



BATH RUGBY CLUB SUPPORTERS CLUB NEWSLETTER SEASON 2025-2026 ISSUE 4

Well, we have had quite a bit to watch and talk about in the last couple of months, some good and some not quite so good!

A wonderful number of supporters (7000) went to Bordeaux and, watching it on the TV, their cheers for Bath were quite audible. Although it was not to be our victory, having seen the game against Leinster I think we still can be very proud of our players.

Much to my disappointment the extra screen at the Rec didn't last... back to watching the game later on TV to see exactly what happened on many occasions.

Our away coaches for Gloucester, Exeter and Bristol have proved popular. We added in an extra pick up in Trowbridge. An alternative pick-up on this side of Bath could be Warminster – anybody who has an opinion please email BRSC.

Our membership numbers are still increasing and we are looking to adding extra member benefits. Visit the Gazebo when you can, it's a good place to meet up, chat and exchange opinions. One can buy or collect pins, flags, and various sundry items and we are hoping to increase our range. (If you have any ideas of what you think would be a 'best seller', let us know!)

The survey got a good response. We have discussed it at committee level and are using it to ensure we offer our members the best experience. Bath Rugby will be able to talk with us about it after the end of this season (they are a bit busy at the moment!).

Semi-finals looming now ... **COYB**



Janeen



New to the Committee

We have recently co-opted some new members who offered their expertise to help us and are already hard at work. You may already know them or have seen them around but you will be able to meet them at the Gazebo or at away games.

Andy Viveash introduces himself

I've been a Bath Rugby supporter for many years and regularly attend matches at The Rec with my wife and 2 young children. I have a strong interest in both the rugby and the wider club community.

Professionally, I've spent over 15 years working in digital marketing and IT. I'm really pleased to be joining the committee and very happy to support and build on the fantastic work BRSC is already doing, particularly around strengthening digital engagement and helping to broaden our reach to new and existing supporters.

I hope to see you all at a game soon!



Ben Baker introduces himself:

Hi, I'm Ben and I'm thrilled to have been co-opted onto the board. I was in the Royal Corps Signals for 18 years and whilst deployed in Afghanistan on my first tour I was sent a Christmas box, which included a number of Bath rugby items such as a scarf, hat and Christmas programmes and have been a fan ever since.

In 2025 I was medically discharged with PTSD and to help me in my day-to-day life and recovery I was given Betty, a black cocker spaniel, as a medical assistance dog. You have probably seen us at games – she is very popular! I am a club member, on the waiting list for a season ticket.

I volunteered with the BRSC as I believe that I can be a valuable member of the team as I have good organisational skills plus many ideas on how to improve the fan experience especially using my own experience to help supporters with additional needs.



"Committee Member" Betty

Ben, Betty & Arthur





Service Dogs UK

Following on from Ben's introduction we thought it would be a nice idea to give a little information on the charity who helped him:

Service Dogs UK were in the fan village on Saturday 18th April (before the game against Harlequins) to raise awareness and much needed funds to continue their amazing work. Service Dogs UK are a charity supporting veterans and those who have served their country within the police, fire and ambulance services, who have PTSD. They pair up service personal with a dog and provide training to allow the dog to become a fully accredited assistance dog. These dogs are all rescue dogs who are given a second chance at a loving home, so it's a win-win for both parties.

You may have seen Betty with her handler Ben at recent games and on Bath Rugby's Facebook page - they have both been through the process the charity provides after Ben served 18 years in the British Army and was medically discharged in 2025 following a diagnosis of PTSD. Without Betty, Ben wouldn't be able to leave the house or deal with his symptoms he suffers with in a daily basis whilst at home.

Having Betty has also opened up the opportunity for Ben to be part of the BRSC committee and he is now getting involved with supporting away games, especially looking into how those with any accessibility needs are accommodated.

There are many veterans and service personnel who attend Bath Rugby, and even more who support Bath but feel unable to attend games because they don't have the support like Ben has found. I do hope many of you managed to meet Ben and Betty plus Ferris (the Ambassador dog).

For more information or how to sponsor a Service Dog take a look at: www.servicedogsuk.org.



Bordeaux

Thousands of Bath supporters managed to attend the game in Bordeaux. Our 'roving reporter' Chrissie sent in her report!

BR Hospitality trip to Bordeaux

This was a fantastic trip (despite the result). From the outset the organisation and communication were excellent and all the 222 supporters on our charter flight had to do was turn up at Bristol airport with our passports. In the departure lounge players and staff mingled with us as their charter plane was departing a short while before us.

On Saturday evening we enjoyed stirring speeches from, amongst others, Bruce Craig and Johann van Graan. After the speeches we chatted to several players not in the match day squad.

Sunday..... The atmosphere in the stadium was incredible but unfortunately, things didn't quite go our way on the day 😞

At Bordeaux airport the players, coaches and staff walked past us to the next gate. They were visibly disappointed. Without exception every BR person was applauded by all of us and JVG stopped, acknowledged the supporters and then applauded us!

There is always next year.....



BITS & BOBS

The vets of Rugby Xerez from Jerez in Spain came to the game on Saturday and joined us at the gazebo. Their team colours are blue and white (bit of yellow)!



Congratulations to Bath University of Bath Rugby on becoming BUCS Super League Treble Winners



Our cups in their home at Farleigh House. As you no doubt know, we will be keeping the original Gallagher Premiership Cup since we now have the Gallagher PREM.

Competition & Raffle Winners

BRSC 100 Charity Lottery:

January - Ben Preater won two tickets to Hospitality in the Presidents Lounge

February - Mrs Beverley Bennett won a 1½ litre magnum of Champagne (label signed by Ewan Richards)

March - Colin Robertson won a Bath Replica shirt signed by players and coaches.

Coach Trips:

During the trip there are always one or two competitions to win a prize, such as a signed shirt or a bottle of wine signed by a player etc. On the trip to Exeter, we were asked to predict the score. The prize was, sadly, won by the only person who put down Exeter with a winning score!



Kate Gibson
won the signed
shirt on the
Exeter trip

Dawn, the bus
driver, won the
signed shirt on
the Gloucester
trip



Survey



Our Chairman, Mike, presenting **Graeme** Norris with the second prize in the free draw for completing the Survey: a Bath Supporters Rugby Ball signed by Bath Legends, Richard Hill, Phil De Glanville, David Trick and Ruaridh McConnochie

Behind the Success

Exclusive Visit Reveals Winning Formula at Bath Rugby and University Partnership

Members recently enjoyed a fascinating behind-the-scenes visit to the University of Bath's Sports Training Village, gaining a unique insight into the partnership between Bath Rugby and the University that continues to produce outstanding results both on and off the field.



The visit was hosted by Head of Rugby Aaron James, an award-winning coach, alongside BRSC patron Chris Lilley, who works closely with both the University and Bath Rugby in identifying and developing future talent.

Aaron, originally from New Zealand, brought a wealth of experience to the role. A former Wasps player who famously faced the British and Irish Lions during his playing career, he joined the University of Bath 15 years ago following a coaching spell with Wasps and has been instrumental in developing one of the country's most successful university rugby programmes.



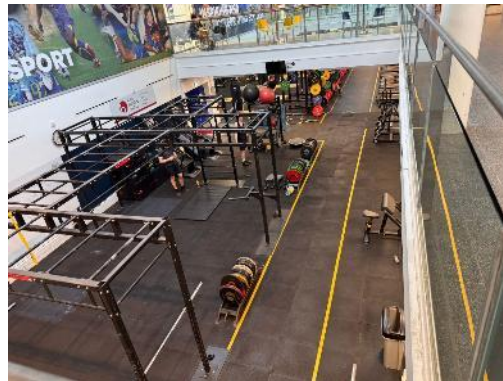
Members learned how the recruitment process extends far beyond the campus gates. Talent scouts regularly attend schools and major youth competitions, including the prestigious Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens and Gloucester's Under-18 academy tournaments. Working alongside Bath Rugby Academy coach Craig Lilley, the programme identifies promising young players who demonstrate the right qualities and may be offered the opportunity to combine a university education with elite rugby training.

At the heart of the programme are the values that underpin every one of the University's ten men's rugby teams. Known collectively as "The Brothers", the players strive to become "Better Educated, Better at Rugby, Better Athletes, Better People". The culture emphasises inclusivity, strong relationships between year groups and a family atmosphere that extends throughout the teams.

With around 35 players in each squad, all participants contribute £400 per season towards costs not met by the University, including those who are members of the Bath Rugby Academy. Their demanding schedules are carefully planned around academic commitments, balancing lectures with training sessions, gym work, tactical meetings and Wednesday fixtures.

The close relationship between the University and Bath Rugby was evident throughout the presentation. Bath Rugby's academy coaching staff, including Mark Lilley, dedicate significant time to work with the University coaching team in player development, employing modern coaching techniques such as video analysis. There is also a strong understanding between the University's coaching team and Johann Van Graan regarding player welfare, selection, training loads and game time.

The tour also showcased the impressive Sports Training Village facilities available to students. Members were shown the extensive gymnasiums, all-weather pitches, multi-use games areas, a 3G rugby pitch, indoor athletics track and Olympic-standard 50-metre swimming pool. We were particularly interested in the indoor training area, complete with the distinctive blue rope famously used by Bath Rugby hooker Tom Dunn to perfect his line-out throwing.



The visit concluded with an overview of the University's elite Performance Squad, which competes in the highly competitive BUCS Super Rugby league. The squad consists of 75 players, with 51 representing the team during this last successful season. Their achievements this year are a testament to a programme that successfully combines academic excellence, world-class facilities and professional rugby development.

For those attending, it was an eye-opening experience and a valuable opportunity to see first-hand how one of the country's leading university rugby programmes continues to nurture both sporting success and personal development.

Our thanks to Aaron and Chris and we hope to run a similar event next year. Don't miss it!