



## Class of 1981- 86 Reunion Dinner



The OPA held a reunion on Saturday evening for students who left Old Palace between 1981-1986. Thank you so much to our charming guest speaker and distinguished author, Alison Weir, for her fascinating talk on the last days of Anne Boleyn.

Thanks also to the OPA Committee, whose members worked so hard organising the event. As the photos show, everyone had a most enjoyable evening.

*More photographs on pages 8-9*

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# Welcome from the Committee



Dear Members,

It has been another successful year for the OPA, with all our events being very well attended and your continued support is very much appreciated.

I would like to welcome Mrs. Jane Burton, the school's new Head, to our committee as President. More members have joined our team in the last eighteen months, and we are hoping that our active committee will be able to provide our alumnae with stronger support.

This year we have been actively trying to expand our membership starting with the 'Leavers of 1981/86' and hosted a Reunion Dinner in The Banqueting Hall for them. Following on from its success, we hope to make this a regular event, but we do need your help with tracking down alumnae who may not currently be members.

I would like to thank the OPA Committee for all their enthusiasm and hard work and also to the School for their continued help and support throughout the year.

Katherine Homatas

Chair OPA



Welcome to the new decade and to this newsletter. Last summer, Jo Tuck stood down as its long-serving editor and I volunteered to take over. Jo brought a real professionalism to the production of this publication, and she will be a hard act to follow. I will try to bring you newsletters to the high standard that you were used to receiving from her.

Our main news this year is that the school has a new Head, Jane Burton, who we welcome wholeheartedly and wish her all the best.

We have several articles for you that review the events that have taken place over the last year; thank you to all who contributed. Also, there are inspiring, sincere and beautiful articles penned by old girls about themselves and by friends and relatives about alumnae who have passed away. This year I received several 'obituaries' which provided an insight into the rich and diverse lives that our members had led. Again, thank you to all who contributed as these articles help to build and bond our alumnae community.

Please enjoy this publication, feedback any criticisms, objections or appreciations directly to me, but most importantly, stay in touch. And, please keep sending me your interesting, unusual and inspiring items.

Regards,

Katy Beck

Newsletter Editor

[opa.newsletter@outlook.com](mailto:opa.newsletter@outlook.com)

# A word from the Head



I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say that I have had an amazing and 'interesting' first sixth months at Old Palace and have very much 'fallen in love' with the school, its atmosphere and the quirkiness of its surroundings.

What have I learnt about Old Palace so far? Well, firstly I have found out what a vibrant, diverse and capable set of students and staff we have at the school who make the place such a positive environment to be in.

I have also discovered that the unique draughts that seem to whip around the wonderful Banqueting Hall defy science, you cannot arrive in the Guard Room quietly as every step is accompanied by a cacophony of squeaky floor boards, the Chapel is a very calming environment where no-one can find you and that it is imperative to speak in hushed tones in the Head's Study as the Grade 1 listed walls are not sound proof!

However, as I write this, what I have really learned is that in the face of the biggest challenge the UK and the world have had to face in a generation, the Old Palace community have yet again shown determination, spirit and positivity as we work together to deal with the Covid-19 situation. The Senior School is currently closed and the Melville Avenue site is being kept open on a skeleton staff to look after the children of Critical Workers.

We do not know when things will return to normal and so all events are on hold, including the OPA Summer Reunion. Hopefully we will be able to contact you all soon with positive news.

Yours sincerely

Jane Burton

Head

## Founders' Day Service

About a year ago, I found myself calling Mrs Jewell (who retired in 2019) for an interview. I was part way through my Masters in Arts Education at Harvard University and one of my assignments was to interview a teacher that had been of great inspiration to me. I knew straight away who I would contact, and we had a wonderful conversation, exploring the importance of the arts and the impact that an arts education had had on both of our lives.

Fast forward a few more months, I had graduated and now Carol Jewell was calling me. I was very surprised and hugely honoured to be invited back to Old Palace to give the Founder's Day speech, to speak about my journey since leaving school in 2004. I am used to talking to kids - I've been a teacher in the UK and abroad for ten years, but this felt different. What would I have wanted, or indeed *needed* to hear at that age? There were several drafts of my address! In the end, I spoke about the importance of holding onto your dreams, visions and values in the choices made in life and the paths chosen. I encouraged the girls to pursue their goals and 'have a go', no



matter how big the dream, to seek what they enjoy, to embrace gratitude and to practise hope.

I had not anticipated the wave of emotions and memories that attending and participating in this event would bring. A number of my old teachers were still there, and it was wonderful to see them, as well as to meet and chat with several current students. Michael the security guard, still remembered

my name, even though I left the school 15 years ago. Ultimately, it was a reminder of how special my time there had been, the education I gained, the relationships I formed and the ways in which Old Palace shaped who I am today.

Sarah Winser

1997 - 2004

# Summer Reunion Lunch 2019



The summer reunion party, on 22 June 2019, was enjoyed by all who attended. We were very fortunate with the weather, and 85 Alumnae joined us for a buffet lunch and a chance to explore the school. During the brief AGM, Katherine Homatas (Chair) made a moving speech and presented gifts, cakes and flowers to our departing Head, Carol Jewell and Newsletter Editor, Jo Tuck. We wished them both the best of luck in their retirements.

Many of our members travelled great distances to be with us that day, and it is very much appreciated. Ruth travelled all the way from Toronto, Canada and she reports:

“One of my happiest memories from 2019 was returning to England to attend the Old Palace Alumnae Reunion. Despite my pleasure at being back, it was sobering to realize that it had been 10 years since my last Reunion – and 50 years since I left the Old Palace.

Although there have been many physical changes and improvements to the school, the main buildings, including the Banqueting Hall, the Guard Room, and the Chapel remained as I remembered them. The stained-glass windows were still bright and beautiful. I recalled the many times that I had walked on the ancient stones and thought of the historical figures who,



in centuries gone by, had walked along those halls, as well.

At the Reunion, it was truly a pleasure meeting Carol Jewell, as she prepared for her retirement, and the new OPS Head, Jane Burton. I was also delighted to see Maureen Bunn again and, at long last, to meet Jo Tuck, both of whom have been extraordinary ambassadors for the OPA for many years.

I sincerely congratulate all of those who continue to make the Old Palace School of John Whitgift such a special and unique place and hope that both the School and the Alumnae will continue going from strength to strength in the future.

Pro Ecclesia Dei!

Ruth Glickman

(née Jones) 1962-69

This year's **Summer Reunion Lunch** will be held on **20th June 2020**. Please see page 14 for details.

# Old Palace Alumnae and Friends' Carol Service



What a wonderful start to the festive season! Returning to Old Palace always conjures up a host of special memories for me and, I suspect, many others, and it was lovely to receive such a warm welcome at this year's Alumnae and Friends' Carol Service on 2nd December. Though much has changed in the world in the 36 years since I left the school, Chapel remains largely untouched and an oasis of tranquillity, a unique and fitting venue for such a beautiful service.

The school's outstanding polyphonic choir, directed by Mr James Griffith, performed an arrangement of moving pieces by a variety of composers

including Benjamin Britten, John Rutter and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Their captivating choral skills were interspersed with congregational carols such as O Come, O Come, Emmanuel and Unto Us Is Born A Son, which were lovely reminders of my Old Palace days, whilst Christmas Readings were delivered by Jane Burton (Headteacher), Mary Moore (Chair of the Friends) and Maureen Bunn (Former OPA Chair); guests showed their appreciation, with a retiring collection being donated to the Reigate & District Group 'Versus Arthritis.'

A thoroughly enjoyable evening was brought to a close in the Guard Room,

where current staff and girls, alumnae and friends enjoyed mingling and reminiscing over a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie. As always, it was a pleasure to meet so many people, with whom I share a very special bond, in such splendid, historical surroundings. A huge thank you to The Friends of Old Palace for organising such a joyous event!

Alison Botham

(née James) 1973-1983

# Class of 1981- 86 Reunion Dinner





# Future articles from Old Palace Alumnae

If you have not written an article for the newsletter yet, we should love to hear from you.

Here is a brief guide to what we look for:

- About 350 words
- A recent head and shoulders photo
- Good memories of your time at Old Palace (might include some of the things you did not like!)
- How the subjects you studied and the staff who taught you may have influenced your further education/higher education/training/choice of career
- An outline of what you have done since leaving school
- Ambitions and plans for the future
- Your name, plus maiden name if different, dates you started and left Old Palace.

Please contact :

Katy Beck  
Newsletter Editor

[opa.newsletter@outlook.com](mailto:opa.newsletter@outlook.com)

*News from our Alumnae*

## Old Palace in the Late Forties and Early Fifties

After attending four different schools, I passed the entrance test to go to Old Palace in 1946. How everything at the School has changed since then – for instance, back then, the fees were seven guineas a term!

Our first classroom was a pre-fabricated building in front of the current Cathedral Building. But it was out to the “Washhouses” at the other side of the school building to reach a toilet, which seems to have been frozen for a good part of the winter. Not until the Sixth Form could we use a toilet in the main building and the one washbasin and mirror for the whole Sixth Form!

The Banqueting Hall was used for gym and was our refectory. Attached to the very high beams were climbing ropes which, when no-one was looking, you could swing on from one end of the Hall to the other. Climbing those ropes to the top was quite an achievement. At lunchtime, in the winter, sometimes soot blew down from the rafters on to the jam on top of the sponge pudding – not good!

Three netball courts were squeezed into what is now the school garden; hockey

games meant WALKING to Duppas Hill and, in summer the trolley bus took us to Wallington, to the old gas company sports ground for tennis and rounders. Swimming was at the old public baths in Scarbrook Hill.

But my pleasure was in the inter-school debating competitions which were run by the Council for Education in World Citizenship. For the first debate, which involved me, I well remember the motion was “We shall never have world citizenship unless we give up national sovereignty.” On the second demanding occasion (and I was still only 15) the motion was “If you answer violence with violence, you forfeit what you are fighting for.”

When I left after getting 3 A levels, I went to the French Institute in South Kensington for two years and qualified as a Translator Secretary.

I was thrilled to be Vice Head Girl, but always regretted not being Head Girl!

Jo Tuck

(née Akers) 1946-53





# Freeing the Musician within



I was 16 years old and faced with the dilemma of taking Music or Maths for A Level. "Well, let's face it," said the Head, fixing me with that look, "what will be of more use to you in life, Henrietta? Mathematics. So that's that decision made". After school I dropped out from reading mathematics in the first term!

I fell into Marketing Management – sales and promotions - but music kept crooking her finger at me. I returned to woodwind study in my 20s (I had originally trained as a classical pianist) studying recorder consort playing with the world renowned Dolmetsch Consort and with virtuoso Piers Adams, with whom I also studied as a soloist. I also studied flute with John Bowler, flute/piccolo at the Royal Opera house Covent Garden and tutor at Trinity College of Music, and later with Derek Honner, former RPO principal flute and tutor at the Royal Academy of Music.

The teaching happened by accident when I joined a local amateur recorder consort in Norbury. The lady who ran it was a piano teacher with a few recorder pupils (ironically all at Old Palace) but with them approaching Grade 5 she felt I was a better player than her and would do a better job. I thought "why not?" and gave it a go. They all achieved ridiculous distinctions and the examiner wrote me a sextet – I still treasure that hand-written score – saying he had no idea the recorder could sound like it.

I took the plunge, ditched my job and set up a teaching practice from scratch. I worked in many local schools over the years but when Croham Hurst merged with Old Palace I found myself back there as a Peripatetic teacher of flute, piano and recorder. I established myself as an Early Music specialist, building up recorder groups from nothing and I completed my own training with two Diplomas in Kodály Musicianship. I became the School's in-house aural coach and co-directed the Training Orchestra.

It took a total breakdown at the end of 2015 to change everything. After a period off work, and in a very dark place indeed, Gareth (the School's Director of Music), asked if I fancied having a go at writing a series of workshops exclusively for our Music Award Holders and, as my coping mechanism was to work incessantly, it seemed like a Plan.

Thus Freeing the Musician Within was born ([www.freeingthemusiciantwithin.co.uk](http://www.freeingthemusiciantwithin.co.uk)). I have now organised and run 15 classes, running three or four each academic year, across a range of topics. A mixture of the practical and brainstorming, I have had our Music Award Holders thinking very much out of the box on subjects including Performance Nerves, Practice and various careers-focused conundra plus classes with renowned practitioners of Gospel singing, Barbershop, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Alexander Technique and Kodály Musicianship. We even linked up with dance students by (quite literally!) dipping our toes into the magical world of Tudor and Baroque Dance.

However, as much as my music was a constant refuge for me, my breakdown led me to seek solace elsewhere and I worked as a Volunteer working on the locks of the Upper Thames for several summers. So, as one does, I took the biggest leap of faith ever in April 2019 and, with no guarantees, let my house out to rent a tiny cottage in the Cotswolds, ditched all my teaching and applied for a temporary job as a Seasonal Relief Lock and Weir Keeper.

Working lock side absolutely forces one to live in the moment. You're only as

good as the weather on any one day. Relationships with walkers and boaters are transient and on a wet day the job may be as glamorous as cleaning the public facilities (found my true vocation there!). There is much pleasure to be gained from dead-heading roses, watching kingfishers zip along, flashes of that unmistakeable iridescent blue, a cormorant diving for fish, cygnets paddling in convoy with their proud mother...all things that cost absolutely nothing yet can lift the spirit and remind us of how simple life actually needs to be.

Leaving the students was the hardest part, but even though my lock keeping contract with the Environment Agency is now over until Easter 2020 (hopefully!), this was totally the right thing to do. I continue to freelance with Freeing the Musician which can be tailored to fit any school, although Old Palace always comes first! I organised a Choral Conducting session in the Chapel last November and returned to the Prep School in December to steward for the ABRSM examinations. January saw me back stewarding for Music Scholarship auditions; I then have two more workshops and two more ABRSM sessions over the spring and summer terms.

I am now writing workshops for the academic year 2020 – 2021 and work closely with my sister, another member of the alumnae, in her venture The Phoenix Collective ([www.thephoenixcollective.co.uk](http://www.thephoenixcollective.co.uk)) which is formed by a group of musicians who share a common passion for music education and the arts in general. We are currently working on an accredited CPD course which will go live in January 2021.

I am delighted to continue to freelance for Old Palace and to support the Director of Music, James Griffith, and his excellent cohort, Lottie Orr, in their endeavours.

## Henrietta Rowsell

1973-83

## Marianna Ascott Loss of Our Mum

(née Roberts) 1948-55  
1937-2019



Marian Roberts was born in the East End in 1937, winning a scholarship to the Old Palace, where she excelled, particularly in sciences. She loved to sing and took part in many school productions including the Mikado. She went on to study electrical engineering and, unusually for a woman she worked for Phillips and Muirheads, contributing to early transistors used in the UK's space industry in '60s.

Married in the late '50s, she and her husband Roderick Ascott, travelled extensively all over Europe on their motorbikes, she was a huge fan of motor-sport following her husband as he took part in various races including the TT. They bought a plot of land in Bedfordshire and designed and built their own house, starting a family before emigrating to Australia as the famous 'Ten Pound Poms' in the late '60s.

Moving back to the UK as a single parent a few years later, Marian worked hard to raise her son and daughter, who both enjoy very successful careers; she was very proud of us. She loved

to travel and after falling in love with Cyprus she moved to Paphos, where she became known as Marianna. She enjoyed the adventurous life - sailing, paragliding and running marathons well into her 60s.

She moved back to Croydon after 10 years to be closer to family and where she volunteered at Mayday Hospital for nearly 15 years. She was a great patron of the arts, opera and theatre, as well as a vegetarian and campaigner for those less fortunate. She loved her old school and it was only back in June 2016 that I managed to bring her to her last Old Girls open day.

In 2013 she moved to Somerset to take advantage of a slower pace of life and to be closer to her two grandchildren. She still enjoyed going out to the theatre and loved her garden. She was a remarkable lady, caring, compassionate and creative.

She was greatly loved and is sadly missed.

Helen Ascott, *daughter*

## Diane Finlayson 1961-68

2nd October 1949 – 25th June 2019

### Remembering a Dear Friend

Diane attended Old Palace from 1961 to 1968. Her love of history led her to a degree from Hull University, specialising in local history.

Following a year at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, she spent a short time teaching, but decided her career lay elsewhere. She subsequently qualified as a librarian and held down a number of senior posts at places like the Housebound Library service, St Thomas' hospital library and the British College of Osteopathic Medicine. In the later part of her career she developed her interest in Information Management which was put to good use with a period of working for NHS Direct.

In her retirement, she became what one friend called a "a perpetual scholar" taking many short courses that reflected her interest in both history and religion. She was a church warden at her local church in Warlingham and sang in the choir. She loved to travel around Europe by train and on cruises often pursuing historical interests.

Diane died peacefully on 25th June 2019 after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer earlier in the year. Diane kept in touch with a number of school friends from the Old Palace days and will be greatly missed.

Sue Bettle, *friend*



## Patricia Worley

(née Jarrett) 1946-53  
1936-2020

Born in 1936, Patricia attended the Old Palace School between the ages of 11 to 17. She was good friends with classmates Dorothy Mercer and Shirley Bond. If any of her school friends would like to contact the family, or receive a copy of the order of service, then please get in touch with me, through the editor.

Nick Worley, *son*



## Beryl Dean 1936-49

4th February 1931 - 30th November 2019

### A £10 P.O.M. and a fine Ambassador for Old Palace



Born 1931, Beryl attended Old Palace School from 1936. She followed her schooling with a secretarial course and a certificate in domestic science and Institutional Management. Whilst running a small canteen, Beryl lived at home but, after the early death of both parents, she started to plan

to emigrate to Australia – at the time when you could go for just £10. (Nobody is really sure what “POM” stands for!)

In 1967 she embarked on a long sea voyage to Australia – made even longer by the closing of the Suez Canal. On arrival she soon obtained a post running the residential hall of Queen’s College in Melbourne but before settling there, took a bus tour of Tasmania and the local area. Alongside her demanding job, Beryl studied and qualified as a Home Economics teacher and had various posts - finally retiring in 1984.

Walking, Scottish dancing, music and animals – especially the training of guide dogs – all contributed to a fulfilled life. One important focus was her membership of Holy Trinity Church in Hampton, Melbourne until her last days. The move into residential care on 4 September last year, at the Elanora home on Brighton beach, was carefully planned by Beryl. Early on she had learned to use a computer and kept in touch with everyone, especially her beloved nieces – Angela in England, Estella in Japan and Frances in Belgium – plus friends back in England, which included contacts with Old Palace Alumnae.

In 2015, Beryl paid one of her visits to England, this time to attend the Old Palace Alumnae Centenary. Her mother had also attended Old Palace and it was during her time – in 1915 - that it was proposed to create an association for old girls. Now Beryl was able to cut the celebration cake and witness the presentation of a statue – Victoria Reading – to the School.

After contracting pneumonia, Beryl was admitted to hospital back in November. During a last visit by a close friend with Rudi, Beryl’s little dog, curled up on her lap. In spite of all the expert care, Beryl “passed peacefully into God’s presence on Saturday 30th November.”

We are grateful to Janice Newham in Australia for many of these details of Beryl’s life.

Jo Tuck (née Akers 1946-53)

## Jean Eyers (née Chouls) 1945-51

6th August 1934 – 5th October 2019

### A Tribute to a Special Mum



Mum was born in Croydon in 1934 and after passing the 11plus and went on to the Old Palace School. She always had very happy memories of school and left after completing Commercial 6th Form in 1951. She was very pleased to get her secretarial qualifications which enabled her to work in London, in the West End, where she loved the glamour. After marrying

Noel, she travelled to India where he was working. She soon found her feet and got a job as secretary to the Deputy High Commissioner. One of her tasks was to arrange a visit of the Queen and Prince Philip. I was born in India.

Their next assignment was South Africa where my two sisters, Ali and Fi were born. She much preferred the climate there. We eventually returned to the UK and moved to Norwich in 1969.

She supported Dad in his career, and she would remember everyone she met and knew just what to talk about. Dad died when she was only 54, and with her usual spirit, she got on with life and kept busy. She enjoyed travelling with friends, visited family in Singapore, and went on many on cruises; I think she went to every continent (except Antarctica) and filled the house with treasures from her travels. I admired Mum’s get-up-and-go.

Wherever Mum has been, she made friends which she retained. She always said that you needed to work at friendship and stay in touch.

Her friends and family remember her as being witty and fun with a great sense of humour. She had a lively, outgoing and strong personality which she retained during her illness. We were saddened to watch Mum fade as the dementia developed but she seemed to pass away peacefully and without pain.

Kate Kettley, daughter



## Lucy Tearle (née Oakeshott) 1962 - 1969

Died October 2019

## Tharane Selvadurai 1998-2008

Died 6th January 2020

# Whitgift Three Schools Concert



The Fairfield Halls re-opened in September 2019, following a three-year renovation project, and on Wednesday, 16th October a spectacular concert was given by the three Schools of John Whitgift, to mark this.

All of the performances from the three schools (Whitgift, Trinity and Old Palace) were at an exceptionally high standard. We enjoyed a range of compositions, including both choral and orchestral. Many alumnae attended, including Jo Tuck, who said: *"I was very thrilled by the concert, particularly the voice of Ellie, a soprano from the Old Palace"*.

I am sure that for all of the OP Alumnae, the highlight was that same performance by our own orchestra and choir. In true Old Palace style, the four soloists, led by the Ellie, entered the

stage with daisy chains in their hair, signalling there was going to be light-hearted performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Poor Wandering One', from the Pirates of Penzance. The soloists' performances were magnificent and joyous, and they almost danced their way through it.

Ellie continues:

*"When asked to sing at Fairfield I wanted to sing a piece that would simply be fun to perform and that everyone in the audience would be able to enjoy. Through being involved in the music department since I was in Year 7, most of my friends are musical as well, so I didn't have any trouble finding people to sing with me. We had to snatch chances in lunchtimes and breaks to rehearse. Initially the idea of wearing flower crowns was a joke, but we decided to do it anyway, because it fitted the atmosphere of the piece."*

*The whole experience was such a fun night and I was so grateful to be able to perform such an entertaining song with all my closest friends in a space like Fairfield, I'll never forget it."*



# OPA Summer Reunion

## Saturday, 20th June 2020

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to join us for our annual Summer Reunion on **Saturday, 20th June**.

We do hope that you will be able to join us. You are most welcome to bring your partner or a family member. Alternatively, please do pass on this invitation to any class mates who may not be on our mailing list.

The reunion will be held at Old Palace Senior School. The format is as follows:

12 noon	Welcome and pre-lunch drinks	The Courtyard
1pm	Buffet lunch	Banqueting Hall
2.30pm	Opportunity to wander, reminisce and catch up	The Chapel
3pm	Afternoon tea including AGM	Banqueting Hall
4pm	Finish	

We are more than happy to reserve a table for you, should you wish to place a group booking. Please contact our Chair, Katherine, at [top.kat@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:top.kat@hotmail.co.uk)

**The cost of the day will be £25 per person and will include lunch and all refreshments.**

To make a booking, please complete the reply slip below and return to the address at the bottom of the page. Alternatively, alumnae can now book on the school website via WisePay (where you will need to create an account). *Full details of how to create a WisePay account can be found under the WisePay header in the top right hand corner of the home page of our website: [www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](http://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk)*

We look forward to your company on the day.

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### OPA Summer Reunion – Saturday 20th June 2020

Name:	Maiden name <i>(if applicable)</i> :		
Address:			
Postcode:	Telephone:		
Email:			
Dates at school:	From:	To:	House:

- I would like to attend the Summer Reunion on Saturday 20th June. *(please tick all applicable)*
- I enclose a cheque for £  (made payable to OPA)
- I have paid by WisePay
- I have made a BACS payment to the OPA **BACS details: Barclays Bank A/C no: 20193968, Sort Code: 20-24-64**
- I am unable to attend the Summer Reunion but I have completed the contact information as I wanted to keep you updated with my current information.

**Please return to:** Nicola Berry, Marketing & Communications Manager, Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Old Palace Road, Croydon CRO 1AX

# Conservation of the Heritage of the Old Palace

Esther Mann recently took on the role of Heritage Manager for the Whitgift Foundation. She comes to the Foundation with over 20 years' experience of running museums and archives. Her brand-new role is to manage the heritage within the Foundation as a whole, including all the

buildings and archives owned by the foundation.

Esther will be maintaining an archive for the Old Palace School and is putting out a request for any items such as uniform, or memorabilia. There will also be opportunities to volunteer to help with the archive, and

forthcoming events.

If you feel you like to get involved or for further information on the project, then contact Esther on [esthermann@whitgiftfoundation.co.uk](mailto:esthermann@whitgiftfoundation.co.uk).

## Within these Walls... Autumn Half Term 2019



As the pupils and some of the teaching staff enjoyed a welcome break from the daily routine of school life, the first task for the Archivist Volunteers began.

Our job was to examine an interesting collection of the Stations of the Cross. Under Esther's guidance the paper covered parcels were all unwrapped to reveal large plaster of Paris pictures with borders, all in relief, depicting the Passion of Christ. Most of them had survived, relatively intact, but others showed more signs of wear and tear, with cracks and chips to the prominent surfaces.

In view of their size, we discovered that they had all been strengthened with hessian sacking and wood. Their beauty ranged from simple, colour washed to highly painted.

They were all measured, photographed, catalogued and carefully repacked to go into storage. By the end of the week, we were happy to find that there was a complete set of all fourteen stations, with some duplicates. Some of them are currently displayed in the chapel.

As little is known of their exact date, Esther would like to know if anyone remembers seeing any or all fourteen on display during their school days.

Where and when did you remember seeing them?

Please contact her on: [esthermann@whitgiftfoundation.co.uk](mailto:esthermann@whitgiftfoundation.co.uk)

Hilary Gadd

(nee Anderson) Leaver 1973



You will see in the earlier 'Events' section, that the guest speaker at the Alumnae 81-86 Reunion was the historical novelist Alison Weir. Although not an alumna herself, she has a close connection with the school, in that her daughter is an alumna. Here she describes how Katherine of Aragon lived at the 'Old Palace' for much of the year 1502.

## Katherine of Aragon at Croydon Palace



© Balbusso Twins

It is often stated that Henry VIII's first queen, Katherine of Aragon, lived at Durham House, the Bishop of Durham's palace on London's Strand, after the death of her first husband, Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales in April 1502. In fact, Henry VII gave the young widow - she was sixteen - the choice of two residences: Durham House and Croydon Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury's residence in Surrey. Katherine chose Croydon and, by 4 May, was lodging there.

At that time, Croydon Palace was a large, stately courtyard house with

opulent chambers, a great hall, a chapel and a great parlour. There had been archiepiscopal buildings on the site since the tenth century. Since the archbishops used the palace as a summer residence, Katherine was probably accommodated in their own chambers, which had recently been partially rebuilt.

Late in May, the Queen, Elizabeth of York, sent her page, to Croydon, possibly to check on the Princess's health, and perhaps discreetly to ask her servants if there were signs of any pregnancy.

During the months Katherine stayed at Croydon, her future remained under discussion. Her parents, the Spanish sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, were naturally concerned about her. On 10 May they had sent an ambassador to England with instructions to preserve their alliance with Henry VII, ask for the immediate return of Katherine and her dowry and, if possible, secure the Princess's betrothal to the new heir to the throne, Prince Henry, who, at eleven, was five years her junior. Everyone was aware that, if Katherine had conceived a child by Arthur, her union with Henry would contravene

canon law. Doña Elvira, her duenna, was adamant that the marriage had not even been consummated and wrote to Queen Isabella insisting that the Princess remained a virgin. In July, when it was beyond doubt that Katherine was not pregnant with Arthur's child, Isabella informed Henry VII that her daughter remained a virgin. But, although Henry also wished to preserve the Spanish alliance, he was hesitant. Months would pass before he reached a decision on the proposed betrothal between Katherine and Henry. Meanwhile, with her future still uncertain, Katherine had moved to Durham House; she was living there by 6 November 1502.

Her stay at Croydon must have been shadowed by sorrow and anxiety. All her life, she had been brought up as a future queen of England; now that destiny had been stolen from her. It would be seven long, stressful, penurious years before it was restored to her and she became Henry VIII's first wife.

Alison Weir

Author



### *The War of the Roses* book donated by Alison Weir

The School is delighted to have received this beautiful collector's edition of *The War of the Roses*, given to us by its author, one of the best-selling female historians, Alison Weir.

Alison has sold over three million books worldwide, publishing more than 23 titles since 1997. She is an honorary life patron of Historic Royal Palaces. Her books, including her most recent Six Tudor Queens series, along with some of her other Tudor books, can be borrowed from The Friends' Library.

# 80th Birthday Celebrations

A celebration of our 80th Birthdays, in September 2019.

Sylvia Mann, Christine Parfect, Gillian Clear and Anthea Winterton, are in in Croydon Park Hotel.



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

If either of these has changed, please contact Nicola Berry, the Old Palace Marketing Manager.

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.

Email: [nberry@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:nberry@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk)  
Telephone: 07714 742897

or write to her at:

Old Palace of John Whitgift School  
Old Palace Road  
Croydon CRO 1AX

Follow us on:



## LATEST NEWS

Don't forget to have a look at the 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)



## Dates for the Diary

During Covid-19, the Senior School will remain closed until further notice. We are publishing the dates of the pre-arranged tours here, but please be advised to check the school's website in May to see if the school has re-opened.

### Conducted Tours of The Old Palace (by The Friends of the Old Palace)

OPA are very welcome – a good opportunity to learn more about the buildings and see the many changes taking place.

Tours commence at 1.25pm and last 2 hours, including Tea served in the Banqueting Hall.

Tour dates for this year:

**October** 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th

**Admission:** Adults £7  
Senior Citizens £6  
Children under 16 £3

Please check their website for further details:

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

### OPA Summer Reunion Lunch

Saturday, 20th June 2020 at 12 noon

See application form on page 13.

This is the most important occasion of the year for OPAs. Do consider getting friends together and booking a table for lunch.

### OPA and Friend's Carol Concert

Monday, 7th December  
at 7pm in the Chapel followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Guard Room.