

The Friends of The Old Palace, Croydon

(Registered Charity no. 261663)

NEWSLETTER

No. 118

www.friendsofoldpalace.org

Autumn 2017



Bishop's Palace Lincoln

The Friends of The Old Palace, Croydon
Registered Charity No. 261663

Aims: To promote and foster the interests of the Old Palace, its restoration and maintenance, and of the Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Croydon.

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A Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

The last session of this year's tours begins on 24th October and it promises to be a busy few days as several large groups have booked to tour the palace. We had a full complement of 30 visitors for the taster tour during the weekend of Open City in London in September. As Croydon is trying to raise its profile as a city of the future - a proposed new shopping centre, a place to relax and dine in Box Park, a tower block second only to The Shard in height – it is good to see that many people realise that the town also has a fascinating past.

Our annual Carol Service with the Old Palace Alumnae takes place at 7.30pm on Monday 4th December so I hope that many Friends can attend. The singing in the atmospheric chapel is always wonderful, and everyone enjoys the mince pies and mulled wine that follow.

Best wishes,

Mary Moore

The Long Gallery

We are excited to announce that work has begun on the long-awaited restoration of The Long Gallery. The room has been opened-up for the first time in over a hundred years to reveal the former Archbishop's Long Gallery. The building is a corridor gallery, believed to date from the second half of the 15th Century. It was constructed as a means to connect separate chambers in the palace, but evidently also became a private recreational space, separate from the public areas of the palace. It was expensively glazed with large oriel windows and strips of high windows overlooking the courtyard to the North and extensive gardens and fish ponds to the South. It was clearly conceived as a high-status room in the Palace.

The dimensions and surviving details are similar to the Brown Gallery at Knole House in Kent, which was also commissioned at this time as a palace for the Archbishops of Canterbury. The Brown Gallery had an open arcade at ground floor level and oriel windows on both sides. Gallery spaces became extremely popular during the Tudor period, such that during the reign of Elizabeth I, most large houses were commissioned with a long gallery. One reason for this seems to have been the popularity of dancing the galliard, which was a formal dance known to have been favoured by Elizabeth I, which suited the relatively light space of the gallery and the length of the room. Elizabeth I is known to have visited Croydon a number of times and chose this room in 1567 to present the Great Seal of England to her court favourite Sir Christopher Hatton, who as Keeper of the Seal, became her Lord Chancellor.

In the 18th Century the room was remodelled with new sash windows and panelling. Shortly afterwards the Archbishops abandoned the Palace, which survived as a linen and calico printing works. The Long Gallery was partially occupied as a domestic residence whilst the wider site operated as a factory

powered by a water wheel in the southern courtyard. In 1889, the palace was rescued and became the home of a new school for girls: Old Palace. Over the years the room was subdivided to provide two classrooms, with a new floor inserted on the western side. The roof of the passageway collapsed in the 1930s requiring extensive rebuilding at the western end, which possibly accounts for the loss of panelling in this area.

The current works have involved opening-up this space and uncovering earlier floor finishes and concealed details in the panelled walls. It is now proposed to refurbish the existing floor and to install new heating, lighting and power. It is also proposed to restore damaged panelling and to replace that which has been lost to recover the perceived identity of this space. The intention is to transform the Long Gallery into a beautiful space; one which can be enjoyed by students, whilst enabling its great significance to be appreciated by all.

Nicola Berry



Sir Christopher Hatton

Dates for Your Diary

Carol Service

Monday 4th December at 7.30pm in the Chapel.

Tours 2018

Spring Wednesday 4th April
 Thursday 5th April
 Friday 6th April

Summer Wednesday 30th May
 Thursday 31st May
 Friday 1st June

Autumn Tuesday 23rd October
 Wednesday 24th October
 Thursday 25th October
 Friday 26th October

Annual General Meeting 2018

Saturday 19th May, 2.30 p.m.

If you would like to raise a matter at the AGM please notify the Chair in writing before the meeting. Any nominations for membership of the committee would be most welcome – again, please mail them to the Chair.

Other Places, Other Palaces

Those of us who have ever worked at Old Palace of John Whitgift School, in whatever capacity and of whatever age, will know that its influence never leaves you and this is just as true of the palace.

So, when my husband suggested a few days away in Lincoln to see copies of Magna Carta, the Domesday Book, L'histoire de Guillaume le Marechal, and the death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots, how could we stay anywhere else but at The Old Palace Hotel? Guests are housed in a converted church in the grounds of the palace and the former bishop's residence is now a retreat house.

The bishopric of Lincoln was a huge entity in medieval times, stretching from the Humber to the Thames, and its cathedral and palace reflected its importance and wealth. The palace was built to the south of the cathedral in the late twelfth century. Little of it remains now but the end of the West Hall, built by St. Hugh of Lincoln, the city's bishop in the 1230s, still stands. We were able to climb the tower gatehouse, built by and named after Bishop William Alnwick in the 1430s, and this has a commanding view over the town. The site is now managed by English Heritage and can be visited at certain times of the year.

On another occasion we went to Ely and here the bishop's palace is still very much in use. Built in the fifteenth century by Bishop Alcock, the palace is similar to our own, having a Long Gallery, a Chapel and over thirty bedrooms. Of the original buildings only the East Tower and the lower part of the West tower remain and the more recent additions are used as the Sixth Form Centre for King's Ely, an independent school.

Not a bishop's palace this time, but still an interesting if perhaps coincidental link to Croydon Palace, was in Zaragoza in northern Spain. The palace here was the ancestral home of the kings of Aragon and now houses the Aragonese parliament. The shield of King Juan I (called The Elegant) features a cross of St George and in each quarter a Moorish head. Who knows if Archbishop Juxon had this in mind when he devised his coat of arms, a cross with four Negro heads, assumed to be created because of his family's association with the slave trade?

Mary Moore



Old Palace News

Old Palace of John Whitgift School

Late August saw another excellent set of public examination results for the school. At A Level 52% of students achieved grades A*/A and 89% A*/B. In their GCSEs 72% of the pupils achieved A*/A, an increase of 15% from 2016, and 95% gained A*/B. One student achieved 12 A* grades and another 11 A*s. All the students and their teachers are to be congratulated on these wonderful results.

The students returned for the new academic year to find a host of new facilities. The seniors now have Drama and Dance studios and IT and Art suites, all of which will enhance their learning. Enhanced learning was also the intention behind a visit over the summer break to Gendi, a village in northern Tanzania. In conjunction with Old Palace's charity partner the Livingstone Trust, students went out to help in the construction of a girls' toilet block in a primary school, a facility which will enable girls to attend school more regularly.

The whole school came together in Croydon Minster on 29th September, the original Michaelmas, to celebrate its founders Mother Emily Ayckbowm and the Duke of Newcastle. The familiar hymns, and especially the School Song, were sung lustily by all.

The Prep School held a special Harvest Festival assembly and the girls brought in a wonderful selection of food to be distributed to people in need. The pupils had their own reward, some Monkey Bread, baked by Mrs Frost, of this parish.

Old Palace Alumnae

We have enjoyed another year with events which included the Associate Afternoon held in March. This is when we entertain all the Year 7 students who have recently joined the school. We meet in Chapel and start by awarding prizes for the OPA annual competition - this time a photographic competition - one to a Year 7 girl and one to an Old Girl. During the afternoon a number of OPA from different eras recalled tales of their days at the school, much to the amusement of the current pupils.

In June we held our Summer Reunion which was well attended and fortunately blessed with fine weather.

We have produced two newsletters full of interesting articles, pictures and features which have been circulated to all OPA.

As another year draws to an end we look forward to sharing the Carol Service in the Chapel on 4th December with The Friends of The Old Palace.

Any news from Old Girls is always welcome so do get in touch. My contact details are below – I look forward to hearing from you.

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Who's Who on the Friends Committee

President: Mrs Carol Jewell, M.A., P.G.C.E., Dip. Ed. (Mont), N.P.Q.H., C.S.B.M.

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Mr R. Biddle

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Mrs A. Frost

Mrs. B. Beven

Mrs. M. Bunn

Mr K. Woodhams

Hon. Life Members

Mrs B. Pettit

Miss K.L. Hilton

Mrs. A. Thompson

The Rt. Rev. R. Bowlby

Mrs E.J. Hancock

Useful Websites

www.friendsofoldpalace.org

Our own website – for information about our tours and the building and its history.

www.oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk

For information about all aspects of the School.

www.opoga.org.uk

For news, photos and information about the Old Palace Alumnae.

2018 Tours

If you would like to help with the tours next year please complete this form and return it to:

Mrs B. Beven, 7 Briton Close, Sanderstead CR2 0JH

I am willing to help
(please tick as appropriate)

as a tour guide
as a steward
on the door and shop
serving teas

on the following dates:

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For tour dates for 2018 see Dates for Your Diary

Name

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Address

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Telephone Number

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Email

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