

OLD BRADFORDIANS NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2025

HEADMASTER'S

Welcome

Dear Old Bradfordians and friends of BGS

Welcome to this latest OB newsletter.

We began Autumn term with characteristic vigour, buoyed up by some excellent summer exam results, the detail of which spoke once again of a BGS education adding value to the outcomes of pupils. Over 71% of all GCSE grades were at 7-9, the old A*/A standard. At A Level, our Year 13 cohort secured a 100 per cent pass rate with 57% of grades awarded being at A*/A.

Needless to say, results and UCAS services were as busy as ever over the summer, as was our admissions and marketing activity, development and fundraising work for Assisted Places, staff recruitment / induction / training processes, facilitation of Governor oversight, financial planning, public benefit projects and, of course, pre-term preparations in advance of the resumption of lessons.

Much gets done over the summer. In a potential first for a BGS Headmaster, I took to various sections of roof around the school - above the reception area and offices of Clock House and the Price Hall Mansard Passages - to help our contractors repair and re-lay weather-beaten Yorkshire stone. I enjoyed the physical work and accessing airy bits of BGS that few ever tread. Our contractor is a friend. I was cheap labour. The views were stunning. As I've said before, BGS keeps me busy and, for the most part, out of trouble.

And it has continued to be the case this past term as I've attempted to keep up with all the comings and goings of our amazing young people.



Please see [Latest News - Bradford Grammar School](#) for a glimpse into the lives and successes of our pupils and staff.

Moreover, if you haven't yet dipped into our BGS publications, please do so via:

- our regular digest, [Hoc Age](#) which details the various excitements of each school term, including the current one;
- and the latest, recently published, The Bradfordian magazine.

BGS social media on Instagram and LinkedIn platforms also illustrate the rhythms of our whole school community. You might be interested in following the Old Bradfordians LinkedIn page via [Old Bradfordians: Posts | LinkedIn](#) to receive the latest news and timely invitations to social events.

At the start of term, I particularly enjoyed regaling new pupils with insights into the rich history and character of our school – now shared more widely with the launch our digital archive, live on the BGS website – see below!



Some of my school history lessons and Headmagisterial bombast might jog memories - I'm sure many of my predecessors behaved much as I do. And when enthusing about the qualities of BGS, I always start with our motto.

Current pupils, Old Bradfordians and scholars of antiquity will know that the Latin phrase Hoc Age translates most closely as "Do this" or perhaps more contextually, "Pay attention to what you are doing". It's a succinct call to focus, to act with purpose and be present in the moment. Its roots, I read, trace back to ancient Roman rituals, where Hoc Age! was a command issued by priests to ensure silence and attentiveness during ceremonies.

Hoc Age – 'Do this'. But do what exactly?

It's a fair question because BGS has done different things, served different purposes the ages. This is where the BGS ethos and values come in. We say in our strategy document that: "Our values reflect BGS character, ambition and optimistic world view; they define who we are and where we are going", in effect they light the way ahead.

Our values are straightforward – excellence, opportunity and happiness – only those three and a simplification going forwards relative to what we had before. This is how we express them:

'Excellence' - We are at ease with excellence in a straightforward 'Hoc Age' way, show our character by overcoming challenges and ask more of ourselves than others.

'Opportunity' - We embrace and enjoy life, broaden our understanding of the world around us and recognise we have a responsibility to help others and our environment.

'Happiness' - We are respectful, treat everyone thoughtfully and act to address wrongdoing; in so doing we make the most of our opportunities, aspire to excellence and build the foundations for fulfilled and happy lives.

These values underpin our vision statement which reads thus:



BGS ENCOURAGES INTELLECTUAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING, AND FOSTERS THE MORAL CODE AND RESILIENCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WE ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE, MAKE THE MOST OF OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND ENJOY LIFE.



Our current values can be traced back to a time when the modern grammar school was beginning to take shape. The drivers of this transformation were twofold. First, the Forster Education Acts of the 1870s, which removed our school from church control and placed it under the care of the local education authority. It was during this period that the school became secular. Second, the expansion of a scholarship scheme funded by the local council, particularly in the 1890s. These external factors broadly coincided with the leadership of the reforming headmaster William Hulton Keeling.

▶ Keeling's tenure saw a drive towards higher standards, enabled in part by the school's ability, through the council's newly acquired governance, to recruit bright and ambitious boys from working-class families via a far-reaching scholarship scheme. It is from these developments that our commitment to excellence (higher academic standards) and opportunity (widening access) began to take root. Keeling was the right headmaster, with the right governing body, at precisely the right moment to shape the future of our school.

The value (and pursuit) of happiness has become more explicit in recent years. In a very real sense, this reflects the natural progression of Enlightenment thinking and activity fostering human flourishing. The door to such philosophy and educational practice was overtly opened at BGS when we became co-educational – a moment of redefinition for our School. The proponent and architect of co-education was former headmaster David (Dags) Smith.

The changes that Dags ushered in, with the support of the Governing Body, coincided with enlightened external influences that placed increased emphasis on wellbeing, pastoral care and safeguarding in schools of all kinds. BGS rose on this rising national tide. Dags did much to galvanise an intention to provide conditions where one can find personal fulfilment, extended by subsequent BGS leadership and now overtly signalled by our values; although no one doubts that schoolboys were enjoying BGS life many years before it became official policy!

In 2025 BGS moves forward as an inclusive, diverse and kind school, and we wear our three values proudly. These three qualities stood out when groups of current and former pupils, parents and staff were surveyed just before I joined BGS as Deputy Head in 2014. They remain at the core of our conversations with stakeholders across BGS to this day. They are also a recipe for our future success provided we, collectively, are tightly aligned around them and share the vision for high standards that our values provide.

All three have equal prominence – this is not a zero-sum game.

Our motto is a call to action, a command perhaps. Our values direct the course of that action. It is with our values in mind – excellence, opportunity and happiness – that we go forward collectively into the Christmas period and a new calendar year.

When Christmas arrives, I will have completed 10 years as Headmaster. Time has passed quickly, at least from my perspective. Hopefully, I will remain sufficiently useful for a little while longer, not least because my kids love attending BGS and Mrs Hinchliffe enjoys working in our PE department too. The BGS family business rolls on.

Enjoy reading all that follows and I look forward to the pleasure of your company at future OB events.

Yours ever

Simon Hinch H



Women in Tech Awards 2025

Rising technology strategist and OB, Ria Chutti (2023) has been named Apprentice Award Winner at the prestigious Women in Tech Awards 2025, celebrating her outstanding contributions to digital innovation in the public sector.

Currently completing her apprenticeship at Microsoft, Ria works within the Central Government Account Team where she supports digital transformation and enhances citizen services through inclusive technology. Her efforts have helped improve the lives of millions, championing technology as a force for social impact.

"I'm passionate about social mobility, and technology is a tool which empowers people, creating opportunities for all," Ria said.



"This award is a reflection of the amazing people I've worked with and the opportunities I've had to grow."



Solicitor of the Year

We are delighted to share that OB Tegan Johnson (2017) has been named as Solicitor of the Year by City Century, a prestigious initiative that connects top solicitor apprentices with 50 leading law firms across London.

After completing her apprenticeship and gaining a First-Class Honours Degree in Law and Legal Practice, Tegan joined Charles Russell Speechlys as an Associate, specialising in commercial construction and engineering - a role she's settled into over the last year. Alongside her client work, Tegan is the Co-Chair of Social Mobility at Charles Russell Speechlys and sits on the London committee for the National Association of Women in Construction – factors which led to her nomination.

On receiving her award, Tegan said: "I have no doubt that the apprenticeship route was the right route for me. I've been to complete my studies and work towards qualification while working in a top City firm, across 3 offices and 5 teams. It's given me real-world experience, confidence, and the chance to grow in a way that traditional routes don't always offer. I'm really proud that I'm now able to mentor others, and very grateful for the recognition."

Huge congratulations, Tegan – your journey is an inspiration to future legal professionals.

Former Head Prefects tie the knot!

We are delighted to share the wonderful news that our former Head Boy and Head Girl, OB Benedict Scantlebury (2013) and OB Elizabeth Scantlebury (2013), were married on 11th October 2025 at The Priory Church, South Queensferry, followed by a beautiful reception at Barnboughle Castle. Everyone at Bradford Grammar School sends their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for a lifetime filled with love, joy and happiness together.



To be, or not to be (in an AI future)?

OB Dr Jonathan Wheeldon (1982) returned to BGS recently to deliver a presentation to Sixth Form students titled 'To be, or not to be (in an AI future)?' Jonathan has had an international career in the cultural industries - music, film, theatre and publishing including senior roles at Universal, EMI, The Really Useful Group and Macmillan (inc. Nature).

He shared his insights on the future of learning, navigating the rapid rise of generative AI such as ChatGPT, and identifying sustainable career paths aligned with your personality. Thank you, Jonathan for inspiring the next generation of Old Bradfordians!

Andrew Foster

Three Old Bradfordians reunited, 25 years after leaving school, to support a powerful fundraising event in London blending their shared love of rugby with a life-saving cause.

OB Andrew Foster (2000), who tragically lost his son Rycroft aged just 16 months to complications after a stem cell transplant in 2023, organised a special charity takeover of the RFL Championship fixture between the London Broncos and Bradford Bulls at the Cherry Red Records Stadium. The match was held in honour of 7-year-old Emilia Mackay, who had her stem cell transplant at the same time as Rycroft.

The event, titled 'Emilia's Big Day', brought together fans from North and South for an afternoon of rugby league action, while encouraging attendees to register as stem cell donors.

Andrew was joined by fellow Old Bradfordians and West Yorkshire businessmen Matt Brooke (2001) and Badar Ayaz (2000), whose companies Bankhead Group and Durham Accountants sponsored the event, providing free entry and travel for children of Bradford Bulls supporters.



Pictured are Andrew (left), Matt (right) and Emilia, whose story continues to inspire.

"This day is more than rugby," said Badar. "It's about community, hope, and making a real difference. We're not just bringing fans to watch the Bulls - we're highlighting the urgent need for stem cell donors."

“

**THERE IS NO WAY I WOULD
HAVE GOT INTO MEDICINE IF
I WASN'T AT THIS SCHOOL.**

”

Dr Amir Khan returns for Clock House Prize Giving and Speech Day

We were fortunate to be able to welcome OB Dr Amir Khan (1999) as guest of honour to award prizes at the Junior School Speech Day. We took the opportunity to speak with Amir about his school days between official duties. "I loved my school days" he said, "the 90s were a fabulous time to be alive. We were the first-year group to do GCSE drama here at BGS. As part of that you had to do a performance to an audience, so we put on a show. There were only four of us, John Hollingworth, Liz Chan and Ghulan Hussan, ably supported by our Drama Teacher, Mr Stokes.



I went on to do A Level Theatre studies, again we were the first-year group... trailblazers some might say! Looking back, I suspect this is where I got the TV thing, probably from Mr Stokes and Bradford Grammar School".

Amir continued "there is no way I would have got into medicine if I wasn't at this school. There is no way I'd be as confident in the way I speak nor have the communication skills I now have. The support I got from the teachers was great. Honestly wherever I go, I will always say, I owe a massive debt to this school. I wasn't doing well academically before I got here.

I was doing OK. The teachers have that special skill here where they identify exactly what you are good at, and they pull it out of you. I don't take anything for granted and I know that I have been lucky enough to come to this school and not everyone from my background gets that opportunity".

"That would never have happened if it wasn't for the Assisted Places programme. It was my mum that made this happen. She was always very strict growing up; supportive too. But it was homework ahead of everything. What I remember most was the 11 plus exam as my mum didn't even tell me I was doing it. She woke me up and said we are going to 'a school'. So I arrived at the Price Hall in a school I didn't know, having done no prep for an exam I knew nothing about. My mum had seen an advert for Bradford Grammar School in a newspaper. I always thought that was an incredible thing she did for me".

We are grateful to Amir for generously making time for Junior School pupils and for talking so openly with us during a busy day at BGS.

Silver Success at the World Rowing Beach Sprint Finals

Two excellent quarter- and semi-final races in the U19 Coastal Men's Double Sculls (CJM2x) saw OB Edwin Van Lopik (2025) with his teammate, Valen Giachetto reach the final, securing a silver medal in a close-fought battle with Team Germany. A fantastic achievement! Congratulations to Edwin, Valen, and the entire Team GB squad.



Team GB Orienteering

Congratulations go to OB Emily Gibbins (2023) on continuing her orienteering journey and being selected for the Team GB Development Squad for 2026. Everyone at BGS wishes Emily the very best of luck. Her commitment, resilience and passion have led to this fantastic achievement which follows success at the Junior World Orienteering Championships (JWOC) in Trentino, Italy, in July, where Emily did well in the sprint discipline (37th out of 162; 4th Brit home) and was part of the team which finished 11th out of 81 in the mixed sprint relay.

England Women's Road Race

We are thrilled to share that OB Rebecca Flaherty (2024) claimed the bronze medal in the individual women's race at the Corsa Dei Castelli U23 Road Race in Trieste on 19th October. Rebecca was also a key member of the England Women's Team who proudly secured silver (2nd place) in the team standings. Congratulations to Rebecca and the England Athletics Team - an incredible achievement and opportunity.



New York **REUNION**

Old Bradfordians and their partners travelled from across the USA and Canada to gather in New York in the fall, joining the headmaster and his family. Friendships were made and renewed, the comings and goings of BGS were shared and discussed, sights were seen and hospitality enjoyed. All in all, it was a wonderful few days in an iconic setting.

Words of welcome were exchanged over Friday evening drinks at a rooftop bar in Midtown. The view south, stretching from Madison Square Garden to the One World Trade Center, provided a spectacular backdrop for conversation and catching up. Some attendees have become good friends over the course of various OB reunions, while others - Nick Turner (1976) and his fiancée Dawn, Mike Gatenby (1997), and Shantanu Sampath (2017) - were joining a North American reunion for the first time. There was much to discuss over drinks, not least how two current BGS pupils – Katy and Ben Hinchliffe – had managed to grow so much since folk last met!



Those attending woke the next morning to flawless blue skies and warm autumnal sunshine, the perfect conditions for a morning boat trip on the Hudson River, which offered stunning views of the vertiginous city skyline and famous New York landmarks. The Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, Ellis and Governors Islands were all captured in various group photographs to mark the occasion. Coffee and cake, and lunch for some, followed at Hudson Yards, while Paul (1968) and Kristine Dobson headed off to explore the intriguing 'Little Island Park' pointed out by our river guide.

The party reconvened later in the day to hear from the headmaster and ask questions about BGS and OB matters. Interest was shown in the school's growing prowess in sport and the arts, redevelopment of the Junior School, continued academic excellence across all year groups and public benefit activities including the 1662 Fund for means tested Assisted Places.

Questions were asked about the impact of VAT and other ideological and financial pressures on BGS, and consequently how the school's business strategy might need to adapt.

▶ A candid and wide-ranging discussion followed about the commercial attitudes and behaviours required of successful independent schools today and in the foreseeable future, as well as the changing nature of the sector and rise of international charitable and for-profit groups. The headmaster reassured everyone about the strong position BGS has worked hard to establish for itself and the advantages this brings in a dynamic climate. He also expressed gratitude for the gathering's deep interest in and ongoing support of the school.

With BGS rugby bobble hats and other gifts shared, it was soon time to head out into the bright lights of the Theatre District for dinner. La Grande Boucherie offered a fine setting for further conversation and also birthday celebrations, as Eleanor Huggins, wife of David (1956), turned 88. The party ate and drank well into the evening and sang a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday", with card and candles adding to the moment, to mark Eleanor's special evening.



Meanwhile, Katy and Ben were treated to various "back in the day" stories of schoolboy heroics from Brian Cousins (1969) and Bruce Bower (1957). Plans to recreate some of these continue to be hatched and kept firmly from the current headmaster's attention - although everyone has confidence in Mrs Hinchliffe to wheedle them out in time. (Thank you, Bruce and Brian!).

Commitments to meet again were made after the meal. Some folk said their farewells to the assembled company - hands were shaken, hugs exchanged - while others met for breakfast on Sunday morning. Bruce was persuaded (it wasn't hard) to head up the Rockefeller Center with the Hinchliffes to take in the views before catching a flight home.

Thank you to everyone who attended. A grand time was had by all. Hoc Age!



Shipley Curry Night

It was great to catch up with Old Bradfordians from different eras at a relaxed and enjoyable evening of conversation, laughter and shared memories of school life. A special thank you goes to OB Peter Mason (1974) for generously providing a free drink using the Hoc Age code word at an excellent nearby real ale pub - his generosity was much appreciated and added a lovely touch to the night. These informal gatherings are a wonderful way to keep our community connected. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the evening such a success.



Careers Event at BGS

OBs were amongst the representatives of various professions at the biennial BGS Careers Fair to inspire and advise current pupils with respect to opportunities in the worlds of work. Organised by Sarah Denby, the school's Head of Higher Education and Careers, the evening provided insights and much useful guidance at a time when pupils are making choices about A Levels, university and apprenticeships. The school extends its grateful thanks to everyone who supported this event which is of tremendous value to current pupils.



"It's been over 20 years since I last visited school, and I'm excited to come back, meet some current pupils and discuss careers in electronic engineering. I've spent my career to date in academia at Imperial and have done several start-ups – so I hope to be able to convey the excitement of gaining detailed scientific knowledge to solve real world problems. After all, my own excitement for all things electrical and electronic was kindled at BGS"

Paul Mitcheson (1997)



"I have visited BGS on a few occasions since leaving for university in 1997, but it has been some years since the last time. I'm very pleased to be coming back again to provide what I hope will be useful insights about careers in the insurance industry and related comments concerning private legal practice. I want my fellow Bradfordians to have the benefit of my experience so that they can make better decisions about their own futures, taking account of our rapidly changing circumstances. It's the least that I can do, given the opportunities that the school made available to me"

James Denison (1997).





1662 Fund IMPACT REPORT

Look out for the latest edition of our 1662 Fund for Assisted Places Impact Report, with stories and pictures of the Gala Dinner, Giving Day and the transformational effect of a BGS education - it will be published soon!



"Our ongoing commitment to inclusivity, a grounded ethos and a diverse social mix is sustained through the generosity of those who support the 1662 Fund and its subset, the Futures Fund, which endows these awards for posterity. To those who have given to BGS this past year, I offer my deepest gratitude. Your support is enabling BGS to retain its essential character and positive impact. Doubt not the difference you are making"

Dr Simon Hinchliffe, Headmaster, writing in the forthcoming Impact Report



The Bradfordian

Click [here](#) for the latest edition of The Bradfordian Magazine - school news and a glimpse of the lives and achievements of the pupils fills the pages.



"Like other successful and long-standing institutions, BGS has moved with the times. "Schools, like states, have to fluctuate between stability and change, as need arises," wrote Tony Moxon in his book *Hoc Age, Bradford Grammar School 1818 - 1996*, first published in 1999. He is right of course. BGS has evolved over the generations and we are doing so again, reflecting the opportunities and challenges of our time"

Dr Simon Hinchliffe, Headmaster, writing in the latest edition of The Bradfordian.

Dates for your diary, 2026

NOVEMBER 06 Curry Evening, Aagrah Shipley 6.30pm - 8.30pm 21 London Club Dinner, Carlton Club 6:30pm	DECEMBER 04 Christmas Concert, Price Hall 7:00pm - 9.30pm 12 Colfes Rugby, Charlton Park Rugby Club, South East London KO: 7:00pm	JANUARY 21 Durham Social, The Boat Club, Elvet Riverside 6:00pm - 9:00pm 22 Newcastle Social, Pitcher and Piano, Quayside 6:00pm - 9:00pm
FEBRUARY 12 London Social, The Pavilion End, St Paul's, London 5:30pm - 9:00pm	MARCH 18 1662 Tree Planting Ceremony, BGS 11:00am - 2:30pm 21 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s , Reunion Lunch, BGS, DH Room 12:00pm - 3:00pm 21 Water Polo & Swimming Gala, BGS 3:00pm	APRIL Date TBC Colfes Rugby 24 1662 Campaign, School Colour Run, BGS
MAY Date TBC An Evening With OB Rugby Guest Speakers, Venue TBC	JUNE 24 Bacchus Cup, Shipley Golf Club, Tee-off Afternoon	JULY Date TBC Ilkley 7s Rugby, Ilkley Rugby Club 19 New Zealand Reunion, Auckland, Venue TBC 23 Australia Reunion, Sydney, Venue TBC

DATES FOR DIARIES



The Digital Archive is now Live!

Our archivist and Deputy Library Manager, Tracy Lord has been busy digitising sections of our BGS archive. The first tranche of material is now ready to view via the Old Bradfordians section of the BGS website: [Old Bradfordians](#).

We are excited to share extracts of BGS history in this way and will be adding more items over time.

Additional contributions for the archive are invited for safekeeping and future telling of our shared BGS history. Tracy and her colleagues can be reached via bgsarchives@bradfordgrammar.com



Keep in touch

Old Bradfordians are encouraged to share their news with us for future editions of the Old Bradfordian magazine and OB Newsletter. We would love to hear from you via development@bradfordgrammar.com – the email for the BGS Development Department and OB events, communications and fundraising in support of the 1662 Fund for Assisted Places.