



## Victoria College Belfast Newsletter December 2010

Dear Parents

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year as I share with you some of the many exciting activities which your daughters have been involved in this term.

We are currently reviewing our assessment arrangements in the College and we are also considering a change to the school skirt. We would appreciate parents' views on any proposed changes and will engage in consultation with you and with the pupils in the new year.

### Entrance Assessments

In November and December the College facilitated P7 pupils who wished to sit either the GL or the AQE entrance assessments and thanks are extended to parents, prefects and staff who ensured that all went as smoothly as possible on successive Saturday mornings, despite the wintry conditions. We wish all the pupils every success as they look forward to Christmas and to the transition to post-primary school next year.

### Open Day

The annual Open Day for transfer pupils will be held on **Saturday 8 January from 10.00 am - 1.00 pm**. We really value the support of our pupils on Open Day and all pupils will be allocated school duties on this day and are expected to attend.

### Public Speaking

Pupils took part in the BPW Public Speaking Competition and Molly Gilmartin was awarded first place in the Soroptimist Public Speaking Competition and will represent Belfast in the Northern Ireland Final in March.



### Trips and Visits

Year 8 pupils enjoyed the annual cross-curricular visit to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in October.



Miss Beirne with Year 8 Girls in Cultra

Year 11 History and German pupils participated in a trip to Berlin in October visiting Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. The Year 14 Politics trip to London in October was a great success with the girls visiting Downing Street, Westminster Abbey and attending Prime Minister's Question Time. Pupils from Years 10-14 enjoyed a S.U. weekend at Castlewellan Castle in November.

During this term pupils participated in the Kids Lit Quiz at Wellington College. As part of the Northern Ireland Children's Book Awards pupils also with authors Derek Landy, Chris Bradford and M G Harris, while pupils also enjoyed a visit by storyteller, Alex Williams.



Derek Landy with some pupils.

Year 13 pupils involved in the BT Young Scientists' project were invited to a reception with the Education Minister at Stormont in November where they were highly praised for both their project endeavour and their enthusiasm for Science outside of the classroom.

### Senior UK Mathematical Challenge



Clio Griffin was awarded a gold certificate while two silver and five bronze certificates were also awarded.

### International Dimension

The College's European Studies Team was selected as a first prize-winner in the European Studies annual Euro-scola Competition and has won a 3-day trip to Strasbourg in February.

Three Year 13 pupils and two members of staff will travel to New Delhi in January 2011 to represent the College in the World Education Culture Congress organised by the Shruti Foundation and the British Council. The Victoria representatives will spend a week in Him Jyoti School in Dehra Dun prior to the Congress as part of the Bachpan Bonding Project



Pupils with Lady Shruti Rana and Ana Kerr, BELB

## Sporting Success

The Senior Swimming Team won the Ulster Grammar Schools' Championships, with Sarah Henderson winning two individual gold medals and the Senior Relay Team winning the Senior Freestyle and Senior Medley relays. The College's Swimming Team across all age groups was placed second overall.

Sarah Henderson, Year 14, completed a busy run of Pool and Surf competitions during which she represented the senior Great Britain team at the European



Sarah Henderson

Championships in Belgium, the Dutch Nationals at Eindhoven and the World Championships in Egypt. Sarah celebrated gold and bronze medal success at the Europeans, four finals at the Worlds and in Eindhoven one gold, two silver and a fifth placed her third overall top competitor in the Dutch Nationals.



Rachael Henderson was selected to represent a Great Britain junior squad at the Dutch Nationals where she won a bronze at Under 19 and held two other of the top 10 places.

Rachael Henderson

Both girls will compete in the British Championships in March.

Esmée Hall, a former Ulster Schools' Champion in 2009, has qualified to compete in the Ulster Open Swimming Championships. This is an outstanding achievement as Esmée is just twelve years old and will be competing against Ulster's top swimmers in the 16 and under age group category. Esmée was selected by Swim Ulster to compete for the Ulster Squad in the Inter Provincial Challenge Trophy and has also been recognised for her outstanding achievement in swimming in her region by receiving the runner up trophy in the Female Youth Athlete of the Year (17 and under) for the Banbridge & District Annual Sports Awards in March 2010.



Esmée Hall

Rachael Houston, Year 9, represented Ireland in an international equestrian competition, during which her team won the Gold Medal and Rachel won the biggest class at this show in her age group and qualified for the Royal Dublin Horse Show.

Hannah McVeigh, Year 14, won the British Open Irish Dancing Championships and is now the 2010 Under 18 British Champion



Hannah McVeigh

The Under 19 Table-tennis Team reached the Ulster Schools' Cup Final while the Intermediate Netball team won all its league matches and will now contest the Belfast 'A' League cup final in February. The Junior and Minor teams are currently lying in second place in their leagues.

The 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey Team is through to the third round of the Senior Schools' Hockey Cup. The 2A XI is in the third round of the cup and the 2B XI is in second place in the league section. The U14A XI are due to play Glenlola in the second round of the cup and the U13 A, B C and D teams have collectively only lost one match all season.



Katherine Welshman, a member of the Table Tennis team.

The Fencing Club has resumed in school with a new club coach and any girls interested in joining should speak to Miss Stewart, Head of P.E.

Former pupil Emily Madill has joined the prestigious Mouratoglou Tennis Academy in Paris where she will pursue her dream to compete in tennis at professional level. We wish her every success

### Music and Drama

In October the Chamber Choir won a place at the Regional Final of the All Island School Choir Competition organised by Co-operation Ireland and their technically challenging performance greatly impressed the judges.



Junior Choir

In November the Junior Choir performed excellently in Holywood Music Festival, winning their class with style. The Chamber Choir also competed and was awarded second place in the competition.

The Chamber Choir sang at the Voluntary Services Christmas lunch, at the Belfast Harbour Commission lunch and in the Bridgewater Centre at the City Hospital. The Junior Chamber Choir performed in the Choirs at Christmas event in the Ulster Hall, during which carols composed by Year 12 pupils, Aoife Colgan, Maria Doran and Carrie Lane were performed. Aoife's Carol was voted the winner in the competition and she received a beautiful trophy and a cheque for £300. The Carol Service, held on 12 December at Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, brought home the real message of Christmas during an unforgettable evening.

A level Theatre Studies pupils enjoyed a visit to the Abbey Theatre Dublin to see 'John Gabriel Borkman' with Alan Rickman in the leading role and former pupil Amy Molloy (Johnston) in the supporting role of Frieda. The A2 Theatre Studies group performed their devised piece in December and rehearsals are now well under way for the school musical production of 'Hello Dolly' Tickets will be available in the New Year from the School Office.

### Charities

Our two school charities this year are Save the Children and Action Cancer. The Junior Choir participated in the Sound of Action concert at St Anne's Cathedral and the College was the top Fundraising School raising a total of £2000 for Action Cancer. Thanks to Molly Gilmartin for initiating and coordinating this wonderful event!

### Duke of Edinburgh's Award

We were delighted when thirteen pupils successfully completed their Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Thanks are extended to Mrs Caroline Hart who has willingly given her time to lead this work in the College. We are delighted that some of our pupils are now proceeding to Gold level and we look forward to hearing of their success in the future.

### The Association of Parents and Teachers

The APT began the year with an Afternoon Tea at Maryville House Tea Rooms on 14 September, while BBC N.I.'s Jim Fitzpatrick was guest speaker at its Annual General Meeting on 30 September. Friends of Prep held a very popular Colour Me Beautiful evening in October The annual Craft Fair on 27 November was a great success raising £3500 for school funds.



A Health Fair is scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> February with Dr Frank Casey as the keynote speaker and the APT Spring Ball will be held on 8 April in the Wellington Park Hotel. Tickets will be available from the School Office in the New Year.

The annual uniform sale will take place on 17 June and items of second hand uniform can be handed in at any time at the school office.

A clothing bin is available on both the Richmond and the Cranmore campus and parents are encouraged to deposit bags of unwanted clothing in order to raise funds for school.

The APT has pledged to raise £30,000 over the next two years and we are very grateful to the members of the APT and to the Friends of Prep for all of their support throughout the year. I would encourage any parents who would like to become involved to contact Mrs Carmel Francis, Chairperson, or the School Office for details.

### Magazine

The 2009-2010 issue of the Victorian Magazine will be distributed shortly and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Joanne Brown for all the hard work which went into producing this publication. In addition our school website is updated on a regular basis and can be visited at [www.victoriacollege.org.uk](http://www.victoriacollege.org.uk). This facility continually provides its viewers with a flavour of the day-to-day activities of our pupils.

### School Examinations

School examinations will take place in January for all pupils except for Year 14.

Year Group	Examinations start	Examinations end
8, 9 and 10	Monday 17 January	Friday 21 January
11	Friday 14 January	Friday 21 January
12	Monday 10 January	Friday 21 January
13	Tuesday 11 January	Tuesday 18 January

An exceptional closure day will be held for both Prep and Senior school on Tuesday 4 January and again on Thursday 17 March 2010. Term dates for the 2011/2012 academic year are available on the school website under the "School Calendar" link. I trust this advance notice will help you to arrange family holiday dates outside term time.

**School will re-open on Wednesday 5 January at 8.45am**

## Preparatory Department New Pre-School class



In the Preparatory Department, a highlight of this term has been welcoming the new Pre-School class to the Cranmore site. The Pre-School class admits girls in the year before they start school and is a teacher led facility, located in the Vitaglass room. Miss Hamilton is the Pre-School teacher and she is assisted by Mrs Scott and Miss Bari. The Pre-School girls have settled in quickly and are enjoying their stimulating new classroom environment.

### Charities

Thanks to the generous support and enthusiastic participation of the girls and their families, the Preparatory Department has been able to contribute to a number of charities already this year and so far has raised over £2000.

The Preparatory annual Harvest Sale was enjoyed by all and raised over £600 for worthy causes, with a donation being given to the Oxfam Unwrapped fund.



### Harvest Sale

A fun-filled morning was spent learning how to cheer-lead and this event raised £1750 for the NSPCC. In November, Prep held a bun sale in aid of Children in Need and raised almost £400. At Christmas, the Preparatory Department once again supported a local charity, The Cedar Foundation, through the selling of Christmas stamps and the use of our Christmas Post Box.

### International Dimension

On Friday 5 November all pupils gathered together in the hall to participate in a special celebration of language learning in Prep. All classes arrived waving the flag of their chosen European country and shared what they had learned in class. The programme continued with two French songs from Prep 4 and Prep 2 entertaining all with an exciting presentation of their Spanish learning. Prep 5 displayed their knowledge of colours by singing the rainbow song and Prep 6 performed two short dramas showcasing their new French vocabulary and expressions. Finally, Prep 7 sang a Swedish song and French song followed by two adaptations of Little Red Riding Hood and presented two role plays set in a French café. Following the performances, all girls had the opportunity to sample some French snacks served by the pupils of Prep 7.



Break time French style!

### Pupil Achievements

In November, the Senior Prep Choir took part in the Holywood Festival and were awarded second place for their beautiful singing. Thank you to Mrs Murray and Miss McQuillan for all their hard work. This term, several girls from Prep 4 to Prep 7 competed in the Ulster Schools' Swimming Championships held in Ballymena. Special mention should be made to Hannah Beattie who won two individual bronze medals at this event. The relay team consisting of Hannah Beattie, Rebecca Clarke and Year 8 pupils Nicole West and Sophie Hunter were placed second in both the medley and freestyle relays. Lois Lyttle, Anna Hill, Bree Moffett,

Rachael McCormack, Rebecca Clarke and Hannah Beattie also qualified to compete in the Irish Championships in Ballymena on the 11 December. Thank to Mrs Henderson for her continued hard work.

### Visits

Prep 5 had an enjoyable morning at the newly refurbished Ulster Museum. There, they had a tour of the Prehistoric and Early Man exhibition, before taking part in an Art workshop. Prep 6 enjoyed a Viking Day, for which the classroom became a Viking village. The Prep 6 pupils dressed up in Viking clothes, made friendship bracelets,



ground flour on a quern stone to make bread and wove walls from hazel branches. They even made some Viking spears and took part in some sword fighting!

### Nativity

Events at the very end of term included the Nativity play "It's a party!" performed by Prep 1-3 girls, supported by the Prep 4-7 choir and orchestra. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work and preparation for this production, especially Miss Wright, Mrs McLuckie and Miss McQuillan. To complete a great term, the whole school were treated to the interactive production, Mr Hulla-baloo's *Winter Wonderland*.

Once again thank you for your support as we look forward to the Spring term and all of the opportunities it will present to your daughters.

Patricia Slevin  
Headmistress

