



OLD BRADFORDIANS

JUNE 2025

WELCOME TO OUR

SUMMER TERM NEWSLETTER



HEADMASTER'S UPDATE

Dear Old Bradfordians and friends of BGS. Welcome to this latest OB newsletter. I write these words in the midst of exam season. GCSE and A Level papers are being sat down the corridor in the hushed Price Hall. Meanwhile, internal exams for Years 9 and 10 proceed in the Sports Hall – my own daughter is tackling these. I hope all has gone well today or else the headmaster's evening at home could be a decidedly frosty affair!

Exams are, however, just one part of a routinely busy BGS life. Articles on our news page ([Latest News – Bradford Grammar School](#)) provide a snapshot of recent comings and goings at School. Additionally, if you haven't had an opportunity to leaf through our latest Old Bradfordian magazine please do so, it's a terrific read with much that will be of interest ([Old Bradfordian magazine – Bradford Grammar School](#)). The Spring term edition of our tri annual school magazine, Hoc Age ([Hoc Age – Bradford Grammar School](#)) speaks to the breadth of the BGS experience. The next, Summer term, copy of Hoc Age is in production and will be shared in due course. It opens with the following lines from me: "You get a strong feeling for what BGS is all about, the difference it makes to people, its substance and significance, when attending Old Bradfordian, alumni events. Happily, there have been quite a few recently."



For example, we enjoyed a 'sell out' social near St Paul's Cathedral recently to mark 40 years since the first girls were welcomed at BGS. OBs of various vintage, including many recent leavers, gathered in good spirits to renew and strengthen friendships and forge new ones. Mrs (Jane) Chapman was in attendance, and she kindly shared a few words about her long relationship with BGS as a teacher, and mum and wife to OBs. Mrs Chapman retires at the end of summer term, and she was the guest of honour. There is great strength and warmth in our extended school family, and these qualities reflect formative experiences in the classrooms and corridors, fields and theatre, labs and library – the list goes on – at BGS. There is something special about our School."

We will celebrate Mrs Chapman's contribution at BGS when we gather for our annual Prizegiving and Speech Day. The activity and achievements of our pupils will, as always, be the focus of proceedings; but we will also touch upon some of the issues of the day, reflect upon BGS and the contexts in which it operates.

The potential imposition of VAT on the fees paid by parents, and removal of Business Rates Relief on the bills paid by the school, represent a double-edged financial sword. Such things are on the minds of those who choose to send their children to an independent school and those of us who choose to work at one. But, as you might imagine, we do not stand idle in the face of challenges. Continued progress in support of our 1662 Fund for means tested Assisted Places and exciting enhancements to our Junior School, including the addition of Reception and Year 1 and new woodland adventure play and learning infrastructure, are examples of developments to secure the character and attraction, inclusivity and positive impact of our school. Meanwhile, prudent business practice continues. The Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors will take all necessary steps to enable BGS to thrive for the benefit of generations of school children to come. We take a long-term view of our legacy. That said, it would be foolish to assume that the challenge is anything less than acute. I am grateful to those OBs who have used their networks and platforms to make the case for BGS and our peer group of schools.

Enjoy reading on, and I look forward to the pleasure of your company at future OB events.

Yours ever, Hoc Age!

Simon



BGS AMBASSADORS COME ON BOARD

STRENGTHENING OUR 1662 CAMPAIGN

The 1662 Campaign was launched with a mission to make BGS accessible to all talented pupils, regardless of background or circumstance. With requests for Assisted Places increasing every year, and the potential addition of VAT on school fees, now more than ever we need the support of our BGS community to raise vital funds to ensure our School remains accessible to all.



Since March, the BGS Development Office and 1662 Committee have worked hard in the recruitment process; all our ambassadors are members of our Old Bradfordian community, with several being direct recipients of a bursary/Assisted Place. They truly believe in the culture and community of Bradford Grammar School, and, with their support, we hope to build upon our 1662 Campaign and enable more children to benefit from a transformative education.

Head of Development, Anya Friis, commented: "We have ambitious plans to grow our endowment fund which will yield income for Assisted Places in perpetuity. We have been touched by the generosity of Old Bradfordians and friends and aim to develop this remarkable support with our Ambassador community over the coming months and years."

Pictured are some of our Ambassadors who attended the inaugural meeting at Queens Club, London, in May.

1662 AMBASSADORS

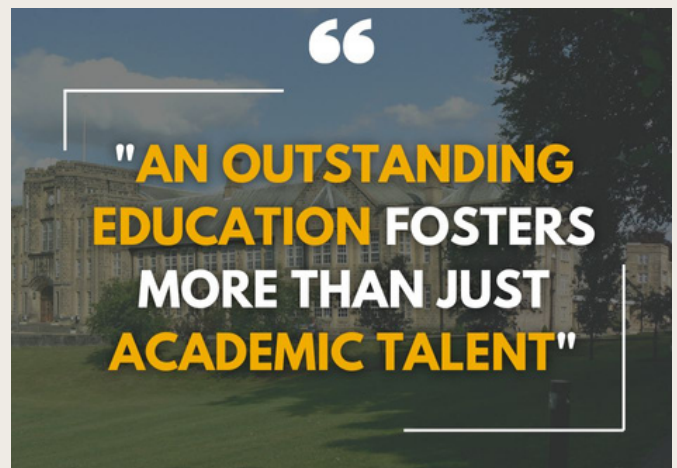
A LEGACY FOR CHANGE

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT ANYA FRIIS

Remembering BGS in your will is one of the most personal and significant ways you can help to safeguard the future of talented young people in and around Bradford, and that of BGS itself. All legacy gifts, regardless of size, help us to pass on the transformative gift of a BGS education.

Legacy gifts will be directed towards the school's permanent endowment for Assisted Places, providing assurance that your gift will be preserved in perpetuity, just as you intend. To find out more, or request a legacy brochure, please email development@bradfordgrammar.com.

As your support echoes down the year, you can be confident that countless future Old Bradfordians will make their mark in the world.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW OLD BRADFORDIANS



The Year 13 Leavers' Lunch in May provided our sixth formers with a welcome break in their A-Level revision and a chance to celebrate their School days with friends and family.

Our newest Old Bradfordians spent the sunny afternoon on the Governors' Lawn signing shirts, collecting memories in yearbooks, sharing an ice cream and enjoying afternoon tea prior to taking their exams.

The year group also took part in a fun and competitive inter class tug of war tournament with parents and teachers joining in the games. We wish them all the best of luck for their next chapter and look forward to seeing them at our forthcoming events.



OUR NEWEST OBS AND THEIR SUCCESSES

EMILY GIBBINS (2024)

In April, Emily Gibbins won the W20E (women's under 20 elite) race at the British Middle Distance Orienteering Championships, held in Otley.

Emily's victory builds on her other achievements such as being W18 British Night Champion in 2022 and representing England in an international competition in Belgium in 2023. She was also part of the BGS team who won the World Schools Cross-Country Championships in 2023.

Geography teacher David Alcock, who runs the school's orienteering club commented: "Emily was a fairly late starter to the sport, and she has successfully built on her cross-country running training foundations to pick up the complexities of navigating at speed and on rough terrain. We are very proud of her achievements."

Emily is now juggling the challenges of orienteering training with the demands of studying Geography at Durham University, though is aiming for more international vests in the future.

Photo Credit: Wendy Carlyle



AMELIE LANE (2024)

Congratulations also go to Amelie Lane on her performance last weekend at the European Off Road Running Championships held in Annecy, France.

Amelie competed for Britain in the U20 women's team and picked up two silver medals in the up and down race and the uphill race. A wonderful achievement and the start of a great career.

Amelie is pictured first left above

MEET NATALIA DANNENBERG-SPREIER

In 2024, we celebrate 40 years of women at BGS. We caught up with Natalia Dannenberg-Spreier (1999) who joined BGS in the Sixth Form to find out where life has taken her beyond the school gates.



Natalia left BGS armed with her A-levels and drive to succeed. A Leeds girl, Natalia continued to study languages (namely German), with a plan to be an International Lawyer, however at the University of Nottingham Natalia directed a play in German and realised that her creative side was calling. Subsequently, back in the early 2000s, she changed career direction and wrote to 23 production companies for a job. She got one acceptance as a runner, which she duly took and her TV career began; one Natalia looks back on with fondness.

“I started as a runner on an astronomy show called ‘Stardate’ and moved onto history and science programmes such as ‘Time team’ and ‘How do they do it?’. It was a wonderful time full of adventures and amazing people. I found myself down South African mines, flying onto an icebreaker ship by helicopter in Canada and crawling around under Egyptian pyramids.”

Around this time, Natalia also found her German husband. The calling to move to Germany came and the need for stability saw Natalia move to Bonn, and work in broadcast journalism, furthering her love of the media, news and the German language. Despite living and working abroad, she remained in close contact with her BGS peers.

“School gave me two things – lifelong friendships and resilience. It’s when the chips are down and the bumps in life come you realise just how important having both are. BGS was certainly a character forming school and I would say that the experience gained there absolutely helped me see light and positivity when the setbacks in life happened.”



For the last 13 years Natalia has been working at the International Paralympic Committee, firstly leading the social media and editorial team, then as the Head of Brand & Engagement. Alongside having three children, her career progressed in an intense role where Natalia and her small team were instrumental in creating public shift in perception, transforming attitudes towards Para athletes through the Paralympic Games. The highlight was most certainly the London Games.

“London 2012 was a game changer in terms of how we shifted the dial; we really didn’t foresee the groundswell of warmth and enthusiasm for the Paralympic Games. We worked tirelessly; 20-hour days living off adrenalin, with coverage on every national paper, across all social media platforms and strategic partnerships boosting everything we did. It was the year the Paralympics and Paralympians truly became cool.”

Fast forward to 2024 and ahead of the Paris games, aside from developing the brand for the Games, Natalia has been tasked with a new role as Head of Paralympic Heritage to bring together the history of the International Paralympic Committee, the Paralympics and athletes to a global audience. A role Natalia is keen to develop and after 13 years at the IPC, a legacy she is driven to deliver.



Are you a female Old
Bradfordian with a
story to tell?

Please contact us at:
oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com to
feature in our communications and socials
over the coming months.

EMILE'S HOME RUN

We are always very proud of our OB's achievements and inspired by how Hoc Age runs through the blood of all our alumni. None more so than back in April when Emile Cairess (2016) ran his second marathon on home turf to finish 3rd out of 50,000 runners in the 2024 London Marathon.

Emile is the first British born runner since 1996 to attain a podium position. This result also gained him an automatic place in the Paris Games. We are very much looking forward to watching him race in the Olympics in a few weeks and wish him the best of luck from all at BGS.



DAVID LOWE (1966)



David Lowe (1966) still vividly remembers the excitement of joining Bradford Grammar at the age of 9. "It was a real sense of pride." He remarked. "Just before joining School we took a family holiday to Scarborough where I insisted on taking my school uniform and wearing it along the promenade."

Coming from a musical family, David was gifted piano lessons as a reward for passing his exams, so when he arrived at BGS, playing the school organ became a core focus and an interest that stayed with him through life. In the early 60s, having organ lessons with the school's music master Leslie Walsh, David looked forward to Saturday morning assemblies, taking to the organ and playing the school's traditional programme to 1000 children, sharing the duty with one or two other boys.

Musically, times were changing, pop music was dominating the airwaves and the Beatles had very much arrived. David recalls one Saturday morning incorporating 'Michelle' into the assembly programme, which he thought had gone unnoticed, until being given 'the look' by his Master. An unspoken word between them said that such an improvisation was not required again!

Whilst studying at BGS, David became aware of the prestigious Wurlitzer which was housed at the Bradford Gaumont (later known as the Odeon – the newly restored – and soon to be re-opened – Bradford Live). David was allowed to practise after school for three hours at a time and eventually was asked to audition for a job, playing pre-show preludes and organ interludes, complete with spotlight and raising platform – quite the accolade in the days when the City's concert hall was a central form of entertainment for miles around.



David remarks that his school days were instrumental to his personal development and enabled skills for life. "As well as harnessing my love of the organ, what I also gained was an in-built confidence that transcended through my career. I was taught to speak publicly at a very young age, which helped me play to a regular audience of 3000 at the Gaumont."

After school, David went on to enjoy a career playing to thousands more at ice rinks and concert halls across the UK and the world; he subsequently followed a different career on the railways and running the family canal business. Indeed, he considers himself a very lucky Old Bradfordian with a wealth of musical memories and life changing experiences growing up in Bradford.



VISITORS BACK AT BRADFORD GRAMMAR

TREVOR SUNDERLAND (1953)

In April we welcomed back Trevor Sunderland (1953) from the Bahamas. Whilst it's been almost 70 years since Trevor set foot in School, the memories of playing rugby, choir singing in the Price Hall and serving lunch (which meant two puddings!!) are forefront.

Trevor was joined by his family, including OB and nephew Nick Sunderland (1994), for a tour, a look at some old school reports and lunch, including a much-missed Yorkshire treat, Seabrook crisps.



MICHAEL D'ARCY (1994)

We also thank our OBs for supporting BGS pupils and students as they consider their future paths. Michael D'Arcy is one such OB, who visited school recently to deliver a lunchtime talk about careers in the legal profession.

Michael, a commercial barrister at One Essex Court, guided years 10-13 through the various roles and professional requirements, as they start to navigate their own life choices.



SOME ADDITIONAL READING



BGS HISTORY BLOG

As Old Bradfordians, you'll probably have a good understanding of the School's history. For those that wish to brush up on their knowledge, we have produced a blog which explores our rich heritage dating all the way back to the 1500s.

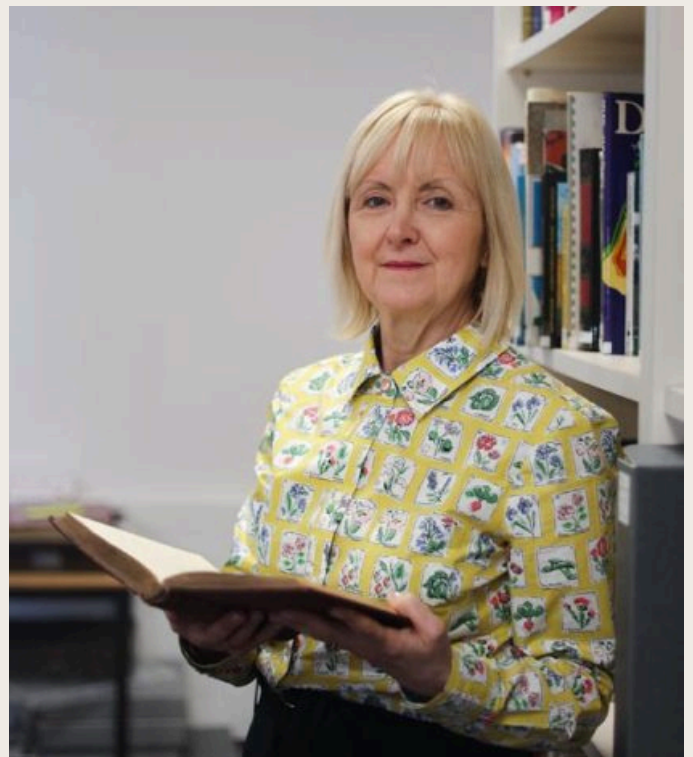
From its humble beginnings near the Parish Church of St Peter to its current location at Frizinghall, click this link to be taken through the years. [Exploring Historical Roots: Bradford Grammar School's Legacy](#).

INTO THE ARCHIVES

Have you ever wondered what happens in the archives at BGS? How we collect and preserve BGS memories?

This article delves deep into the workings of our archives. Put the kettle on and read all about our archivist, Tracy Lord, and the work the team is doing to keep our heritage preserved.

['Our archives provide a great insight into BGS life over the years'](#)
(bradfordgrammar.com).



ALUMNI EVENT REPORTS

SWIMMING AND WATER POLO GALA

There was a great turnout on 16 March for the annual Old Bradfordians event, with OBs and BGS students participating in the annual Swimming and Water Polo Gala at the Adrian Moorhouse Pool. Old Bradfordians spanning decades came together to challenge the current students in the swimming whilst, more importantly, hanging on to their title of Water Polo champions. A title they've had since 1984.



Medley relay started the swimming off. The OBs put forward their strongest team with Tim Hobbs on the Backstroke, Hugo Stonelake on the Breaststroke, Reece Hunt on the Butterfly and Tom Stenhouse on the Freestyle, managing to narrowly beat BGS. The next event was the 100m Freestyle, Nigel Wilson and Tom Stenhouse swam for the Old Bradfordians but were both pipped by the school swimmers. Rhys Hunt won the Butterfly race, followed by a win from Tim Hobbs in the Backstroke and Harry Palmer coming second. With two relays to go, school were winning 42 points to 40. The determination and strength of the students ensured a BGS win with 68 points against Old Bradfordians who scored 53 points.

The OBs, however, were yet to have their finest hour, with the opportunity to achieve a 40-year title looming in the Water Polo competition. The team which, in part, was made up of English Schools Senior Champions from the 1980s (Stephen Moorhouse and the Nixon brothers) was also supported with younger talent to bring the title home. Whilst there were a couple of early goals from the Bradfordians, the OBs ensured a comfortable win and a final result of OBs 13 – BGS 5. Looking back on the day, Specialist Swimming Coach, Craig Robinson, commented: “It was fantastic to welcome back four OBs from the class of 2023, who brought some youth and energy to an aging OBs team, and who certainly spiced up the competitiveness of the swimming competition.”

OB organiser Mike Nixon was delighted with the OBs performance and aims to build on their success in 2025. The OBs are looking to recruit and to retain their water polo crown, whilst increasing their swimming times. In addition, female OBs are asked to come forward and create a female team to take on the BGS girls for the first time. Please email oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com to register your interest for next year.



RUGBY RUMBLE HOSTED AT COLFES SCHOOL



Our OBs (pictured in the white tops) took on Colfes School and Fitzwilliam College alumni in a 'rugby rumble' and fundraiser hosted by OB Andrew Foster (2000) at Horn Park, London on Saturday 20th April. Thanks to the OBs for their support, for the younger ones for joining in on the fun and to Andrew for organising. We look forward to hosting at BGS next term!

40S, 50S, 60S REUNION LUNCH

April saw the coming together of Old Bradfordians spanning three decades at our annual reunion event hosted in School. For the very first time, OBs who left BGS in the 1960s joined their fellow 1940s and 50s alumni for an event filled with nostalgia.

The DH Room was decorated with an archive exhibition produced by Tracy Lord and Beatrice Heywood. Guests pored over old photographs and memorabilia, which sparked conversations and memories of the role BGS played in shaping the lives and careers of those in attendance. Over 30 guests enjoyed lunch followed by the Headmaster's address which focussed on the school of old and the school of today; how the pupils and wider BGS family have created change to ensure the success it is today.



02 AND 23 MAY - LEEDS AND LONDON SOCIALS



Last month the Development office welcomed all our Old Bradfordians and across the UK, to Leeds and London for a social get togethers. It was a great opportunity for OBs to re-connect and reminisce with their existing friends, whilst making new ones along the way. Both were wonderful and well attended nights and we look forward to organising more in the coming months.



We were joined by current teachers in both cities. In London, we also took the opportunity to celebrate 40 years of girls at BGS. Marking this occasion was our guest of honour, Assistant Head, Jane Chapman.

Jane, who, retires this summer following 35 years of service, talked about the positive impact girls have made to the school over the decades.

Many of you will have been taught by Mrs Chapman (a Classics Master) over the years and we wanted to give you the opportunity to send in any messages.

School will be compiling the memories and messages to thank her for everything she has given to pupils over the years. Should you wish to leave a message, please email oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com.



EVENTS COMING UP - ALL WELCOME

ALL OLD BRADFORDIANS WELCOME TO PLAY OR SPECTATE

FRIDAY 21 JUNE
1PM ONWARDS

CRICKET FESTIVAL

THE PAVILLION, BGS

 OBS V BGS CRICKET
REFRESHMENTS
FAMILY EVENT



[BOOK TO ATTEND THE
CRICKET FESTIVAL HERE](#)

ALL OLD BRADFORDIANS WELCOME TO PLAY OR SPECTATE

SATURDAY 29 JUNE
10AM-5PM

ILKLEY RUGBY 7S

ILKLEY RUGBY CLUB
DENTON RD, ILKLEY

 OBS V BGS RUGBY
FOOD AND DRINKS
FAMILY FUN DAY



[BOOK YOUR ILKLEY 7S
TICKET HERE](#)

SATURDAY 07
SEPTEMBER
1PM CEST

REUNION LUNCH - FRANCE

TOULOUSE

 TO BOOK YOUR
PLACE PLEASE
EMAIL:
OLDBRADFORDIANS@
BRADFORDGRAMMAR
.COM



NEW FOR SEPTEMBER

Calling all OBs living in France to save the date! We are very pleased to share that there will be an Old Bradfordian Reunion Lunch on Saturday 7th September at 13:00 (Central European Summer Time) taking place in Toulouse (exact venue to be confirmed) and hosted by OB Roger Harrison (1966).

Roger very kindly spoke to us at the 1940s, 50s and 60s reunion about connecting with fellow OBs living in France. If you haven't already received an email about this event and wish to attend, please let us know by emailing oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com.