



*OLD BRADFORDIANS*

NOVEMBER 2024

WELCOME TO OUR

# *AUTUMN TERM NEWSLETTER*



## HEADMASTER'S UPDATE

Dear Old Bradfordians and friends of BGS,  
Welcome to this latest OB newsletter. Much has happened since the last time I wrote. Let's start with the good news...

Summer term concluded well with a busy schedule of concerts, trips, sport fixtures, Speech Day and various end of year celebrations. It was at this time that we also sought responses from parents to a tri-annual survey, following the ISI (inspection) template.

The survey revealed a high degree of satisfaction with BGS, particularly with regard to the breadth of curriculum, pupil progress, physical activity and the range of co-curricular activities, feeling safe and respected, and also leadership. When put alongside our recent Good Schools Guide report ([BGS Shines in The Good Schools Guide Review](#)) it is self-evident that BGS remains in decent shape. But we don't get complacent.

Once term ended, an extensive plan of summer works began. Much was achieved including office and classroom refits, realisation of a new Special Educational Needs hub, (part of a much wider expansion of provision in this field), pool repainting, boat house refurbishments, window replacements, alarm upgrades, roof repairs, lighting improvements, server and extensive re-cabling work, planting and pitch renovations, the list continues and as ever this is just a flavour of the things that go on, often unseen, but always appreciated, over the summer.



We also had hugely successful sports tours to Sri Lanka and Canada for our netball and rugby teams respectively, as well as an ambitious expedition to Morocco, CCF camps and a pre-season hockey tournament at Nottingham.

The summer 'break' is a busy time at BGS, and beyond campus improvements, trips and tours, there were some exam outcomes to crunch, communicate and celebrate where appropriate. Results and UCAS services were as busy as ever over the summer, as was marketing and student admissions activity, development and fundraising work for those vital means tested Assisted Places, staff recruitment / induction / training processes, facilitation of Governor activity, financial planning, public benefit work and, of course, pre-term preparations in departments, support and teaching, and much general administration in advance of the resumption of lessons.

BGS keeps me busy and, for the most part, out of trouble! I like it that way. And, as ever, I am inspired by my colleagues who invest a great deal of their time and energy in making BGS the wonderful school it is for our pupils.

In terms of those aforementioned exam results, over 50% of all GCSE grades were at 9/8. Over a third of GCSE students scored an average of grade 8 or above. Just under two thirds of students scored an average grade of 7 (old GCSE 'A' grade) or above. At A Level, our Year 13 cohort secured a 100 per cent pass rate with one in five grades awarded being an A\*. These are very strong outcomes in the context of both groups of young people and any reasonable levels of expectation placed upon them – pleasingly, added value is something that has improved over recent years.

Please see [Latest News – Bradford Grammar School](#) for more stories about the recent successes of our pupils. Moreover, if you haven't yet dipped into our BGS publications, please do so via:

- The annual Bradfordian magazine [The Bradfordian](#)
- The annual Old Bradfordian magazine [The Old Bradfordian](#)
- Hoc Age, our termly digest [Hoc Age](#)

Much has happened in the wider scene too, not all of it good news for BGS...





VAT on fees and other cost pressures, including the loss of Business Rates Relief, will have an impact on BGS given our catchment and context. As I wrote in a recent [blog](#):

“The imposition of VAT on fees paid by parents who choose to send their children to an independent school has been debated extensively, and the nation spoke emphatically on this matter at the ballot box. BGS and our peer group schools will naturally respect the outcome of the election. VAT it seems will be paid from January 2025, an early start date in the estimation of many”.

To be clear, BGS, in common with our peer group of schools, has no political affiliations and will work with any colour of government that seeks to work constructively with us. But we are not naive. Some families are now being forced to withdraw their children from BGS and schools like ours. More will follow. I have grave concerns regarding the education and wellbeing of these young people. Meanwhile, other parents who would once have considered BGS will no longer be able to do so. These changes will bite incrementally over time.

That said, BGS is an efficient and effective business, and we will strain every sinew to meet new challenges without compromising our standards. Crucially, in this moment of mounting pressures, I continue to extend my gratitude to our benefactors. Through their support we are able to protect Assisted Places for bright and deserving young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is our vision and purpose, with opportunity, excellence and positive impact at the core of all we do.

And on we go, with belief in our work, striving to make a difference for our young people and trusting to the support of Old Bradfordians and the wider BGS family.

Enjoy reading all that follows, the things that make our school community so special, and I look forward to the pleasure of your company at future OB events.

Yours ever, Hoc Age!

Simon



## *DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT NEWS*

### GENEROUS DONATION TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH LIMITED MEANS

An anonymous benefactor has given a significant donation to Bradford Grammar School, allowing several children from a range of backgrounds to take up transformational places. Seven new Year 12 students have been awarded Assisted Places thanks to the donation, where they will receive an outstanding education and be inspired to dream big and reach their full potential.



It brings the number of students who have been awarded APs at BGS this year to 14, with much of the money generously gifted by the school's Old Bradfordian alumni via its 1662 Campaign. Two of them, a Year 12 and a Year 13 student, have also received scholarships from the Rank Foundation's 'School Leadership Award' which has supported 1,500 pupils since 1978. The students attend a leadership event in each of their Sixth Form years, take part in regular online meetings and spend two weeks in the summer holiday working for a non-profit organisation. The students also receive financial support.

One AP recipient, Zinedine Meah, in Year 12, said: "The opportunities I have at BGS go way beyond the curriculum. I'm a member of the Politics, Bio Med and Debating Societies, all of which are setting me up for my future. I'm grateful to those who support the 1662 Campaign and thank them for enriching my life in immeasurable ways."

The recent benefactor, who wishes to remain anonymous, said: "BGS provides a transformative education; it offers an environment for students to thrive and achieve their full potential."





## *DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT NEWS*



“Bright, talented children deserve an outstanding education which is why I support the Assisted Places programme. We know that by helping these aspirational children we can also achieve a more positive future for them and their families.”

According to the English Indices of Deprivation, Bradford is the fifth most deprived area in the UK with 22 per cent of children living below the poverty line.

The school has recently launched the 1662 Campaign Ambassadors programme, where benefactors come together to discuss ways to sustain and increase the number of Assisted Places at BGS.

Anya Friis, Head of Development at BGS, said: “BGS has a long history of social responsibility, offering talented and hard-working children from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to reach their full potential.

“We couldn’t offer these places without the generosity of our benefactors, and we are hugely grateful to them and the transformational impact they continue to have on children’s lives in Bradford.”

Pictured are Year 12 Students, Zinedine Meah and Aryan Ali

## BGS Giving Day March 2025

On 27th & 28th March 2025, the Bradford Grammar School community will come together for BGS's largest annual Giving Day.

## BGS Giving Day

27th & 28th March 2025



#BetheONE

We will be running challenges throughout the two days and inviting everyone to get involved – to BE THE ONE. Be the one to engage, be the one to donate, be the one to make a difference.

We look forward to sharing more on our giving day plans in the coming months, for now, here is a short video: [https://youtu.be/xts\\_fHvc7Sg](https://youtu.be/xts_fHvc7Sg)

## ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

No. of donors	Monthly amount	Total received
50	£21.00	£15,750
35	£30.00	£15,750
21	£50.00	£15,750
14	£75.00	£15,750

### Can You Support our 1662 Campaign and Give a Monthly Gift?

Can you support our 1662 campaign to give a child a transformational BGS education? We run a regular giving programme where our supporters choose to give monthly at an amount that works for them. If 35 of our Old Bradfordians gave £30.00 a month, it would fund a child for a full year of education at BGS.

Regular donations (with Gift Aid) can make a huge difference; they build quickly and show that any amount can truly make a difference. It also allows you to plan your giving and gives you flexibility to change it at any time.

Please complete this form ([Make a Regular Contribution to Bradford Grammar School](#)) to set up your direct debit today. If you would like additional information, or have any questions, please email: [development@bradfordgrammar.com](mailto:development@bradfordgrammar.com).



# HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER AND OB RETURNS TO SCHOOL FOR PRIZEGIVING

OB Umar Hussain (2010) who worked his way up to become a visual effects producer on Hollywood blockbusters was the guest speaker at this year's Clock House Prizegiving ceremony.

Umar returned to inspire the next generation of film fanatics where he told his young audience that the organisational skills he picked up at school, along with the ability to 'ask the right questions,' had served him well in his career.

Umar left BGS in 2010 and went on to study Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Manchester University before becoming an intern on the reality show Made in Chelsea.

He then got his big break working as a visual effects production coordinator on the Guardians of the Galaxy film and through persistence, drive and making the most of every opportunity, rose through the ranks to become a visual effects producer.



Now Miami-based, his credits include Star Wars Episodes VII, VIII and IX, Jurassic World, Fast & Furious, Doctor Strange, ABBA Voyage and one of his favourite films, The Lion King.

Umar, who enjoyed a tour of his old school and chatting to pupils about his job, said: "I enjoyed my time at BGS and it's so nice to be back and to be able to speak to current pupils."



"As well as the impressive new technology on offer today, personality counts. BGS is such a lovely place to learn and being polite and empathic has got me far."

"My father, Zulfi, always said, 'if you don't ask, you don't get' and I took him at his word. You'd be amazed how many times people will help if you ask them nicely."

Richard Ribeiro, Headmaster at Bradford Grammar Junior School, said the children had loved learning about Umar's work.

"We're really grateful Umar took time out of his busy schedule to inspire all our pupils. He's shown them exactly what you can achieve with his determination to move upwards, then working hard when the opportunities came his way. He's a fantastic role model for them and we've loved showing him around."

# REMEMBERING OLD BRADFORDIANS AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Many Old Bradfordians will remember Head of History, Nick Hooper (2015). Mr Hooper, who has had a lifelong interest in the First World War, and led school battlefield trips for 25 years, has been back at School recently to help produce a video in collaboration with Bradford Through The Lens videographers, Riaz Ahmed and Graham Swain.



A project that began in 2014, Nick has always enjoyed researching and uncovering new stories about our wartime Old Bradfordians and has written over 200 biographies of those who died during, or as a result of, their war service.

Commenting on this project he said: "Preserving the memory of our Old Bradfordians and their stories has been at the heart of this project. In 1922, as a school we said we would honour those who lost their lives and 102 years later – here we are – keeping the promise."

Watch for yourself this fascinating look back at our fallen soldiers and teachers; a journey which starts at the War Memorial.

[A visit to the War Memorial at Bradford Grammar School | Bradford \(youtube.com\).](#)

**DO YOU HAVE A  
STORY TO TELL?**

**Please contact us at:**

**[oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com](mailto:oldbradfordians@bradfordgrammar.com)**

**to feature in the 2024 Old Bradfordian and  
across our socials.**

## WILL LUXTON - SCHOOL VISIT

In October we welcomed back OB and Yorkshire County Cricketer, Will Luxton (2021), who handed out Senior Club Colours to some of our 6th Form students. Pictured are some of our BGS cricketers, hoping to follow in Will's footsteps.

Will has a busy season coming up with International tours; we will report on his progress over the year on our social media channels!







## *FOUNDERS DAY 2024*

Bradford Grammar celebrated Founders' Day at Bradford Cathedral in October and as pupils congregated, they were reminded of School's rich heritage and how it was built on philanthropy and inclusivity.

BGS pupils gathered to celebrate School and its history, from 1548 and the days when it existed as The Free School of King Charles II, through to 1870 and being one of the first schools to adopt the Forster Education Act reforms, becoming a secular school within the local board of education.

Head Boy, James Woodham reminded us of those that have supported the school to make it what it is today, giving thanks to our benefactors and philanthropists such as Samuel Lister, former Headmaster William Keeling, Douglas Hamilton, Sir Ken Morrison and others.

It was also a time to remind our pupils that they too may walk in the footsteps of fellow Old Bradfordians and want to give back – ensuring that BGS remains a school built on inclusivity – so that others, regardless of background, may also benefit from the same exemplary education.

Founders Day – A day filled with gratitude.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? BLAINE THOMAS (2020)



We caught up recently with Blaine Thomas – one of our younger Old Bradfordians who, following his time at BGS, is about to embark in the world of work upon completion of university life. Blaine secured a place at Bradford Grammar having been awarded an Assisted Place, funded by a donation established in memory of the late Sir Ken Morrison.

When Blaine joined BGS in the 6th Form back in 2018, he was expecting a culture shock moving to an independent school from growing up on the Canterbury estate in Bradford. But the reality was somewhat different to his expectations of a grandiose building and a stuffy, uptight environment.

“Teachers and students were friendly from the outset, which meant I was able to settle quickly. I was surrounded by teachers who wanted me to do well and other students who also wanted to do well and this combination was the motivator to be the best I could possibly be.”

School provided some important groundwork for a career in law; opening opportunities and relationships with established lawyers, some of which are Old Bradfordians who have supported the journey.

Fast forward two years and Blaine, armed with three top A Levels, was accepted into Oxford University to study Law. He eased into Oxford life and credits BGS for enabling this smooth change.

“Moving from a non-traditional background to a top university – from Bradford to Oxford – would have been a tough change. The university required a quick transition and a focus on independent study. BGS gave me that cushioning and preparation for what would be three years of intense learning in a high-pressure environment. It meant I could hit the ground running without feeling shell shocked.”

“  
“THE FAMILY YOU ARE BORN INTO  
SHOULDN'T BE A **BARRIER TO SUCCESS.**  
  
**I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE CHANCE I HAD**  
**AT BGS TO ENGAGE FULLY IN MY**  
**STUDIES AND SCHOOL LIFE BEYOND A**  
**LEVELS.”**



## *WHERE ARE THEY NOW? BLAINE THOMAS*

During those university days, Blaine was able to fully embrace the opportunities that came his way. He met with various law firms, took an internship and was offered places in multiple international practices upon graduation. Safe in the knowledge that he would become a trainee corporate lawyer, Blaine decided to fulfil another dream and took a leap of faith, travelling for 6 months across Asia.

Today, Blaine is living in London and is about to start his professional life at international firm Slaughter and May. Whilst West Yorkshire may seem a world away, the Bradford boy who is close to his family still visits often. He also meets with other OBs, including BGS classmates, and is forever grateful for the opportunity he was given back in 2018.

“The family you were born into shouldn’t be a barrier to success. I am grateful for the chance I had at BGS to engage fully in my studies and school life beyond A Levels. The opportunities that were offered to me at school changed my life and there are so many bright talented students across Bradford who also deserve the same opportunities. Supporting the 1662 campaign for Assisted Places will ensure more children in West Yorkshire get their chance to thrive.”

## *AN EVENING AT THE THEATRE*

Actor and OB John Hollingworth (1999) has been busy performing on stage these last few months. Over the summer, John played Antony in Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra in a bilingual production at the Globe, which was also supported by fellow OBs who spent the evening on the South Bank. John has taken up a new role for October and November at Hampstead Theatre playing a Yorkshireman and Hull Trawler Owner in the world premiere of Richard Bean’s new play ‘Reykjavik’.

In a recent interview with The Stage, John commented on his Northern upbringing: “I grew up on benefits in Yorkshire and got an assisted place at Bradford Grammar School, which had a fairly metropolitan accent.” Hollingworth says. “Now, I make money playing posh guys. I think a lot of casting directors don’t even know I’m from Yorkshire.”

To read this interview in full, please visit: [THE STAGE INTERVIEWS REYKJAVIK’S JOHN HOLLINGWORTH](https://www.thestage.co.uk/interviews/reykjavik-1999-ob-john-hollingworth) ([hampsteadtheatre.com](https://hampsteadtheatre.com)).





## *TRAIL RUNNING FOR THE UK*



### AMELIE LANE (2024)

Bradford Grammar School has a history of producing runners to represent GB and one of our stars is Amelie Lane who has spent the season competing for England and the UK in the European and World Mountain and Trail championships. The highlight of her season was a Team GB race at the European Championships in Annecy where the team secured two silver medals in the Uphill and Mountain Classic races. It was a different race back to BGS the next day, to sit her Geography A Level.

Amelie started racing seriously in Year 8, with the support of parents and close BGS friend and fellow all-round runner, Rebecca Flaherty.

“I started running when I was 10, my parents would encourage me and reward with an ice cream at the end of every race. My dad runs with me now, though he is too slow! I also thank Rebecca who has been a constant source of inspiration over the last few years.”

Post A Levels, Amelie – who is one of our most recent Old Bradfordians – is taking a break from studies to concentrate on running and the season ahead, though she will take up a place at Durham University to study Biology next year. Training takes place through Winter and Spring up in the Lake District, in the Alps and daily runs close to home on Ilkley Moor.

This year Amelie is upping the distance from 7km to 15km races as she moves from the Junior to a Senior category. We will share Amelie’s progress throughout the season.



# NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC AWARD



Our congratulations go to OB Ruby Hendry (2017) who has been awarded the Sybil Tutton Opera Award to support the funding of a second year Masters Degree at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM).

The Award comes on the back of Ruby performing at the Buxton International Festival and now sets her up for the next major performance, playing the role of Zinnia in RNCM's December production of L'Etoile (Chabrier).

Ruby also credits The Countess of Munster Musical Trust which has helped with her scholarship to cover the course fees.

"Both awards are auditioned and extremely competitive and I am grateful to both charities for their support of and belief in my musical journey."

## AN EVENING IN EDINBURGH

We kicked off this year's OB events with a trip up North. BGS took itself on the road and across the border earlier this month to the beautiful city of Edinburgh.

OBs from across the years met up with Headmaster Simon Hinchliffe at La Monde to share stories of school days gone by. Thank you to everyone who attended.





# FORTHCOMING EVENTS - ALL WELCOME



This is a brand new event and opportunity for OBs and friends in the North to come together for some fine food at Aagrah in Leeds. The restaurant, which comes with a first class reputation, will be serving a selection of delicious dishes throughout the evening for just £20 per head.

**To book the Curry Evening, please visit:**

**<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DZEN>**



By popular demand we bring you our London Social 2025. Tickets are a nominal £10 which will pay for your first drink and some light bites on the evening. Please join the Headmaster and Development team on what promises to be another great night in St Pauls. You are advised to book this event early to secure your space.

**To book, please visit:**

**<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EBCH>**



We invite our Old Bradfordians from these three decades back to School for an afternoon of good company and memory making back at BGS. Tickets are £30 (plus a 75p booking fee) which includes a 2 course fork buffet with wine, and hot and cold drinks throughout the afternoon.

**To book, please visit:**

**<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EBCL>**



Following the success of the Old Bradfordians against BGS, we are extending this annual event in 2025. This year, we are looking to create a woman's team and to host a free swim for families prior to the games happening. The Swim and Water Polo Gala is free to attend. Post pool refreshments and food will be served in the DH Room.

**Anyone wishing to attend, please book here:**

**<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EBDO>**

## ALL EVENTS AVAILABLE TO BOOK NOW



# *SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR BIGGEST EVENT HOC AGE WEEKENDER - 20 & 21 JUNE 2025*

**For the very first time, in 2025 we will bring you a weekend full of fun, friends, sports, food and drink back at BGS.**

This is the ultimate opportunity to come and meet up with friends old and new and to get involved in the numerous activities we are pulling together on this Hoc Age Weekender on 20 & 21 June.



The weekend will honour and celebrate our Old Bradfordians who have made an impact in the city and world we live in.

We'll have a cricket, hockey, netball and rugby festival, rowing competition, food stalls, a BBQ and refreshments. For those that want to support our students, we'll also host a careers event. Please see the full list of events on the next page.

We really hope you, your friends and family can join us on this weekend and enjoy all that's on offer; it's the perfect opportunity to get together with OBs and enjoy the Yorkshire sunshine!

*HOC AGE WEEKENDER & MADE IN BRADFORD  
GALA DINNER 20 & 21 JUNE 2025*

# OLD BRADFORDIAN EVENTS

## HOC AGE WEEKENDER - JUN



19

JUNE

Ladies Day, Ilkley Trophy, Ilkley  
Lawn Tennis Club

20

JUNE

Careers Morning - Meet the  
OBs, BGS

20

JUNE

OB V BGS Cricket Festival,  
Pavillion, BGS

20

JUNE

OB V BGS Hockey Festival, All  
weather pitch

20

JUNE

Touch Rugby, Pavillion, BGS

20

JUNE

Netball Festival, All Weather  
Pitch, BGS

20

JUNE

Rowing and riverside lunch, The  
Boathouse, Saltaire

21

JUNE

Made in Bradford Gala Dinner,  
Price Hall, BGS

25

JUNE

Bacchus Cup, Golf and Dinner,  
Shipley Golf Club



**SATURDAY 21 JUNE 2025**  
**6.30PM-12AM, BGS**



**MADE IN BRADFORD**

# **GALA DINNER**

**OLD BRADFORDIANS EVENT RAISING FUNDS  
FOR THE 1662 CAMPAIGN FOR ASSISTED PLACES**

The end of the Hoc Age weekend will be marked with a Gala Dinner in the Price Hall. This is a fabulous opportunity to get together with your peers to honour Old Bradfordians who have had an impact on our school, city and country. The event is open to Old Bradfordians and Friends of BGS.

This black tie Gala Dinner is for the 1662 Campaign, which exists to provide Assisted Places to talented children from around West Yorkshire. With social deprivation on the rise, we aim to ensure children from all backgrounds have access to an exemplary BGS education so they, in turn, can reach their full potential. Our fundraising goal is to raise over £30,000. This will fund a place in our Sixth Form for one student.

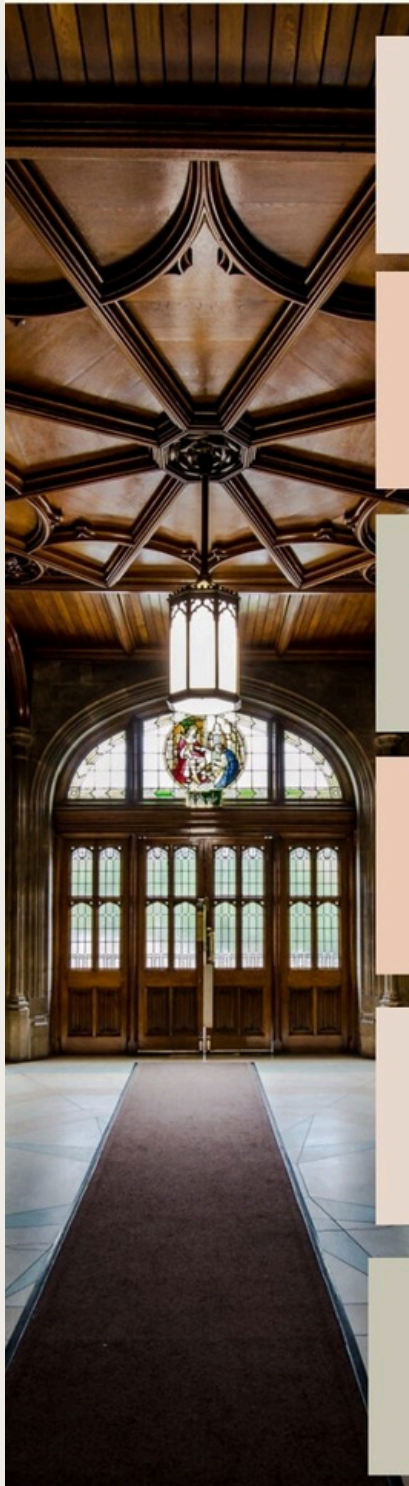
Tickets are now on sale at £80pp which includes a drinks reception, 3 course dinner and entertainment through the night.

To book individual tickets, visit: **<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EAIR>**

To book a table for 10, visit: **<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DXWO>**

# OLD BRADFORDIAN EVENTS

## NOV-FEB



13

NOVEMBER

Reykjavik Theatre Trip,  
Hampstead Theatre, London

18

NOVEMBER

Curry Evening, Aagrah,  
Leeds

10

DECEMBER

Nine Lessons and Carols,  
Bradford Cathedral

13

DECEMBER

Colfes v BGS Rugby, Ilkley  
RFC and Social

17

DECEMBER

Christmas Concert,  
Price Hall, BGS

27

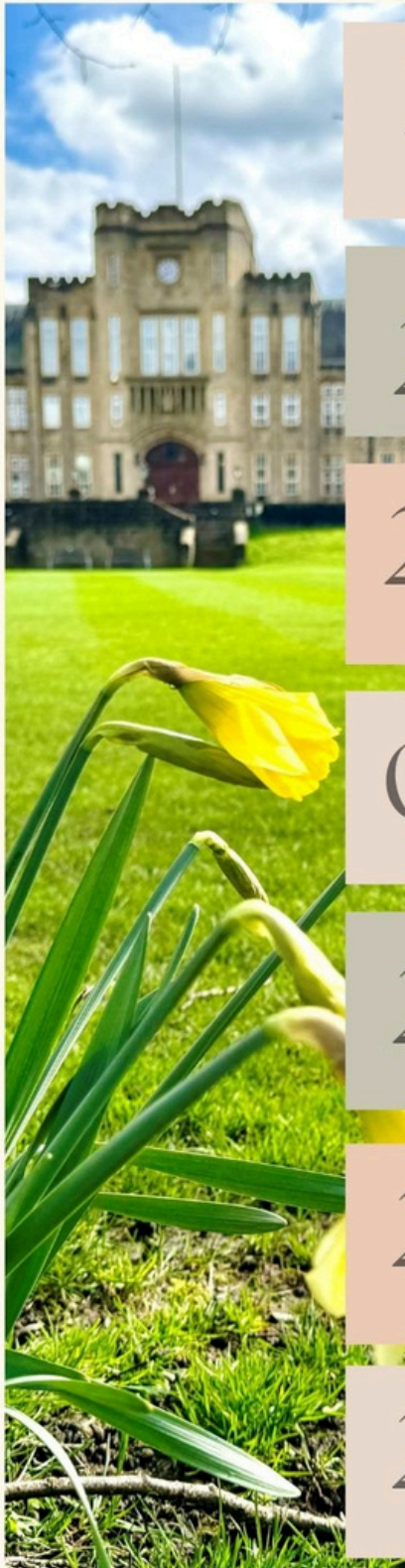
FEBRUARY

London Social, Pavilion  
End, St Pauls, London



# OLD BRADFORDIAN EVENTS

## MAR-JULY



21 MARCH  
40s, 50s, 60s Reunion,  
DH Room, BGS

22 MARCH  
Swim and Water Polo  
Gala, BGS

28 MARCH  
Giving Day - Fundraiser for  
1662 Campaign

04 APRIL  
Leeds Social (Venue TBC)  
Leeds

24 APRIL  
Spring Concert, Price Hall,  
BGS

26 APRIL  
Alumni XV Rugby, Horn  
Park, London

28 JUNE  
Ilkley 7s Rugby  
Ilkley RFC, Ilkley