

Brymore

experience to last a lifetime



Newsletter February 2014

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Message from the Headteacher - Mr Mark Thomas

Brymore has been fortunate to avoid the worst of the flooding and storms that have hit the South of England and the Somerset Levels in particular. A house match may have been postponed, a Saturday mountain biking session may have been cancelled. Trees have been felled by the winds and the farm are struggling to find grazing land for the sheep. Nevertheless, however problematic these issues may seem, they fail to compare to the hardship faced by many families and the farming community, only a few miles from Brymore.

Many seeing the terrible pictures on the news will no doubt forget the floods as the waters subside and the cameras move on. However, for farmers who work on a yearly cycle, some of the effects will continue to be felt over a year later. It has been heartening to see on the news and hear of many ex-Brymore boys doing what they can to help the local communities affected. The school has also been able to provide some temporary accommodation for a family from Moorland who were recently evacuated from their home. We have always tried to foster responsibility in the boys, something that hopefully remains with them for life.

Brymore also works on a cycle and we are now half way through the academic year. This is the time when preparations for the following year are usually in full swing, with double the effort needed this time around as we prepare to accept two new cohorts of boys in September. This is the culmination of a three year plan, where we have been working hard to secure the financial future of the school by increasing student numbers whilst keeping class sizes, and numbers in the school overall, small enough to allow us to provide the individual attention the boys deserve. It is pleasing to report that we are close to capacity for boarders in Year 9 next year, and we will be oversubscribed with a waiting list for Year 7 out-boarders. In terms of cycles, this means Brymore is heading back to where it was ten years or so ago. Soon, we will have no choice but to turn some boys away, because we will simply not have the space.

The conversion to academy status continues to provide funding for development. Over half-term, work has already started on the hard court area, which is being completely refurbished. It will have a new all-weather surface, new fencing, goals and floodlights and it should greatly improve this much used resource. Further work, most notably the installation of wi-fi across the whole school, is planned for the summer, as part of our relentless drive to improve the 'Brymore experience' for the boys here.

I hope everyone manages to have some sort of break over the half-term holiday, and that journeys back to Brymore are a little easier for those that struggled to get home on Saturday.

Best wishes

Forest School

If you venture into the deep dark woods on a Thursday morning, you may not find bears but you will definitely find some Brymore boys!

Mr Ball has been taking small groups of the Year 9s for Forest School every week during period one and the boys have been learning all about the environment and utilising the materials around them, whilst working as a team. They have recently completed the construction of a willow fence, created mallets and made whistles but the highlight of every week has to be making hot chocolate in the Kelly Kettles.



Bath Half Marathon

Mr Bagshaw, Miss Rundle and Mr Mahon are all running the Bath Half Marathon in aid of the Stroke Association on 2 March 2014 and are looking for people to dig deep and sponsor them to complete the 13.1 miles of the race.

This is a charity close to the heart of Mr Bagshaw as he, himself, suffered from a stroke in 2012. He set himself three goals to help his recovery and to give him the motivation to get better. The first was to have a brilliant 40th birthday party. The second was to play golf to a professional standard once more from level par, which he achieved in July 2013 when he won the Kibworth Open. The third goal is to run a marathon which Mr Bagshaw plans to do on 6 April 2014 in Brighton. This drive epitomises the Brymore spirit.

Should you feel that you can sponsor Mr Bagshaw for the marathon then please logon to his Just Giving page:

www.justgiving.com/Duncan-Bagshaw2 or if you wish to donate to the whole team for the Bath Half then please see the individual staff member or put money in the collection tin in Reception.



Chinese New Year

Following our Thanksgiving 'theme night' last term, Mr Bagshaw and Mrs Saunders worked hard to create a Chinese New Year celebration. With a tasty menu, including prawn toasts, spring rolls, beef in black bean sauce and chow mein, the boys really enjoyed cheering in the year of the horse. A special quiz was also created by our Gap Tutor, Mr Cooper. Next, we look forward to celebrating St Patricks Day!



Goodbye Bradley

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to Bradley Harris, our resident blacksmith, who not only came here as a student but has also graced the school with his professional experience for the last 15 years. Training boys in the art of blacksmithing and welding throughout those years and assisting them in improving their skills was truly awe inspiring to watch. Bradley has built up a very successful business of his own over the past 15 years and this success has been so overwhelming that he has had to leave us to focus on this. We all wish him the very best and hope he won't be a stranger to the school in the next 15 years.



Year 11 Raising Achievement

Year 11 are rapidly approaching exam time and this term has been packed with opportunities to make the most of their grades. They have been attending 'breakfast' sessions in English and Maths on a Tuesday and Friday, as well as taking mock exams in Maths, Science and ICT. Mrs Davis has introduced an extra prep session between 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm for those Year 11s who need it, following requests from boys to have more time to work. History have also been running an extra prep session for the whole year group on Friday evenings. DT have been running 'catch up' sessions on Saturday afternoons and at lunchtime and Mr Thomas and Mrs Davis have introduced a general 'catch up' session on Saturday for those Year 11s who are behind in their work. Mrs Anstice has produced a Countdown Calendar for Year 11, containing all the key deadlines, catch up sessions and information about exam times, which is being sent home to Year 11 for the holiday, along with a pack of revision material. As many parents keep reminding their sons, this is a crucial time and the next few weeks will be 'make or break' for the Class of 2014. We wish them every success, with a gentle reminder to revise this holiday...

Important Date for Parents of Year 11

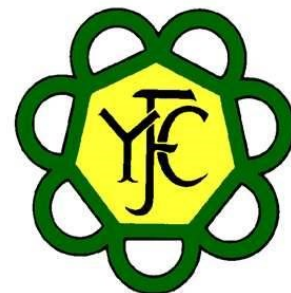
On Saturday 29th March, from 10.00 am until 11.20 am Mrs Davis, Mrs Anstice and Mr Ashton will be running a 'parents' session for parents of Year 11, in which they will go through the exam papers, explain how the questions are assessed and give you all the tools you need to support your son over the Easter holiday. We strongly urge you to attend if at all possible. It has made a huge difference in the past!

News from the Learning Resources Centre (Miss Bradford)

College Applications - Please could Year 11 parents ask your son to let me know in the LRC, when they are applying for a college place, so that I can get the school references prepared before they are called for interview.

Overdue library books - Please could you encourage your son to return any Library books he may have, to the LRC. A recent return had been out since 2011, not a record but pretty close!

Brymore Young Farmers - we have had three excellent speakers this half term, who delivered lectures on the subjects of Wild Fowling, as well as sheepdogs and sheep-dog training and refereeing. Boys have learned about the importance of discipline and respect and have enjoyed fridge cake making with Mr Oliver. Coming up next half term, we look forward to hearing about Farming and Managing Deer and Community Policing.



Sainsbury's School Vouchers

Once again, we are collecting Sainsbury's 'Active Schools' vouchers to purchase PE equipment. If you do pick any up whilst doing your shopping, please place them in the box in Reception.

Pistol Shooting (Mr Coll)

On 26 February and 5 March 2014 we have Commonwealth medallist and Olympic pistol shooter, Georgina Geike, coming in to talk to the boys and show them some techniques. We have had 36 boys sign up for the training and with any luck it may spark a competitive interest in one of them, that may produce a future Olympian!

Old Trainers (Mr Williams)

Should you have any spare trainers you no longer need then the PE department can always use them for boys who have lost theirs. Please send any in with your son. Thank you in advance.

Message from Matron

A reminder to all parents and boys that aerosols are not allowed in school

Workplace Challenge

Some members of staff have signed up for the Workplace Challenge. The aim of the programme is to promote sport, physical activity and health improvements across England's workplaces. We have 15 people signed up across all departments and have racked up more 'activity points' than any other workplace in Somerset. Staff have really taken to the challenge and upped their activity levels with some very competitive front runners in the guise of Mr Williams and Ms Rundle. We are hoping to harness this competitive nature and motivation to get staff active by holding a 'Walk away from the Easter eggs' challenge before the Easter break. Staff can log the number of steps taken per day with a free pedometer, courtesy of the local Healthy Workplaces scheme.

Online Rugby Qualification (Mr Williams)

IRB Passport is your gateway to the training and education web sites provided by the International Rugby Board. Registering for an IRB Passport gets you access to online accreditation on a range of topics from Law education to physical preparation. It is completed totally online and it allows you to print a certificate on completion with the following courses available: law of the rugby game, strength & conditioning, keep rugby onside, player welfare, rugby ready, keep rugby clean, officiating and coaching.

This is open to everyone. However, everyone undertaking GCSE PE is encouraged to do this.

The website for registration and completion is: www.irbpassport.com

RC Car Racing (Mr Simmons)

Joining the likes of Ayrton Senna and Lewis Hamilton is not something everyone gets a chance to do, and whilst Formula 1 might seem a world away, competitive motorsport on a somewhat smaller scale has been taking place at Brymore.

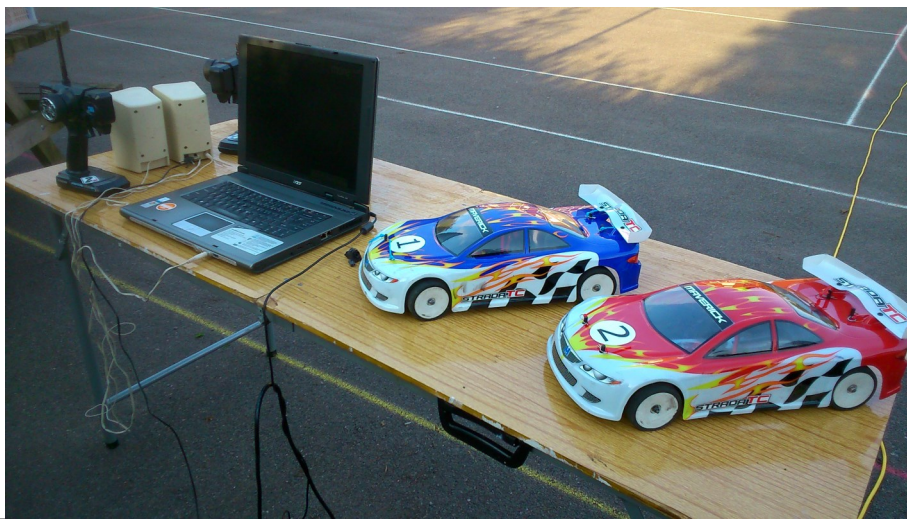
Using tenth scale model touring cars and a computerised timing system, 'would be' racing drivers have been able to go 'head to head', hoping to become the fastest driver overall. Drivers race to complete as many laps as possible in 3 minutes, and have three runs to do so. At the end of the heats drivers are ranked fastest to slowest and awarded points accordingly. This adds up to a five race league in which drivers' best three rounds count.

This has resulted in some very close racing in our first championship. In the final heat, Tom Watts and Sam Gee were separated by one point and less than two seconds. Whilst the overall victory went to Sam, it had been a tough battle, with Tom proving to be a challenging adversary.

The second championship has been dominated by Aaron Saunders, whose smooth driving style and unflappable nature saw him running heat after heat of almost perfect runs. Whilst not adverse to giving his opponents a little nudge to make his presence felt, his clean runs were unassailable, with no-one coming close to matching his pace.

In the first half of the Spring term, eight more drivers have taken up the mantle and so far racing has been close, with no individual driver being able to forge ahead. The newcomers are improving quickly and the returning racers may not be able to rely on their experience to stay ahead.

Whilst they may only be miniature versions of full sized racing cars, the competitive nature shown by the Brymore boys has in no way been scaled back and judging by the smiles, the fun is full sized as well.



Year 12 Dramatic success! (Mrs Davis)

Mr Willcocks, Mr Thomas and Mrs Davis were delighted to see Harry Orr give a tremendous performance as Kenneth, who discovers a dark secret from his past, in his student production of 'A Night on the Tiles'. He performed alongside fellow AS students at the Bridgwater College studio theatre. Each group had been asked to reduce a play, whilst retaining its continuity and each actor was permitted no more than six minutes performance time. Students had chosen a range of plays from different genres, including Pinter's 'The Caretaker', 'The House of Barnarda Alba' and 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. Despite suffering the last minute departure of one of their cast members, Harry's group offered a convincing and moving adaptation of their play, which culminated in Harry alone, on stage, holding the audience tension with an expression of anguish.

Excellent work and a pleasure to watch!



Sports Report (Mr Spridgens)

In spite of the recent spell of continuously wet weather the sports department has, carried on regardless. No lessons or activities were cancelled due to the weather. This is a tribute to the 'can do' attitude of the boys and staff in those areas. Many thanks to all. Unfortunately, several competitive matches including the Taylor -v- Walker House Rugby match had to be postponed. Any fixtures that have been postponed have been rearranged for after the half-term break.

Rugby

The Year 11 team are scheduled to play Haygrove in the Area Cup Final at North Petherton Rugby Club on 12 March 2014. Kick off is at 5.30 pm. Year 10 have some work to do to improve the position of their team, which is currently low in numbers, as more boys need to keep up with the training commitment required. It is this training which is at the heart of Brymore's success. The Year 9 team continues to make steady progress, though they also need to pick up on the training requirements for future success.

Cross Country

A group of boys recently represented the school in the Area Cross Country in early January. They qualified to represent Sedgemoor in the County Schools Cross Country held recently. Individual results for the latter are available on the Somerset schools athletics website.



Hockey

Hockey is becoming a more popular after school activity, thanks to the enthusiasm of Mr Williams, who holds a practice every Friday after school. All are welcome to attend. Mr Winter also assists by running hockey on a Saturday afternoon.

Chads Hill

Over 75% of the boys in the school attempt the chads hill run on a regular basis. Certificates are awarded for the number completed and a regular list is published of boys' personal bests. Parents are invited to run the Chads Hill run on 29 March 2014 at 11.30 am, just after the Year 11 English and Maths Focus morning.

Fitness

All boys are expected to attend the evening fitness sessions on a regular basis. While boarders recognise this as an intrinsic part of the Brymore routine, it is just as important, if not more so for out-boarders to commit to an evening a week of fitness. We believe there should be no delineation between out-boarders and boarders. Each boy who enters the school does so knowing the level of commitment expected of him in this area. Therefore, I would encourage parents of out-boarders to ensure their son takes part. Those who do not, are missing an essential part of the Brymore experience.

May I take this opportunity to thank parents who support the end of term sports activities, especially those held on a Saturday. In the past, parents have requested that these fixtures are held on the last days of half-term/term, so they could see their sons participate in such events. With this in mind, please be aware that when requests are made for boys to leave early this affects all teams in those competitions. I would encourage parents to avoid this if at all possible.



Ski Trip (Mr Ball)

Twenty three boys, Mr and Mrs Ball and Mr Ashton departed from Gatwick for the Italian mountains in Bormio at the start of the Christmas holidays, looking forward to the annual Brymore ski trip.

The trip was hailed as a huge success with boys having more than 5 hours of skiing a day. Thanks to excellent instructors, every boy improved by the end of the holiday. They also participated in après ski activities such as swimming and ice skating. A particular highlight was the pizza night (the large 'all girls' group at the same restaurant may have added excitement to this occasion!) The ultimate adventure for most was trying out the men's downhill black run that was also featured on the TV programme 'Ski Sunday'. This challenge was a test of the skills the boys had learnt and gave them a chance to put their learning into practice.



Prizes were given out routinely but an eventual 'Best Brymore Skier' award was given to Ed Templeman, as the boy who had not only shown skill on the slopes, but taken the whole trip as an experience and made the most of it. Elliott Reed was also awarded the 'Expert Skier' award thanks to his prowess on the slopes.



Many thanks to all the boys who made the trip enjoyable and also to the staff that accompanied them. This year we are looking to go to the 'Milky Way' of resorts in the Sauze d'Oulx in Italy during the first week of the holidays and we are hoping that the trip will cost no more than £880 per person. However, we do need a minimum of 16 passengers for this. Should your son be interested, please contact the school to get your son's name on the list as spaces do tend to fill up quickly for this popular trip - this includes any new students who will be starting in September 2014.

Gap Tutors

Many will remember last year's Gap Tutors, Mr Pannam, Mr Peatfield and Mr Truebody with great fondness. They proved what a huge and significant impact students from abroad can have on the Brymore experience. With this in mind, we have been delighted to welcome our new Gap Tutors who come from all over the Commonwealth. The group consists of two Australians, one New Zealander and a South African. We hope that the continuous down-pouring of rain since they arrived isn't going to put them off. Despite this, they have thrown themselves into Brymore life with gusto and have been quick to settle in with boys and staff alike. Mr Harnwell, Mr Cooper, Mr Lee and Mr Heels will be with us until the end of the year and we hope that you will make them feel welcome within the Brymore family.



Somerset Cross Country Final (by student Charlie Herbert)

On a very cold and wintery 1st February, eight runners supported by Miss Bradford and Charlie Herbert set off on an important journey to Aldon Hill, in Yeovil for the annual Somerset Schools Cross Country Championships. These boys had worked hard at the Bridgwater Area Schools Trials and had therefore secured themselves places on the Sedgemoor Schools Cross Country Team at this wonderful event.



En route to the event the boys were nervous but excited about what to expect as this was the first time competing in such a large event for some of the boys. However, on arrival with a bus full of now eager participants, the disruption being caused by the weather got the better of us as our bus struggled to get any grip on the wet ground beneath us, leaving Miss Bradford struggling to spin our way out.

Soon it was time for Harry Orr to start his senior boy's race. Once prepared, he headed over to await the noise of the gun. BANG!off he went with a good start, sticking with the lead group, leaving us anticipating a good result. Unfortunately, breathing problems from running into the harsh wind prevented him from completing the race.

Now we had to await the intermediate boy's race with the hope of Daniel Holter-Hovind, Will Foale, Harvey Sellman and Will Sully all doing well to gain places running for the county at the next stage of the competition. They warmed up doing various stretches and pulse raisers. The time had come to show the spectators what they could do. All four started well, keeping with the middle of the main group. As they approached the start line for the second lap of their 5,350 metre course across challenging terrain all boys were still putting their full effort in, even though they had started to fall back in the group. They then approached the valley of the course, with a steep incline, for the final time. After this incline they evened out onto the home straight and they started pumping their legs for their finishing sprints which could be position deciders. After finishing



the boys were tired from the challenging course but were all happy with their positions when they looked at the tough competition they were up against. Will Foale did the best out of the Brymore boys for his race finishing 30th, with an astonishing time of 23:06, closely followed by Daniel Holter-Hovind who came 34th with a time of 24:36, Will Sully with a position of 36th and time of 25:38 and last but not least Harvey Sellman who came 37th with 26:03.

With the intermediate boys resting and having a well deserved drink, the junior boys, who had been warmed up during the previous race, stepped up to the line. The three Brymore boys

(Sol Perry, Huw Scott and Harry Taylor-Page) were all eager but nervous as this was to be their first sporting event representing Brymore and especially the Sedgemoor schools cross country team. They started well for their slightly shorter course of 3,720 metres across similarly testing terrain. These boys ran very well for their first time at a county event, supported by parents, Miss Bradford, Charlie Herbert and the boys who had run previously. They came charging into the finish with impressive positions and times. Harry took 37th place with a time of 16:41; 38th place and a time of 16:47 went to Huw Scott, and finally for Brymore, Sol Perry achieved 44th place and a time of 17:34. In the junior boy's race these three boys secured some well deserved positions and times. All boys on the day carried on right through till the end with all their strength and energy and showed the true Brymore spirit of resilience, team work, confidence and strength. Miss Bradford was left to enjoy a quiet journey back to school as a couple of the runners had dozed off to sleep. Many thanks to all the parents who came and to Miss Bradford for driving the minibuss.



Horticulture (Mr Willcocks)

Recently a quiz was held in the Friendly Spirit Inn in Cannington. The proceeds were destined for the Horticulture department and the event was organised by Mrs Richards. It was well attended by staff and the public and over £150 was raised.

Meanwhile, back at Brymore, the banana plant in the greenhouse is producing a flower, about which we are all very excited. The plant is three years old and this is the first time that it has flowered. It is well worth a look if you've never seen one before.

We are now looking forward to the task of interviewing and selecting our new HoDs for next year. Year 10s will have the opportunity to apply for these coveted positions and they will need to complete an application form which they can collect from the department. We are hoping to appoint by Easter, if not before.

Please can all parents be aware and remind their sons that all boys must wear steel toe capped boots with overalls and require warm clothing to go under this. Sadly, school uniform is not appropriate especially in this weather. In addition the boys need a full set of waterproof wet weather clothing and gloves. Our Horticulture lessons continue, no matter what the weather.

We have plants for sale! A range of bulbs, pots, shrubs, herbs and indoor plants and we hold a plant sale at the end of every half term. If you cannot make the plant sale or wish something specific then please contact us via the school and we can always organise something to your requirements.



Farm News

We have been busy on the farm with the boys dagging the ewes ready for lambing which begins during the half-term and continues when the boys return and into March. It is always an exciting time especially for the boys who get to witness lambing and bottle feeding of any orphans first hand.

Some of the Year 9 boys got to visit the edge of the flooded Somerset Levels with Mr Williams and see the impact this would have on the farmland around it. We have had to bring all our sheep inside as the fields are sopping wet and our hearts go out to the farmers on the Somerset Levels who are suffering on a much greater scale.

We have also been doing cheese making with boys which has been thoroughly enjoyable and Year 10 boys have been visiting Mr Jones' farm near Stogursey to see robotic milking at work. We have a number of pigs and beef cattle off to market - with all the cattle passing their compulsory pre-movement TB testing.

Adrian recently lost his nose ring. It is a complete mystery to us how this happened as there were no signs of injury but replacing this was a real test of strength to the farm team and the vet as Adrian was not a happy bull having it replaced!



Brymore Lottery

Cheques will be in the post to these lucky people.

£40.00 J A Hill

£25.00 Mrs M Herbert

£15.00 Mr I Rook

FOBSA

Just a reminder that the Chair of FOBSA is Andree Chandler and they are always looking at new ways to raise money and are always on the lookout for parents to join. Should you be interested or just wish to know more then please contact Andree on: 07754 545677 or andree2058@gmail.com

Work Experience - urgent (Miss Bradford)

30 June - 4 July 2014. There are still some year 10s who have yet to submit their work experience forms to Miss Bradford; if you are based in Somerset there is a website Miss Bradford can use to locate a possible placement. Outside of county, she will do her best to help find a placement for any boy who goes to see her.

Your son is expected to contact the placement himself by letter, email or phone call and to send in the Work Placement form to the provider. There is a cost to school for each placement and for some the closer to the deadline, the more the cost will increase, so it is crucial to act fast and avoid disappointment or expense. Good luck.

Paper Aeroplane Competition

We recently held the annual paper aeroplane competition.

David Lukins was crowned student champion, followed by Jordan Hobbs and Harry Hanse.



Important Information for Parents regarding Pupil Absence

Firm commitment is at the core of Brymore's ethos and we recognise the importance of attendance in shaping boys' self esteem, their academic success and their social wellbeing. The latest government directive to all schools is that absences should **only** be authorised in **truly exceptional** circumstances. This does not include holidays during term-time or family commitments at weekends. We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents not to take their sons out of school on a Saturday, particularly at the ends of terms, when there are house events which rely on pupil and parent support. Saturday is a working day for the boys and us. We are committed to following DfE Statutory Guidelines and Legal Processes and parents must be aware that **penalty notices will be issued** to those with a significant number of unauthorised absences. We appreciate your support as parents in ensuring that your son rarely misses school.

Upcoming dates for the diary - Spring Term 2014

w/c 10 February		Year 12 Students - Residential Trip week, with Bridgwater College
Friday 14 February	4.00 pm	Year 12 term ends. Depart from Brymore.
Sunday 23 February	Evening	Year 12 boarders return
Monday 24 February	All day 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm 6.00 pm - 9.00 pm	Year 12 Bridgwater College begins Year 10 Parent Consultation Year 9 & 11 Boarders return
Tuesday 25 February	8.30 am	Out-boarders return
Saturday 29 March	10.00 am - 11.20 am 11.30 am 2.15 pm 4.00 pm	Raising Achievement in Maths & English for Parents of Year 11 Parents Chads Hill Run/Walk Rugby & Hockey House Finals Boys depart