

Chair's Report July 2025

The Old Palace Alumnae held their final Summer Reunion on Saturday 20 June. As 11am approached, a long queue was seen outside the school gates, Hilary rang the school bell and the gates were opened. Around 250 OPAs', Old Palace pupils, members of staff and guests attended the event. It was a wonderful occasion and blessed with good weather and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The Annual OPA AGM was held after the event and roughly 100 Old Palace Alumnae attended.

A final Founder's Day Service was held on Monday 30 September with Father Andrew conducting the service. Alumnae and their families were invited to attend. The Croydon Minster was full of OPAs', Old Palace pupils, friends, families, members of staff and invited guests. The music was conducted by James Griffith, Director of Music at the school with many Alumnae joining with the dwindling school choir numbers to create a full Choir. Under the directorship of Veronica Barnes the choir sang specially chosen anthems for the occasion in three parts.

On behalf of the OPA, Hilary gave a wonderful speech entitled "A goodly heritage have we" and interestingly enough it echoed almost the same experiences that I had at the school for my 10 happy years there. A special VIP Reception was held in the Chapel for the OPA committee, former staff and the Sisters of the Church. The Sisters were delighted to be invited and thoroughly enjoyed the service and a guided tour around the school afterwards.

Cindy Hedmann and Zoe Sexton resigned from the committee due to work commitments however the committee welcomed four new members, Veronica Barnes, Jean Loh, Sophie Filon and Liz Forrest.

The OPA Committee meeting was held in Grindal on Wednesday 16th October.

The OPA held their final Carol Service in the Banqueting Hall on Monday 9 December. Tours and refreshments were served from 4.30pm with the service commencing at 6pm. It was very well attended. It was conducted by Maria Kolpaktchi (OPA) along with Marion Holmes (OPA) and Veronica Barnes. Veronica conducted the large Choir, made up of many Alumnae and the remaining choristers at the school. A rousing and emotional end to the service came when the school song that had been written & composed 106 years earlier in 1918 was sung.

The OPA Committee held three further meetings and two working party meetings. They have been working hard to produce a new OPA database, which is now operational, a new OPA constitution which I will present to you today and we are in the process of setting up a new OPA website which is work in progress.

I would like to pay tribute to the Old Palace Alumnae whom have very sadly passed away in the last year: Karen Sorensen, Jo Tuck, Pam Gill (Alum), Maggie Anderson and Zoe Sexton. All were committed and

dedicated members of the OPA, with Jo and Zoe being former members of the OPA committee. Jo was our much loved and highly respected OPA Newsletter Editor for many years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for their commitment, dedication and hard work throughout the year and all their support for myself. Also I would like to thank the school for their continued support for the Old Palace Alumnae.

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