



BATH RUGBY SUPPORTERS CLUB NEWSLETTER ISSUE 3 SEASON 2025/2026

After all the excitement of the Internationals we are now able to enjoy our regular Club games and we have seen some wonderful rugby. It was great to see our 'youngsters' playing so well against Leicester Tigers— in the true spirit of the Prem Cup! It has also been such a joy to be out watching a game, supporting our team and watching them win!

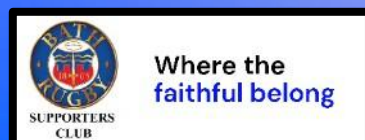
I am sure that I was not the only person who was thrilled to see another screen in the stadium when we went to watch the game against Saracens. A few years ago, we were away to Toulon and during a discussion with Bath Rugby about the new stadium (still a long way from approval) I mentioned I could never see the screen as we are in the Thatcher's stand and I am only 5'2", surrounded by much taller people. It was agreed that there was not much we could do to improve the stadium before a rebuild but I said that in the meantime watching the game would be much improved for many people by another screen. (I may have mentioned it a few times!) It's taken some years but it's here.

We have held several sell-out events over the last couple of months and there are pictures and notes in the following pages. There are more to come! Please remember to drop by the Gazebo on match days and say hello to the team.



I would also like to congratulate committee member Andy (who is responsible for all our social media communications) for raising £555 in support of Bath Rugby Foundation, by running the Bath Half Marathon. Well done Andy!

Janeen



Membership Events & Entertainment

Quiz Night in the Clubhouse

A sell-out social evening enjoyed by all. There was also an on-line quiz for those who could not attend the live event. David Stock was the Quiz "Host" for the evening.



General Views of the
Quiz Night





Quiz Night Winners



The Winning Team



Winner of the Raffle



Winner of the Heads/Tails quiz



Dave Stock (Quiz "Host")



Halena Coury from Bath Rugby Foundation (BRF) making her speech. In the background are Sarah Tarling BRF and Dave Stock.

LOOK OUT FOR FUTURE EVENTS

TOM DUNN
TESTIMONIAL DINNER
 3RD JULY 2026 - BATH PAVILION

Player Table Nine guests plus a player	Standard Table Ten guests
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Join us for a fabulous evening celebrating the rugby career of Bath and England legend Tom Dunn, in support of the Bath Rugby Foundation and Dorothy House.
 Dress Code: Black Tie



BATH RUGBY
Dorothy House
Legend

For further details or to make a booking, please contact: amy@ourlegend.com

Tom Dunn: Friday 3rd July

Black tie Testimonial Dinner in support of Bath Rugby Foundation and Dorothy House. Player Table = 9 guests and a player
 Standard Table = 10 guests
 For further information or to book contact amy@ourlegend.com

Rengen House

Before the Saracen's game (and what a wonderful evening we had at the Rec, watching that game!) we held another get together at Rengen House. The first drink was included in the ticket price and there were old films of Bath Rugby playing in their (previous) heyday to watch, when we weren't just chatting! It was a chance to mingle with other supporters and to meet with our Ambassadors, Chris Lilley and Richard Hill.

Afterwards a lady who felt she wouldn't know anyone so brought a friend, emailed to say what a lovely time they had both had. I think we're a friendly bunch!





Ask The Ref

Tony Spreadbury Evening

A wonderful evening was had by all at this always popular event and below are some photos and a report sent to me the next day.

Being Head of Match Officials across the eight unions of European Professional Club Rugby and their respective competitions is as demanding a role as any in the game but Tony Spreadbury wears his responsibilities more lightly than most, on the outside at least.

On the EPCR staff web page, 'Spreaders' portrait certainly has a bigger grin than anyone else.

His 'Ask the Ref' session organised by Bath Rugby Supporters Club has become an annual event and drew a full house of 100 members to the Rec clubhouse for an entertaining evening of analysis, insight and straight talking.

First, using video clips, he encouraged his audience to offer their thoughts on incidents and refereeing interpretations from last weekend's Six Nations matches. The lesson? It's not always as clear-cut a decision as you might think.

Spreadbury himself is no fan of protracted conversations between referees and TV match officials and oversees a more streamlined process in EPCR competitions than we see in Prem rugby. 'Clear and obvious' is the message to his officials.



A full house asking questions, learning and laughing.



He also revealed that this summer's Junior World Championships (under-20s) being held in the Georgian capital Tbilisi will rely on TMO teams working from a bunker in Basingstoke! But that will also ensure that they are not influenced by sharp-eyed TV pundits.

Other topics under discussion included the sheer complexity of line-out laws and how to preserve the sanctity of the scrum within the laws. Top refs are encouraged to use former prop forwards such as David Flatman as coaches to improve their instructions and decision-making.

Another tip to rookie refs: don't be on first-name terms with one team and refer to the opposition just by their shirt number. It doesn't sound good.

Spreadbury refereed 44 Test matches, including two Rugby World Cups, and was one of rugby union's first fully-professional refs before becoming a referees' coach and then the RFU's head of professional game match officials. He took up his EPCR post in 2021.

The event, which was a full house, raised nearly £700 for BRSC, which supports the Bath Rugby Foundation.

Raffle Prize Winners





Bath Rugby Ladies

<https://www.bathrugbyladies.co.uk/>

On March 8th (International Women's Day) Bath Rugby Ladies came to the Rec to play against North Bristol Women watched by about a thousand spectators. It was a nail-biter of a game until the last few minutes and although NBW finally won by two points it was a very special day for all involved. I am very pleased to be able to add a match report of their latest game (on the next page together with some photos below:



Photo credit: Bath Spa University



Match Report – West Country Derby
Bath Rugby Ladies vs North Bristol Women
Sunday 8th March – The Recreation Ground, Bath
Final Score: Bath Rugby Ladies 17 – 19 North Bristol Women

Bath Rugby Ladies and North Bristol Women delivered a thrilling West Country derby at The Rec on Sunday 8th March, fittingly played on International Women's Day, showcasing the quality, intensity and resilience of women's rugby.

Bath opened the scoring early, capitalising on forward dominance with a well-executed driving maul, finished by **Esme Bird**. North Bristol responded quickly through **Amber Carter**, with **Freya Ellis** adding the conversion to give the visitors a 7–5 lead.

Bath answered soon after as **Olivia Lewis** finished strongly in the corner following slick attacking play. North Bristol then struck back with an almost identical try, working from a strong attacking scrum platform near halfway and moving the ball wide for winger **Bibi Marley Van Keerbergen Roffe** to finish in the corner, giving the visitors a 10–12 lead at half time.

North Bristol struck first in the second half when **Celyn Evans** broke through a gap in the Bath defence from around 10 metres out, with **Ellis** adding the conversion to extend the lead to 10–19.

Bath continued to apply pressure and responded through **Chlöe Fletcher**, who picked from the base of a scrum and powered over through the North Bristol defence, refusing to be held up to score Bath's third try. **Katie Derrick** added the conversion.

In the closing stages Bath were awarded a penalty 45 metres out directly in front of the posts, giving them an opportunity to snatch the lead. **Derrick's** effort had the direction but fell just short of the crossbar, leaving the score unchanged.

With the clock running down, Bath mounted one final attack deep inside North Bristol territory and pressed the visitors' try line. However, a late penalty went the way of North Bristol, who kept possession and ran down the final 30 seconds before kicking the ball into touch, bringing the game to a close and securing a narrow 17–19 victory.

It was a fantastic display of women's rugby, with both sides producing gruelling defensive efforts and relentless physicality throughout the 80 minutes in front of a supportive crowd at The Rec.

Players of the Match

Bath Rugby Ladies:

- **Forward:** Kyara Martin
- **Back:** Olivia Lewis

North Bristol Women:

- **Forward:** Daisy Mayes
- **Back:** Bibi Marley Van Keerbergen



Bath Rugby Foundation

Thanks to your generosity with donations made when renewing or signing up for membership, BRSC has been able to sponsor two students for this season (25/26) which is why I like to let you know more about them whenever possible.

David Trick interviewed Luke Hopwood who joined the Foundation in September 2025. David's report is below and is followed by information on the new intervention project, *Engage*.

Bath Rugby Foundation Report

By David Trick

Interviewing Luke Hopwood, Functional Skills Tutor

I have often said Bath Rugby Foundation staff are exceptional people, who manage to turn around the lives of so many of our students. With this in mind, I'd like to introduce Luke Hopwood who joined us in September 2025. Luke was Head of Year at Kingswood Prep School before joining us, and with this taking a 30% reduction in salary.

Luke's words: "Working with young people for many years in various settings: formal education youth work; fostering independent and state sectors; my own children; my views on what matters most have distilled down to a few simple things:

- Children and young people deserve adults who are kind, supportive and encouraging to them. If nothing else, consistently being these things is more impactful than most realise.
- They are given the chance to thrive - they all have passions and interests but some need help unlocking them. Developing trust and rapport rightly takes time but is the platform for any aspiration you have for them.
- It is a privilege and also a big responsibility to look after children.



When considering moving, I wanted to work somewhere that reflects my values and priorities - the Foundation is filled with staff who genuinely care and are both purposeful but, crucially, value-driven. There is a sense of support and fun that comes when people know they are 'in it together'.

"It is a huge personal change in working environment and one which brings new challenges. The cogs are constantly whirring on how to capture and retain the students' interest and engagement, when to push, when to give space, what the next steps are... It is a careful balancing act but the key thing for me is this work always feels meaningful. Not in a wishy-washy way but in a targeted and specific manner. I'm sure there will be tricky days and challenging / disappointing situations, but my sense is the career change was very much the right one."

Welcome Luke!

Thanks to the unrestricted support of the 1st XV Club, last year we launched Engage - our early intervention programme for children aged 9–13 who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging, from mainstream education. I'm pleased to share how it's progressing this academic year. Across Bath and Wiltshire, more young people are struggling with anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) and unmet social, emotional and mental health needs. Persistent absence has doubled nationally since COVID, and many children receive little or no specialist support. Engage fills that gap. Using sport, 1:1 mentoring and tailored SEMH support, we help young people reconnect with learning in a way that feels safe, achievable and relevant. Sessions are delivered in trusted community rugby clubs and small, nurturing groups of 2–6 students, with a 1:3 staff ratio. They take part in confidence-building activities, emotional regulation work, physical activity, creativity and goal-setting - all grounded in trauma-informed practice. We work closely with schools, families and local authorities to support successful reintegration. Since September 2025, Engage has supported 15 young people, with capacity to grow. Despite a challenging funding landscape, the early impact is extremely positive: Attendance increased by +1.2% after 10 sessions Four in five students improved their attendance to within 1% of the national average (92%) Late arrivals reduced by -4.4% Achievement improved by +36% Behaviour improved by +25% These are small groups - by design - but the difference made is significant. Your generosity is what makes this happen. It funds time, trust and second chances for children who need a different way to learn. Because of you, they have the space to rebuild confidence, re-enter education and believe in their futures. Thank you.

At the Gazebo

As this 'goes to press' we are looking forward to meeting Northampton on Friday evening. We have not played a European Champions Cup Quarter Final for a long, long time, so it will be an exciting evening. I hope everyone who can, comes along in full voice, to cheer our team on to the next step. We will not have the Gazebo out, but will have a table in the Clubhouse so you can still stop by and say hello.

We had a wonderful afternoon (in the chilly wind and sunshine) last Saturday. Lots of people stopped by to have a chat, pick up a flag, and we even recruited a few more members! We then went to watch some wonderful rugby which made this weekend very special. couple of pictures, one of those of us on the committee who were able to be there and another of a gorgeous little boy, William Watkins aged 3¾, who is a BRSC member and very happy supporter of Bath Rugby.

