



# AROUND THE PALACE

Dear all,



There is a real theme of connectivity across this edition of the Bulletin.

It is great to see Old Palace students connecting with organisations and activities outside of the school while retaining connections between year groups.

Our Politics students have been to see how democracy and the law works at the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court. In keeping with the political theme, the school welcomed our local MP, Sarah Jones, to give a

very well received assembly and Q&A session. Our Biology students connected with others through the Biology in Action conference and our Sports Leaders have spent valuable time connecting with our younger students at Prep.

Finally, our Year 7 students have connected with their stomachs through a number of wonderful food based activities!

**Jane Burton, Head**

## Seniors Autumn Concert





## Seniors Autumn Concert

Our Autumn concert took place on the 20th of November, during which Old Palace's musicians and singers filled Croydon Minister with a wide range of musical styles – from jazz and pop music, to sacred classical repertoire and many other genres. The concert gave our talented musicians an opportunity to showcase much of the hard work that they have put in to their musical activities over the last term.

The concert began with two pieces by Old Palace's Senior and Training Orchestra, both performed with style and elegance – *Festive Overture* and *Gaudete* – which got us all in the Christmas spirit! This was followed by the Prep School's Palace Singers who further prepared us for the festive season with a vibrant and beautiful performance of John Williams's *Christmas Star*.

The Jazz Band played with both energy and poise, and there were some great improvised solos from many of the musicians. Following this was the return of the Palace singers along with Year 7 (and some extras!) with their exhilarating interpretation of Matilda's *Naughty, When I Grow Up, My House and Revolting Children*. The complex rhythms were executed with skill and fluency, and the solos in *My House* captured the emotion of the piece superbly.

The Brass Trio got us back in Christmas mode with a lovely performance of Ms Duncan's arrangement of *Silent Night*. The arrangement featured creative melodic canons throughout, and was played with poise and purpose. Lloyd Webber's lyrical *Pie Jesu* was then performed by our talented Year 11s Grace and Mayowa – who both sung beautifully and performed like professionals!



This was followed by Sanjana's emotive rendition of *My Ship*. Catherine (Year 9) then took the stage performing Chopin's *Mazurka in A minor* on the piano, which featured trills and complex rhythms that were executed skilfully.

Old Palace Senior Choir successfully tapped into their theatrical side with a rousing and energetic performance of Menken's *Little Shop of Horrors*. The bouncing "look out!" shouts from individual members of the choir added an exciting and unpredictable element to the performance.

Following this came the typically slick, accurate and stylish Steel Pan Group, who performed *Remember* by Becky Hill and David Guetta in their own inimitable fashion. Second to last were Zaynah and Chitleen, whose authentic performance of *For Good* was enough to bring anyone to tears! Finally, Super Choir closed the Autumn Concert with two contrasting pieces: *Total Praise* which was sang with grandeur and *With Love* from Motown which was accompanied by some enjoyable choreography.

Old Palace musicians should be proud of the quality that they consistently produce. The future is bright for them all – whether it will be performing for 2 or for 2000, this concert was a testament to the fact that you can trust Old Palace musicians' level of talent – but none of this happens without hard work, and we thank all the performers for their continued work ethic and professionalism.







Old Palace  
Alumnae

## OPA & Friends Carol Service

Monday, 11 December 2023

6pm-7pm

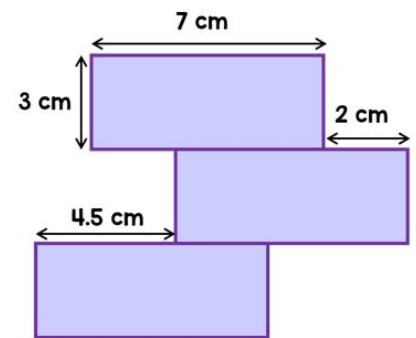
In The Banqueting Hall  
Refreshments and tours of  
the school are available from  
4.30pm-6.00pm & 7.00pm-8.00pm

RSVP: [nberry@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:nberry@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk)



## Maths Puzzle Fun

Three identical rectangles are arranged to make a shape.



What is the perimeter of the shape?

Answer on page 14

## Old Palace Welcomes OPA Sarah Jones MP

We were delighted to welcome the MP for Central Croydon and former Old Palace pupil, Sarah Jones, to Old Palace.

In front of a packed hall of students, Sarah talked us through her unexpected route into Politics and what inspired her to become an MP. Then she opened the floor to questions, which came thick and fast; everything from the conflict in

Gazza and last week's vote by MPs to ideas on tackling knife crime.

Finally, our Student Leadership Team enjoyed the chance to talk to Sarah in person about a range of subjects including university and what it's like to be female in a male-dominated profession. For example, did you know that women still only account for a third of all MPs?





## Year 12 A Level Politics: Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court

On 13th November, Year 12 A Level Politics students embarked on a journey to the epicentre of British democracy – the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court. The trip was an immersive experience, featuring a captivating exploration of the institutions that shape the nation's governance – highlighted by our personally-guided tour by Croydon Central MP and former Old Palace student, Sarah Jones.

The day commenced at the historic Palace of Westminster, home to the iconic Houses of Parliament. As we walked through the corridors, we stepped back in time to the Tudors and Elizabethans, gaining insights into the UK's complex political history and the intricate workings of its legislative process. We were expertly guided by Sarah Jones MP, who led us through the Commons and Lords chambers, providing a firsthand glimpse into the heart of parliamentary debates and decision-making. It was remarkable and inspiring to walk the halls that have and will shape British laws for centuries.

The visit to the Houses of Parliament was complemented by a Q&A session with Sarah Jones, who generously

shared personal experiences and perspectives on life as an MP. This interactive session allowed us to gain valuable insights into the challenges and responsibilities of the representatives that the citizens of this country elect.

The second half of the day took us to the Supreme Court, where we delved into the realm of judicial authority. A guided tour through the courtrooms highlighted the significance of the highest legal authority in the land, emphasizing the principles of justice and the rule of law. After spending time in the Court's interactive gallery,

we all had a deeper understanding of the delicate balance between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

The Year 12 A Level Politics trip to the British Parliament and the Supreme Court provided a tangible connection to the democratic foundations and legal intricacies that govern the United Kingdom. The experience not only enhanced our academic understanding but also inspired the next generation of political leaders and legal minds.

**Faith, Year 12**



## Year 13 Sports Leaders Visit Prep

Year 13 went to Prep to lead a session with students in Year 1 and Year 4 last week. They set up small stations based on athletics including throwing foam javelins, hopscotch and relay. The Prep students had a great time working together, being active and having fun.





## Year 12: Biology in Action

Written by: **Stephanie**, Year 12

On Friday 10th November, fellow biology students, Dr Nadarajah and I went to the Biology In Action event at the Emmanuel Centre in Central London where we received the fantastic opportunity to hear from five biologists about their journeys, work and passions.

Our first speaker was a Wildlife presenter and photographer who currently works with the Royal Society of Biology: Lucy Eckersley. She titled her speech, *The Unusual Suspects*. Lucy is the successful woman she is today despite still not knowing what career she wanted to get into at 22 years old. In secondary school, she was recommended a career in the military, but she let her love for animals drive her to her chosen work in wildlife. We could see her love for her career in the myriad of pets she owns. Of course, she owns the usual ones like cats and dogs as well as lizards, centipedes, and similar casual pets.

Lucy also spoke to us about how pathogens and animals naturally evolve but often at the same pace as the animals survive one strain of a pathogen by natural selection but then the pathogen also adapts and attacks this adapted species. This is a simple explanation of the Red Queen Hypothesis. But humans interrupt this process. Lucy then introduced the concept of One Health in how humans, animals and the environment are all connected and not separated. Just like people paving roads in California can cause the infection and death of seals through a virus carried in cat faeces.

I know it sounds crazy but I did not make that up.

Our Second speaker was a Science Communicator and PhD student (at the Francis Crick Institute)- Pooja Swali. Her speech was titled *Pathogens, Plagues, and Prehistory*. Pooja told us of her amazing work with ancient DNA. Her work involves constructing phylogenies which are essentially gene trees. After sequencing different samples of ancient DNA from teeth and skeletons, we can then place the DNA in the gene tree and see where it branches during mass events such as the Black Death. She even discovered the oldest piece of DNA in all of Britain (this is a really hard thing to find and DNA fragments in the cold which Britain is no stranger to) and her joy and passion at this discovery was tangible in her speech. But this is not to say that her job is all smiles as DNA is extremely fragile so she is used to working with only fragments, essentially half the story. Sequencing and matching DNA can also be less glamorous as it is massively time-consuming, and it is hard to see where two genomes match.

Our third speaker was a very passionate and light-hearted individual (as well as my personal favourite)- Dr. Mikhaela Neequaye- a research assistant at the John Innes Centre where she studies the diversification of Floral scent. Her job is very much out in the field and hands-on. Her work involves going into fields and trapping the scents of flowers in bags. It is then taken to the lab where it is processed in a pump where it can finally produce a chromatogram of all the chemicals

in the plant. She also detects the brainwaves of insects and other animals that help with pollination and creates an image of their response when they are attracted to another member of that species. She then repeated this with their responses to flowers of certain scents. This showed that flowers are very intelligent for organisms without a brain as they mirror the smells that attract insects to attract them to pollinate. She then tested the various scents on keen volunteers from the crowd and the scents ranged from ginger-smelling to washing detergent or ice cream, showing how every creature has their preference.

After lunch, we also had a talk on exam skills from Dr. Laurens Edwards, a former AQA examiner known for her GCSE and A-level revision videos on YouTube. Her tips were incredibly invaluable as they were so subject-specific, so I am now inclined to check her videos and I encourage other A-level and GCSE biologists to do the same.

Our fourth speaker was Greg Foot, a Science presenter and communicator, who told us about the work he has been doing for wildlife conservation in the Amazon Rainforest with the Tambopata Research Centre. His speech was titled *Rainforest Lab*. Macaws often go to clay-licks where they lick the clay and the alkaline nature of the clay-licks can neutralize the acid in their stomachs but the sodium is also beneficial for them to have strong, healthy heartbeats. By observing the activity at these clay-



## Year 12: Biology in Action *continued*

licks researchers have found that the number of macaw species is dwindling exponentially in the last decade. This is because of the logging of Brazil nut trees which are dense, slow-growing, and tall. So they are perfect for wood laundering. These Brazil nut trees are a habitat and source of food for these macaws, so more wood laundering means fewer macaws. Macaws are also critical to the Amazon's ecosystem. They contribute to seed dispersal by pooping the Brazil nut seeds they eat all around the Amazon. They are also seed predators and can support the spread of Brazil nut trees through germination. Greg and his teams use technology with nature in several different ways. They made 2m tall nests from PVC containing sand and soil to provide a habitat for these macaws that have lost their homes. They even have plans to use AI to ID the macaws by fingerprint and only let them in rather than other species.

Our fifth and final speaker was James Piercy, Science communicator and Engagement and involvement

Manager at Queen Mary University London who titled his speech *Transforming Trauma*. He summarised his job as essentially simplifying the work of clinicians and processes what severe traumas have taken place and what can be done about them. His speech took a specific interest in bleeding, more specifically haemorrhaging which he defined as bleeding at the rate that you will lose half your blood volume within three hours. He talked about solutions such as blood transfusions and how previously in medicine we used to use saline to keep blood pressure up even as blood volume decreased. The introduction of blood transfusions between humans was called Code Red in 2008. Using blood meant that it could clot and reduce massive bleeding. But even with blood transfusions, rates of death from haemorrhaging were still high so throughout the UK the London Major Trauma System was introduced (LMTS) which meant that trauma patients were sent to specialist hospitals rather than

just the closest ones causing death rates to decrease. Of course, the world of medicine is constantly changing and clinical trials such as the SWIFT trial are constantly being introduced to reduce mortality and improve lives. And as James emphasised, a lot of thought and time goes into these trials even to the extent of trialling drugs on hundreds of people just to find the window of its optimal effect, but I have high hopes for this trial and many others.

This event was such a fantastic opportunity as it opened my eyes to the world of biology and all its applications. All five speakers took the same A level but took it down completely different and yet wildly fascinating routes.

Razia, Year 12 accurately called it an '*insightful...experience*' that she '*really enjoyed*'. Kayla, Year 12 best captured one of the most enjoyable parts of the trip in that it was '*very interactive*' and we all, I'm sure will see this as a trip to remember.

## Year 7: Christmas Gingerbread Houses

Year 7 plus Liana in Year 8 and Shelise in Y13 have made a Gingerbread house in Food Tech Club. They spent a lunchtime decorating their little houses; it was a great effort and much fun was had by all!





## Year 12 Sports Leaders

Year 12 Sports Leaders led a fun session at Prep Site last week with Year 3 and 4. The session involved a fun warm up based on different types of beans – including French Beans!

The students then had 4 mini stations to complete relating to skills used in Striking and Fielding activities before ending the session with a game of Mat Rounders. Well done to Zoe and Grace who led the session and to the Prep students for listening so well and getting fully involved.



## Year 7: Food Tech

Year 7 made a healthy lunch snack in their DT Food Technology lesson this week. All worked independently and made some lovely lunches! Well done Year 7.





## Year 8 Activity Day: The Hub Challenge

On 15th November, Year 8 had a day off timetable. Out on the Netball courts, they undertook the Hub Challenge. Run by WiseUp, this involved a series of activities, all very challenging, for which they had to plan their tactics and work with each other. They scored themselves (with moderation from a member of staff!) on planning, communication, working together, motivation and completing the task.

The activities included Giant Nails – which had to be

balanced so that they all stayed in place. Stepping Stones – moving across a space using blocks, and following some very stringent rules. And hardest of all: Hover Ball – balancing a ball on a tin can and moving it through a hoop by means of cords attached to the can. The day ended with a very competitive game in which a cone had to be grabbed.

We had fantastic weather – very cold, but sunny all day. Everyone learnt a lot about their own strengths and weaknesses, and had a great time.







Dear all,

It is so lovely to be able to share with you everything we continue to do as part of our commitment to a broad and balanced education for your daughters, here at Prep.

The weather may have taken a cold turn, but the commitment and enthusiasm from the Prep team, for our Old Palace Prep pupils, burns as bright as ever before.

We hope you enjoy looking at the photographs and reading all about what's been happening at Prep recently.

**Mrs Jodene Panteli**  
**Head of Preparatory**

## Pre School's Winter Walk to Coombe Wood

Mrs Anderson led the Pre School children on an exploratory nature walk to Coombe Wood. It was a beautiful sunny day and the girls had great fun collecting leaves and spotting berries, lichen and moss. A welcome stop at the café for hot chocolate and crown-making rounded off the trip, before everyone got on the mini bus to go back to school.









## Year 5 & 6: Bikeability

Last week, pupils in Year 5 & 6 had the opportunity to develop their cycling skills through Bikeability; the government's national cycling training programme. The girls learnt practical skills to help them cycle on today's roads and develop their confidence when riding a bike. It was a really enjoyable experience.









## Reception's Winter Walk to Coombe Wood

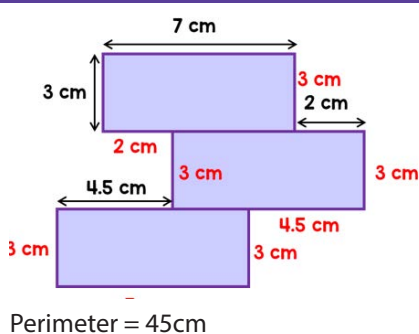
Reception pupils put on their wellies and waterproof coats for a walk to Coombe wood. They had great fun collecting leaves and jumping in puddles as they made their way from the Prep School to the café for hot chocolate. They all sang happy birthday to Tiana!







### Maths Puzzle Fun page 3 Answer



### U16s Netball v Sydenham High

On Monday 27th of November, our U16s Netball squad played an away match against Sydenham High. We had short, intense 6-minute sessions of gameplay, rotating squad members after each one. Sydenham started off very intensely, moving down the court quickly and making shot after shot but we soon adjusted and began to match them, forcing lots of turnovers – especially in the goal thirds – and

accurately shooting. By the end, the aggregate score was 24-24 with both sides putting up a great performance.

For Old Palace, our Player of the Match was Leilani, for her excellent contributions defensively and in attack. We'll get back to training on Monday and start preparing for our next fixture!

Skye W, Year 12