

Fellow Old Blundellians,

On this OB Day of 2026, I am pleased to be able to report on the Old Blundellian Club's activities over the last 12 months. As always, my thanks go to the Foundation Director Tom Cowle, and his team for their unwavering support, collaboration, and tireless work delivering for the Blundell's community.

It was my pleasure to attend 2 drinks receptions this year, Bristol in February and London in May. Both events saw a fantastic mix of OBs from university students to long time stalwarts of the OB Club all enjoying great food and drink but even better conversation and company. The incredible diversity of age, life and career stories on show at these events never fails to astound, with connections forged and friendships rekindled over stories of years gone by. The new venue in London proved a hit and we look forward to meeting more OBs there again next year.

The Reichwald fives tournament had a fantastic turn-out, as did the touch rugby tournament which saw both mens and womens teams from across the OB, Blundellian and local communities go head-to-head on Big Field. The newly unified OB Sports weekend in September will bring together all of the OB sporting events into one weekend of OB sporting fun and we are so looking forward to seeing everybody back for a big weekend. We now have a role on the committee for OB Sports lead and as usual I encourage OBs to get in touch to get involved, to give it a go & throw your hat in the ring for these sport events. It is a fantastic opportunity to engage with current pupils, reconnect with your former teammates, and once again play on the fields and pitches on which you grew up.

The OB Club welcomed current U6th to their annual beer & pizza evening, introducing them to the OB Club and their next home and Blundell's of the Beale Centre. Though, in true west country style, more chose cider than beer so perhaps we should change the name of this

event. Congratulations to the team of OBs and committee members who won the quiz this year - I must remember to split you all up next time.

The Beale Centre as always is the centre of the OB Club's activities with so many events taking place here throughout the year, not least the always-fully booked Winter Lunches wonderfully hosted by Jonny Ison. These have played host to a fantastic range of speakers again this year. We are so grateful for Sue, Katie, Katie and Jenny for their support and volunteer time running these. Of course no event is complete without the fantastic food produced by Ankur and his catering team, which we are all excited to sample once again in a short while at lunch.

Of course, the OB Club is glad to support the school in their use of the Beale Centre with it playing host to SLT & Governors meetings and community events. Over the summer break, we look forward to further formalising our working relationship with the Foundation Office by moving them into the office space in the Beale Centre, putting the OB Community truly at the heart of their work and creating efficiencies and more opportunities for collaboration every day. The final details of this move are being worked through and we will update the community on this in the new school year.

You will note that the Beale Centre has had a few more tweaks since we sat here last year with a replacement carpet, and signage on the glass, behind the bar and at the base of the steps. Tom and I also spent a few days over the Christmas break donning our work-clothes and painting the Abram room which now looks much fresher. This building is for all members of our community and I am so pleased that it now looks so much more presentable and usable.

The Club continues to provide sponsorship to OBs who may need a kick-start with a dream or career move. We are able to support OBs with an up to £500 grant and I encourage applications from OBs from all walks of life. Please get in touch with Janet and David for more information and how to apply.

The 1604 giving campaign is open and well underway run by the Foundation Office. Any monthly donation no matter how large or small is gratefully received. We have a long list of projects that we would love to get underway! If you would like to know more or to become a member, please speak to one of the foundation team. As well as supporting scholarships and bursaries, recent capital projects have included the golf simulator and refurbished squash courts and a new kitchen in GH. You will start to see new 'Foundation project' plaques appearing around the school to highlight the good work of the foundation made possible from the generous donors.

The end of the school term fast approaches, and with it the opportunity to welcome the outgoing U6th into the OB Club. This year, the committee is presenting them with a gift which we hope will turn into a new tradition. Cufflinks with our now not-so-new logo or a necklace produced by a member of the Blundell's community.

Of course, with the end of the school term we also note the departure of 2 key people in Bart Wielenga and the Rev'd Tim Hunt. Both have been incredible supporters of the Club during their tenures at Blundell's and we are pleased to welcome them into the OB Club today.

We remember today a number of members of the OB Community who have passed away in the last 12 months. Notably Martyn Grose, Angus Rackham, Peter Dickinson, Richard Sharpe, Hugh Morris and Richard Giles. We send our love, thoughts and prayers to every person lost's family and loved ones.

We have a number of committee officers and committee members standing down today.

Nick Soul is stepping down as a committee member following his move to the United States. His commitment to the OB Club, even from afar, has been nothing short of tremendous. During Nick's time on the committee he worked across a number of workstreams, notably the strategy refresh of 2023, and his impact will be felt for a long time. We wish him all the very best for his life across the pond.

Charles Abram has served as a committee member for more than a decade and we have so appreciated his expertise and dedication to the OB community. Thank you Charlie, I know we will see you at almost every event and so it won't be long before we get a chance to catch-up.

Today also sees the handover of the Treasurer role from Jonny Ison. Jonny is a true stalwart of the OB Club and committee. I'm not sure there are many before him who could claim such a tenure. He has seen the club through substantial changes in personnel, the move to an employed secretary and changes to our financial operating structure. There is no doubt that the club would not be able to operate as it now does without your guidance and dedication.

There are opportunities available to join the OB Committee and we are looking for members who have a passion for supporting OBs and the school who have ideas to bring. I welcome contact from anyone who would like a conversation about this opportunity.

I want to thank the Committee for their support and input, remembering this is all done in their own time and done voluntarily. Much of the committee's, and my, focus this year has been investigating and determining how the OB Club should move forward with regards to its structure and formal relationship with the Foundation Office and the school. These conversations are ongoing, and I know the committee has always and will always act in the best interests of Old Blundellians.

I also wish to thank Janet, our Club Secretary, for all the hours she puts into making so many of the events mentioned happen, but also for her continued commitment to building and sustaining our community of Old Blundellians. Tom Cowle and his team are a never-ending support for me and Janet and we look forward to continuing to build this relationship and mode of working together even further over the next year.

Katharine Sendell
Chair of the Old Blundellian Club