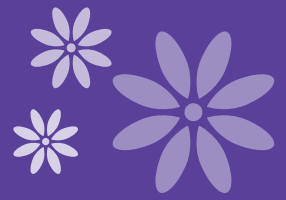




**Old Palace of  
John Whitgift School**

Independent Girls' School



Autumn 2020

# Old Palace Alumnae News





# Welcome from the Committee



Dear Members,

Welcome to this Autumn edition of the 'News'. I hope that this finds you well and managing to adapt to the 'new normal'.

This is the second edition of the year, and I hope to continue to produce two newsletters each year from now on. Particularly at the moment, when it is difficult to meet up with friends, or attend events, I am hoping that these newsletters will help us all to stay in touch. It will have been

difficult for many of us in these strange times, but I hope that this newsletter will provide you with some cheer. In the last few weeks, several articles have been submitted by contributors that attended school at similar times and may well remember each other. This brings home to me that this publication provides a small but valuable connection between many of us.

I would really like to thank all of the many contributors and you will see that there are some compelling articles from our members. It is always so interesting to hear what each other have been getting up to in recent times. There is also an article that looks back at the very full and glamorous life of an alumna, who sadly passed away this year, where you can see images of the girls' uniform and school productions, that will allow you to reminisce.

It is with regret we had to cancel several alumnae events earlier this

year but, unfortunately, this was beyond our control. Since March, the school has been working hard to organise virtual events, such as the school's Easter and Founder's Day services. Both the school and alumnae were able to share in these events, and you can see further details below. We all look forward to the time when we can visit the school for 'real' events, but until then we hope to be able to enjoy more virtual events.

I would like to encourage you all to send me your news, whether one paragraph or one page. However short your item, we are always interested to hear what you have been up to, or which old friends you have met up with. So, stay in touch and look forward to seeing you in the not too distant future,

Katy Beck

Newsletter Editor

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### Cover:

Phoebe, Year 8, made this beautiful drawing of the iconic Old Palace green door

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Keeping the OPA members connected, especially in these uncertain times, is very important to the OPA Committee. We do this by hosting various events throughout the year and hopefully we will be back on track sometime next year. Meanwhile, Katy Beck has edited a lovely Autumn edition of the Newsletter, with the help of Nicola Berry and Jackie Jones and my thanks go to them.

My very best wishes go to you all and your families and I wish to extend my thanks to the School and the Committee for all their hard work and support throughout what has been a very difficult and challenging year for everyone.

Katherine Homatas

Chair OPA

# A word from the Head



When I last wrote for this newsletter we had just gone into lockdown and much like the optimists at the start of WW1 we thought that the Covid-19 situation would be over fairly quickly, probably by the summer.

As I write this in October, we continue to face the challenges presented by Covid-19 and are likely to do so well into the spring. However, as you can imagine, the Old Palace spirit is alive and well amongst our students who not only responded so well to remote learning for the summer term, but have started this term with great positivity.

Face coverings are 'de-rigueur' around the school and no-one is ever far away from a bottle of hand sanitiser, but the girls continue

to work hard in lessons and throw themselves enthusiastically into the clubs (albeit limited on offer). This year, the knitting club is proving very popular amongst the younger years!

Our staff have been superb in the face of these challenges, especially becoming experts in online teaching in an incredibly short space of time. Things are tough for everyone, but in the history of the school I am sure there have been more tricky things to deal with, so we move into winter ready to face the challenges ahead as a united and ever-strong Old Palace community.

Jane Burton

Head

## A lifetime of friendship



*Celebrating Pam's 80th Birthday – she always jokes that she is much younger than me - 8 months!*

September 1949 and I stepped nervously into Class 3A2 – my first day at Old Palace. All the wall/window seats had been taken so I was placed in a centre row, fairly near the Teacher – the lovely Miss Clayton. Names of some of the other new girls were Sandra Muggridge (to be elected Form Captain), Rita Arnold, Maxine Sutton, Jean Boakes, Maureen Mace, Margaret West, Jill Goodborn, Eleanor Docking, Valerie French, Brenda Clark, Sylvia Smith, Christine Brown, April Thomas and Pamela Hudson. A few had already been at School for a year in 3B. From these I recognised Jill who I had been at Nursery School with!

Fast forward 71 years and I still have contact with several of these "Old Girls". Thanks to the OPA I have been able to maintain contact. Pam and I were both in Anselm and loved all sports – she will proudly recall that we were the only two who could vault over the "horse" in Gym lessons!

Life has taken its twists and turns but we have always remained in close contact – to this day Pam and I speak regularly and I keep in touch with Jill, meeting for lunch with her sister, Carol, who was also at Old Palace. We have always enjoyed seeing each other at the annual OPA Reunions. We have been to each other's weddings, attended our children's weddings and now have the joy of sharing photos of our grandchildren. Due to distance we don't meet as much as we would like but the bond of friendship is always there.

Pam has always threatened to write to the newspapers telling them about our friendship which, thanks a great deal to Old Palace, has lasted such a long time. I thought I would write to you!

Maureen Bunn

(née Collins) 1949-56



# Bronwen Williams - A life on the stage



*Bronwen Williams, Sylvia Mann, Jane Swinyard, Christine Perfect, Gill Clear, Anthea Winterton and Althea Tindale at a Reunion Lunch in 2018.*

Bronwen, born in May 1940, was the middle one of three sisters, daughters of a Welsh father who sang in the chorus at Covent Garden, and a mother who was a teacher. She showed early promise as a performer, entertaining her sisters with stories and her excellent ear for accents.

At Old Palace her talents as both an actor and her fine singing voice were quickly recognised and she played the title part in *Iolanthe*, at the tender age of just 13, then *Bunthorne* in *Patience*, *Ko-Ko* in *The Mikado* and *Mr Puff* in *The Critic*.

The review for *The Critic* in the school magazine read:

Bronwen Williams' Puff was a delight. From the first huge wink of her wonderfully expressive eyes to the final notes of the *Rule Britannia* finale, she

never slackened her pace. She took the whole part, the long speeches (the 'puffing lessons', if mishandled could be so tedious!) and the quips in her very accomplished stride. And yet there were highlights; one magnificent Eighteenth Century bow, the story of the officer and the lady in *St. James's*, and of course the sight of his (her) delighted face through the smoke and fire of the sea battle.

After school, and studying drama she had a long and successful career on stage, screen and radio. In the West End one role was that of *Henrietta* in *Robert and Elizabeth*, a musical about Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, starring Keith Mitchell. She had extensive repertory experience in many theatres across the country, playing everything from Shakespeare to Sondheim and Ayckbourn. She joined Derek Nimmo's

touring company *Intercontinental Entertainment* for five tours visiting Hong Kong, the Far East, the middle East and Europe performing in *Blithe Spirit*, *A Bedful of Foreigners*, and *Stepping Out*. Another tour was with Barry Cryer and Willy Rushton.

She appeared in films such as *Under Milkwood* and *Poor Little Rich Girl*. She wrote songs and talks for *Start the Week* and *Stop the Week*. She also did television roles including in *Bergerac*, *Cabaret* (including at the Ritz) and voiceovers.

Later, work was more difficult to come by and she took bed and breakfast guests in her lovely and spacious London flat, bought in better times. Many guests were officials at nearby Lords. Her last role was in *The Mousetrap* when several of her



*The Critic*



*Iolanthe curtain call. Bronwen is centre left (with long dark hair,) next to the Lord Chancellor played by Jane Rogans, who was Head Girl at the time.*

classmates from Old Palace went to see her. A later move took her to St Albans where she entered a more comfortable period of her life.

One reason for her move was that her niece, who had lived close to her in London was now in St. Albans. Family was very important to Bronwen. She had entertained her sisters' children with stories, mimicry and accents. Sadly, both her sisters died prematurely, the older in 1992 and the younger in 2003. She was devastated by these deaths and helped the families wherever she could. One nephew moved to the USA and she visited him several times, as well as having a strong relationship with the nearby niece and her daughter who visited her every weekend and the three of them holidayed together only late last summer.

Bronwen also greatly valued her time at Old Palace and her friends from those days. She was a frequent presence at the summer reunions and one memorable year gave a talk on her career which she had obviously found hugely exciting and enjoyable. She loved coming back to the school, where she was particularly fond of the Chapel. She met old classmates there, and also on other occasions. She had great empathy and warmth and will be sorely missed.

## Christine Perfect

(née Gosden) 1950-58



July 1957 photo of girls in school uniform, at age 17, from left to right, Rosemary Marsh, Christine Perfect (née Gosden) and Bronwen Williams.

# Canon Claire Tillotson MA



I started at Old Palace at the age of 8 in 1978 and left in 1989.

Looking back at teachers who influenced my career now, the main one was Miss Harvey. She was such an inspiration and made the music lessons fun and creative. I was immersed into the music life of the school, playing hymns for assemblies in the Banqueting Hall, playing clarinet in the orchestra and becoming Head Chorister of the choir when I was in 6A.

Music was then and still is my passion and after leaving OPS, I studied for a degree at The London College of Music. The reality of playing clarinet in a professional orchestra hit me when I was studying and after graduating, so I embarked on a career in teaching. Having passed my PGCE, I taught music at Archbishop Tennison School in Croydon and also taught clarinet at Whitgift school. But my real passion was in Music Therapy and in 2001, now married and with two very young children, I started studying at The Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy Centre in London.

I have been practising as a state registered music therapist now for 17 years and mainly work with children who have Autism. As well as working in this country, my work has taken me to Jerusalem and Bethlehem where 10 years ago, I set up a music therapy project in Bethlehem. This has opened

my eyes to a different world, culture, and the difficulties of working in such a complex and political country.

As I am a practising Christian, the Bishop of Rochester, who had an insight into my work in Palestine, made me an Honorary Lay Canon of Rochester Cathedral in 2011. This coupled with my work as a Church Organist and Director of Music keeps me busy! It certainly brings home the words of our school song ' Pro Ecclesia Dei!'

I am fortunate to still be in contact with Miss Harvey (now Mrs Harvey Fackrell) and keep her up to date with my career. I had no idea the path I would lead when I left school but the musical education I received has kept me in good stead and I am so grateful to her and the school for the opportunities I was given.

Four years ago, myself and two of my very good friends from school, Jo Strutt ( Nee Ellery ) and Zoe Croft, revisited the school and Jo and I gave a talk to some of the Sixth Form students at a dinner. It was lovely to be back and reminisce on our time spent at OPS.

## Canon Claire Tillotson MA

(née Tamberlin) 1978-89



Clare with Jo Strutt and Zoe Croft



# 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

Nicola Hawes wrote this poem several years ago in response to a competition in the OPA Newsletter. She was inspired by the history of the school and the 'different feet that have trod' in the building throughout time. Incorporating pictures of the different seasons together with its history, she picked up her pen and wrote.

I think that her words are particularly poignant at this time, when many of us are living quite isolated lives, and we have time to reflect, in particular about our very special school days at the Old Palace...

### Where feet have trod.....

She stands proudly in the Summer sun  
Waiting patiently for her annual guest,  
No ordinary visitor, but one named 'the great'  
Croydon Palace welcomes the splendour and power of  
England,  
Enchanted Queen Elizabeth, holds court, merry in the  
Banqueting Hall  
Her feet have trod and history lives on .....

She weeps profusely in the chill Winter air  
Neglected with damp, abandoned, would she survive?  
'Sell her off, knock her down,' I hear the cries  
A linen printers, bleaching works and laundry,  
Reduced to a barn with hay cart, brushwood and  
chicken coop  
Their feet have trod and history lives on .....

She sighs with relief, as Spring lifts her head  
T'is 1887, thanks to the Duke of Newcastle, a gift,  
Sisters of the Church strive in earnest  
Repairs, now, our school rises from the derelict site,  
From a humble past, she's grown  
Their feet have trod and history lives on .....

Today she smiles adoringly, as Autumn leaves fall  
Clutching great treasures which survive,  
Service, skills, knowledge and courage  
Relationships – our pillars of strength,  
Education for life, our world  
Our feet have trod.....our SCHOOL!

Nicola Hawes

(1963-73), Membership Officer OPA



# 'Ruby's Choice': A film about dementia



In the summer of 2015, and spring of 2018 my story was first featured in the Old Palace Alumnae Newsletter. The articles described my journey of research and co-development of a ground-breaking model that is humanising dementia care in 11 countries. Old Palace School inspired me that each of us holds the power to make a difference in the world in our own sphere of influence. Our spheres of influence grow and change in life according to the different networks we encounter, and in 2020 my work sphere grew exponentially with an exciting project with the film world.

In May and June 2020 a new feature film about dementia called *Ruby's Choice* was filmed in Sydney, produced and directed by Michael Budd of Amazing People Pictures and starring the acclaimed actress Jane Seymour. My colleague Jane Verity and I, who co-lead Dementia Care International and its charity arm Dementia Foundation for *Spark of Life*, were invited in 2018 by Michael to help get the film off the ground, acting in an advisory capacity. In the process I had the opportunity to meet the philanthropist Sir Owen Glenn, and explain about the international work of our organisations and the relevance of the film. Sir Owen became the funder of the entire film through the Glenn Family Foundation, and decided to generously commit his 50% share of the profit to Dementia Foundation for *Spark of Life*.

"I have chosen to support the Dementia Foundation for *Spark of Life* with 50% of the profits of *Ruby's Choice*. It will enable this Australian based health promotion charity to alleviate emotional suffering and ignite the *Spark of Life* in people with dementia, their families and carers," Sir Owen stated.

This generous support will also help aged care services in developing countries. Aged Care Leaders in Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia and India are already benefitting from sponsorships funded by Dementia Foundation for *Spark of Life*. These sponsorships have enabled them to attend the international Master Leadership Program in Australia that equips them to implement the *Spark of Life* Model of Care in each of their aged and dementia care services.

The *Spark of Life* Model of Care is an innovative, systematic and sustainable best practice model, recognised and awarded for excellence by the Global Ageing Network GAN – formally known as the International Association for Homes and Services for the Ageing (IAHSA).

As well as equipping leaders with skills and resources, the program also gives attendees specialised knowledge to educate families, communities and health professionals supporting people with dementia.

This is critical as the *Spark of Life* Model of Care enables people living with dementia to live in a community that understands them, has empathy, and has learned profound, yet simple strategies to provide emotional and social support.

Aged Care Leaders find the model is affordable and practical to implement in their very diverse countries. The model provides a new perspective on dementia that facilitates rehabilitation and enables people with dementia to live meaningful and enjoyable lives.

The film *Ruby's Choice* coincides with the completion of the development, research and international field testing over 27 years of the *Spark of Life* Model of Care and it's now ready for further uptake around the world, at a time where it can be of vital support. If you have contacts with aged care or healthcare leaders who may be interested in bringing this innovative best practice model to the UK please feel welcome to contact me on: [info@dementiacareinternational.com](mailto:info@dementiacareinternational.com) and visit [www.dementiacareinternational.com](http://www.dementiacareinternational.com) and [www.dementiafoundation.org.au](http://www.dementiafoundation.org.au)

Hilary Lee

(née Muller) 1974-1983



bottom right, Sailesh Mishra, *Spark of Life* Master Practitioner, with a woman with dementia and her family

In July 2020, Mrs Frost retired from Old Palace School, having taught a whole generation of Prep School girls. At the end of the summer term, her colleagues posted glowing memories of her in the school's weekly bulletin, and I thought this deserved an article in our 'News'. I then found out that Mrs Frost was one of our alumnae, Alison Hawes, whom I remembered so I interviewed her to find out how she had ended up spending so much of her life at the Old Palace School. *Katy Beck, editor*

## Mrs Frost: Memories of Old Palace



*Having returned to your old school as a teacher, can I assume that you had happy memories of your school days?*

I have many happy memories of school. I particularly remember messing about with friends at lunch time. We were meant to stay outside during all weathers. When we were in 3A, our classrooms were the prefabs in the playground, and sometimes we managed to go back into them at lunchtime. We would look out for the teacher on patrol, and if one came we would dash into the stock cupboard at the back of the classroom which was next to the cloakroom and the way out. We didn't stay in the stock cupboard but escaped through a hole we made in the wall between the cupboard and cloakroom and then legged it out of the prefab. This continued for many months until eventually Miss Coombes, our form teacher, found out and letters were sent home to our parents. That put an end to that!

I also remember enjoying our lunches, and the friendly dinner lady Mrs French.

We used to sit around tables of 8 girls, and each of us had roles such as serving out the food, clearing up and cleaning the table, which made it great fun. We were also able to eat all the food left as we were last in!

*In my blurred memories of school, you were never without your lacrosse stick. Did you continue with lacrosse, or sports after school?*

I studied PE and Maths at university, so yes, I did. I would have liked to have just studied PE, but Miss Hilton thought that it would be good to have a second, more academic subject. After university, I continued to play team sports, but now I do mainly individual sport such as running. Whilst I was at school, I really enjoyed sports, and I always looked forward to the Thursday lunchtime lacrosse practices and rushing around a lacrosse field on a Saturday morning.

*Having read your tributes by your colleagues, you clearly must enjoy teaching. What inspired you to go into this profession?*

As long as I remember I always wanted to teach. I think partly, it was because my sister, who was eight years older than me, and who I really looked up to, was a teacher.

*Were you nervous about returning to your old school to teach?*

I had been teaching in another local school for a couple of years when the post of Prep School teacher at the OPS was advertised. I vividly remember taking my hand-written application form to the school and entering

through the 'green door' to hand it in. After the interview, Miss Hilton offered me not the Prep School role, but a job as ICT teacher and a 3A form teacher.

Whilst I enjoyed this, as soon as a position in the Prep School came up, I moved there and have been there for over 30 years. I never felt any difficulties being on the teaching staff, in fact one of my current colleagues is also an alumna. I am very grateful to Miss Hilton for offering me a job at Old Palace as I have enjoyed my time at the Prep, have lovely memories and have made some very good friends who I hope will always remain so.

*I have read the tributes by your colleagues, and the interesting assemblies that you organised, which included one where the prep staff dressed up in Winnie the Pooh costumes in the Minster. What other memories would you like to share?*

Probably the most memorable event of my teaching career, was from the year of the school's Centenary. There was a series of events organised for the school's trip to Canterbury where our Founder's Day service would take place in Canterbury Cathedral.

Before the service, we all attended a lunch party at the Kent County Cricket ground. Miss Hilton somehow managed to organise all this for us, and there was also a book written to celebrate our Centenary. As well as this, a group of girls, two from each year, took part in a walk from Old Palace to Canterbury. I was one of the teachers who accompanied them, and we camped each night of the trip. It was really memorable.



*Finally, I have heard that you are going to spend a day a week helping out at the school. Do you have any other definite plans for your retirement?*

Yes, I am incredibly fortunate to be able to still work one day a week at the Prep School. But also, I have started a theology degree at a London college. At the moment, most of the teaching is online, and I am enjoying the diverse mix of students ranging in age from 18 to about 60 and from all backgrounds. This is something that I had wanted to do for many years but have not had the opportunity. It's funny, but some of it reminds me of being back at school. We are learning New Testament Greek, and I try to work out what question I will be asked as the teacher goes round the group so I am ready for it, just as we did in Latin lessons, and getting nervous as my turn comes round. The essay writing will be challenging as I haven't written an essay in years, but I have thoroughly enjoyed all the teaching so far.

*These are just a few of the quotes from Mrs Frost's colleagues. For a full tribute, please follow the link below.*

*"It would be difficult to find someone as kind and caring as Mrs Frost."*

*"Mrs Frost is such an inspiring teacher with her warmth, patience, positivity, empathy and incredible ability to talk to anyone and put them at their ease."*

*"Mrs Frost is a bundle of energy and enthusiasm, bringing 'pizazz' to Old Palace! When she is in charge of an assembly, you know that fun is never too far away, as well as knowing you will be left with some inspiring words to contemplate throughout the day."*

[https://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FINAL\\_Bulletin-200\\_070720-1.pdf](https://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FINAL_Bulletin-200_070720-1.pdf)

Alison Frost

(née Hawes) 1974-1981

Katy Beck

(née Lodge) 1973-1983, editor

## Following the rule of six\*



*From left to right: Nicola Johnson, Tracey Lee (née Chapman), Alison Botham (née James), Katherine Homatas (née Boyd), Maxine Adams and Polly Black, all in the year group of leavers of '83, met up in September 2020 after six months of Covid-19 restrictions.*

Polly says: "It was really good to meet up again after so long, as we have all missed our regular get togethers. We meet up regularly, which is thanks to Nicky Stacey, who organised a reunion for our year group five years ago. Almost half of the year group met up at the school, where we joined a tour with 'The Friends of The Old Palace'. This was great fun and very nostalgic. Since then, the alumnae based near Croydon try and get together as often as we can."

\* as per the Covid-19 regulations in September

## STAYING IN TOUCH

We would like to be able to put our members in touch with each other. However, because of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), and personal data security, there is not an easy way to do this.

As a start you can register as a member of the Old Palace Alumnae by contacting our Marketing Manager, Nicola Berry. Then, as a starting point, you will receive our newsletter. Please check the school website and our facebook page for our news:

<https://www.facebook.com/opoldgirls>

<https://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/>

# A novel idea: The Hameed sisters



Ambreen Hameed

One morning in April 2020 I texted my elder sister, Ambreen: *I think it would really help my mental health to have a project. What do you think about publishing our novel online?* A moment later a reply pinged back: *Funny – I was thinking the same thing.*

Lockdown had brought both our industries – TV in Ambreen’s case, theatre in mine – to a halt. The announcement came in the week that I, a freelance dramaturg, had been about to go into rehearsal with the Royal Ballet for a new production, *The Dante Project*. Ambreen, an edit producer, had a new series of *Celebrity Best Home Cook* postponed as filming was forced to stop. Like many other women, we found ourselves whisked out of work into a daily routine of housework, cooking and taking turns to stay with our elderly mother. Publishing our work offered at least a partial remedy to the sense of loss: a way of feeling creative, (somewhat) in control and joining in with what everyone else seemed to be doing – working online.

By that stage we had had a long and eventful journey with our two-book novel, entitled *Undying*. Over the last few years, it has been backed by two well-known literary agents, almost been the subject of a book auction, come close to being published several times, and – most recently – been languishing in a drawer.



Uzma Hameed

Set in south London in 1998, *Undying* is a black comedy about two British-Pakistani sisters who are in their thirties and, *still not married*. Sufya, the eldest, is an evolutionary biologist trying to figure out whether animal behaviour supports the theory that males and females inhabit different moral universes. Her voice is written by Ambreen who has a passion for science, having studied the big four at A-level (double maths, chemistry, and physics,) and gone on to read for degrees in both Physics and the History & Philosophy of Science. (Come on, OPS!)

I write the younger sister, Zarina who has chosen the arts, and runs a theatre company. Since I took Latin, German and English Lit at A-level - Shakespeare with the inspirational Dr Eleanor Relle was a highlight that can’t go unmentioned - and went on to read Modern Languages and yes, set up a theatre company - there might be a tiny element of autobiography at play here! Zarina is writing a new play and, in the absence of any decent men in her life, pondering the nature of heroism.

The story begins at a family dinner where, after a separation of many years, the two sisters are about to be reunited with their childhood playmate, Heathrow –so named for the Terminal 3 concourse on which he was discovered as an abandoned toddler. Now a well-travelled, award-winning documentary film-maker, Heathrow’s return is causing

great anticipation in the household. After all, he’s still single, and he’s even a Muslim.

As far as their long-suffering parents are concerned, it is Sufya who, as the eldest – and, in Zarina’s eyes, the one who always gets first pick–is the logical betrothed for Heathrow. But as Sufya (to her own surprise) finds herself falling for a man approved by her family, she is unaware that her younger sister has secretly loved Heathrow for years, and is no longer willing to settle for leftovers. In fact, Zarina is determined to overturn her destiny, even if it means resorting to dubious occult practices to get her man. But there is more to their enigmatic hero than either sister knows...

*Undying Book 1, The Kinship of Djinn*s will be out in December, with Book 2, *My Uncle’s Son* following early in 2021. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, we hope that comrades one and all will unite in enjoying a special preview of our book covers, which we are delighted to share with you here.

For anyone wanting to find out more, visit our website: [hameedandsister.com](http://hameedandsister.com)

Ambreen Hameed

(1976-1983)

Uzma Hameed

(1978-1985)





## Hazel Snaith

(née Hanson) 1936-37

1927- July 2020



Hazel was a Life member and up till very recently attended Reunions at School. In recent years Jo Tuck, our previous newsletter editor, was a regular visitor to Hazel and was invited to her 90th Birthday party.

In March 2018, aged 91, Hazel attended our Associate Afternoon for Year 7 pupils when she entertained everyone by playing a Chopin Impromptu on the School's new Steinway. A musician all her life, Hazel also used to provide the accompaniment for a Professor of singing, when he was conducting exams with pupils at the Royal College of Music.

Maureen Bunn and Jo Tuck, *friends*

## Judith Richeux

(née Grainge ) 1954 to 1959

Died 3 September 2020

Judith and I attended Old Palace from 1954 to 1959 when Sister Fenella was Headmistress! Judy died at her home in France leaving her husband, Guy, her 3 children, Corinne, Marc and Stefan and their husband and wives, several grandchildren, and a very recent great grandchild. She was my oldest and very dear friend, who will be greatly missed

Angela Theobald (née Hutton) *friend*



## Bronwen Williams

1950-1957

15th May 1940 – 3rd January 2020

Bronwen joined Old Palace in September 1950 in 3b, then the youngest form in the school (now Year 6). She quickly established herself as a star performer in stage and musical events. Her performances *Hiawatha* and *The Walrus and the Carpenter*, 3b productions, led to her taking major roles in the annual school performances (alternately *Gilbert and Sullivan* and plays) most roles being taken by those who had just finished O and A Levels.

She left school halfway through her A level course to take up a place to study drama at the Royal Academy of Music and from then on had a fulfilling and enjoyable career on the stage appearing in West End productions, repertory and touring many parts of the world. She also wrote songs and scripts for radio.

For the last 16 years or more she had been a regular attender at the Old Girls Summer Reunion, meeting classmates there and also on other occasions.

She will be sorely missed by not only her year group but anyone who was at the school in the years she attended. A full article about her is included elsewhere in the Newsletter.

## Amanda Louise Frances Bennett

(née Orbell) 1976-1983

2nd July 1965 – 12 September 2020



*Back row: Sandra Aldridge, Tracy Lee (née Chapman), Maxine Adams and Caroline Bray (née Aspey) Front: Amanda Bennett (née Orbell)*

At 11 years old we all met at Old Palace and remained best friends to this date. Amanda, our kind, full of fun and dearest friend, had fought MS for many years. Seeing her suffer like she did at the end, was tough to see, yet she lived with grace, humour and always wanted to know the gossip! She was a beautiful person inside and out. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

Tracy Lee, *friend*

In this section, I am sharing with you what I see as some of the highlights and main events from the school, over recent months. I have extracted these details from the school's weekly bulletin of news (Around the Palace) which describes in more detail what the girls have been up to. It is worth dipping into the bulletins when you have time. I am really impressed with the range of extra-curricular activities that the girls get up to, so I am also including some images of these too.

### BBC Radio 3, Choral Evensong from Croydon Minster



Members of the school's polyphonic choir joined the Minister's choristers for the recording of the evening service (Evensong) which was broadcast on Sunday 18th October.

The canticles were sung to an arrangement by T.A.Walmisley, who was the Church organist in the 1830s.

© DFphotography.co.uk



### Creative Workshops Years 7 & 8

These practical workshops replace homework in the subjects of Art, Dance, Drama, DT, Computing and Music until after the autumn half term. There was a real buzz of excitement around the school, with the students eagerly getting involved in a range of projects and tasks. These workshops also give students the opportunity to mix with a variety of students across the year group in a fun and vibrant setting whilst expanding their practical skills. We look forward to seeing the outcome of the work produced.



### Prep Football

Years 3 – 5 are now playing football. Mrs Coster held her first session with Year 5 last week and the girls are taking to this new sport with great enthusiasm.



## A Level and GCSE Results

This year, we have achieved a very strong set of A Level and GCSE results.

At A Level, 25% of all the entries were awarded the top grade of A\* with 68% of entries achieving A\*/A and 93% achieving A\*-B. Students secured places at top universities including two students who gained Oxbridge places. Over 95% of students gained places at their first or insurance place university.

At GCSE, 32% of all entries were awarded the top grade of 9, with 51% of entries awarded at least a grade 8 and 74% of entries awarded at least a grade 7 (the equivalent of an A grade from previous years). Just over a quarter of all Old Palace students achieved at least a grade 7 in all of their exams.

*'After such a difficult period where our students have coped with so much disruption and uncertainty, it is pleasing to see our students achieve such strong academic results and see their hard work duly rewarded. Congratulations to all our students. Thanks must go to the Old Palace staff for all their hard work and to our parents for all the support they have shown their daughters and the school!'*

**Mrs Burton**





## Preparatory School Celebrates European Day of Languages

The whole of Prep school participated in the European Day of Languages, and every class had fun activities, ranging from registration being taken in several different European languages, a puppet show, making flags, learning numbers and quizzes.

Apparently, the "pièce de résistance" was the "cremeschnitte", made by the chef and her team which is a vanilla and custard cream cake that originated in Croatia



## African Drumming



In October, pupils at the Prep School enjoyed an African Drumming workshop. This was taught by the same man who took Story telling. His name was Prince Kojo and he taught us about the names of the drums. It was awesome. Lydia, Year 5



## Year 8 Cricket

Some of Year 8 have been working on developing their cricket skills during lesson time – maybe we will find the next Heather Knight at Old Palace?



## Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh Award

Well done to the Year 10 students who completed their Bronze DofE expeditions over the Summer.





The last event that the alumnae were able to attend was the 'Class of 81-86 Reunion' which was held at the end of February 2020. The OPA Committee meeting and the Year 7 Associate Alumnae Afternoon, due to take place in March, had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. However, within a few weeks, the school had set up its own YouTube channel and is now able to host virtual events.

## Easter Service

On Wednesday 1 April, the school Easter Service was broadcast to all students and some invited alumnae. The link is still live so you can see the service by clicking below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=eW7GTbgZBNA&feature=youtu.be>

It was especially comforting to watch the service, as the whole country had been in lockdown for just over a week, and everyone was feeling rather isolated and unsure of what lay ahead. Being able to watch the service brought a real sense of comfort from the familiar setting, and it was so good to see the involvement of a few of the students. Father Andrew, the Priest-in-Charge at Croydon Minster, led the service and also wrote the following message to the school. This was first published in the weekly school bulletin, of 9th April, 2020. I would really encourage you to read these bulletins and see how much is going on at the school.

[https://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FINAL\\_Bulletin-190\\_09\\_04\\_20.pdf](https://www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FINAL_Bulletin-190_09_04_20.pdf)

### An Easter Message from Father Andrew

We are all having to get used to new ways of doing things: schools, churches, places of work, places of leisure, places of worship. For Old Palace that meant that our Easter Service was live streamed on YouTube, which was unimaginable a couple weeks ago; but it was so good to be connected with you all in that way.

Human beings are endlessly creative and the best sort of education fosters that creativity and ability to respond to new situations and challenges. I have seen that in staff and students at Old Palace; and it is a great tribute to the school.

The message of Easter, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ at its heart, is one of a way of life that is unimaginable initially, but one that draws the best out of human beings, so that they can thrive, flourish and be alive to the gifts of God. I pray blessed Easter for you all.

## Founder's Day Service

This year, the school community was unable to join together in the Croydon Minster for the annual Founder's Day service. Following on from the success of the Easter service, a virtual Founder's Day service prepared, organised and filmed. This was broadcast to the students during form time on Tuesday 29th September, and a link was available for parents and alumnae to share and watch.

<https://www.johnwhitgiftfoundation.org/old-palace-founders-day-service-2020/>

The two weekly bulletins of 25th September and 2nd October 2020 give much more detail than we can provide here. I strongly recommend reading Jane Burton's address which you can find in full in the second bulletin. The service was advertised on the OPA facebook page, and there were many supportive and encouraging comments posted. Please enjoy these images taken during the filming and broadcast.



# Virtual OPA & Friends Christmas Carol Service

We all know that Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the much-loved OPA & Friends Carol Service. However, this year, Covid-19 restrictions mean that sadly, we are all unable to attend the service in person.



Does this mean there will be no Carol Service? Not a bit of it. Instead we will be recording a virtual service which will be available (free) for all to see from **6pm on Monday, 7 December.**

Just remember to look at the Latest News section of the Old Palace website on the morning of the service for all the details of how to view. Alternatively, type Old Palace School into the search box of YouTube and it will direct you to our new Old Palace YouTube channel.

There you will find not only the Carol Service (remember - it won't go live until 6pm on the 7 December) but all the other films we have made about Old Palace since lockdown.

YouTube Channel link:

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCBqiB4Ik1sypJhM58FrukWQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBqiB4Ik1sypJhM58FrukWQ)

## Dates for the Diary

### OPA and Friend's Virtual Carol Concert

Monday, 7th December  
2020 at 6pm.

### PROVISIONAL OPA Summer Reunion Lunch

Saturday, 19th June 2021  
at 12 noon

This is the most important occasion of the year for OPAs. Do consider getting friends together and booking a table for lunch. There will be time to look round the building – there is lots of work taking place, including the restoration of the Long Gallery.

The afternoon will include a short Annual General Meeting of the Old Palace Alumnae with tea and cakes.

## 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)

