

# Old Palace Alumnae News



*Head Girls, Suraiya and Alison*

## Welcome



Walking on Kenley Common at the end of October in the Autumn sunshine, I came upon a bank of beautiful Michaelmas daisies and it reminded me of how lovely Founder's Day was in September. The School very kindly invited OPA's to attend the Service. Singing all the wonderful hymns, which I still remembered, listening to the beautiful singing of the Choir and seeing some very dear friends again, made it a very special occasion for us all.

Christmas is just around the corner and the OPA & Friends are holding their annual Christmas Carol Service in Chapel on Monday, 5th December at 6pm. It is a lovely way to commence the Christmas Season with mulled wine and mince pies served in the Guard Room afterwards. We hope you will be able to join us on this festive occasion!

On the horizon, our annual Summer Reunion will be taking place on 17th June 2023. It has always been an extremely popular event with tours around the School being the highlight!

My thanks go to all the OPA Committee and the School for all their hard work and support throughout the year and also to Nicola Berry and her team for producing this edition of the Newsletter.

**Katherine Homatas**

Chair OPA



# Founder's Day 2022



Mrs Burton with speaker, Nicolina Andall.



Flashback: Jo Tuck carrying banner in 1952



The OPA treated students and staff to muffins



Maureen Bunn and Jo Tuck, Old Palace Alumnae





# Summer Reunion 2022



Despite the train strike, we were delighted that so many alumnae were able to join us at the OPA Summer Reunion in June.

The Head of Old Palace, Jane Burton, and the Chair of the OPA, Katherine Homatas, welcomed alumnae and their friends and family to a delicious summer buffet in the Banqueting Hall; evoking memories for many of the time it was used as a gym.

Old Palace has changed greatly in the last 30 years, and so our guests really enjoyed a guided tour led by some of our current Sixth Form students (who also learnt much from our alumnae about what it was like to be at Old Palace in the 60s, 70s & 80s).

We finished the afternoon with a rousing rendition of the School song!





# Associate Alumnae Year 7 Afternoons



In July, we held the delayed annual OPA Associate Alumnae Afternoon for Year 7 pupils who joined the School in September 2021.

This is a long-established tradition at Old Palace which involves members of our alumnae kindly giving up their time to come and talk to the students about memories of their time at the School.

The girls heard some fascinating stories about the old brown uniform: having to walk into town to the swimming pool and how cold the School was in the winter. But perhaps the most important story they heard from all our alumnae was about the friendships they made at Old Palace; how they were so important in later life and that they were definitely something to cherish.

Thank you so much to Hilary, Tania, Jan and Feyi for coming to talk to us and also to our Chair of the OPA, Katherine, for organising it. The students really enjoyed themselves, helped along by muffins and the gift of a beautiful Michaelmas daisy badge.

## Year 7 Associate Alumnae: Class of 2021 and 2022

This year, we actually held two Associate Alumnae afternoons; a Covid-delayed one in July for last year's Year 7s and another one in September for this year's Year 7s.

## OPA Donates a Marquee



*We are most grateful to the OPA for their very generous donation of a beautiful marquee. Pictured above is Katherine Homatas, Chair of the OPA, outside the marquee at Prep.*

# Connecting our Alumnae Network



It is always such a pleasure when alumnae come to visit us at Old Palace. Just this week I met Sarah Winser at our inaugural Old Palace 'Connect' event partnering with local primary schools.

We were also delighted to welcome Nicolina Andall as our Founder's Day speaker in September, as well as many others who joined us for the service on the 29th. In addition, Saima Mohsin kindly took the time to speak to students in assembly earlier in the term about her recent experiences reporting for Sky News from the recent devastating floods in Pakistan.

Thank you to everyone who is also embracing our 'OPJWS Alumnae' social media for regular news updates on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, or via our new-look website page:

[www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/the-old-palace-alumnae-opa/](http://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/the-old-palace-alumnae-opa/)

Our network continues to go from strength to strength.

It is our ongoing hope that these improved connections will lead to more opportunities for alumnae to work with our students – inspiring and advising them as they begin their higher education and career journeys. We are currently organising a series of careers and higher education workshops and

we also offer many students 'mock interviews' to support university applications.

Should you wish to offer your time and support, please email us at: [OPAlumnae@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:OPAlumnae@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk) or complete this **short form** to register your interest (*accessible only when reading this newsletter on line*).

We look forward to hearing from you all.

Helen Richards

Assistant Head: Co-curricular, Community and Partnerships



# Remembering Queen Elizabeth II



The Old Palace School community was deeply saddened by the news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The School was very fortunate to welcome the Queen to Old Palace on two separate occasions in 1960 and 1996 and she has been an inspiration to so many in our community through her dedication to her duties and service to the country.

As you would expect, the Old Palace community marked the passing of the Queen in a number of different ways. Both Prep and Seniors held commemorative events and assemblies.

We also opened a Book of Condolence at Seniors.





# Exam Success 2022

Old Palace students achieved a very good set of results at A Level this year (2022) with around 50% of grades at A\*-A, including 16% at the top A\* grade. 93% were placed at universities of their own choosing with 7% deciding to take a Gap Year (or applying in 2023). Just under 60% secured a place at one of the prestigious Russell Group universities and two students were successful in securing places at Cambridge University. What was really pleasing was the wide range of high quality courses that Old Palace students started this autumn, very much reflecting their skills and talents.

At GCSE, Old Palace students delivered another strong set of results with 51% of entries graded 8 or above. As with previous years, we were delighted to welcome back so many of our Year 11 students in September to continue their A Level courses at Old Palace.

## A Level Grades

A*-B Grades	
A*	16%
A* - A	47%
A* - B	79%

## GCSE Grades

9-7 Grades	
9	26%
8 and above	51%
7 and above	72%





## Beryl Smith

(née Kellas) 1953-58

We are sad to report of the death of Old Palace alumnae, Beryl Smith.



Her son, Adrian Smith, writes: "It is with much sadness that I write to inform you of the death of my mother, Mrs Beryl Smith, previously known as Miss Beryl Kellas. She was 80 years old.

Beryl attended Old Palace School between 1953 and 1958, a time which was under the legendary leadership of Sister Fenella. I found an Old Palace Year Book of Spring 1954, where Mum/Beryl was listed in New Girls IIIA, along with one of her best friends for many years, Jennifer Bone.

Beryl was a Croydon girl from a local poor family and attended thanks to a scholarship.

She left when 16 years old and pursued a career in the Royal Bank of Scotland in London until 1963, when she married my father, Brian Smith (a Scot also working in London for

the Royal Bank) and became a housewife and mother. We eventually settled in Rainham in Kent from 1967 onwards.

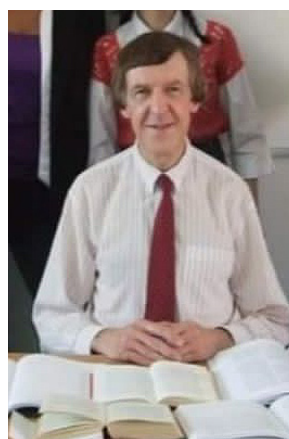
Beryl had two sons: Adrian (myself) in 1964 and Simon in 1969.

She was a passionate Crystal Palace fan all her life, having gone to her first game in 1948, and dragged us along from the 1960s onwards.

Her health was not good in recent years with heart and lung problems and she contracted a vicious form of myositis (muscle inflammation neurological condition) in February this year. She was admitted to hospital in Medway, Kent and, despite steroids and other medication, deteriorated further and died on Friday 25th March at 3am.

She enjoyed the periodic Alumnae newsletter received via my email and visited the School once or twice over the years. Many of her old photographs, including one of her at Old Palace around 1957 next to her friend Jennifer, surrounded by all the pupils, have made us smile".

We send the family our sincerest condolences.



## Steve Addis

We received some sad news in October about the death of Steve Addis who was Head of Classics at Old Palace and previously Head of Classics at Croham Hurst.

We know that Steve was a very popular member of staff as well as an inspirational teacher of Classics. He is remembered fondly by many of his pupils.

## Jennifer Richardson

We were saddened to hear the news that former Old Palace member of staff, Jennifer Richardson, who taught at the School for many years until the 1990s, passed away on Thursday 1 September aged 87.



She had such fond memories of Old Palace and we know she will be remembered with affection by her former pupils.

### *In Memoriam:*

## Meredith Kercher

Thank you to the alumna friend who visited Old Palace recently and took the time to remember Meredith.

Her memorial tree shines brightly in the autumn sunshine; ever surrounded by our love, thoughts and prayers.

15 years departed.



# OPA & Friends Carol Service 2021



In December, we held the OPA & Friends Carol Service, which despite being held in the Banqueting Hall rather than the Chapel, was still a very special evening.

We were particularly delighted to welcome residents from the Whitgift Care Home; we know they really enjoyed being out for the evening and it was so nice to chat to them after the service.

Mrs Homatas, Chair of the OPA added: *"We all enjoyed the choir's beautiful singing; it was very kind of the girls to give up their time for us and make the evening so special. We would also like to thank Father Andrew, Mr Griffith, Miss Orr, Miss Kolpaktchi and Mr Haigh-McLane and his catering team for the refreshments."*

## Dates for the Diary

### OPA & Friends Carol Service

Monday, 5th December 2022

6pm Banqueting Hall

7pm: Mulled Wine & Mince Pies

We are looking forward to welcoming our alumnae, their families and friends to the OPA & Friends Carol Service at 6pm.

### Summer Reunion 2023

17th June 2023

### Friends of Old Palace

Keep an eye on their website for further details.

[www.friendsofoldpalace.org](http://www.friendsofoldpalace.org)

## Do we have your correct email address and/or postal address?

If either of these has changed, please contact the OPA.

Email:  
[OPAlumnae@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:OPAlumnae@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk)

or write to:  
Old Palace of John Whitgift School  
Old Palace Road  
Croydon CRO 1AX

The OPA newsletter is now being distributed electronically so please ensure we have your current email address. Postal copies are available to those who do not have access to email.

## LATEST NEWS

Don't forget to have a look at the bi-weekly bulletin, **Around the Palace** for all the news at School.

It can be found on the home page of the School website.

You'll be amazed how much is going on!

[www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](http://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk)

