

OLD BRADFORDIANS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2026

HEADMASTER'S

Welcome

Dear Old Bradfordians and Friends of BGS

Welcome to this latest edition of the OB (digital) Newsletter.

The advent of 2026 brought my tenth year of headship to a close – I'm old news! "You were never 'news'" so said our Deputy Head, Jed Boardman. Such is the camaraderie amongst Senior Team members. Nonetheless, a piece on the BGS website marked the occasion, alongside a photo of me looking grumpy, not smiling. I don't like having my picture taken; perhaps you can tell. All of which rambles towards the point I wish to make – simply to say thank you to everyone who sent a message of goodwill. I am grateful; and you did make me smile.

Ten years is, of course, nothing compared to the dignified, long service of some current and former colleagues. Nor does it compare to the years chalked up by a selection of my predecessors, former headmasters like:

R Hall 1563-1621 (58 years)

B Butler 1728-1784 (56 years)

WH Keeling 1871-1916 (45 years)

So, please don't fret, I understand that tenures can be long and my years are merely a blink of an eye in Bradford. I am not getting above my station...

... and so, to business. Since the last Newsletter, we have enjoyed OB social gatherings at the Annual Dinner of the Old Bradfordians Club London and Christmas BGS / Colfe's rugby fixture, in the Northeast at Durham and Newcastle and back in London at a bustling



bar near St Paul's. There is more in the social calendar, most immediately the annual Swimming and Water Polo fixture and OBs Reunion Lunch at BGS. Looking Further ahead, please to join us at:

- An evening with BGS rugby internationals, Charlie Hodgson, Steve Ravenscroft and Dan Scarbrough, The Phoenix, 37 Cavendish Square, London, Thursday 21st May, 5.30pm - 9.00pm
- The Bacchus Cup, Shipley Golf Club, and evening meal, Wednesday 24th June
- Ilkley Rugby 7s, Ilkley Rugby Club, Saturday 4th July.

OBs and Friends of BGS might be inclined to follow the designated [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to receive the latest news and timely invitations to these social events and others. Needless to say, we hope to have the pleasure of your company before too long.

Whilst on the theme of forthcoming events, our **annual fundraising** event in support of the **1662 Fund for Assisted Places** will take place on **Friday 17th April**.

▶ This year we are challenging our pupils, their parents and members of staff to take part in a Colour Run at BGS, comprising an obstacle course whilst getting pelted with all manner of lurid powder and paint.

I encourage everyone to get behind the Colour Run to raise funds to enable bright and deserving children to join BGS who would not otherwise be able to attend. Help us to change young lives for the better through the transformational effect of a BGS education. If you haven't done so already, please read our latest Impact Report (see below). The articles therein describe the vital contribution that OBs make to the prospects of the young people of our school, city and district, and in so doing protect the essential, inclusive character of BGS.

In terms of that 'character', our motto Hoc Age remains an axiomatic expression of school life. OBs may recall Price Hall assembly notices celebrating the activities and achievements of the previous week. These still ring out on Monday mornings from the lectern. Here are a few snippets from one randomly chosen 2026 assembly that provide a flavour of those messages; and I wonder how much has changed since the school days of those OBs reading these words?

"Our second to fourth netball teams managed three convincing wins against the Silcoates first to third teams respectively. Our firsts played Woodhouse Grove and came away with a

comfortable win. Our U14Cs and U15Cs suffered two close defeats to Skipton A teams. Then, at the end of the week, we hosted RGS Newcastle and came away with four narrow losses, one draw and five wins.

U12 hockey boys competed in the Yorkshire Cup. The team enjoyed a convincing win against Silcoates 3–0, hard-fought victories over GSAL 2–1 and Harrogate Grammar 3–1. They narrowly lost 1–0 to both Cundall Manor and Pocklington, before finishing the tournament with a hard-fought win against QEGS. The first XI boys travelled to the Wirral for the ISHC Plate Round 1, where they secured an impressive 2–0 victory over Rossall. On Saturday against QEGS, the U13A lost narrowly to strong opposition; meanwhile the U13B team achieved an excellent 4–2 victory; a thrilling 5–5 draw kept the U12As busy, and a dominant 5–0 victory for the U12B capped off a super block fixture.

GSAL's swimmers visited on Wednesday with an extremely high standard of racing on show. BGS delivered an excellent overall performance, securing a very respectable 213 points against GSAL's 235, underlining a performance full of quality, resilience and promise.

It has also been a big week for Table Tennis at BGS, hosting a national schools competition involving over 300 players from across the North and East of England, over four days of competition.





The U14 rugby 7s team added another silver medal to their collection at the Durham on Tuesday. Narrowly missing out to Hymers in the final showed great skill and character throughout the day, most notably against RGS Newcastle and GSAL.

Finally, in terms of BGS sport, forty runners competed at Cliffe Castle this week in the Bradford / Keighley Schools League, delivering impressive performances across the board. With strong results throughout the day, BGS continues to dominate the local cross-country scene. Special congratulations to Olivia, who has been selected to represent BGS at a prestigious English Schools competition.

And... last but by no means least, congratulations to the cast, backstage crew and tech teams for a phenomenal run of shows in the Hockney Theatre. Our BGS musical, School of Rock, was a triumph. Those involved can be incredibly proud of their performances and the hard work and commitment they put in to make it a show to remember. The singing, acting and dancing were out of this world, all accompanied by a stunning band. Miss White and Mrs Steele are still receiving many compliments about the

show and are sure they will continue to roll in. Three nights of foot-tapping, head-nodding, hands-in-the-air joy. Pupils danced, stamped, sang and rocked the stage. It was electric – thank you, all for being in the band!"

If you would like to hear more about such comings and goings at BGS, please take a look at the [Latest News](#) section of the BGS website and our recent [publications](#), including the regular termly magazine [Hoc Age](#), which details the various excitements of each school term, including the current one.

Enjoy reading all that follows. And please get in touch with the Development Department via the email address development@bradfordgrammar.com if you would like a piece featured in a future edition of this Newsletter, or if you have suggestions for future reunions and events.

Yours ever

Simon

Simon Hind H



Cross Country Success

OB Rebecca Flaherty (2024) stormed to victory winning the National Cross Country Championships – Junior Women category. An incredible achievement and a fantastic moment for the Old Bradfordians community. In the photo, Rebecca is joined by Tony Kingham (left) and OB Dave Potter (1980; right) both beaming with pride.

A special mention goes to Mrs Flaherty (Head of Year 12 and Teacher of Chemistry), who managed to cheer Rebecca on all the way from Milan Airport, watching the livestream surrounded by enthusiastic BGS Year 8–10 students who were on their way home after the recent ski trip. Well done, Rebecca! Congratulations on an outstanding performance.

Wedding Industry Awards

Well done OB Hamish Irvine (2014) who has been recognised as one of the top two wedding photographers in the UK at the 2026 Wedding Industry Awards, following his regional win as Wedding Photographer of the Year for Yorkshire and the North East last November. At the national finals in Liverpool, he was named runner-up and was highly commended. An outstanding achievement at one of the industry's biggest events.

Reflecting on his time at Bradford Grammar School, Hamish added: "my career kicked off early with teachers giving me opportunities to hone my craft working for them, or for the school. I photographed the rugby team group photos when I was 16, printing them out for parents and organising the shoots. My A-Level English teacher even trusted me to photograph her wedding, at the age of 17. She played a part in my fledgling career, and I couldn't be prouder of those opportunities so many people at the school gave me."



Dining Across the Divide

OB Fraz Malik (2022) was delighted to have been involved in The Guardian feature Dining Across the Divide. As he notes "without doubt, respectful dialogue remains crucial to breaking down barriers and increasing mutual understanding and knowledge, and in fostering an atmosphere of peace and togetherness. Irrespective of differences of race, religion or social background, we are always united as human beings. Sometimes the most radical act is simply sitting down and listening". The piece, which generated much positive feedback can be found [here](#).



Photo Credit: Mark Pinder.



Ella Dawson Foundation

Congratulations to Jane Dawson on receiving the True Grit Award Yorkshire and Humberside at Business Cloud's Northern Leaders 2025 event. This recognition is a testament to Jane's incredible resilience and dedication. After losing her daughter, OB Ella Dawson (2013) at just 24, following a courageous two-year battle with blood cancer, Jane and her family turned their grief into action. In February 2022, they founded [The Ella Dawson Foundation](#) to ensure young adults aged 18–30 living with cancer can access tailored support for their psychological, nutritional, and physical wellbeing. Jane accepted this award on behalf of the entire Ella Dawson Foundation community.

Heart Hero Award

Inspiring news from OB Ruby Jones (2011)! Ruby was recently nominated for a Heart Hero Award by the British Heart Foundation. While she didn't win, she's incredibly proud to have been recognised for her efforts. After saving her husband's life last year, they've embarked on an extraordinary journey together. Here's what Ruby has to say: "I am incredibly proud of what we have built with The Idiopath Limited, a resilience-led initiative focused on raising awareness around sudden cardiac arrest, confidence under pressure, and life-saving skills. Without CPR training, my husband would not be alive today. That reality has shaped our mission: to equip as many people as possible with the skills, confidence, and understanding that enabled me to act when it mattered most".



Sanya fulfils dream to study Medicine at Cambridge

OB Sanya Haleem (2025), had her dream of studying Medicine at Cambridge University realised when she gained three A*s and an A in her A Levels.

Sanya joined BGS in Year 7 from Beckfoot Heaton Primary School on an Assisted Place. Last summer, she discovered she'd gained an A* in Biology, A* in Chemistry, A* in Maths and an A in Further Maths. Sponsored by Sovereign Healthcare during her Sixth Form years, Sanya received the school's specialist competitive university support as she applied to Cambridge. It included mock medical interviews and help with her personal statement, to secure her place at Newnham College. She also received a great deal of support from Newnham alumni and BGS Bursar, Homera Najib.

Said Sanya: "I'm really happy with the results and delighted to have my place at Cambridge. I don't think I'd have secured the grades if it wasn't for BGS. "What's really special about BGS is the teachers, in that they're enthusiastic about you coming to ask for help, and never more so than in the Sixth Form. My friendships really solidified during that time too. "I used to be quite shy and I've gained so much confidence since I joined BGS. I've had so many opportunities to take part in new things. I don't think I would have had those opportunities anywhere else."

Sanya, who gained Grade 9s across the board in her GCSEs, has loved her time at BGS, enjoying cricket, rowing, assemblies and being a member of the Islamic Society. Sanya is also a participant



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in The Rank Foundation's School Leadership Programme, established in 1978 to give financial assistance and opportunities, including a summer school, to develop teamwork and leadership skills, to a select group of students in Sixth Forms across chosen state and independent schools. "I'm much more comfortable speaking in front of the class now," she said. "I wasn't used to that, but now it's easier."

Mrs Najib, who studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge, said: "I knew Sanya was applying and when she got her offer, I asked her if she wanted to chat about it. It's been lovely and I've been able to relive my Newnham days talking about the friendships that you build for life! We're very proud of Sanya and we know she has a fantastic future in store at Cambridge and beyond."

Giving back – latest Impact Report, 1662 Fund for Assisted Places

Bradford Grammar School's ongoing commitment to inclusivity, a grounded 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 Assisted Place Awards in perpetuity. To those who have given to BGS we offer our deepest gratitude. In 2024/25 we raised £1.3m towards the 1662 Fund. The support of OBs and Friends of BGS is enabling our school to transform lives through the positive impact of an inspiring education.

Read the latest edition of the Impact Report for more details; and explore ways in which you can support Assisted Places via this [link](#) or by contacting the development@bradfordgrammar.com directly. Thank you.





Photos:
Stephen
Garnett.

Charlotte Brontë bracelet recreated

OB Robin Wright (1979), Managing Director of Wydean Weaving, a Haworth-based specialist in braiding and ceremonial manufacturing, was commissioned to produce a replica of the 175-year-old mourning bracelet once owned and worn by Charlotte Brontë.

The replica was created for actor Margot Robbie, who plays Cathy Earnshaw in the recent film adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*. The piece was commissioned by Robbie's stylist, Andrew Mukamal for wearing on the red carpet at the London premiere, creating a media storm.

Robin, who liaised directly with Mukamal and the Brontë Parsonage throughout the process said: "we could never have imagined the impact the



**IT'S BEEN INCREDIBLE FOR OUR TEAM
TO SEE THE IMPACT OF THEIR WORK**



bracelet, woven here in Haworth and with silver work created by our jewellery partners McCarty London, would make when Margot Robbie stepped out wearing it".

"The aim was to create a museum-quality replica which honoured the original's materials, construction and appearance, while ensuring the historic artefact itself remained protected. From specialist scanning of the original to creating CAD files for mould creation, right through to the rare diagonal plaiting we created using our 100-year-old flat braiding machine, we created an exact replica of a bracelet, made and worn 175 years ago".

"It's been incredible for our team to see the impact of their work as we pulled out all the stops and used all the resources available to us to create the bracelet in just four weeks."

Huge congratulations to all involved and for creating such a beautiful replica.



Old Bradfordians Club London, Annual Dinner

On Friday 21 November, the Headmaster and Deputy Head, Messrs Hinchliffe and Boardman, were delighted to attend the Old Bradfordians Club London Dinner at the Carlton Club. The evening was filled with lively conversation, excellent food, drink and hospitality, and various toasts to the school.

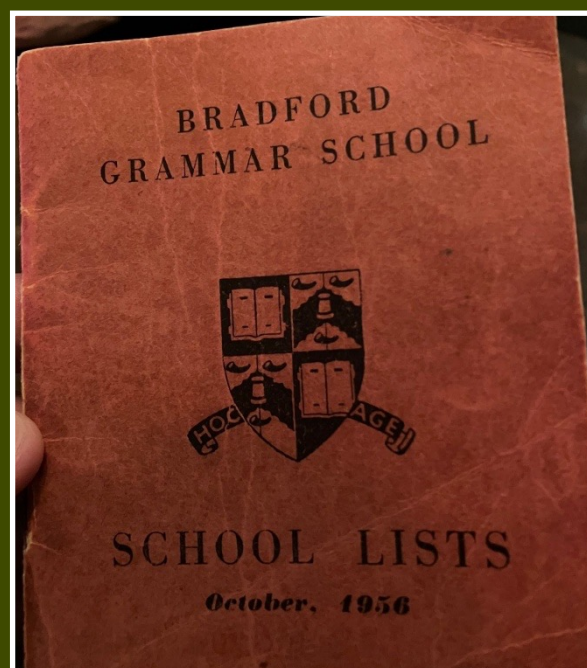
Former Senior Leadership Team member and Head of Classics, Jane Chapman, gave an

inspiring and entertaining speech which received a well-deserved standing ovation. It was fantastic to see both familiar faces and new ones joining the throng in the West End this year.

Grateful thanks to OB Mark Lawrence (1975) and the club committee for organising and hosting such a superb evening. Their hard work continues to bring our OB community together 'down south'.

Durham and Newcastle Reunions

We were delighted to host two university socials that united OBs from across the decades, from recent leavers to those who left BGS some years ago. Guests enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect, share memories of their time at BGS, and build new friendships within the wider alumni community. A Red Book from 1956 sparked thoughtful conversations about shared traditions and the enduring legacy of the school. Thank you to all who attended, joining Sarah Flaherty and Ross McOwen, Heads of Year 12 and 13 (Sixth Form) respectively, and helped to contribute to a wonderful couple of evenings in the north east.



London

REUNION

We gathered at the Pavilion End pub for a fantastic London Social, bringing together OBs for an evening filled shared memories and great conversation. Guests caught up over drinks and made new connections within our growing alumni community. We were delighted to hear from Deputy Head, Jed Boardman who spoke about life at school today and shared heartfelt thanks to all for their continued support, especially for our Assisted Places Programme, which continues to change lives.



Head of English, Lee Hanson also commented how much he thoroughly enjoyed meeting former pupils and hearing where life has taken them. And a big thank you to Mark Lawrence from the Old Bradfordians' Club London for explaining how alumni can get involved and become members. To everyone who attended: thank you for sharing your stories and for staying connected with us. The Development Department loves hearing how life is unfolding for each of you. We hope to see you all again very soon!



Dates for YOUR DIARY 2026

Old Bradfordians Lunch at BGS

We can now confirm that OB Nigel Cameron (1971) will be joining us as our guest speaker at this year's All Old Bradfordians Lunch (all year groups). Since leaving BGS in 1971, Nigel has enjoyed an extraordinary career. He has served as a professor at three North American universities, led a Washington-based think tank focused on technology policy and authored or edited books on subjects ranging from robotics and the future of work to medical ethics, to religious history. In 'retirement' Nigel has turned his focus to biography. He is currently writing about BGS during the mid 20th century and the teachers who dedicated their careers to the school. We looking forward to hearing his reflections, stories and insights. To book please visit: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FYOZ>



SATURDAY 21 MARCH
SWIMMING & WATER POLO GALA
ADRIAN MOORHOUSE SWIMMING POOL, BGS

SCAN THE QR CODE TO BOOK TICKETS



**FROM BGS TO THE BIGGEST STAGE
AN EVENING WITH RUGBY GREATS**

GUEST SPEAKERS:
DANIEL SCARBROUGH,
STEVE RAVENSCROFT AND
CHARLIE HODGSON

**THURSDAY
21 MAY
5:30PM - 9PM**
THE PHOENIX,
37 CAVENDISH SQUARE,
LONDON,
W1G 0PP

**£10PP. INCLUDES
COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS
ON ARRIVAL**
TRYBOOKING FEES WILL BE APPLIED
AT CHECKOUT FOR EACH TICKET PURCHASED

SCAN THE QR CODE TO BOOK TICKETS



**SATURDAY 21 MARCH
12:30PM - 4PM
BRADFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**AN HISTORIC FIRST:
ALL OLD BRADFORDIANS
REUNION LUNCH**

TICKET PRICE: £30PP,
INCLUDES 2 COURSE FORK BUFFET,
WINE OR BEER AND
HOT AND COLD BEVERAGES.
TRYBOOKING FEES WILL BE APPLIED AT CHECKOUT
FOR EACH TICKET PURCHASED

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO BOOK YOUR TICKETS

Swimming and Water Polo

We are pleased to announce the return of our annual Swimming and Water Polo Event, taking place on Saturday 21 March 2026 at the Adrian Moorhouse Swimming Pool. This much loved fixture will once again see OBs compete against current BGS pupils, bringing together our community for an afternoon of connection, sporting spirit, and friendly rivalry. We warmly invite alumni, parents, pupils, to join us - whether as participants or spectators. To book please visit: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXOI> Following the event, guests are invited to join us locally for drinks, followed by a curry (details to be confirmed).

An evening with BGS Rugby Greats

BGS invites you to join us for a special evening with former international rugby stars and OBs Dan Scarbrough, Steve Ravenscroft and Charlie Hodgson - Thursday 21 May, 5.30pm - 9.00pm, The Phoenix, 37 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0PP. Our event will take place in the Basement Bar. This is located downstairs, so please make your way down on arrival. Our distinguished guests will take part in a lively panel discussion, sharing memories from their rugby days at BGS through to international honours. Headmaster, Simon Hinchliffe and Head of PE Outreach, Matt Wilde will be in attendance for what promises to be a very special evening. Complimentary drinks will be available on arrival on a first come, first served basis. To book please visit: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXZB>.

For enquiries about any of our OB events, please contact the Development Office: development@bradfordgrammar.com

And finally...

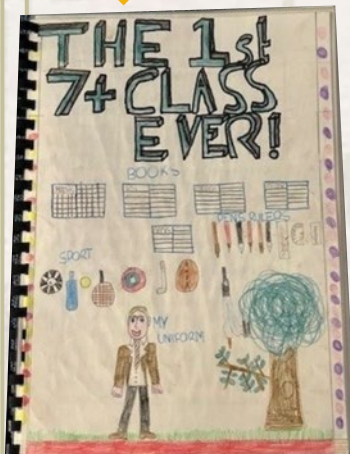
FROM THE ARCHIVE

The first tranche of material is ready to be viewed 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. Archive material is also shared via the archive Instagram account [here](#). To whet OB's appetites for all things archive related, some snippets from the Instagram feed are given below:



▲ "A great photo of the school with BGS boys walking in front, probably on their way to the sports pavilion. Taken in 1963".

▲ "We're grateful for every donation to the archive we receive and last week this incredible scrap book arrived in the post.



From 1998, it is filled with illustrations and wonderful memories of the first ever Year 3 class in Clock House. We would like to thank for colleague Mrs Chapman for this delightful book. If anyone has any memories connected to this, please get in touch – we would absolutely love to hear from you".



▲ "On 14th November 1955, the BGS Tuck Shop was formally opened by the Headmaster, Rev. J.P. Newell and his wife. The Tuck Shop was situated in three rooms on the ground floor of Clock House. The Bradford Department Store, Busby's were largely responsible for converting these rooms to their new use. The Headmaster and Governors felt that it would be a most useful addition to school amenities".



▲ "Before 1949 our pupils had to be transported to local swimming pools for their swimming lessons. Can you imagine how delighted they were to find that when their new school opened in 1949 it had it's very own pool. Seen here showing both water polo and a swimming lesson shortly before it was rebuilt in the new millennium".

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.