

# Brymore

experience to last a lifetime



## Newsletter February 2015

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### Message from the Headteacher - Mr Mark Thomas

When I first raised concerns with the government, over two years ago, about the removal of agriculture and horticulture from the league tables, their actual publication seemed a long way off. At the time it seemed the right thing to do, standing up for the land based industry which is so important to this country, and standing up for Brymore, and what we stand for. However I cannot deny it was with some nervousness that I decided to take a stand and ensure we carried on teaching both subjects at Brymore, regardless of what the league tables say. The league tables have now been published for the first time since agriculture and horticulture have been removed. The effect on the position of Brymore is obvious, but not as drastic as I feared.

The key measure that I look for (as do Ofsted) is the value added measure, which basically takes the best eight subjects, including English and maths, and compares how well each boy does compared to where they started as an eleven year old - in other words how much progress they have made across a range of subjects. This year Brymore is ranked in the top 43% of schools in the country, which Ofsted would normally describe as good. However, this is without agriculture and horticulture, two of our highest achieving subjects. Put them back in and we are ranked in the top 5% of schools in the country. In real numbers, our value added score jumps from 1006.2 to 1052.1; the effect is clear. The reason the results are good even without agriculture and horticulture is because the boys have done so well in their other subjects as well. The progress results for both English and maths place both departments in the top 15% nationally. In design and technology boys at Brymore achieve, on average, a grade and a half higher than they would at other schools. In other words boys getting a solid 'D' grade elsewhere, would get a 'B' at Brymore.

What makes this more remarkable, is that last year's Year 11 were the least able cohort of boys we have ever had when they joined us, being ranked in the bottom 3% nationally on entry. From the bottom 3% to top 5% in three years, now that is progress! However what is more important to me, is that this was achieved whilst still placing a huge emphasis on the development of the boy as a whole, with farm and garden duties, sporting commitments and participation in a huge range of activities still continuing. Boys are expected to show real responsibility at Brymore, helping run the school on a daily basis, and representing it with pride at many events. With over 170 different activities put on last year, and more planned this year, the personal development of the boys will continue to be our priority, alongside their academic progress. I remain convinced that it is possible to do both.

Have a good break.

## Cross Country

At the beginning of January Mr Williams took a group of 14 boys from all year groups to the Sedgemoor Area Cross Country finals in Bridgwater. All performed really well, with Will Jarman winning the Year 8 & 9 boys race by more than 20 seconds. From this group, 12 of the 14 boys were eligible to go forward to the County Finals in Yeovil on 31st January; they were: Nick Payne, Ryan Foster, Will Jarman, Ryu Perry, Jack Thompson, Toby House, Harry Taylor-Page, Daniel Holter-Hovind, George Watts, Joe Parkman and Huw Scott. Ben Coggan and Harry Meade were on the reserve list.



The boys who travelled to Yeovil tried hard against fierce competition but nobody managed to secure a top-ten spot which would have seen them represent Somerset. A great learning curve for the younger boys who now know what they need to do next year!

## Forest School (Mr Ball)

The Year 7s and I have been heading up to the woods to take part in Forest School. We have worked with the natural world around us, which included some very impressive den-building. The boys drank hot chocolate and put their team working skills to good use. The feedback from the boys is that they really enjoy their Forest School time. Certainly, I enjoy running it with them.



## Young Farmers Club (Miss Bradford)

The club has once again been very lucky with speakers this half term, coming out on cold dark nights, sometimes from another county to spend an hour with us; we are a very lucky group.

Our speakers' subjects have been very interesting and have ranged from 'Working aboard Cruise Liners' to 'Pest Control,' from 'Deer Management' and 'Bee Keeping' to a General Knowledge Quiz, which was thrown in for good measure; the year 7 team were beaten by 1 point by the year 10 team. Well done year 7.

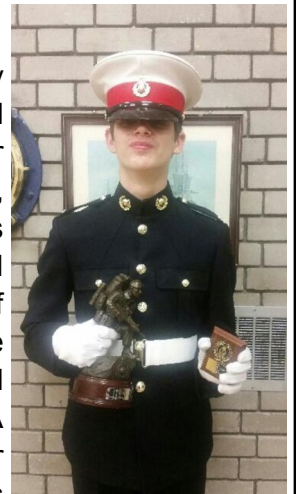


Three boys entered the Somerset Region Junior Reading Competition and came a creditable second to last year's National Winners. Well done to Brooks Carey, Ed Loder and team leader Matt Ranson. Matt is already planning to gather a team for next year at Intermediate level, whilst hoping to encourage another Junior Team.

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## Student Pride

We were all very pleased to be told that one of our Year 10 boys, James Beilby, was awarded the Royal Marine Cadet of the Year for the Bridgwater Royal Marine Cadets. A true honour for James and his family and we are really proud of him. If your son does something exceptional or has achieved anything, then please do keep us informed.



### **IT Software (Mrs Porter)**

Some parents have been asking where they can buy software for their son's laptop. Brymore is registered with a website called [www.software4students.co.uk](http://www.software4students.co.uk). Here, you may find the software cheaper than from a shop.

### **Work Experience (Miss Bradford)**

Any Year 10 student experiencing difficulty in obtaining a placement or any student who has the paperwork for their placement but has not yet handed it in - please see Miss Bradford in the LRC.

### **Students Remote Access (Mrs Porter)**

Students at Brymore have the ability to logon to the remote desktop from home, meaning any work they have saved at school can be accessed when on holiday or at weekends, along with any resources on the system for them.

All boys have a logon and have received an email with the link for the remote desktop so that they can install this on a home computer or laptop. Should any parents wish to clarify this further, then please contact the school.

### **Horticulture (Mr Willcocks)**

Work continues in the Horti department, despite the good old British weather.

Nearly all our potted plants have been weeded and top dressed. Meanwhile, pruning of the soft fruit has been completed. In addition, a lot of the top fruit (apples and pears) and the remaining walled fruit trees have almost been finished. This term we have also taken two groups of boys to Monkton Elm Garden Centre near Taunton. Here, we learned where the plants they sell are raised and found out about the laws surrounding importing and transporting plants; in addition the Year 9s heard about some of the many job opportunities in Horticulture.



Many of the flower beds have been weeded and mulched with bark chips. Meanwhile, Year 11 have taken a selection of hardwood cuttings and a lot of bramble clearing has happened, thanks to Years 7 and 9, especially in garden duties.

Duties are important to help us keep the department tidy and in a state acceptable for health and safety. It is vital that everyone brings back warm old clothes, wet weather clothes, overalls of the appropriate colour for the boys' year and steel toe capped boots.

We have received applications for the position of Garden Head of Department (HoD) from twenty five Year 10 boys, who were interviewed by the Horticulture team. The new HoDs will be given trial places after the half term break. We are very grateful to those Year 11 HoDs, who are now standing down, for the time they have given up to help us and for all their support over the last year. Next half term we will be very busy with seed sowing, pricking out and potting on annual plants and we will be preparing to plant up summer hanging baskets. Therefore, if you would like to order yours, please contact the Horticulture Department. We have also begun to grow the plants which we hope will produce cut flowers in the summer and we hope to have a large selection available for summer weddings and other similar events. Should you wish to know more about this, please contact Mrs Stanley.



The trolley has continued to be out every Saturday with fresh leeks, onions, potted plants, logs and cider vinegar for sale. It is always good to see all those parents who have supported us through purchasing from the trolley.

We still have a large selection of flowering hellebores, viburnum tinus, jasmine and other shrubs for sale and now we have fresh salad leaves.

Sadly, our polytunnel and a wooden garden store shed fell foul of the high winds and we are now awaiting a warm, still day so that we can re-cover the poly tunnel. Sadly, the shed needs replacing completely and we are looking at how best to do this.

### Author Visit (Mrs Taylor-Lane)

The Year 7 boys were treated to a visit by local author Beth Webb, who regaled them with spooky tales and told them about her life as an author. The boys were really engaged by her talk and hopefully they will be inspired to read widely, thanks to her input.



### Boccia Tournament (Mrs Jones)

Wednesday 28th January saw a team of nine Brymore Boccia players set off to the Blackbrook Leisure Centre in Taunton to compete in the Somerset Parallel Games. The three teams consisted of some veteran and novice players but all participated to an extremely high standard. In the first round playoffs our teams came 1st, 2nd and 3rd in their individual group rounds and as the day went on our boys were still competing right through to the final play offs, finishing fourth out of 16 - only a few points away from medal positions.

Well done boys. You did us proud!

### Farm News

We passed our FABBL inspection this half term. This is the Red Tractor Farm Assurance seal of approval and is necessary to be able to sell our milk to Dairy Crest and our beef and lambs to market.

Eleven beef cattle passed their pre-movement TB test this week, enabling us to sell them. Five were sent to the market at Sedgemoor Auction Centre on Saturday, where the market report shows that we had the top price for a 'Native Heifer' with one of the Beef Shorthorn crosses from our bull Adrian.

Our hens are laying well and our delicious eggs are for sale either at the Lodge at the end of the drive or from the farm.

Twenty fertile eggs from our Light Sussex hens were set in the incubator to hatch out for the Year 7 practical lesson last week. Students were able to watch this quick development by 'candling', shining a powerful light through the egg and it has been possible to see the developing chick moving inside and even to see the heartbeat. Eighteen hatched and of these, thirteen were female (pullets). Year 7s will be weighing them weekly to monitor their growth. These pullets will be reared for egg production.



The ewes are about four weeks away from lambing. The ewe lambs have been given their first dose of 'Heptavac P plus' vaccine. This builds their immunity to the diseases on the farm and they will pass the immunity on to their unborn lambs. The main flock will have their booster dose in mid-February.



We sold 16 lambs at Sedgemoor Auction Centre on the last Monday of term and these were also mentioned in the market reports. Our pigs have all been moved inside while the ground is wet and cold. The Large White X Landrace boar, Max, has settled in well, proving to be very docile and easy to handle. A couple of our sows have been scanned and are pregnant to our older British Lop Boar, Mr P.

## Sports Report (Mr Spridgens)

### Cross Country

As a result of the area Cross Country Championships, mentioned in an earlier part of this newsletter, held in Bridgwater in early January, twelve boys were selected to represent Sedgemoor in the County Schools Championships in Yeovil. Aply led by the captain George Watts they found themselves up against very strong opposition and in the three age groups our highest placed finisher was Ryu Perry who was 17<sup>th</sup> in the Year 9 category. Thanks again to Miss Bradford for giving up her time to transport the boys to Yeovil.



### Hockey

Hockey practice for all year groups takes place on the MUGA every Monday with Mr Sawyer running this activity. Our numbers are on the increase and because of this more matches are taking place against other schools.

### Rugby

All four teams continue to make good progress with the Year 9 team in particular showing very good potential for the future. Members of staff responsible for running these teams include Mr Coll, Mr Williams and Mr Watts, with Miss Bradford also assisting with transport arrangements.

### Chads

The new road has yet to have an impact on the Chads Hill run and therefore it still remains a popular activity. Several boys have run well over 30 already in this academic year. This activity can only take place with the support of staff helping out, which includes Miss Rundle and several staff already mentioned, along with the new Gap Tutors. Disappointingly, at the lower end of the school in year 9 some boys have opted out of this activity and I would urge you to encourage your son to challenge himself, as this is a big part of Brymore life.

### House Competitions

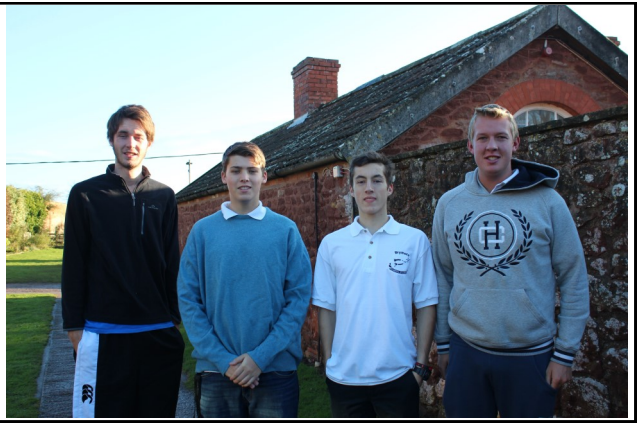
Throughout this term the house rugby and house hockey competitions are taking place. As a result of requests from parents in the past, these competitions were scheduled for Saturday afternoons, in particular when the school broke up for the holidays. The boys who select the teams for these competitions are finding it difficult to put out their strongest combinations, due to exeat requests from parents for early departure for ease of travel or other such requests. Please try to avoid this if you know your son is needed for a match.



Generally, with the help of the above mentioned staff and others, the sports department is in good health at the moment. Nevertheless, it is always important to remind boys that they need to show maximum commitment at all times and those who have not done so this term, need to come back refreshed and determined after the half term break.

## New Gaps!

We have been joined this term by our Gap Tutors from the Southern Hemisphere. The Brymore boys have extended a warm welcome to Duncan Whittaker (Australia), Sam Crow (Australia), Ben Wood (Australia) and Liam Chellew (South Africa) and the new Gaps seem to have made a good start in the boarding houses. They have lots of plans to travel during the school holidays and will be with us until December 2015 so please, if you see them say 'Hello!'



## World Book Day (Mrs Taylor-Lane)

On Thursday 5th March, we are holding a Readathon for World Book Day for boys in Years 7 and 9.



At Brymore, we value reading, for the pleasure it brings and the difference it makes to boys' achievement. We are looking to encourage boys to read as much as they can within the 24 hour period of World Book Day. Students will be encouraged during lessons to read, for at least 10 minutes on this day in each subject, and to record their totals. In addition, time spent in the boarding house will be dedicated to reading. We are hoping that this can be a sponsored event and will be looking for your son to collect his sponsorship form, which will be coming out during the half term break.

## Day in the Life of a Brymore Boy (Ms Warren)

Recently, we made a film called 'A Day in the Life of a Brymore Boy', which was shown within the Bridgwater College Academy Trust. It is now featured on the homepage of our website. We have tried to capture what



makes Brymore unique, whilst showcasing how much boys can get out of the school and outlining the dedication needed to be a Brymore boy. The video follows one day for one of our boys, from beginning duties first thing in the morning, through daytime lessons to fitness in the evening. My respect goes to all the boys. Having now spent the time filming them I can genuinely say that it is a long and tiring day! I would like to offer my grateful thanks to all the boys who allowed us to film them and especially to Bertie for agreeing to be the main protagonist.

## FOBSA (Ms Warren)

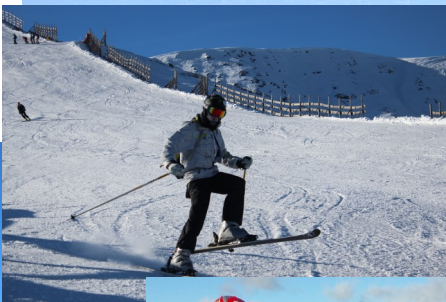
Following the recent AGM, FOBSA has had a change of personnel. The Chair of the Committee is Julia Birchall-Mann. Meanwhile, Delia Brandwood remains Secretary, while Michelle Harris will continue in her role as Treasurer.

FOBSA provide the school with support during big events such as Open Day and Sports Day by selling refreshments and thus raising money that they can donate back into the school. Without the help of other parents the committee will become overstretched, so if anyone wishes to join or help out during event days then please contact Julia via email [fobsachair@hotmail.com](mailto:fobsachair@hotmail.com)

Brymore would like to take this opportunity to thank Andree Chandler, who stepped down as previous Chair of the Committee and who has been a loyal and hardworking member of the Committee for a number of years.

## Ski Trip (Mr Ball)

The annual ski trip took over 30 boys to Sauze D' Oulx in Italy. We woke up on the first morning to discover that we had received ample amounts of snow overnight. Thus, we hit the slopes full of excitement and determination. The boys were a pleasure to take away and the more advanced skiers showed some real skill, while the beginner's group showed exceptional levels of improvement. Archie Rich was crowned 'supreme champion' (expert skier!) of the trip so a big 'well done' to him and a huge thank you to Mr Austin, Mrs Ball, Mr and Mrs Ashton who helped. We would also like to thank the boys for creating a memorable, fun trip.



Plans for this year are well under way and letters have already been sent out!

## Bike Track Sponsorship

We recently managed to secure sponsorship from EDF for some 'top of the range' bike lights. The bike track is well used by boys but in the winter months we found that time was limited because of the fading light. Now we have been able to purchase sets of lights to fit onto the bikes so that boys can use the track more frequently. This term Steve Pettitt, Operations Manager at EDF Hinkley Point, came in to see the lights in action. We would like to thank EDF and also Gary Perrett for his direction in helping us secure the funding.



## Brymore Lottery

1st - £40 J Wilson

2nd - £25 Zoe Ball

3rd - £15 Mrs Wright

### **Your views matter: Parent View for Ofsted**

As you may know, Brymore is now in its fifth term as an academy. According to the Ofsted Framework, we can therefore expect an Ofsted inspection in the next five weeks. We are very much hoping that inspectors will see how hard we have worked to raise standards and to ensure that every Brymore boy receives the best education we can offer him, in all aspects of his life here. Every boy is entitled to the kind of academic challenge in the classroom which builds his ability to succeed. In the last four years we have widened the range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, whilst retaining the greatest of Brymore traditions such as Chads, 'fitness', Harvest Festival, Carol Service and so on. For so many of the boys here, Brymore is their 'home from home' and our pastoral care has focused on ensuring that boys support each other and know that they will be listened to. We may not always get it right but we do always strive to listen and to keep on improving. Hopefully, the upcoming inspection will identify the school's strengths and allow the boys and staff here to celebrate their pride in Brymore.

The school would not be what it is without the tremendous support of dedicated parents, who have made an active choice to send their son here. Ofsted takes the views of parents and students extremely seriously and your views will be taken into account as part of the inspection.

I am therefore encouraging you to offer your views on Parent View, so that you have a voice in the inspection process. As always, regardless of Ofsted, we value your opinion and we are so grateful to those who have supported us over the last few years - and to those parents who have already offered their support online.

**The web-site address is: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>**

Thank you.

<b>SPRING TERM</b>		
Monday 23 February INSET DAY	3.30 pm - 5.00 pm 6.00 pm - 9.00 pm	Year 10 Parent Consultation Years 7, 9, 11, 12 & 13 boarders return
Tuesday 24 February	8.30 am	All out-boarders return
Saturday 28 March	10.00 am 11.30 am 2.00 pm 4.00 pm	Year 11 Raising Achievement Sessions for Parents Parents Chads Hill Run/Walk Rugby & Hockey House Finals All students depart for Easter Holidays
<b>SUMMER TERM</b>		
Monday 13 April		Years 12 & 13 return
Monday 20 April INSET DAY	3.30 pm - 5.00 pm 6.00 pm - 9.00 pm	Year 9 Parent Consultation Years 7, 10 & 11 boarders return
Tuesday 21 April	8.30 am	All out-boarders return
Friday 1 May	12.30 pm 1.00 pm - 3.30 pm	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 depart for Bank Holiday weekend Year 7 Parent Consultation
Tuesday 5 May	6.00 pm - 9.00 pm	All boarders return
Wednesday 6 May	8.30 am	All out-boarders return
Saturday 23 May	11.30 am 1.30 pm 3.45 pm (approx.)	Years 11, 12/13 Leavers Service Sports Day All students depart for Summer half-term
Sunday 31 May	6.00 pm - 9.00 pm	All boarders return
Monday 1 June	8.30 am	All out-boarders return
Saturday 27 June	10.30 am - 5.00 pm	Open Day and Country Fair
29 June - 3 July		Work Experience Week (Year 10)
6-10 July		Activities Week
Saturday 11 July	10.30 am 12.00 pm	Swimming Gala All students depart for Summer holidays