



THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of
St Michael's Catholic College
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Inner Voices Choir Performance for The Clooney Foundation Awards 2025



St Michael's students who are part of the Inner Voices Choir had the honour of performing at The Clooney Foundation for Justice Awards with celebrated musician John Legend at The Natural History Museum on Friday 3rd October. Academy Award winner George Clooney who established the foundation with his wife, the distinguished human rights lawyer Amal Clooney joined the rehearsals. The celebrated actor, director and activist spoke to students in the choir about the purpose of the foundation which champions free speech and women's rights around the world and the sacrifices in the name of justice that some of those winning awards had made in the course of their work and activism. The choir closed the awards with an uplifting performance of the Sam Cooke song 'A Change is Gonna Come' inspiring the audience to continue their important work and to support the vital causes the foundation champions. What an inspiring event for our students and staff to be part of.



St Michael's Student Wins Prestigious Prize and Spends Summer on Cultural Exchange in Australia

In the Summer Term, Julia S stood out amongst competition from across Southwark to win the chance to spend the summer on an all expenses paid trip to Australia. Julia stayed with a family in Canberra and attended school through the week, whilst exploring the culture and wildlife throughout in a truly immersive experience. Julia even had an appointment to meet The High Commissioner of Australia! Please find Julia's reflections below:



Spending a month studying at Canberra Grammar school truly was an experience filled with friendships, learning and a unique cultural environment. When I first arrived, I was greeted by the shockingly crisp air of Canberra's winter season. The cold weather was different from what I expected (yes I was that person who thought Australia was warm all year long across the whole continent) and I quickly realized that I would need to bundle up each day to stay warm. Despite the chilly temperatures, my time in Canberra was warm and welcoming in many other ways!



Attending school in a foreign country was both exciting and challenging. The school itself was vibrant and full of energy, with students from diverse backgrounds. I was initially nervous about fitting in, but I soon found that the students and teachers were incredibly friendly and open. Over the weeks, I made many new connections and friendships that made my time there truly special. Sharing stories, studying together, and participating in school activities helped me feel like a part of the community. These friendships became one of the most valuable parts of my stay, and I hope to keep in touch with these new friends even after I return home.



One of the highlights of my afternoons was taking walks around the neighbourhoods near the school in Canberra's natural environment. I was amazed to see kangaroos hopping next to me, although they did eye me up and down multiple times. It was such a unique sight – kangaroos are an iconic symbol of Australia, and seeing them in the wild was like stepping into a postcard. These moments outside of school gave me time to reflect on my experiences.



Overall, my month in Canberra was a mix of new challenges, cultural learning, and personal growth. The cold weather was a reminder that adapting to new environments takes effort, but the friendships I made and the natural beauty I witnessed made it all worthwhile. Studying abroad in Canberra not only broadened my educational horizons but also enriched my life with unforgettable memories and connections.

Julia S, 13A

Dido and Aeneas - An opera by Henry Purcell

On Tuesday 14th of October, 26 of our brilliant pupils currently in the Year 8 and 9 choir performed as part of the SSLP partnership with Southwark Schools including choirs from Dulwich College, JAGS and Alleyn's Girls School, at St Georges Cathedral, in the opera Dido and Aeneas, written by the English composer Henry Purcell accompanied by the professional choir and orchestra of the Gabrieli Consort. The wonderful and exciting concert took place in the evening, to a packed out St George's Cathedral.

The dates of Purcell's opera and first performance are uncertain. It was composed no later than July 1688, and had been performed at Josias Priest's girls' school in London by the end of 1689. The story is based on Book IV of Virgil's Aeneid. It recounts the love of Dido, Queen of Carthage, for the Trojan hero Aeneas, and her despair when he abandons her.



The concert had been prepared for by St Michael's choir during lunchtime choir rehearsals that started at the beginning of term and included a special rehearsal of the opera songs with the director of the Gabrieli Consort, David Clegg, himself an international soloist that has performed with international orchestras. The choir worked very hard to learn the songs they were involved with in the opera, and performed them to a very high standard. Members of the Gabrieli Consort commented on how well they sang as well as their confident stage presence. A big well done to them and here's to the next big musical performance challenge!

Sadie E, 8MA commented on the choir's performance saying, "This felt very special to be a part of because I felt like I was transported into the world of opera and it was amazing." Alexa M, 8MA added, "it was wonderful because it felt like a once in a lifetime opportunity and hearing professional singers inspired me to learn more about opera." Amy M, 8MA was also part of the choir and said, "the rehearsals with Mr and Mrs Laurence at school were really important to prepare us and help us feel confident performing to the audience in the Cathedral." Ashley B, 8MA commented that, "the Gabrieli Roar choir project really brought everyone together and the other schools also had amazing choirs that combined made a very powerful and musical sound!"

Mr D Laurence

Year 10 to Pembroke College, Cambridge

Kassandra G:

My day at Pembroke was absolutely phenomenal in encapsulating what university life is like. Our day started with sophisticated introductions that outlined a multitude of aspects in university life and what a university looks for when choosing A level. They explained these aspects in a clear and accurate way to help provide the students with proper insight on what they may plan to choose to direct and guide them to their desired career path. Then, we were swiftly moved to tours of the campus and understanding what life is looking like living at the university, diving into the experiences of recent students. These anecdotes helped to expand our understanding of how students on campus live and it helped to gauge how they were able to maintain a work life balance at such a prestigious and formal university. Finally, our day was completed with 2 rounds of taster lectures that were insightful in explaining the teaching style of lecturers and how people are expected to be taught. These lectures as a whole were highly interactive and intriguing in their distinct way of teaching and incorporating many factors to help to support their inquiry alongside deconstructing concepts to help the students.



Anuoluwa O:

I was delighted when I saw the email saying that I had been chosen to visit Pembroke College again, and it was an even lovelier experience than I imagined. We learned a lot about university life and how Oxbridge differs from other high or mid-ranked universities. We had two taster sessions in History and Geography, and I thought that they were both very interesting and engaging. The most valuable thing I learned on that trip was the dismantling of the stereotype that students at Oxbridge often come from wealthy backgrounds. After being presented with data about the true economic backgrounds students came from, I was surprised to see that most were from state schools. This was valuable to me as it helped me understand that Oxbridge is not as unattainable as I thought, because intelligence is valued over privilege or status when admitting students.



Year 10 to Pembroke College, Cambridge

(continued)

Adham A:

A recent visit to Cambridge, and specifically to the beautiful Pembroke College, offered more than just a tour of its historic grounds; it provided a valuable insight into the reality of university life. During the trip, we had a detailed and elaborate talk that moved beyond the prospectuses and focused on the actual student experience. The discussion, held in that inspiring setting, covered the key differences between school and university, particularly the shift towards independent learning and the responsibility for managing one's own time. We also talked about the social aspects, from joining societies to building a new network of friends. The main thing I took away from the conversation was a sense of clarity and motivation. The idea of university became less of an abstract concept and more of a tangible, achievable next step. It highlighted that higher education is not just an academic challenge, but a fantastic opportunity for personal growth. The visit, especially within the walls of Pembroke, left me with a clearer understanding and a renewed enthusiasm for the future.



Maia J:

The trip to Pembroke College in the University of Cambridge was both a thrilling and illuminating experience personally for me - throughout the day, we (me, nine other students, Mrs Weatherley and Ms Parr) were shown how daily life is like in Cambridge, were given a tour of the college, and experienced two different lectures. Once we had first arrived, we were given a warm welcome, and then some riddles to figure out before the introductions and speeches. Although they were quite challenging, it was a pleasant opportunity to socialise with other schools. Afterwards, the hosts began to discuss qualifications needed to get accepted into Cambridge (and other universities), how schedules look like for the students, different courses, the flexibility of learning topics around main courses, living in halls of residence, chances to bond with others, and extracurricular activities. I believe that this felt very beneficial and clarifying for me and my colleagues to know about the processes and practices that come with being a Cambridge University student. Following this activity, we were presented with a tour of the Pembroke campus, and we were told and explained where libraries, dorm rooms, areas for socialising, and cafeterias were located - I truly felt submerged into the realms of university life, and this was a definite motivator for joining such a prestigious school. After the break for refreshments that followed, we received two lectures - the first being about the political disputes of the English Civil wars during the mid 1600s. The



second lecture was on adaptations to floods and hydraulic modelling (flood simulations for geographical research). Personally, I believe that this trip was illuminating for me and my colleagues, and it taught us about emerging adulthood, but also was a reminder of who we are and the Salesian values we live by as part of St. Michael's.

Football Fixtures



U15 Teams Make Strong Start in London Cup

Following last year's success in the South London Cup, our U15 Boys and Girls teams were entered into the tougher London Cup this year—a challenging competition, but one our students are ready for.

Boys U15: St Thomas More (A)

A set of back-to-back away days saw the U15 Boys travel to North London to play St Thomas More. The game was a real back-and-forth, with the boys struggling to find their feet in the first half.

As the game progressed, they started to find their rhythm. Unfortunately, every time they scored, they conceded straight after, leading to a 2-2 draw at full-time. In extra time, the boys found another gear, scoring two goals to finish the game 4-2.

Thomas M (10VI) was named Player of the Game with an outstanding 3 goals and one assist. It was a real team effort from the Year 10s, with a special shout-out to Hubert J (9VI) and Euan D (8RU), who played up one and two age groups, respectively, to help the team.

Girls U15: Bacon's College (A)

The following day, our U15 Girls travelled to Bacon's College for a game that was highly entertaining for the neutrals.

Sport teaches life lessons, and the lesson that day was: "Control what you can control, and you will be rewarded." The game was a real battle, mentally and physically, which led to moments of uncertainty and fatigue. We started strong, going up 2-0, but then conceded. From there, both teams traded goals until the score was 3-3 with only three minutes left.

Up stepped Mary-Oriane B (8RU), who managed to score the game-winner in the final minute. A big shout-out to Captain Agnes W (10MA) for leading her team and to all the girls involved. A special mention must also go to Mavelle P (7VI), who made an incredible contribution playing up three age groups.

Mr Laribi, Mr Ferguson, and Mr Roach are all extremely proud of the performances and resilience of both our U15 Boys and Girls.

Agora Debating Trip

On Wednesday the 8th of October a group of Year 12 students had the chance to attend the Agora Debating Trip. It was held at Streatham and Clapham High School, we talked with other people from different schools in student led discussions. We talked about a range of topics from the climate crisis to UN and NATO and if these alliances are outdated or not. These discussions were very informative and I felt very enlightened by the voices of others in my group.

At the school, we were invited to choose 2 topics of our choice from wealth inequality to even oppression and hate speech. These discussions were in relatively smaller groups so we felt comfortable to speak and express our opinions on the topic. The awards at the end of the night rewarded those who not only shared the most insightful opinion, but also those who stepped out of their comfort zone while speaking.

Ashton S and Jasmine M, Year 12



I see You

I see you sausage-wrapped at Bermondsey Station
I see you cardboard hungry sign in hand at London Bridge
I see you on poverty's ridge.

I see you spare change-begging me for coffee or tea.
I see you seeing me avoiding your hungry eyes.
I see you noticing me quickly hurrying by.

I see you at society's edge.
I see you as I climb the escalator to taste my cheese and wine
I see you: white squall your lips define.
I see you coming down
nothing to stop the decline
I see.
You see right through me.

Ms P Belvett



St Michael's
Catholic College



Students are keen to be involved in everything the College offers them... they have many opportunities to take responsibility and are encouraged to show initiative.

- Ofsted

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Thursday
27
November

4.30pm - 7.00pm



Llewellyn St, London SE16 4UN



www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk



contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



020 7237 6432

SCAN QR CODE (after half-term)

TO REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE
AND FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



Chaplaincy Corner

What's been happening in the faith life of the school?

- St Michael's Day Festival, to celebrate St Michael's feast day was a successful evening raising over £400 on the day – carnival games, candy floss, sponge the teacher all helped to raise this amount. A ParentPay donation link was also set up and this garnered a further £300. Thank you to all staff, students and families for their support. The Sixth Form Chaplaincy team were integral to the success of this important whole school event
- CAFOD reps in Year 12 Chaplaincy attended their first training at Jesuit House and were able to use their new found knowledge of their most recent campaigns to create and deliver a series of Assemblies on the importance of food equality and the support of Southwark Foodbank
- The work of the Young Salesians group was celebrated at their first graduation ceremony with 61 students receiving badges. Fr Keith attended and blessed the badges. The ceremony was a celebration of their amazing work to put their faith in action to support others and contribute positively to the school and local communities.



The Word of the Lord

Romans 12:2



A reflection to start the year...

Heavenly Father,

We ask for the renewal of our minds. By your Holy Spirit and the power of your truth, rewire our thoughts, our attitudes, and our beliefs. Cleanse our minds so they are focused on what is eternal, not temporary.

Transform us, Lord, from the inside out, so that the result is clear: that we may discern your will.

We desire your way—that which is good, acceptable, and perfect. Give us the spiritual clarity to recognize it and the courage to pursue it today.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Miss Casey
Chaplaincy Co-Ordinator



Upcoming Events



October

Thursday 16th - Wednesday 22nd Years 7-13 In -Class Assessments
 Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th INSET No Students in the College | End of term

November

Monday 3rd | 08:40 Back to College - ALL students
 Thursday 6th | 08:00 Morning Mocks | Maths
 Thursday 13th | 08:00 Morning Mocks | English
 Thursday 20th | 08:00 Morning Mocks | Maths
 Thursday 20th | 16:00 Year 8 Parents' Evening via SchoolCloud
 Monday 24th - Friday 28th Year 11 & 13 Revision Week
 Thursday 27th | 16:00 6th Form Open Evening

December

Monday 1st - Tuesday 9th Year 11 & 13 Mock examinations
 Monday 1st - Friday 5th Years 7-10 & 12 Revision Week
 Monday 8th - Friday 12th Years 7-10 & 12 Assessment Week
 Thursday 18th Christmas Trips / Rewards Activities for students
 Friday 19th Christmas Liturgies | End of term



Safeguarding Team



**Designated
Safeguarding Lead**

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**Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead**

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