

2022 COGA Centenary.

Canon Constant Van Crombrughe, founder of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, said 'a good education does not limit itself to making a young man/woman virtuous and knowledgeable; it teaches him/her to live'.

On Saturday 27th May 1922, the first meeting of COGA (Coloma Old Girls' Association) was held, and placed under the patronage of the Sacred Heart. 70 members were present, former pupils, staff, past & present students of the kindergarten training college, pupils of form VI, the Boarders' prefect and Governors of the school.

The first President was Reverend Mother Elise. The annual membership fee was 2/6, plus an additional 2/6 if you wanted to attend the three general meetings per year. News of Old Girls could be found in the school magazine, with their achievements, work and families. This was a way of keeping in touch with Old Girls who had moved away. A membership card would get you into the Garden Fete for free and socials with entertainment. A badge was designed and could be purchased from the secretaries. Meetings were reported in the 'Croydon Advertiser'.

A Games club was formed, playing netball (October to Easter), tennis in the summer, and table tennis all year. In December 1946, the Old Girls' netball team beat the sixth form team 16-4!

Socials were organised, including a Ball on 7th February 1939 with live band at the Greyhound Hotel in Croydon, attended by 140 people.

An Old Girls' Dramatic Club was set up in 1924, designing costumes, scenery & lighting. Betty Ward wrote that proceeds from a production of 'Jane Eyre' in 1945 were given both to the Red Cross prisoners of war fund and to Reverend Mother's fund to help pupils taking university training.

COGA has always worked to benefit pupils by manning stalls at the Fairs, through donations and the Raffle held at the Annual Luncheon. Funds have been used at Coloma for many projects and resources, e.g. furnishing the Performing Arts Centre, laptops, mini ipads for the music department and for the Astro turf pitch. The Annual lunch starts with Mass in St Anne's chapel, where a window from COGA can be seen, then a drinks reception and lunch, followed by the AGM, including voting for officers, speeches, donation to the school and awards given. In 2017 the Maureen Martin OBE/COGA Year 9 Award was inaugurated. COGA is a group of individuals with unique talents (COGA is always looking for members with IT skills!), whose sum is greater than its parts. It facilitates friendships with fellow students and teachers, renewing old acquaintances, across the generations, joined by the shared values taught at Coloma and outstanding education.

Ten years after the War, Mother Mary Cuthbert wrote to all Old Girls to join the Association, encouraging them and their families to attend the garden fete and an open evening at the school,

'Remember that although times change and some are no longer here, Coloma remains the same and extends to you all a warm welcome whenever you come back. May God bless you in all you undertake.'