fireworks Display has been confirmed for Friday 25 January 2019. PAFA will send further information about this event in early January.

If your son or daughter wishes to change from school to packed lunches, please remember that you need to give half a term's notice. To switch over from the second half of the spring term 2019, notification is needed before 8 January 2019. Please email pkeogh@colfes.com in the Bursary Office.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and restful festive break and I look forward to seeing pupils back at school on Tuesday 8 January.

Best wishes,

Richard Russell
Headmaster