

THE OLD BRADFORDIAN

The Old Bradfordians Association Magazine



Behind the scenes at Bradford Live

with OBs Lee Craven and Chris Morrell

News
Features
Obituaries

2026 Edition

WELCOME



... from the Chairman of The Board of Governors

In the Old Bradfordian last year, I outlined how the school was striving to balance ‘change’ with ‘continuity’ – responding to new opportunities (and challenges) while remaining firmly grounded in the values that have characterised and underpinned Bradford Grammar School over many years.

Lynne Morrison

Chairman
of The Board
of Governors

Writing this brief introduction in February 2026, it is only too clear the pace of change globally continues to accelerate – whether through technological advances, economic challenges, climate change, or questioning of the existing rules-based world order. So many aspects of our lives feel to be experiencing generational shifts.

For the school, change means it is increasingly important to anticipate, and innovate, while retaining the ethos at the core of how we offer excellence in education set in a happy and caring environment.

I am revisiting these thoughts, not simply because they remain relevant, but, more particularly, because I believe they link with the theme I want to say a few words about this year, namely why ‘impact’ is so important to BGS.

Many of you may already have read the recent 1662 Campaign Impact Report, highlighting some of the real and life-changing opportunities for our pupils that have primarily been made possible through the generosity of our benefactors and donors. We owe all these supporters our thanks and seek their continued support in assisting as many young people as possible to be able to benefit from the BGS experience.

These and other, often local and community-based, initiatives also help us meet the public benefit expectation for independent schools.

My focus on the word ‘impact’ here, however, is what happens beyond, rather than inside, the school gates – the remarkable impact our former pupils make in their subsequent lives and careers.



There is a clear expectation that high-quality education will yield societal, as well as individual, benefits. This is well illustrated in the field of higher education where, for some years, universities have been required to report explicitly on their research 'impact', as part of the periodic Research Excellent Framework.

This is defined formally in terms of the 'tangible benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia'.

While in this context the focus is on universities, it might be helpful to think in a similar way to understand, and appreciate, the extent to which BGS pupils also contribute 'tangible benefits' across wider society.

Whether as leaders in industry and commerce or professional and legal services, pioneering advances in science, medicine and healthcare, taking on senior public roles, enriching our culture provision in its multiple aspects, or performing at the highest international levels in their chosen sports, Bradfordians have had, and are living, truly impactful lives. They are making a positive difference.

Also, importantly, in doing so they continue to manifest the school's key attributes – excellence, opportunity and happiness.

This leads to my key point: as well as succeeding academically, we want our pupils to thrive and go on to lead purposeful and 'impactful' lives. Old Bradfordians can help significantly in that aspiration.

We are committed to our pupils developing those skills, attitudes and behaviours that will not only allow them to progress their own careers, but in so doing, will also enable them to shape the world and develop those around them.

As well as their remarkable generosity, in supporting the means tested Assisted Places that enable more bright youngsters to attend BGS, and helping to fund leading-edge facilities at the school, Old Bradfordians contribute in many other ways. The knowledge, networks and experience they bring to the school and its pupils are invaluable. We want OBs to feel that BGS is still very much their school.

We are keen to maintain contact with our alumni and hear their stories, and we ask those OBs who are in contact with BGS to encourage other former pupils to do likewise.

I hope you will enjoy this latest edition of the Old Bradfordian magazine and the insight it will provide into just some of the achievements of the school and its former pupils.

I am sure that you, too will want the school to be able to prepare more talented young people to make a difference and have impactful futures.

Lynne Morrison



Dr Simon Hinchliffe
BA, MEd, PhD, FRSA
Headmaster

... from the Headmaster

It is a pleasure to share the 2026 edition of our Old Bradfordian magazine with you. I will begin by thanking OBs, Gordon Green (1961) and David Noble (1970) who, last summer, brought the affairs of the Old Bradfordians Association (OBA) Committee to a very dignified conclusion.

As indicated by Gordon, OBA President (2011-2014) and Acting President (2024-2026), in the previous edition of this magazine, the direction and activity of the Association will henceforth be managed directly by the school. This change has subsequently come to pass; the precise moment of transition took place at the recent Gala Dinner.

The Development Department now organises and provides a range of events and publications to bring our OB community closer together. In so doing, the very special relationship that BGS enjoys with its supportive alumni across the globe, nurtured by the OBA over many years, will be protected for generations to come.

The Gala Dinner was nonetheless a poignant occasion in which the historic formation of the OBA came to an end. The moment was rendered even more significant thanks to a generous founding donation of £100k from the OBA to the 1662 Futures Fund, a dedicated endowment conceived to ensure that the opportunity of a BGS education remains accessible to talented pupils regardless of financial circumstance, not merely for today, but in perpetuity.

The generosity of the OBA has since been matched by the benevolent contributions of others. In recognition of this collective philanthropy, new honours boards have been commissioned to stand as a lasting testament to those who have chosen to invest in the future of BGS and its pupils. We are grateful to those OBs and wider circle of benefactors who continue to support the school financially, enabling BGS to transform young lives through the power of education.

BGS has, over the course of its history, aspired to play a role on the civic scene and be a good neighbour in Bradford and the district through, for example, the Direct Grant and Assisted Places schemes of former governments, continued now by the school's own means tested fee assistance programme maintained under the auspices of our 1662 Fund and its subset the Futures Fund. Benefaction is recognised as a historic behaviour of our school, enshrined in the annual Founder's Day Service at Bradford Cathedral. On that note, I would like to record my gratitude to Anya Friis, our outgoing Head of Development, who has done much to sustain fundraising activity over recent years. We wish Anya every success and happiness with her future endeavours.

BGS makes a positive contribution in many other ways too, a theme picked up by Lady Morrison in her opening words to this publication. Our intentions are clear and sincere, yet we face headwinds that have the potential to restrict our ambitions.

The government's policy on VAT is, they say, 'expected to raise £1.8 billion a year by 2029/30' and they forecast that a relatively modest 'ten per cent increase in fees (in addition to underlying growth)' will generate these revenues. The current underlying growth of fees is, of course, significant, driven by changes to the minimum wage and National Insurance, unexpected and marked increases in employer contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme, and inflation of food, fuel, and wage costs - among other factors. The latter is particularly impactful for organisations like BGS where typically 70 per cent of all costs are staff related.

The strong sense from the Government was, and still is, that independent schools can and should absorb much of the VAT and other rising costs by virtue of accepting a manageable hit on their (perceived) extravagantly large surpluses. And let's be honest, some independent schools have historically generated surpluses somewhat enthusiastically.

Such behaviour has opened the door to critical analysis and a hardening of attitudes. But schools like BGS continue to make strenuous efforts to keep fee rises in check and remain as accessible as possible. Since 2010, per-pupil funding in state schools rose by 59 per cent in absolute cash terms. The BGS fee rise over the same period has been 50 per cent, despite the same uplift in costs, mostly associated with salary expectations. Vanishingly few independent schools are guilty of profiteering. But stories like ours at BGS haven't cut through, and we find ourselves in an ideological and commercial ecosystem shaped by hostility towards a few large and well-known members of our sector.

The predicted 10 per cent fee rises have not materialised. That was a fantasy. Increases have by necessity been significantly higher. A few schools in dire straits have taken bold stances on relatively low fee positions – but these are not sustainable.

The Government knew there would be an impact. The Treasury acknowledged that 'some parents may not be able or willing to pay higher fees. The Government estimates that, in the long-term steady state, 37,000 pupils will leave or never enter the UK private school sector as a result of the VAT policy and the Government further estimates that approximately 3,100 additional pupils in England will leave or never enter the private school sector as a result of the business rates policy.' That's a projected fall of just over 40,000 pupils in the long term, realised incrementally. The Government said 3,000 of these children would leave independent education in the first year of the policies. That's a forecast Michael Fish would be proud of – some of you will remember his gaffe on telly in 1987.

In reality, school census data indicates that more than 17,000 children, not 3,000, left independent education before the one-year anniversary. So, the Government estimate will be met very swiftly, not in the long term as suggested, or it's an underestimate of the likely impact.

Fulneck, Mount St Mary's, Moorlands and Queen Margaret's, all schools in our region, have closed. More will inevitably follow. And when we say schools, we mean people, children, their families and my colleagues, and all the services and businesses that feed into any school operation. Where does that leave the £1.8 billion of anticipated tax revenues, initially earmarked to provide for an additional, desperately needed, 6,500 teachers, now destined to fund undefined 'public services', possibly related to housing?

The policy was built on flawed understanding of independent schools and their finances, flawed reckoning and projections of the likely impact, and flawed expectations of the potential benefits to the Treasury. This is not a political or an ideological statement or argument. It's simply a plea for an objective analysis and fact-based discussion.

Is BGS immune to all of this? No, of course not. The independent sector has been contracting in our region for some time. BGS has held steady during this period, claiming an increasingly large share of a shrinking market, and crucially, not at the expense of academic standards, which have quietly but significantly improved. That's been one of our most meaningful achievements in recent years. But we now feel the pinch too, just like everybody else.



My ten years of headship have involved internal reframing of objectives and reorganisations to improve standards – that was the first set of leadership tests – a civic and district backdrop of economic challenge, and then came the global pandemic, followed by deepening ideological and political opposition locally, extending to a regional and national antipathy, inflationary cost pressures not limited to fuel, food, and wages, an unexpected Teachers' Pension Scheme hike and attendant workplace anxiety, and, as described, additional slings and arrows linked to national policy decisions on National Insurance, business rates and VAT. If this were a Netflix series, what should it be called? Rest in Peace Mr Chips? I certainly don't have much hair left, as my sometimes grumpy looking publicity photos all too readily attest.

And yet, despite the challenges, and perhaps because of them, BGS keeps performing and walking the talk of its values: excellence, opportunity and happiness. We apply ourselves with purpose and in ways axiomatic with our motto, Hoc Age. We are misunderstood, but undaunted.

BGS continues to model steady improvement across a range of fields, including academic performance. Pupil experience is improving. Parental satisfaction is improving. Our public benefit and connectivity with local communities and civic institutions are improving – all against the ideological and economic grain.

Last summer, 71 per cent of all GCSEs were graded 7 to 9 – that's A and above. 58 per cent of A Level grades were A and above. Given our level of selectivity, which has held steady, this represents a pleasing picture of added academic value.

Looking beyond exam results, a team of BGS pupils were crowned UK champions in the national finals of a LEGO robotics competition, earning a place at the world championships in Florida, where they placed second in one of the four main categories.

We taught 350 individual music lessons each week last year. That's not a school – it is a symphony with a timetable. And last year 86 per cent of candidates were awarded either a merit or distinction in Associated Board music exams, and pupils regularly participate in regional and national choirs and orchestras.

The changes we made to BGS sport – initiated roughly a decade ago – continue to bear fruit. We were silver medallists at the British Schools Orienteering Championships, and a Year 9 pupil is yet another to represent England at this sport. In tennis, for the first time in decades, silverware returned to BGS from championships at Eton and we have Yorkshire champions in our team.

Two boys have been selected to play for the Yorkshire Rugby Academy, two for the England Hockey Talent Academy, and one for the England U16 Hockey squad. Last year, a Year 13 pupil represented Great Britain at Beach Sprint Rowing Racing.

And finally, cricket. Last summer, a Year 13 pupil played for the England U19 squad. Later that season he walked out with a fellow OB for the Yorkshire XI, a first as far as we know for our school. Meanwhile, a current pupil has just been called up to the England U19 women's cricket team. Whisper it quietly, but she plays for Lancashire!

BGS steers a straight and true course guided by our heritage, the best of our traditions and ethos. We remain a beacon of educational excellence in the North and beyond with an ongoing commitment to honest effort, high standards and positive impact. Alumni and friends who actively support BGS are helping to safeguard our essential character, our public benefit and future. The school would not be the venerable and moral institution it is without our Old Bradfordians.

**I hope you enjoy reading all that follows.
Hoc Age!**

Yours ever,

Simon Hindle



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NEWS IN BRIEF



Class Acting

Actors Joe Layton (2009) and John Hollingworth (1998) appeared in the BBC production, *The Bombing of Pan AM 103* in June. The series told the true story of the bombing of the passenger flight over Lockerbie in 1988.

Above: John Hollingworth (1998) in the 2024 play, Reykjavik
Below: Alistair Brownlee (2006)



OBE Honours

Triathlete Alistair Brownlee (2006) was awarded an OBE in the King's Birthday Honours list in June.

The double Olympic gold medal winner was recognised for his services to triathlon and to charity, acknowledging his unparalleled success as an athlete and an inspiration to children through his Brownlee Foundation.

Tech Terrific

Rising tech strategist Ria Chutti (2023), was named Apprentice Award winner at the prestigious Women in Tech Awards 2025 in September, celebrating her outstanding contributions to digital innovation in the public sector.

Undertaking her Apprenticeship at Microsoft, Ria works within the Central Government Account Team, where she supports digital transformation and enhances citizen services through inclusive technology.



Law Award

Tegan Johnson (2017) was named Solicitor of the Year in October 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. 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.

Top: Ria Chutti (2023)

Left: Tegan Johnson (2017)

Below: Emily Gibbins (2023)

Orienteering Star

OB Emily Gibbins (2023) continued with her world class orienteering journey by being selected for the Team GB Development Squad for 2026 in October. **Congratulations Emily!**



Saudi Trade Mission

Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, Homera Najib, joined a trade mission to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in November with the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

During the visit, she took part in a series of insightful meetings, built valuable professional connections, and helped strengthen international links on behalf of BGS and the wider region.

A highlight of the trip was meeting two incredible Old Bradfordians in Riyadh: Haithem Kader (2002), currently serving as Second Secretary (Economics) at the British Embassy for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and James Atkinson (2001), the Senior Director at the Public Investment Fund (PIF).

Right: Homera with OB James
Below: OB Ed and his teammate Valen



Silver Success

Two excellent quarter and semi-final races in the U19 Coastal Men's Double Sculls (CJM2x) in the World Rowing Beach Sprint Finals, in November, saw Old Bradfordian Edwin Van Lopik (2025) and his teammate Valen Giachetto reach the final, securing a silver medal in a close-fought battle with Team Germany.

Congratulations to Edwin, Valen, and the entire Team GB squad!

True Grit Award

Jane Dawson, the Founder and CEO of the Ella Dawson Foundation (set up in memory of her OB daughter) was honoured to receive the True Grit Award Yorkshire and Humberside at BusinessCloud's Northern Leaders 2025 event.

The award is given to a leader who, through their own personal adversity, drives and inspires change to help others. The Ella Dawson Foundation provides vital mental, physical, nutritional, health and wellbeing support to help young people navigate the challenges of a cancer diagnosis and rebuild their lives beyond cancer.



Above: Ruby and her husband Rob

Hero Ruby

Ruby Jones (2011) was nominated for a Heart Hero Award by the British Heart Foundation in January after saving her husband Rob's life last year.

The pair used the experience to create The Idiopath, a resilience-led initiative focused on raising awareness around sudden cardiac arrest, confidence under pressure, and life-saving skills. Said Ruby: "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."

“
... WITHOUT CPR TRAINING
MY HUSBAND WOULD NOT
BE ALIVE
”

AI Demystified

Author and entrepreneur Antonio Weiss (2005) launched Demystifying AI in the summer, a guide aimed at helping business professionals harness the growing power of artificial intelligence.

Drawing from experience with his own men's fragrance business, the guide outlines practical strategies for integrating AI into everyday operations while steering clear of the pitfalls. The book was named WHSmith's Business Book of the Month.



Left: Rebecca and Sarah Flaherty with brother Alex, after the Great North Run

Guinness World Record for mum and daughter duo

An Old Bradfordian and BGS's very own Head of Year 12 stormed into the record books in September by becoming the fastest mother and daughter to run a half marathon.

England cross country runner and OB, Rebecca Flaherty (2024), took on her first half marathon with the Great North Run alongside mum Sarah, an experienced marathon competitor.

The pair were aiming to beat the current Guinness World Record and were overjoyed when they smashed it by several minutes, recording a joint time of two hours, 44 minutes and 19 seconds. Rebecca had completed the 13.1-mile course in 1:18:48 and Sarah in 1:25:31.

Said Sarah: "I didn't see her for the whole race, and I followed thinking I would just have to run my best and see how I get on. It was exciting and was definitely a challenge. It was nice to have something different to aim for as the fastest mum and daughter.

"When I crossed the finish line Rebecca was waiting and I said: 'Have we done it?' And she said: 'Yes!' It was amazing."

Rebecca's usual terrain is cross country, and she has represented Team GB and England several times. She competed for England in the individual women's race at the Corsa dei Castelli U23 Road Race in Trieste, Italy, in October where she claimed the bronze medal. She was also a key member of the England Women's Team, which proudly secured silver in the team standings.

In addition, she represented GB in the U23 Women's race at the European Cross Country Championships, finishing 21st overall, and in January she ran for England as a Senior for the first time in Belgium at a World Cross Country Tour race, where she finished 11th.

Her most recent success was in the British Universities and College Sport (BUCS) Cross Country Race, where she finished 5th individually and led Oxford University to a team bronze medal in the Women's A race. From that, she was selected to represent GB at the World University Cross Country Championships in Italy.

Rebecca, who is studying Biochemistry at Oxford University, said: "The Great North Run was my first half marathon, so I went into it with no expectations and wanted to enjoy the atmosphere and crowds. I'd never done such a large mass participation event before and it was so exciting to stand in the starting pens with my mum and brother and see thousands of runners around us.

"I started next to mum and knew she was following me the whole race which was really motivating. I had to finish, otherwise we had no chance of getting the world record. It really helped me push the whole way, as I didn't know how fast mum was running and so every second I knocked off my time could be the difference between achieving the record or not.

"Seeing mum cross the finish line was so special as we quickly realised we'd broken the existing record by around seven minutes, and we were both so proud. We got to spend the rest of the day celebrating in Newcastle and it was such a special day and something we will cherish forever."

Sarah, who has run the London Marathon four times, took on the New York Marathon in November where she finished with a remarkable time of 2:57:48, placing sixth in her age category and securing automatic qualification for the 2026 Chicago Marathon.

Race ace Lorcan competes across the world

Racing driver, Lorcan Hanafin, has had a superb year competing in some of the most prestigious races in the world.

OB Lorcan left BGS in 2021 and chose to focus on his racing career, despite getting all his offers to study at university. And it was the right decision judging by the 23-year-old's racing success so far.

Lorcan was introduced to karting and a love of motorsport by his dad who rallied in Ireland and bought him his first kart aged five. He swiftly moved onto the Junior Clio series and Ginetta Junior Championship, before progressing to a string of well-known competitions. They've included the Porsche Carrera Cup Great Britain, where he bagged a Runner Up title in 2021, the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup, the Porsche Carrera Cup Germany, the Asian Le Mans Series, the GT World Challenge Europe, the World Endurance Championship and latterly the European Le Mans Series.

Lorcan's 2025 season kicked off with the Asian Le Mans Series in February where he raced a Ferrari 296 GT3 with Dragon Racing with two American teammates – Todd Coleman and Aaron Telitz.

Fast forward to April and he headed to the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya for the start of the European Le Mans Series, a six-season race across Europe, competing for the Iron Lynx team alongside teammates Martin Berry and Fabian Schiller.

Lorcan recalled: "We had two second place finishes at Paul Ricard and Spa-Francorchamps, but unfortunately we had a lot of bad luck during the season, so we were not in championship contention. We did, however, show a lot of pace and scored three pole positions during qualifying."

Lorcan then went on to join the World Endurance Championship (WEC) with the Iron Lynx team where he travelled across the world competing at the Circuit de la Sarthe, home to the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Interlagos Circuit in São Paulo, Brazil, Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, Fuji International Speedway in the foothills of Mount Fuji, Japan, and at Sakhir International Circuit, in Bahrain.

"It was an incredible opportunity to be able to compete in the WEC and the Le Mans 24 hour. It allowed me to see new countries and to compete on the world stage was a massive privilege," he said.

"My teammates, Fran Rueda and Andy Gilbert, and I competed in a mixture of 24-hour, six hour and eight-hour races across the globe. The highlights from the championship were the 24 Hours of Le Mans and my second place in qualifying at the last round in Bahrain. Le Mans was also the return of Mercedes AMG for the first time in 26 years, so it was very special to be a part of that occasion too."

Lorcan also took part in the GT World Challenge where he competed with Steller Motorsport in a Corvette Z06R GT3. He achieved one class podium in the opening race at the six-hour Paul Ricard in April. The championship also included the Spa 24-hour in June, which meant he also competed in two of the four major 24-hour races during 2025.

"Overall, it's been a great season," he said. "I've competed in 22 races, jumped on 80 flights and carried out other motorsport related work, such as coaching and my work in Formula One as an Expert Host at numerous Grand Prix. I'm ready for a break and reset for the 2026 season which already looks even busier."

"As far as my goal of becoming a professional racing driver, is concerned, it's certainly in reach for me. I'm making strong impressions with different manufacturers who've been encouraged with my performances across the world over the last couple of years. I'm planning to make inroads with them this up-coming season, where I'll be spending more time racing in the USA."





Above: Aidy Smith (2009)

“

**I WANT TO CONTINUE TO
INSPIRE, EDUCATE AND RAISE
AWARENESS AND HELP A WHOLE
NEW GENERATION UNDERSTAND
THAT THEY BELONG ...**

”

BAFTA honour for OB Aidy

An Old Bradfordian who has used his platform as an award-winning television presenter and writer to change perceptions around Tourette syndrome and neurodiversity has been accepted onto a prestigious national arts programme.

Aidy Smith (2009) has joined BAFTA's Connect Program which aims to support emerging talents who are trailblazers for inclusivity and representation across the TV and film industry.

Aidy was diagnosed with Tourette's when he was aged seven and has gone on to become the co-host and producer of the hit Amazon Prime television show, *The Three Drinkers*, which has been aired in 130 countries in 30 different languages; write various drinks columns for the national press, such as *The Independent*; and have drinks segments on various radio shows, including BBC Radio London.

He has spent years campaigning to educate and inspire others about Tourette's, which causes people to make involuntary sounds and movements, as well as about neurodiversity, having been also diagnosed with ADHD two years ago.

Aidy is heavily involved in charities such as The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity, of which he is a Patron, and the world's largest Tourette's charity, the Tourette Association of America, for which he is Global Ambassador. He has created a number of inspiring radio and television documentaries about both Tourette Syndrome and ADHD which have appeared on broadcast media such as BBC Radio 4 and Virgin Radio.

Speaking about his latest achievement with BAFTA, he said: "Ever since I was a little boy, I remember watching the BAFTA Awards in complete awe. To be able to walk into that building in Piccadilly knowing that I'm now a part of such a talented and creative community of people is a 'pinch me' moment, to say the least."

"The ambition with BAFTA is to promote television shows which normalise neurodivergence, where people who are neurodiverse become the heroes and champions of the television series. I'm looking forward to talking to a number of different commissioners and TV channels about these ideas."

"I want to continue to inspire, educate and raise awareness and help a whole new generation understand that they belong and that there's a place for them at the table."

Friends Reunited for Emilia

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

Andrew Foster (2000), who tragically lost his son Rycroft aged just 16 months due to complications after a stem cell transplant in 2023, organised a charity takeover of the RFL Championship fixture between the London Broncos and Bradford Bulls at the Cherry Red Records Stadium.

The match, held in honour of seven-year-old Emilia Mackay, who had her stem cell transplant at the same time as Rycroft, aimed to raise awareness of stem cell donor registration.

The event, titled 'Emilia's Big Day', brought together fans from across the country 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.

"The day was more than rugby," said Badar. "It was about community, hope and making a real difference."



Above: Andrew, Matt and Emilia, ahead of the charity takeover



Photographer Hamish’s Wedding Awards Honour

Leeds photographer, Hamish Irvine (2014), was celebrating after being named one of the top two wedding photographers in the UK in January.

Hamish, 30, qualified for the national final of the 2026 Wedding Industry Awards after being named Yorkshire and North East England Wedding Photographer of the Year in November.

He finished runner up overall and was highly commended at a glittering award ceremony in Liverpool.

Hamish, a photography First Class Honours graduate from Leeds Arts University, focuses on the colour, fun and emotional connections of his couples. He shot his first wedding when he was 16 while studying for his A Levels at Bradford Grammar, and his Chapel Allerton-based business has gone from strength to strength since.

Said Hamish: “The Yorkshire and North East regional honour was amazing. Now to come in the top two in the country is beyond all expectations.

“I’m so grateful to my wedding couples who nominated me for the award. The connection I have with the people I work with is so important to me.”

In submitting him for the award, one of Hamish’s couples wrote: “Hamish loves weddings as much as the couples getting married. His energy, joy and pure love for what he does shines through from the first meeting, through the pre-wedding shoot, to the day itself and also beyond.

“The way he captures the tiniest details and portrays the happiness of the couple and the guests is truly remarkable. No other photographer manages to do it in his unique way.”

See Hamish’s work at www.hamishirvine.com

Above & below:
Hamish Irvine (2014)



THE CONNECTION
I HAVE WITH
THE PEOPLE
I WORK WITH
IS SO IMPORTANT
TO ME



Women's Prize shortlist

Former BGS Head Girl Yuan Yang (2008) was nominated for the acclaimed Women's Prize for Non-Fiction in March recognising her debut work *Private Revolutions: Coming of Age in a New China*.

Her book has been lauded for its poignant portrayal of life in modern China, focusing on four women navigating personal ambition and societal expectation in an era of rapid transformation. It paints a vivid, humanising portrait of China's shifting identity through the eyes of a generation born in the 1980s and 1990s.

Born in China in 1990, Yuan spent her early years with her grandparents before moving to the UK and enrolling at Bradford Grammar School. After graduating from university, she returned to China as a Financial Times correspondent, a role that profoundly shaped her understanding of its people and politics.

Yuan made history in July 2024 as the first Chinese-born British MP and now serves as Labour MP for Woodley and Earley near Reading.

Below:
Yuan Yang (2008)



FEATURES



‘CREATING A CONNECTION IS SO IMPORTANT’

Above: Richard Midgley

He may have been unsure what career he wanted to pursue when he left university, but discovering a love of marketing led entrepreneur Richard Midgley (1989) to establish his own agency and, later, co-found a £20m media group. He talks about the roots of his success – trust and friendship.

It seemed a ‘no brainer’ for Richard ‘Midge’ Midgley to apply to study Geography at Cambridge University when he was at BGS.

Having joined Clock House in Year 6 in 1980, he had enjoyed school, where he pursued his love of cricket, water polo and rugby. It was a place where he made friends for life and had the discipline of hard work instilled. Cambridge was the next step, a proud moment with all his family having left school at 16.

“The problem was there was no real thought about what I was going to do with a Geography degree when I left,” recalls Midge. “Although I enjoyed it, I came out not knowing what I wanted to do. But I knew a guy from school who had gone to work in a marketing agency, and he said it was a good life. I thought I’ll give that a go.”

After applying for jobs in London and getting nowhere, Midge offered to work for free at Advertising Principles (now called Principles Agency), a Leeds-based firm. Finally, he found his calling.

"I had a really inspirational boss," he says. "Over the years I learnt the ropes and how to do a good job and how to get on with people. They had some decent clients, and I made friends with people inside the organisation and outside of it. Creating a connection with colleagues and clients is so important. I enjoyed what I was doing, and I stayed for 15 years taking on lots of different roles, from media buying to client services and strategy."

Midge's dad was a builder and the idea of running his own business, like his dad, was appealing. When an opportunity arose to buy another agency he went for it, and although it fell through, the late John Halewood, a former client and owner and founder of the drinks company Halewood International, said he would back Midge in setting up his own firm. He went on to launch his integrated marketing agency Ponderosa in 2010 (named, he laughs, after the party house in the cult black Welsh comedy Twin Town).

"There were just two of us in the business," he recalls. "The first thing we did was go through all our contacts just to get enough money coming in to pay the mortgage. We were getting little projects. There was no secret formula, we did a good job and we would get recommended."

'Doing a good job' built trust, while making connections turned clients into friends. Business boomed and a year later, the firm merged with the agencies Prego, Sixteen Hands and Grapple, and went on to acquire major clients, such as Russell Hobbs, Leeds Bradford Airport, Warner Brothers and Moonpig.

Then six years ago, Midge and his business partner Steve Henry went on to create a group, The Audience Collective (AC) with investment from Harrogate-based private equity firm Newmore Capital. The group brought together several agencies so it could provide 'everything the client might need' and went on to acquire more offices in Leeds, Swansea, Dublin and Birmingham. Today, AC employs 150 people and has a turnover of £20m.

Like all business owners, Midge has faced challenges, not least when they lost Halewood as a client in 2016 after John died, and with the COVID pandemic, where some clients' businesses were halted overnight, while others, such as Remington UK which sells personal care products, thrived.

"We furloughed some staff, but we couldn't just stop. We had to keep going," he says. "Fortunately, we bounced back strongly."

He's also watched the advent of artificial intelligence with interest, viewing it as 'important, but also not'.

"The problem is there's a lot of people who think AI is the answer in our world when it's not. It's a tool to help you do a quicker and a more efficient job," he says. "My view of marketing is that it's always been about making connections with people. When AI can tell you a joke or a story and make you cry, that's when we're all in trouble. Having said that, if I was working in film production right now, I'd be panicking!"

Does he have any advice for any future OBs wanting a career in marketing?

"I think you've got to love it," he says. "It's not a job to make you really wealthy, you have to care about making something interesting or different and be passionate about what you do. It's a tough job and it's getting tougher. There are a lot of pressures."

"I've loved every minute of it. I've always loved the connection and doing something that helps people. We work with businesses which have 300 employees, so if our work can help those employees pay their mortgages that's great."

The future of AC looks bright with more acquisitions on the horizon. Midge's love of marketing (and business in general) shows no signs of waning.

"We've just appointed a new MD so I can move to more of a group role," he says.

"We're taking on a new round of investment so we can take on more agencies over the next three to four years to carry on growing. The journey isn't ending – it's just the next chapter!"

“

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”

'IT PUSHED ME OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE'



The Rank Foundation has supported hundreds of young people in their bid to become future leaders, including several from BGS. Two recipients talk about the confidence they've gained from the foundation's School Leadership Programme.

Sitting among a group of young people from across the country, Sanya H (2025) listened intently to the presentations from leaders and entrepreneurs. The then Year 12 BGS student had been put forward to be part of The Rank Foundation's School Leadership Programme and the leadership conference, in London, was the first event.

"I was surrounded by people I'd only just met, and after the presentations we had to do a project, a business idea, with them," recalls Sanya, who joined BGS on an Assisted Place in Year 7. "Ours was to help with the homeless, a garden café. I was nervous, quiet at first, but my confidence grew after working with them and it grew further as I got involved with more things. The leadership programme has pushed me out of my comfort zone. This year, when we did the project, it was totally different."

Founded in 1953 by the flour miller and film maker Arthur Rank, The Rank Foundation was built on his enterprising spirit, commitment to community and Christian faith. During his lifetime, Arthur, later known as Lord Rank, remained committed to helping and encouraging others, describing young people as "the seed corn of the future and the leaders of tomorrow".

The School Leadership Programme was established in 1978 to give financial assistance to a select group of students in Sixth Forms across chosen state and independent schools. Twenty-five students per year are identified by their head teachers as possessing exceptional leadership potential, and whose families receive financial assistance from their schools. Support takes the form of a maintenance grant of up to £5,000 per year to support studies after school as well as access to inspiring events and projects, keynote speakers and a strong alumni network.

Former headteacher John Hind, Director of Education and Leadership at Rank, visits many schools as part of his role. Students have half termly online meetings and get to attend an overnight Leadership Conference. This year's challenge at the conference was to make a three-minute video on a pressing social issue.

"It's wonderful to see them taking on board the challenge," he says. "Students can be working alongside those from a state school one minute or Eton the next. It's genuinely very rewarding seeing the programme's impact in all sorts of ways."

Current BGS Year 12 student Kashfia M also joined BGS on an Assisted Place in Year 7, and like Sanya, was encouraged to apply for the scholarship by Headmaster Dr Hinchliffe. She is hoping to study Medicine when she leaves school.

"I've learnt a lot of leadership skills and improved my communication skills and how to work with other people," she says.

"I have met a lot of people from different backgrounds which is good. I'm really grateful I've had the opportunity. I was quite apprehensive at first, but I'm very glad I did it. It's definitely given me more confidence."

As part of the programme, in the summer holidays students spend up to ten days working for a not-for-profit organisation, typically one with links to The Rank Foundation, which they may have to travel to.

"They're remarkable experiences for award holders," says John. "They broaden their understanding of leadership beyond the classroom and expose them to community engagement – often in underprivileged areas."

"Going away from home for placements does make a difference. It takes them out of their comfort zones and challenges them. One of the boys in Scotland had to jump off a cliff into a river and he was scared of heights. But he realised as a leader he wouldn't be able to say no, so he did it. He was very proud of himself."

Once award holders have left school, they are invited to join the Fellowship – an alumni network for those who have been part of the School Leadership Programme.

Alumni includes British scriptwriter Simon Beaufoy, writer of the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, High Court Judge, Sir James Dingemans and Hugh Knowles, former CEO of the charity Friends of the Earth.

Sanya is readying herself for Cambridge University, where she will study Medicine. Her confidence has grown as a result of attending BGS, she says, but the leadership programme has also played a part.

"I like to get up and speak in front of the class now," she says. "I wasn't used to that, but now I can do it easily. I enjoy public speaking."

As well as confidence, another benefit she's gained, from both school and the leadership programme, has been learning that it's ok to fail.

"I used to get really upset when I got anything wrong," she says. "But now I know that progress is learning from failure."

John Hind sees these benefits and many more every year. Being a former headteacher, he can speak to other heads with ease as he travels across the country to different schools.

"I'm not an inspector or a coach so they tend to speak quite openly and it's a great privilege," he says.

"They're in an excellent position to encourage people they see every day in their schools who have leadership potential to step forward. One of the most rewarding parts is then seeing how much those young people develop over the course of their Sixth Form when I meet them in March of Year 12, then when I see them a year later."

"Our programme helps them to think about leadership and all of them leave with a sense of pride and validation, which is wonderful."



Right: Sanya on results day



As one of BGS's long-term benefactors and an Ambassador for the school's 1662 Fund, former Scholarship boy, David Allanson (1974), talks about the impact a BGS education had on him and why he gives back to the school.

Above: David Allanson

David Allanson arrived at BGS in 1967 on a West Riding of Yorkshire County Scholarship, in the days when the Direct Grant scheme was still operating. He'd grown up in Calverley, near Leeds. His father had worked at the Co-op straight from school and his mother was a burler and mender at one of the area's many textile mills.

With a head for numbers and logic, David was one of several boys from his local primary school who, over the years, had been offered the chance to attend BGS. When he arrived, he says, it was like "an entirely different world."

"It's not easy coming here when you're 11 years old and you turn up and you see this commanding, beautiful building," he recalls. "The bulk of the kids I'd grown up with left school at 15, and I had to fit into this new environment.

Some people got lost from the very start, but I was relatively confident and outgoing. I enjoyed sport and also team games."

David was never worried about people being better academically than him and he enjoyed being in the company of talented young people.

"I was used to people pushing me on the sports field so that bit of BGS came very easily," he says. "I found the camaraderie was wonderful and I had some great friends. The majority of teachers would go the extra mile for everyone, and I get the sense that that's still how it is now.

"When I left school, I didn't take much away from it other than I'd had a good time. It was only later and with the benefit of experience that I realised what Bradford Grammar had done for me."

'I believe very much in **ASSISTED PLACES'**

After BGS, David headed to The Queen's College, Oxford to study Classics. But, having always had a head for numbers, he went on to pursue a career with Citibank, initially as a corporate banker before moving to the foreign exchange dealing room.

"It was a bit like playing sport," he recalls. "At the end of every day you had either made money or lost it, and I enjoyed the rough and tumble of the dealing room environment."

David, who lives in London, enjoyed a long career in finance, including 12 years with Goldman Sachs, work with a hedge fund company and as a Chief Investment Strategist for an insurance firm.

While he could have given to many charities, he chose BGS and his former university. His benefaction journey with Bradford Grammar began with a monthly standing order in 2003.

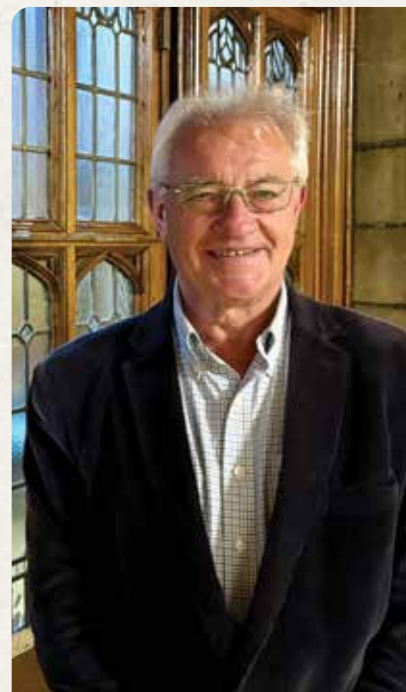
"There are things you can do to give back but it's sometimes difficult to know what they are and how to get started," he says.

"The more I engaged with BGS the more I could see how driven they were to attract young, talented people to the school and give them access to the super facilities. The city of Bradford has struggled financially and there are fewer people able to afford private education, hence the need for more bursaries. They can have a transformative effect on youngsters. I certainly wouldn't have gone to Oxford and captained the university football team if it wasn't for Bradford Grammar. I had the world at my feet."

Eventually grandfather-of-three, David, began making more substantial donations, which were put in the school's endowment fund initially. But a conversation with former Headmaster, Stephen Davidson, resulted in his donations being paid into a Bursary Fund match funded by Barclays. David has since become an Ambassador for the school's 1662 Fund for Assisted Places.

"I believe very much in the Assisted Places programme and if I can help anybody come to a place like this I will," he says. "There is a different level of aspiration here. The ethos is that anyone can make it."

"It's good to give back if you enjoyed your time at BGS and you think it benefitted you. A donation, no matter how small, can go a long way in allowing someone else to come here. It's a sacrifice worth making because it can give someone a life that, otherwise, they may not have had."



A portrait of an older man with white hair and glasses, wearing a blue pinstriped blazer over a dark blue shirt. He is sitting at a table with his hands clasped. The background is dark with orange and yellow vertical stripes on the right side.

ROGER EVANS
AND THE
POWER OF
OPPORTUNITY

Left: Roger Evans (1963)

From a Bradford schoolboy to a Silicon Valley pioneer, Roger Evans (1963) reflects on how his time at BGS shaped a life of opportunity, innovation and giving back.

When Roger Evans left Bradford Grammar School as Head Boy in the early 1960s, he could hardly have imagined that one day his name would grace the building that shapes the school's next generation of leaders and visionaries.

Today, the Roger Evans Sixth Form Centre stands as a daily reminder of what can happen when opportunity, curiosity and ambition come together.

Speaking from his home in California, the 80-year-old venture capitalist and former tech entrepreneur still credits Bradford Grammar as the springboard for future success.

"BGS played a bigger part in my success than Cambridge ever did," he says. "It was one of the few schools that could have propelled me to a place like King's College. I owe far more to BGS for getting me there than to my own ability."

Roger joined BGS at Thornville at seven years old and rose through the ranks to become Head Boy and Victor Ludorum in his final year – achievements that, as he admits with modest pride, reflected the school's ability to "bring out excellence in every way".

"I hate to say this," he laughs, "but I was pretty good at everything! BGS really brought out the best in me."

The school, he recalls, was academically rigorous; 'a place focused on winning open scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge' – and he says its teaching was far ahead of its time.

"When I got to King's, I realised how far ahead we'd been pushed at Bradford Grammar," he shares. "I was up to speed with much of what others were struggling to cover. It explained why the school produced so many open scholars."

That early advantage gave him confidence and the breathing space to explore. His curiosity, he admits, often led him down unexpected paths. Coming from a family of scientists, he had chosen to specialise in modern languages 'simply to do something different', and at Cambridge soon found himself at another turning point.

"I discovered I was living in the same room John Maynard Keynes had lived in," he says. "A couple of my friends were economists, and their work seemed a lot more interesting than mine, so I switched to economics."

It turned out to be the bridge to everything that came after."

As graduation neared, Roger knew one thing: he didn't want to stay in academia. "I wanted a job – and a pay cheque," he says, smiling.

A chance encounter then changed the course of his life. "I went to a lecture called something like What Computers Will Do for the World. I wasn't studying anything remotely connected – but I was curious," he says.

The talk turned out to be an IBM recruitment drive. There were no Computer Science degrees in those days, only aptitude tests. "I took the test, scored highly, and they offered me a job," he says. "It was a fortuitous decision – one of several in my life – but it opened the door to everything that followed."

IBM in the 1960s was the beating heart of a new technological age. But after three years, Roger's curiosity – the same trait that had taken him from languages to economics to computers – began to stir again. "In the early days I'd find myself reflecting on how lucky I was to be there – it was like being in a postgraduate lab with big pay cheques thrown in," he says. "But by my third year I was asking myself, am I really going to be here for the rest of my life?"

The answer was no.

That restlessness led to the creation of CASE – Computer and Systems Engineering Ltd – a start-up distributing data-communications equipment from the United States.

"My father was horrified," Roger laughs. "He could no longer talk about me at the golf club. But to me it didn't feel like risk – it felt like excitement, the chance to do something new."



CASE grew rapidly, representing companies such as American Data Systems (ADS). When ADS ran into financial difficulties in the early 1970s, CASE – led by Roger – stepped in to help restructure the business, eventually supporting entrepreneur Bill Norred in founding a new company, Micom Systems, from its ashes.

Recognising the potential of the venture, Roger made another defining leap. He left Britain, moved to California, and joined Micom to run sales and marketing. “It was another opportunity I couldn’t ignore,” he says.

At Micom, Roger’s close contact with customers led to a breakthrough insight – that smaller businesses using the new so-called minicomputers needed faster, simpler ways to connect their systems. The result was the Micro800 Data Concentrator, launched in 1978, an innovation that propelled Micom on to international prominence and helped shape the early networking industry.

Within a few years the company had gone public, and by 1987 Roger was President of Micom, steering it through major acquisitions and global growth. “It was a thrilling time,” he recalls. “Every decision felt like standing on the edge of something transformative.”

When Micom was eventually sold in 1988, Roger took yet another step into new territory – joining Greylock Partners, one of Silicon Valley’s most respected venture-capital firms. There he backed a new generation of technology companies, from early network pioneers to software firms that would later go public.

“I never had a fixed plan,” he says. “Each step was about recognising an opportunity and having the courage to take it.”

Roger is measured and grounded in how he talks about success. “People often say follow your passion,” he reflects. “I don’t believe in that advice. Passion isn’t something fixed inside you – it’s something that grows out of curiosity and recognising opportunity.”

He likens it to his own career. “I didn’t know the IBM lecture would change my life. I didn’t plan to move to America. But I was willing to go where opportunity led, even when I didn’t know exactly where it might end,” he says.

It’s that same belief in opportunity that underpins Roger’s philanthropy. When Bradford Grammar launched a capital campaign two decades ago, he was quick to respond.

“I was attracted by the opportunity to give back to BGS because the school had given me the best start,” he explains.

He wasn’t initially thinking of the Sixth Form Centre; what drew him in was Stephen Davidson, then Headmaster, whose vision for a modern, co-educational, outward-looking BGS inspired him.

“It was more than anything a desire to support an entrepreneur,” Roger explains. “Stephen’s excitement about what he was doing – opening the school to more girls, building links with the local community – it was a time of fresh energy, and I wanted to help him realise that.”

His major donation made the new Sixth Form Centre possible – a bright, modern hub where senior students now study, collaborate and prepare for life beyond school.

Headmaster Dr Simon Hinchliffe describes it as “a daily embodiment of Roger’s values.”

“The centre stands as a living testament, showing students that curiosity, courage and a readiness to seize opportunity can shape a remarkable life,” he says. Roger’s generosity has done more than transform the campus. It has inspired others to give in similar ways. “Roger shows how one individual’s belief in the power of education can ripple across generations,” adds Dr Hinchliffe.

Now retired, Roger is often asked what advice he would give to those starting out today. For him, the answer lies in recognising the scale of the moment ahead.

“The dawn of AI represents a field of opportunity greater than anything I have seen in my lifetime,” he says. “AI will be transformative for human productivity and progress. Those who develop expertise in it will find countless paths to pursue meaningful and rewarding careers.”

As ever, the message is one of curiosity, courage and readiness to step toward the unknown – the qualities that shaped Roger’s own remarkable journey from Bradford to Silicon Valley.

*'This is an
important part of
BRADFORD'S
FUTURE'*

Bradford's iconic cinema, the Odeon, was left empty and derelict for 20 years before two Old Bradfordians had the vision and passion to give it a new lease of life. They talk about their journey transforming it into the 3,800-performance venue, Bradford Live, and the challenges they faced along the way.

Meeting Chris Morrell on a searingly hot day outside the new cultural gem, Bradford Live, it is not long before stories are swapped about its former incarnation – the Odeon cinema. For Chris, there are fond memories of sneaking in to see *Rocky 4*, while I can recall being terrified watching *Silence of the Lambs* through trembling fingers.





"Everyone's got an Odeon story," he laughs, heading towards the building which has taken his life for the past ten years and those of fellow directors Lee Craven and Kirsten Branston.

Lee was the one to get the band together, so to speak, reaching out to fellow Old Bradfordian, Chris and Kirsten. Lee had first started asking questions about the derelict building in 2010 and was in touch with the Bradford Odeon Rescue Group (BORG), without whom, there wouldn't have been a building to save, he says. From there he contacted Peter Angier, a Theatre Consultant who offered to look over the old cinema and write a report on its condition.

"I thought at least if he said there's nothing you can do that would be that, but he didn't," recalls Lee. "He said if you strip out the cinema, you've got an interesting proposition. But he advised that the building was in a bad state, and it wouldn't be long before it was unrecoverable."

By 2012, and with a credible team that could move the project forward, Bradford Council bought the site and launched an expression of interest. By 2014, the trio got the go ahead for the development. Built in 1930, the beloved building had previously been known as the New Victoria Theatre and then the Gaumont, playing host to rock superstars such as the Rolling Stones, The Beatles and Little Richard. When it became the Odeon cinema in 1969, the original auditorium was subdivided, and two concrete boxes installed for the screens and seating.

"It was 1960s vandalism!" says Chris, shaking his head.

Chris initially offered half a day of his time to the project but that soon 'snowballed'. They signed up operators NEC Group in 2018 which unlocked the first tranche of £4m Government funding and the stripping out of the building began. The cinema had closed in June 2000, and it had fallen into disrepair, suffering a great deal of water damage. As the concrete was removed, it revealed just how complex a restoration it was going to be.

"We were involved in every single decision in the building," says Chris. "We had so many conversations, about what's going on the floor, the colour of the ceilings, etc. We challenged the architects, we challenged the electricians and plumbers. I don't think they liked it...but on the whole we got what we wanted."

The three faced major obstacles over the decade. In 2024, the operator NEC Group decided they did not want to proceed with their operator contract, agreeing to pay Bradford Live more than £5m in compensation, and the project's original estimate doubled to £50m, in part with Covid, the Ukraine War and rising inflation sending costs soaring.

"I can remember a point when we needed to buy steel, and we had to confirm the price in 24 hours or it would go up again. It was four times the price of what it was three months earlier," recalls Lee. "Those were nervous times, but we didn't lose sleep over it because we knew it was the right thing to do. It's always been the right place to put money into for this city."



Left: OB's Lee Craven and Chris Morrell

THE IDEA WAS ALWAYS FOR IT TO BE MORE THAN JUST A MUSIC SPACE

The extension, which houses all the staff and back-room functions, also pushed the budget, but the alternative would have been to put containers in the car park.

"If we were going to do this project we had to do it properly," says Chris. "We needed it to be exceptional to overcome the prejudice that Bradford is second rate."

And it is exceptional. Lee, Chris and Kirsten have ensured the original building has been honoured, while the extension and modern elements have brought it back to purpose for the thousands of people who will work and visit Bradford Live from August 30 onwards. A few weeks before the opening, the building is already being used for events and dinners, ensuring that in the future, it won't only be reliant on large scale concerts and gigs for its survival.

"The whole building is really flexible and there are a lot of spaces within it," says Chris.

"The idea was always for it to be more than just a music space; it needed to be more than that."

In the magnificent ballroom, formerly Odeon 3, Chris points to the 144 glass panels, each with 16 panes, which were taken off site and re-lead. It's indicative of the attention to detail the trio have given the project, honouring its past by restoring as many original features as possible.

Says Chris: "When I came in the ballroom originally, I said to Lee 'If all we were doing was restoring this room it would be a challenge!' But it's important people come in here and think money has been well spent. It's not just a hobby horse. It's an important part of Bradford's future."

The bar area, painted in a warm yellow, is now in its 1930s original form when it was a tearoom, with beautiful arched windows and Art Deco inspired lighting. Meanwhile, the auditorium itself takes the breath away, its ceiling dotted with stars, its large arched brick walls running as striking architectural features along its sides. There is bare brick and exposed steel throughout the venue, a nod to the city's industrial past.

As they walk through the building, there is a story behind every brick, pane of glass and ceiling rose. It took wells of grit and self-confidence to push the project forward, qualities they honed at BGS.

"We needed it for something like this," quips Chris.

After BGS, Lee studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford, before studying for a Master's Degree at Warwick University and joining the family textile business. After studying Economics and Geography at Hull University and a Master's at Lancaster University, Chris worked for a manufacturing company before running a family business with his brother.

Many business partners would have fallen out over the challenges they faced, but the two school friends remain on great terms.

"There's been times we've not always seen eye to eye," laughs Lee. "There's been plenty of opportunities to fall out, but I don't think we have."





Thankfully, a new operator, Trafalgar Entertainment, was secured in March on a 25-year lease and it has already invested £3m in infrastructure, installing a premiere lighting rig, PA systems, new bars and a kitchen. The OBs are also proud the majority of the workforce came from West Yorkshire.

"For all the conversations about how much money was spent, almost all of it was recycled back into the local economy," says Chris. "You have to invest in something like this for it to generate its own revenue and there's talk of it putting £500m into the local economy over the next 25 years."

Both of them believe it can rival Leeds and the rest of the country over the coming years.

"I think it will attract bands who want a larger space but also want something more intimate," says Lee.

"Bradford's profile has been so low as a city for 10/20 years," adds Chris. "Without any profile in the music industry like it had in the 70s and 80s, there's been no reason to come here. And now there is."

While there are likely to be other ventures to work together on in the future, they can look forward to the first gig knowing the hard work has paid off. It's even had Royal approval with Bradford Live having been officially opened by King Charles and Queen Camilla in May.

"It's definitely been a once in a lifetime project," reflects Lee.

"The whole thing has exceeded our expectations," adds Chris. "It's a beloved building and people in Bradford are rightly proud of it. I think it will be one of the most exciting music venues in the country."

Editor's Note: Bradford Live opened in August 2025 and took more than £1m at the box office before opening.

To find out what's on at the venue log onto:

<https://trafalgartickets.com/bradford-live-bradford/en-GB>



'I'VE SEEN THE VALUE OF KIDNEY DISEASE RESEARCH'

The fantastic ROW2025 endurance challenge held at BGS in January 2025 brought together staff, pupils, OBs and members of the Bradford Amateur Rowing Club (BARC). It was a huge success which raised more than £18,000 for Kidney Research with almost four million metres being rowed. It also sparked a poignant response from Old Bradfordian, Ronald Drake (1971), Secretary of Bradford ARC, who put pen to paper to share his family's story.

'Kidney disease is a silent adversary that can stealthily disrupt the lives of individuals and families alike. As with so many illnesses, what happens to one happens to all. In the case of chronic kidney disease treatment, continued debility and fatigue affects entire families for weeks, years and often life.

My brother-in-law has benefitted from kidney research having been diagnosed with end stage renal disease in 1979, shortly after marrying my sister. Back then, research, which only began in the early 1960s, was progressing quickly and they were advised to take whatever steps they could to defer the need for dialysis. A very restricted diet was prescribed of 30g protein per day with limits on sodium, potassium and phosphate, and later there was a fluid restriction. These tough steps delayed dialysis for a year.

In 1979, renal units were only at teaching hospitals with availability of the relatively new dialysis machines and staff being limited. Transplantation was the best chance of survival, but success rates were lower and the surgical mortality rate was significant. Patients would spend months, sometimes years on dialysis.

Hospital and home haemodialysis maintained life and hope for my brother-in-law until 1984 when he gratefully received a transplant from a deceased donor. He regained health and took part in several Transplant Games for the QEH Team. The Transplant Games promote health, raises awareness and also fundraises.



**FROM THE
INITIAL DIAGNOSIS
TO NAVIGATING
TREATMENT OPTIONS
AND ULTIMATELY
RECEIVING
A TRANSPLANT,
RESEARCH HAS BEEN
OUR GUIDING LIGHT**





Above: James van Lopik
and his brother, Edwin

With medical care, the first kidney lasted nearly 20 years before failing. After further haemodialysis and other complications, he received a live, related donor kidney from his brother in 2001. He now has good health with regular hospital checks and lifelong medication. His brother lives well with a single kidney and has suffered no ill effects from his selfless gift of life.

Most cities now have a Renal Unit. There are many different forms of dialysis to help patients while they await a transplant, or in some cases decide to remain on dialysis. Research and fundraising have worked together to improve all aspects of life for kidney patients. This ongoing research is vital to facilitate new treatments, medications, medical and surgical skills and the essential technology behind kidney machines. Advances in science are doorways to hope and very costly.



Above: Derek Hallam (1971), Roger Simpson (1968), Sam Hotchin (1970) and Ron Drake (1971) – all members of Bradford ARC, many of which took part in the ROW2025 endurance challenge.



James and Edwin van Lopik are Junior members of the Rowing Club (Bradford ARC) of which I have the honour to be Secretary. They are also members of the BGS Boat Club where I learned to row 55 years ago. When I heard Ed was setting up a fundraising endurance challenge in honour of his younger brother, who has the rare kidney condition known as C3GN, I leapt at the chance to take part in the challenge. I was proud and grateful to see so many of my fellow club rowers, BGS rowers and their families be inspired to participate in large numbers so willingly. ROW2025 was an inspiration in young people working for each other, offering hope for the future.

My family's experience underscores the importance of continued support for kidney disease research. I know my family, and the van Lopiks, are eternally grateful for the dedication of researchers and healthcare professionals who have devoted their lives to this cause. Their work has not only extended patients' lives but has also improved their quality of life.

But while significant strides have been made, there is still much to learn and achieve. The fight against kidney disease is ongoing, and sustained investment in research is crucial to uncovering new treatments, improving existing ones, and ultimately finding cures.

Our family's journey with kidney disease has required resilience, hope, and the invaluable support of kidney disease research. From the initial diagnosis to navigating treatment options and ultimately receiving a transplant, research has been our guiding light.

In sharing my family's story, we hope to thank, inspire and encourage others in their support and advocacy for kidney disease research, recognising its profound impact on countless lives. Together, we can make a difference and pave the way for a future where kidney disease is no longer a formidable adversary but a conquerable challenge.'

If you want to know more about Kidney Disease research visit www.kidneyresearchuk.org and if you want to donate visit [@supportcare.kidneyresearchuk.org](https://supportcare.kidneyresearchuk.org)

Among the first cohort of

COEDUCATION

They were among the first cohorts of girls to join Bradford Grammar School below Sixth Form age. Alex Hewitt (AH), Hannah Rawson (HR) and Katie Moore (KM) reminisce with Headmaster Simon Hinchliffe (SH) about their school days.

SH: Thank you, Alex, Hannah and Katie (all 2009) for making time to share your memories of BGS, the early days of coeducation, and life thereafter. I'm conscious you've remained loyal friends since school and have all recently returned to Yorkshire.

HR: Alex and I did lots of music and drama. Starting from our initial year of Senior School, we were both in Oliver. One of my first BGS memories is of wearing the most unflattering pink tunic. It haunts me still. Alex and I became really close during that production.

AH: Hannah and I met Katie through netball. We were firm friends by the third year.

HR: These were the early years of coeducation with only 19 girls in our year. We bonded during extracurricular activities. I came from Moorfield, an all-girls school at the time. BGS was a baptism of fire. But it was the environment I wanted to be in.

KM: I came from Froebelian. My brother, Jamie, told stories that made me feel like it was an incredible school. Everyone seemed to be having the best time and that's what I wanted.

AH: I started at Clock House when I was eight. I was in Mrs Morris's class. She was an absolute angel. I joined in 1989, the year they started taking girls beyond the Sixth Form. I remember my mum - who worked at BGS at the time and still does - sitting me down and asking: 'Are you sure you want to be the only girl in the year?' I said yes. I just don't think it bothered me. And also, boys at that age are really sweet. I played football with them at break. They would include me in stuff. And I got so many cards on Valentine's Day. I've never done so well and never will again! Clock House was a really lovely environment. Lucy Wellings joined the year after. And then, after that, Laura Ogden. We had just enough girls in the whole of Clock House to make a netball team. I remember my first swimming lesson, which was in the old pool, where the music department is now. There wasn't a proper women's changing room. I used the teachers' changing room and the swimming coach or PE teacher forgot about me! I just sat in the changing room in my swimming costume for the full lesson, because I didn't know where to go. I thought, 'there's no way I'm walking through this school in a swimming costume.'

And so, I just sat there. Forgotten (says Alex with a wry smile).

SH: I guess this was a time when the school was evolving, occasionally wrestling with the arrival of girls.

KM: The boys didn't really care, neither did the girls. As kids, everyone just got on with everyone. It didn't really matter when you were eight.

AH: And the boys had skipping ropes, played hopscotch... there weren't really any gendered games. But then, regarding Senior School, and I'd be interested to get Hannah's and Katie's views, there were some 'traditional' teachers who had to adjust. For games we could play netball in winter and rounders in summer, and that was it. We wanted to do something different. We wanted to play tennis. I remember going up to Mr Linfield to make a case and eventually he relented. Do you remember?

KM: We went on the tennis tour, and Mr Linfield said, 'you can choose what you want to wear'. We chose pink.

SH: If you could go back in time and ask BGS to grant you one wish to make the transition to coeducation even smoother, what would it be? And shall we start with our former Head Girl?

HR: Well, it's now a big thing at school, but I played my hockey at Ben Rhydding. I'd have loved the opportunity to play at BGS, but there were only 19 girls in the year. We needed 13 of those 19 to want to play to field a hockey team. Happily, I was able to play outside of school. And once the facilities at school improved, I had the chance to play my club games on the BGS astro.

KM: I probably would have asked for more personal support. This is something I've reflected on massively since leaving. I'm thinking here about neurodiversity, ADHD for example. Neurodiversity can present differently and BGS got a lot more diverse when girls joined. This is something I've become passionate about in my own teaching. And I would have loved more support. I don't think I'm stupid. I think I'm intelligent and maybe learn in less conventional ways.

But I think I would have benefitted from more nurturing of the talents that I did have, if that makes sense.

SH: It does, I hear what you're saying.

KM: In the fifth year of Senior School, there was a 'support class' – and if you were in it, it was also your form group.

AH: It was a support class affectionately known by the people in it as 5-D-U-M-B.

KM: It might have been funny at the time. I was in that form group. Looking back, I wish I hadn't joined in the joke and put myself down like that. If teachers had heard what was being said, I hope they'd have put an end to it.

SH: Your reflections will resonate with some. School experiences can be complex – this is true of all settings – and things have moved on, as do we as individuals. Coeducation has undoubtedly fostered culture change at BGS and brought benefits, for males and females.

AH: I have a light-hearted one. I'd have wished for a proper girls' games kit. We had to wear the most hideous netball skirts, made of about 50 metres worth of material that we had to wrap around us. And, also, it would have been nice not to do athletics in basically our knickers. When you're going through puberty, it's not good, it's the stuff of nightmares.



“ ... WE HAD TO WEAR THE
MOST HIDEOUS NETBALL SKIRTS

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Above: Katie and Alex
on last day of Year 11

SH: You left BGS for different universities, let's lean into that. What one quality, above all others, did BGS foster in you for the next stage of life?

HR: Confidence... and the capacity to believe in yourself. I found BGS to be quite an empowering environment. It gave me the opportunity to do things I wanted to do and to do things outside the classroom, which I really enjoyed and made me a rounded individual.

KM: I look back and think, wow, there were some amazing teachers who have impacted my life. The relationships I had with some of the teachers, I recreate that with the children I now teach, making sure they feel valued and understood.

AH: This is going to make me sound like a massive nerd, but it's definitely the desire to keep learning and that not being an uncool or bad thing. I feel lucky I could explore the nerdier side of things - academia. BGS was a good environment for that. And it led me to what I did afterwards. I didn't get the grades I needed on A Level results day, which was genuinely one of the worst days of my life. I took a year out, did various things, and then went to the University of Birmingham to take a new direction - history and politics. I loved history, got to work with The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, went on to do a Master's, carried on working for museums, which terrified my mum at the time, who was keen on me becoming a lawyer. I then decided to take a break from studying, lived in Taiwan for a while with my partner, Sam, and came back to the UK to do a PhD. I worked again for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Museum of London and the Weald and Downland Living Museum, and then I got a job working in Parliament on digital projects which opened up a career in the Civil Service. I'm now a senior policy advisor in museums and cultural property for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and fly the flag for the arts and for cultural education.

KM: I just jumped on the bandwagon and applied for universities. I started a degree in journalism at John Moore's, Liverpool. For a summer job I worked at a kid's club on the east coast of America and, midway through the summer, I thought to myself I can't go back to Liverpool. Working with children felt natural - I found I could connect with them and make things fun. I left Liverpool and moved to San Francisco and nannied for a family. When that came to an end, my mum said, 'look, if you want to be a nanny, you have to go to Norland, it's the best place, the best education', so I did.

SH: Kindly describe Norland for the uninitiated.

KM: The uniform was interesting. A camel brown dress that went to mid shin. Tan tights. Dark brown brogues. Brown bowler hat, white gloves and white scarf.

SH: Battle dress?

KM: I don't know who decided brown, but I mean brown's very 'in' right now, so, maybe they're ahead of the time. Norland reminded me I could do something special. I became Head of Students there which was an important moment for me. Then I moved to London, lived with my now husband and worked as a nanny for four or five years, before moving back to Leeds. I took up a position at Richmond House School, where I've been since 2021. I'm the neurodiversity ambassador for school, and that's something good to come from reflections on my time at BGS.

HR: I always knew I wanted to go to uni. I went to Warwick and loved it. My third year was abroad at Grenoble. I was lucky enough to do a few Edinburgh Fringe festivals through a student arts group, and dabbled in a bit of student playwriting, which in hindsight was absolutely dreadful! And then I moved to London straight after I graduated. I lived in London for 12 years having taken a job at a small communications agency before moving back to Yorkshire.

SH: And all three of you are now back home in Yorkshire. Is this a life cycle thing? Serendipity? Coordinated action by a group of friends?

HR: It's a massive mix for me. Ultimately, we ask ourselves: are we going to stay in our house shares in London or our tiny flats? Or are we going to join the race for space and see where we can go? And in the post-pandemic era, some work can be done virtually, certainly in the corporate field that I occupy. Then it came down to the three Fs, which really cemented the move for us: family, friends, finances.

SH: Katie how do you find teaching the youth of Yorkshire? Are our present-day Tykes the snowflakes and needy, social media distracted, generation some people think?

KM: They're not soft, that's for sure. I've been teaching reception and nursery, and even at that age, you can stretch them, you can challenge them, and they want to learn and have fun. These children are made of strong stuff; they are incredible. Naysayers should ask their local primary school if they can spend a day with a reception class, then come and tell me if it was a soft day!



Left: Hannah, Katie and Alex have been great friends since their BGS days

Below: Hannah and Alex in Oliver!

SH: One final question to all three of you: if you could give your younger BGS self just one piece of advice, what would it be?

HR: Have no fear. Say yes to every opportunity that comes your way.

KM: I'd say just be yourself. Don't follow a crowd.

AH: Similar to Katie. It's okay not to follow one single path. It's okay to get things wrong, not do well in exams, or a piece of coursework, and it's okay if everything hasn't fallen immediately into place, because you will get there.

SH: That's a lovely way to close. Thank you for affording me some of your valuable time, it has been very generous of you all.

KM: I've really enjoyed it. I like speaking about the old days.

HR: I love hearing about them, and can I just say, I don't think I've told you guys yet, but do you remember our classmate, Matthew Tate? He works at BGS now; you know, he was in our year at school.

SH: Dr Tate is a brilliant teacher of chemistry and Head of Year 9. Why not pop into school and say hello?

KM: I would love that. I come to school regularly on Thursday evenings to play netball in The Barn and it always fills me with a little bit of a warm feeling. It just feels so comfortable and so normal.

AH: I'd love a school lunch. And do you remember before Jamie Oliver, we used to have Snickers ice cream and Mars Bar ice cream for pudding?

HR: And those chicken tikka paninis, do you still have those chicken tikka paninis at break time? Are the vending machines still there? They used to sell sweets called Fizzy Jerks, do you remember? What a name! Just plain wrong. And another thing... and...





“

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IN WHAT YOU DID
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NORTH STAR



Above: Tom Bairstow
of NorthHouse

Known for producing spectacular visual design experiences, with clients ranging from pop stars to royalty, NorthHouse Creative has gone from strength to strength. Founder Tom Bairstow talks about the challenges and rewards of scaling up his company – and one of his favourite celebrity clients.

It's been a while since we caught up with Tom Bairstow (2004). Back in 2022, his company NorthHouse Creative had just 'lit up the palace' for the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee and the team had previously worked on the spectacular half-time show at the Superbowl, the one with Beyoncé and 110 million viewers.

NorthHouse is a creative studio specialising in visual design for live experiences. It has produced spectacles for Coldplay, Katy Perry, Shawn Mendes and One Direction; for huge sporting events, such as the Rugby World Cup; and even the King's Coronation, projection mapping onto Windsor Castle. The team has grown from eight full time staff (pre-Buckingham Palace celebrations) to 21 today and has been kept busy creating a new show for the castle at Disneyland Paris and work on the upcoming Brit Awards. With such a prestigious catalogue of work, does NorthHouse still have to bid for projects, or do clients simply call in 'the guys who did the Jubilee'?

"The company has grown quite a bit since we last spoke," says Tom. "I guess previously it was built on word of mouth and relationships, and it still very much is. We're very proud to be working on the Brit Awards and that's come through clients we've worked with in the past. But we still had to prove our capabilities and that we were the right fit for the Brits.

"I always like to look back at the threads of where projects have come from and it always comes from work we've done in the past. The creative and entertainment industry is focused on people and it's the relationships you build, and trust based on the quality of your work and the service you provide. Those client relationships have proved to be the biggest testament to the longevity of the company."

One client he's really enjoyed working with recently is Oscar-winning German film composer and musician, Hans Zimmer, with NorthHouse creating the visuals for his current worldwide tour, *The Next Level*.

Recalls Tom: "To kick off the project we went around to Hans' flat in London to brainstorm ideas, and we were sitting on his sofa, eating pizza. He's a true pioneer of the industry and to be surrounded by him is incredibly inspiring. He's definitely up there as one of my favourite people to work with. We were rehearsing for the show in Germany and the relationship he has with the band was phenomenal. He's got such a dry, cutting sense of humour, especially when he's up on stage for six hours a day, blasting out these one liners down the microphone. He's a great guy and a true artist."





Above: The NorthHouse team
at the opening of the Disneyland
Paris Show

Tom always loved art and music and after leaving BGS did a foundation degree at Bradford Art College before heading to Leeds Metropolitan University to study Graphic Art and Design. It was while playing in his band alongside his studies that he started creating music videos for them, which led to work as a freelance video designer. He moved to London in 2010, with NorthHouse evolving from Tom Bairstow Visuals Ltd in 2012.

As NorthHouse has grown, so Tom’s role has changed within the business. He’s still a creative visionary but also a strategic company owner.

“When I look back at when we were an eight-person team and everyone reported into me, it was an easy structure to facilitate,” he says. “I never really understood that as the company grew my role would evolve and change and my priorities would have to change. It’s only in the last 18 months that I’ve really come to terms with that. I can’t just be an artist anymore. I’ve got to be a creative and commercial strategist.”

But while he enjoys the process of creating a strategic plan, the real work comes in delivering it.

“That’s been the biggest challenge I’ve found in scaling the company,” he says. “On paper everything works, but there’s constant ebbs and flows. The industry itself is constantly shifting as emerging technology comes about as expectations change. You have to somehow stay on top and be able to understand where they’re going to shift to and adapt.

"But I've never created a strategic plan we've rigidly stuck to. It's crucial to be able to think short term, medium and long term always, to look at different scenarios. That's ended up becoming a big part of my role, to make sure I'm looking ahead and that what we've got in the next quarter is achievable and we know how to deliver it and we have a good plan in place to make it happen."

Fortunately, Tom appears to have both a creative and strategic brain, which was evident with his love of music and art while also studying Maths and English Language A Levels. He joined BGS in 1997 on an Assisted Place and gained 'an awful lot' there.

"I don't stand in front of the mirror every morning reciting Hoc Age," he says laughing. "But what the school really instilled was the need to be excellent and I think that's one of the best things about BGS. I strive for excellence in everything I do. The teachers really helped guide you. It was a key thing, the way they helped you find your passion, and because of that they could help you excel in what you did. BGS was great for that."

"I've now got three boys and not only is it total chaos, my eldest is approaching nine. I think back to when my parents said: 'Do you fancy having a look at Bradford Grammar?' They sold it to me saying it had rooms filled with drum kits and amazing music facilities and that the sports facilities were fantastic. I look back now and I'm so glad I made the decision to go there...I wish we had BGS around the corner from us but we're 300 miles away (in London)."

With a busy career and full family life spending time with wife Nicola (the pair grew up on the same street in Wilsden) and boys Bear, Rain and Ennis – there can't be much time to sit still.

"I've accepted that my brain doesn't ever switch off!" he says. "What I tend to do is spend time with the boys. They're my proudest achievement and they give me so much space from running the company. Our weekends as a family are very sacred."

Finally, with so many prestigious projects under his belt, what does the future look like for North House? A bigger team? Offices abroad?

"What we're looking at now, rather than growth for growth's sake, is optimising at our current size and considering our next move in an ever-evolving industry," he says. "The biggest objective is to grow the company into new areas of industry. The Disneyland Paris show was an amazing process with Disney and we want to do a lot more work with theme parks, attractions and destinations. We've started to do a lot of work with exhibitions, including some with the Victoria and Albert Museum and we're doing more with immersive experiences. And we want to do a lot more work in the US and the Middle East. Ultimately, we'll build the team very steadily, but I don't think there'll be a big rush to suddenly double the team."

"I think what I've learnt over the last two years is I doubled the team quite quickly without realising how much it changes the way you operate and the processes. We've now got to this point and hovering around 24/25 people is probably where we'll remain. It will help us keep a really well-oiled system before we make any next moves."

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THE KING AND I



BBC
SPORTS
PERSON
OF THE



Old Bradfordian, Jake Keating, loved music at school but never believed 2025 would see him perform in front of television audiences, before royalty and manage a street festival.

Little did musician Jake Keating (2016) know when he joined a specially assembled new choir that he'd be entertaining royalty less than a year later. Jake was one of 50 members of the choir Bantam of the Opera, performing the orchestral version of Take Me Home, Midland Road at Bradford's Cartwright Hall in front of King Charles, in May.

"I grew up around Cartwright Hall, playing in Lister Park, and a lot of the area is deeply embedded in who I am," says Jake. "To be singing in front of royalty in a space that very much felt like home was just surreal. It was a brilliant experience. I never would have anticipated ever meeting or performing for the King, but he was genuinely such a lovely man and very down to earth."

Bantam of the Opera was formed in early 2025 as part of a BBC Radio Leeds Challenge to celebrate the Bradford 2025 City of Culture year. The challenge was backed by Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber, opera singer Lesley Garrett and Bradford sporting legend Chris Kamara, who was keen to be involved, having used singing as a therapeutic tool to help his speech fluency after being diagnosed with apraxia, a motor speech condition.

The choir was made up of Bradford City fans (The Bantams), more used to cheering on their team from the terraces of Valley Parade than singing for a King. Jake was joined in the choir by fellow OB, Peter Parker (1999) and BGS Governor and Dean of Bradford Cathedral, The Very Revd Andy Bowerman. The aim was to be ready to sing at a memorial concert in May, marking 40 years since the Bradford City fire disaster, in which 56 fans lost their lives.



Above: Jake Keating at the Sports Personality of the Year 2025 event
Left: King Charles with members of the Bantam of the Opera choir

"A few people were already singing in community choirs, and some hadn't sung since they were at school," recalls Jake, who was encouraged to audition by BBC producers. "Most were quite literally friends from the terraces.

"The first rehearsal was during February, and we were a bit nervous and rather excited. Unbeknown to the choir, Lesley Garrett was hiding in a backroom and halfway through she sprang out. It was the biggest surprise. She's been a brilliant patron. Once we began singing, it was amazing how quickly we made a nice sound together."

The first time the Bantams performed was in Bradford's The Broadway Shopping Centre in the food court. A flash mob, pop-up type thing.

"It was bonkers," laughs Jake. "We were all disguised wearing our coats and jackets over our football kit and before we knew it, we were whipping everything off and singing one of the songs from Carmen to crowds of people.

"Lesley Garrett was standing on a chair in the middle of the food court singing and waving a Bradford City scarf around her head. The crowd loved it and so did we. Everyone was still getting to know each other, it was quite surreal, but also momentous. It brought us all together and it was nice to get such a positive reaction from people in the city."

The choir has grown beyond what the BBC initially thought it would be, singing at events throughout the year. Another highlight was being asked to perform at the televised BBC Sports Personality of the Year event in December, and the choir will be singing at the Football League Managers Association dinner in May.

It's not that long since Jake was singing in the Price Hall, taking up all the music BGS had to offer. He was a Norfolk Scholar, generously supported by OB and benefactor, Mark Richer (1981), and initially introduced to BGS by a 'wonderful man called Bill Prior' who got his mum the application forms and paid for his first school uniform.

"I absolutely adored my time at school. It was so inclusive and it was amazing to explore every option open to me to find out where my true potential lay."

After school, he became a full-time musician and songwriter (including singing at the current Headmaster's wedding!). He was festival manager for the three-day free street music festival HONK! in September and has more exciting projects lined up, many with the Bantams, to keep him busy.

"It's been the most remarkable journey," he says, summing up the past 12 months. "I love community performance work, and I'd love to run a green fields music festival one day. I feel very lucky."

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**LESLEY GARRETT
WAS STANDING
ON A CHAIR IN
THE MIDDLE
OF THE FOOD
COURT SINGING
AND WAVING A
BRADFORD CITY
SCARF AROUND
HER HEAD**

”



Left: Lesley Garrett with the Bantam of the Opera Choir

Events

Bradford 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.



Paris

OBs, and 1662 Fund trustees and benefactors joined the Chairman of Governors and Headmaster in Paris to celebrate the work of OB, David Hockney (1952).

Hockney was about to open his most extensive exhibition to date at the Louis Vuitton Foundation – it was set to be the largest and most comprehensive collection of his work arranged along a timeline from early days in Bradford, to California, France and back to Yorkshire again – a superb showcase of work spanning 70 years.

The opportunity to attend the exhibition's vernissage and socialise in the Parisian springtime provided a perfect opportunity to thank our 1662 Fund supporters and celebrate one of our nation's, and Bradford Grammar School's, most accomplished and iconic artists.



Top: OBs in Bradford for a curry night
Bottom: OBs, 1662 Trustees and benefactors joined the Chairman of Governors in Paris

Gala Dinner

BGS played host to OBs, Governors, staff, friends and supporters of BGS and honoured guests at the Gala Dinner in June.

We gathered in black tie and finery on one of the hottest days of the year, attempted to keep ourselves cool with drinks and canapes in the Sixth Form Centre before moving to a thronged Price Hall for dinner, speeches and musical entertainment provided by current pupils and OB brothers Nick (2017) and Jake (2016) Keating.

The Headmaster welcomed everyone and led a warm vote of thanks to the Old Bradfordians Association (OBA) for their founding donation of £100k to the 1662 Futures Fund to endow Assisted Places for future generations of pupils. This was a poignant moment in which the current formation of the OBA came to an end. From this moment going forwards, the school will organise and provide an inclusive range of events and publications to bring our OB community closer together. In so doing, the very special relationship that BGS enjoys with its supportive alumni across the globe, nurtured by the OBA over many years, will be protected for posterity.

BGS had not hosted an occasion on this scale for a number of years and we have since been contacted by a large number of OBs and their families and friends asking when we might organise another. This is something we will be actively considering in due course as part of our commitment to providing a range of events for the wider school community. Whilst primarily a social occasion, the Gala Dinner raised significant funds for Assisted Places and provided a wonderful occasion for reconnection and celebrating the best of BGS.

The evening drew to a natural close after live music and relaxed conversation in the cooler air of The Quad with many OBs asking when the next gathering would be – Hoc Age!



Top to bottom:
Attendees at the Gala Dinner in June



London Social

More than one hundred OBs of various vintages, 1973 – 2023, joined the Headmaster and current, long serving teachers, Julian Reed-Purvis and Matt Wilde, near St Paul’s in London.

The evening, organised by the Development Department and the Old Bradfordians Club London, provided an opportunity for reminiscing about school days and catching up with the latest news from BGS. This was one of a growing number of informal social occasions provided by the school and it was lovely to welcome a number of OBs to their first reunion since leaving BGS.

OB Reunion Lunch at BGS

BGS opened its doors to a wave of nostalgia and warm reconnection as OBs gathered for the annual Reunion Lunch – this year specially inviting leavers from the 1970s for the first time.



Held in the DH Room, the lunch marked a poignant return for many attendees who hadn’t stepped foot in the school for more than 50 years. The event was characterised by a spirit of homecoming and celebration of shared history. Guests were treated to a fork buffet prepared by BGS Executive Chef Dean Winter, and the culinary offerings set the tone for a day steeped in memory and camaraderie. Following the meal, Headmaster Dr Simon Hinchliffe delivered a heartfelt address, reflecting on school days past while providing a glimpse into present-day life at BGS.

His remarks resonated deeply with guests, many of whom noted the remarkable blend of tradition and transformation within the school.

The afternoon continued with Sixth Form students guiding OBs on personal tours of the grounds, revisiting familiar spaces and exploring new additions such as the Sports Barn, the Early Years building and the refurbished Clarkson Library.

Top: OBs in London
Above: OB Reunion Lunch



Old Bradfordians Club London, Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner of the Old Bradfordians Club London was another sold out, grand affair in the West End. The event provided a convivial occasion for OBs and friends of BGS to reconnect and enjoy conversation over excellent food and drink.

In characteristically candid fashion, the Headmaster provided a state of the nation address, illustrating some of the challenges faced currently by the independent education sector and how the school is facing into these headwinds to deliver its ongoing vision for education. Dr Hinchliffe was careful to point out that while BGS is being impacted, the essential character of the school remains resilient to the current ideological and commercial climate in the UK, and he thanked OBs for their continued interest in and support of their alma mater.

Former Head of Classics and member of the Senior Leadership Team, now retired, Jane Chapman was this year's guest speaker. Jane spoke warmly and with gentle humour about the changes she had witnessed, and ushered in, during her long and loyal service at BGS. Married to, and mum of, OBs, Jane proved to be a very popular choice for Guest of Honour, and together with the current Deputy Head, Mr Boardman, also in attendance, they joined the assembled masses in lively conversation and toasts throughout the whole evening.

Well done 'London Club' President, Mark Lawrence and his committee for organising another super Annual Dinner.

New York Reunion

Old Bradfordians and their partners travelled from across the USA and Canada in October to gather in New York, 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 to flawless blue skies and warm autumnal sunshine, the perfect conditions for a 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 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, 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 and the advantages it 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 time for the bright lights of the Theatre District for dinner. La Grande Boucherie offered a fine setting for further conversation and 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 to 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!.



Left: Eleanor and David Huggins (1956) with the Hinchliffes in New York



2025 Bacchus Cup

Thirty-eight players, including 33 OBs, came together at Shipley Golf Club for a fantastic day with alumni spanning the last six decades.

The course was in great shape, with firm, fast fairways and true-running greens making some impressive scoring.

Highlights included:

Nearest the Pin on 7: Mike Savage (1990), Nearest the Pin on 17 and Best Guest Score (43 points): Nicholas Smith, guest of Peter Smith (1960).

As for the coveted Bacchus Cup... Dan Murphy (1994) with 39 points.

Joint runners-up were Sam Downs (2015) and Simon Shaw (1985) with 37 points.

The date is in the diary for the next event on Wednesday 24 June. Anyone interested in registering for the 2026 Bacchus Cup please **contact development@bradfordgrammar.com**

Left: Thirty-three OBs and their guests came together for the annual Bacchus Cup event

OLD
BRADFORDIAN

Obituaries

With thanks to John Bennett (1973)
Obituaries Editor.

We record with sadness the deaths
of the following Old Bradfordians and offer
our deepest sympathy to their families
and friends.

David Parkes
(1958)

1939-2025

David entered the third form and followed the science stream. Active on the sports field, he represented the school at various levels and played the occasional game for the First XV. He was also an active member of the First Scout Troop run by Mr Titus' Oates. Following an open scholarship to St John's College, Cambridge, and a first-class honours degree in Chemistry, he completed a doctorate. Thereafter, he worked for brief periods at the University of Pittsburgh and the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell, in Oxfordshire, before joining Shell where he remained for the rest of his professional career. Work took him to Chester, Amsterdam, London and back to Chester where he became Head of Research in the chemicals division. Following retirement, alongside his family and charitable work, he devoted himself to gardening, golf, guide dogs and, for one year, a family of badgers, as well as global travels which took him as far as Antarctica.



The Rev Geoffrey
Herman
Greenhough
(1954)

1936-2025

Known as Greenhough GH, Geoffrey entered Form 3D from Scott's School on a scholarship. He graduated with a BA from the University of Sheffield in 1957. He then gained a PGCE from the University of Leeds in 1958. In the same year, he was commissioned into the RAF, retiring in 1975 after a full-service commission with the rank of Squadron Leader. His time included a posting to the German border at the height of the Cold War. Following military service, he was ordained into the Church of England as a minister of the gospel, serving four parishes until his retirement in 2000. Following retirement, he actively served local churches in and around Winsford, Cheshire.

John David Glover
(1978)

1963-2025

John went to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, as a Choral Exhibitioner in 1979. He had been a member of the school orchestra and choir and kept up his friendship with fellow member Hugh (who has submitted this obituary) for more than 50 years.

Christian Mark
Dinwoodie
(1978)

From T&A Obit

1959-2025

Husband of Sarah and
father to Luke and
Joseph.

**Ernest Harvey
Tordoff
(1962)**

1946-2025

Ernest moved to Midhurst, Sussex towards the end of his life where he served as Vice-Chair of the Midhurst Society. He headed a range of incredible community projects, the best known being when he asked the artist Philip Jackson if it would be possible for the town council to borrow and display one of his maquettes. The artist refused, adding that the maquettes were too fragile for public display, but instead offered one of his larger bronze statues for permanent exhibition. Ernest made sure the statue – which represents 13th century Italian poet Dante – found the right home in Midhurst.



**John Wentworth
Cook CBE
(1944)**

1925-2025

John died on 13 October 2025, just a few weeks before his 100th birthday and therefore possibly our oldest Old Bradfordian. His wife, Val, died only a couple of months before him and their neighbours in Windermere described him as being a humble, kind and generous man. Born in Bradford, he was not sporting, and didn't enjoy rugby or cricket at school, until he discovered climbing. He won a scholarship to study Classics at Cambridge but, because of the Second World War, joined the Navy, from where he was promptly sent on to Bletchley Park. Following this, he took up his place at Cambridge where he became President of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. Following graduation, he trained as a teacher and worked in Yorkshire then moved into education administration there. His CBE was officially described as being for 'public services in Scotland,' more specifically for being Director of Education for Edinburgh.



**Roland Kaye
(1962)**

1946-2025

Roland Kaye died peacefully surrounded by his family at Five Rise Nursing Home, in Bingley, on 23 October 2025, aged 84. He was a loving husband of Christine, wonderful father to Karen and Fiona, and a beloved Grandad to Chris, Mike and Tom and loving father-in-law to Andrew and Ian.

**Barry Stansfield
(1954)**

1938-2025

Born in Bradford, an only child, Barry won a scholarship to BGS and the form prize. His main interest was history and languages, being taught French by Harry Rée who had been an agent in Churchill's Special Operations Executive. He also loved athletics and cricket, winning the 100 and 220 yard sprints in the Yorkshire Championships. He played cricket in the Bradford league and Saturday cricket for Idle Upper Chapel Cricket Club with great success. In addition, he organised guest speakers for them, including Geoff Boycott and Fred Trueman.

Following school, he joined the family firm, Stansfield and Walton, living firstly in Belgium, then Germany to develop the business, which eventually became Walton Textiles. It later diversified to include a manufacturing company, garage repair and servicing outfit and later the retail shop Stanmore Textiles selling woollen jumpers.

**Harold Ludman
(1951)**

1933-2025

Harold was born in Shipley and from BGS went to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, as a scholar. He then became a neurotologist who made major contributions to the field and excelled during his ENT training at UCH. He went on to edit and illustrate the standard textbook Mawson's Diseases of the Ear and co-authored the widely used ABC of ENT. He also held several key leadership roles within the specialty.



Anthony Masson
(1974)

2025

Dr Anthony Masson taught Chemistry at Bradford Grammar School from 1974 to 1996. He achieved a First in Chemistry at Leeds University and subsequently undertook research into the kinetics of gas-phase reactions, moving to Brandeis University, Massachusetts, to complete his PhD in 1970. This was followed by a year at Oxford as a post-doctoral Fellow and two years at York University as a teaching Fellow. A PGCE undertaken at York then directed Anthony towards a career in school teaching. During his 22 years at BGS, Anthony taught all age groups, demonstrating a very conscientious approach and careful adherence to accuracy. Intellectual rigour was both modelled and expected from his pupils. Colleagues in the department routinely sought his input and advice. Former Head of Department, Dr Brian Parker, recalls Anthony had 'one of the sharpest minds I have ever met' and was 'a quiet and gentle man', before going on to share his memories of a colleague who, when Rubik's Cubes appeared in the 1980s, had, within a few days, produced three or four sheets of instructions showing how to solve them from any starting point!

Anthony served BGS with distinction for many years. On retirement, Anthony and his wife, Christine, left Bradford to live in Cheshire to be closer to their daughter. Anthony died in August 2025 from complications following a long illness.



David C Sykes
(1968)

2025

David C Sykes sadly passed away in June 2025. He was a local boy and continued to live in Great Horton, Bradford his whole life. After leaving school, he worked for Yorkshire Bank before joining the French wool firm, A Dewavrin Limited, rising to be Company Secretary from 1991 to 2001. He was also Company Secretary and Director of British Mohair Spinners Ltd from 1991 to 2000 and a member of The Bradford Club.

Outside work, he had many interests, which included rugby, American football and photography, leaving an extensive archive of photographs to a local transport museum. He travelled to France in connection with work and developed a life-long love of Paris, making many visits. He continued to support the school and several animal charities. David enjoyed his time at BGS and generously remembered the school in his will. His bequest will be used to support the school's Assisted Places 1662 Campaign, David himself having benefitted from such a scheme.

Richard Kooper
(1963)

1946 – 2026

Notes







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