

Brymore

experience to last a lifetime

Newsletter

February 2023

www.brymoreacademy.co.uk

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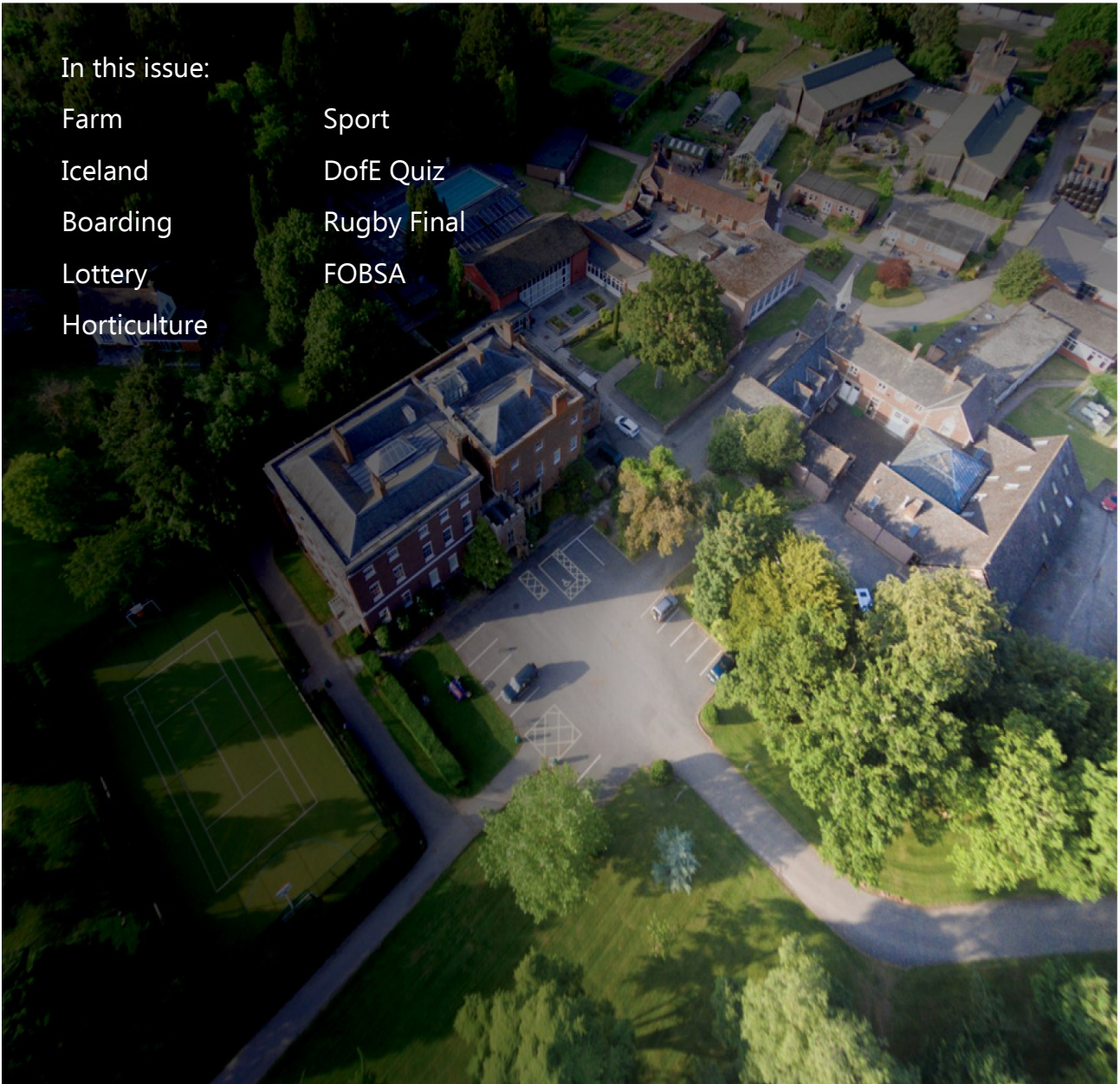
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Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents

I have written in newsletters before that February half term represents a unique point in the Brymore calendar. We are half way through the academic year and whilst we can reflect on many of the achievements so far, it is also a time to look forward, both to the rest of this year and next. We can now reflect officially on the success of the Year 11 class of 2022 whose GCSE results mean that they are one of the highest achieving year groups in the County. The current Year 11 have also started well, with many having passed their Land Based GCSE already and everyone who was entered for the Engineering GCSE achieved a pass, with 19 boys being awarded the highest grade possible. They still have their practical to complete, however they have done incredibly well so far.

Year 6 children across the country find out on 1st March which secondary school they will attend next year. As the parent of a Year 6 boy myself I am only too aware of how nerve racking this experience can be. Yet again we are massively over-subscribed with the prospect of more boys being unsuccessful in their application to Brymore, than those that will be successful. The relationship with the school for those that will be successful has already begun, with many boys already interviewed. We hope to see many on our lambing day and also at our Open Day in June.

At school we are also looking forward to the second half of the year. It was good to see many Year 11 parents at our recent raising achievement day as the preparation for exams begins in earnest. As already mentioned, we have our Lambing Day on 11th March, Open Day, Leaver's service, Sports Day, Swimming gala, Activities week, Parent's Chad's Hill run, work experience, house finals not to mention a packed activities program ensuring boys have a varied experience both during the evenings and at weekends. All of this takes considerable planning and I am forever grateful to all staff and FoBSA for their hard work in making this all happen every year.

Spring has sprung, bulbs have begun to emerge and it will not be long before the clocks move forward. Whilst I look forward to the second half of the academic year with optimism, I hope that you are all enjoying some downtime together as a family over half term. Thank you to Mrs Blake and Mr Ashton, who gave up some of their holiday to ensure boys were able to have an unforgettable experience in Poland last week. Thank you also to those staff who continue to work over half term, as Brymore never fully closes and it continues to look forward.

Enjoy the rest of your holiday.



Boarding

It's been a fantastic start to the new year, which can at times be a difficult time with dark cold mornings and evenings. The boys returned from the Christmas holidays full of energy and enthusiasm and got straight back into the swing of things, embracing the Brymore way. The boarding team also returned to work full of excitement for the term ahead. We are very pleased to welcome into our team a new member of staff who has been settling into his role. Mr Webber has begun as Reid House tutor (working predominantly on Sundays) and is relishing the opportunity to work closely with the full time boarders in Reid House to better their experience as boarders, offering and planning a wide range of activities; bringing his vast experience in the outdoor education and activities to Brymore. Boys will benefit from a growing list of activities to become available throughout the year, including caving, high ropes, hill scrambling, kayaking and expeditions.

This term sees our Year 11s studying even harder for their exams and coursework, given they are approaching the end of their time here at Brymore, and are now half way through their year 11! As we all remember, it is a demanding time of year and we are pleased to be supporting the boys in their pursuit for excellence across their subjects, so as to improve their chances of achieving all they wish for. The staff in boarding and across the school are putting in a great deal of time and effort to make this happen, but ultimately it is down to the boys themselves to sharpen focus and deliver their true potential and more. There is a fine balance between the correct amount of time and focus on study and the other activities and social time available, which boys this year seem to be getting the correct balance.

The Year 11 rugby team enjoyed their rugby final at North Petherton, with a great evening had by the team and supporters, who enjoyed a cold night out supporting the team. Other teams are still training hard for the rest of the season, completing their fitness,

Chads and training sessions. We hope their efforts will be rewarded with success.

Boys in boarding have continued to combine the pleasure of delicious snacks, in order to raise funds for their House Charities. Reid House has had a regular Thursday night snack evening and Miss Johnson has made cake and sausage rolls to sell, together with indulgent milkshakes which has made a significant contribution towards their funds raised. They also held a competition, which was open to all boarding houses, where boys were able to guess the number of sweets in a jar. Many boys took part and amazingly a Year 7 from Kemp was able to guess exactly right and won all the sweets as his prize!!! Next half term they plan to do a 'Wellie Wanging' activity in an effort to increase their funds for Yellow Wellies. School House has also held a tuck raffle and at the end of term they had a waffle night, with many boys signing up to have ice cream and waffles, together with toppings of sauces and fruit. This is popular with boys in all houses and will be extended to Lambing Day also. This will no doubt also be popular with members of the public and it is expected that there will be significant funds raised for the Farmers Community Network. Kemp House had a fabulous movie night where the snacks on offer were doughnuts, ice cream and chocolate sauce with an indulgent hot chocolate, squirty cream and flake crumbs sprinkled on top. They also extended the option for boys from Reid to have some and it was a positive evening with Forage Aid benefiting from the money they raised.

Next term there is talk of Mrs Webb doing a Chads run and boys guessing her time, whilst perhaps being sponsored to run with her or sponsoring her themselves. A current boarding total of over £1,200 and we are yet to reach the half way point of the year.



The house improvement teams have been busy making further improvements to the house environments with the purchasing of new mood lighting, in-house activities equipment and soft furnishings to continue to make the boarding houses as homely as possible. Kemp House boys have been continuing to offer a range of clubs and activities organised by the boys with a range of new equipment and supplies provided for Art club, stop go motion filming, junior farm machinery club and cheese and biscuits club becoming more and more popular.

Finally, we have just analysed the data from our safeguarding and behaviour survey. 98% of boys said they respect other boys and boarding staff. 99% said they knew what the consequences of poor behaviour were in their house. 96% felt that houseparents and other staff dealt well with poor behaviour. 95% agreed that the boarding staff have high expectations of their behaviour. 98% said they feel safe in their boarding house. In addition to this, 97% said they knew how to keep themselves safe and understood what unsafe situations were. Lastly, 98% said they knew how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Clearly the results are very good but we will address the need to further increase those statistics and therefore continue to strive towards maintaining a safe and positive environment here at Brymore.

As the icy mornings reduce and winter slowly ambles into spring, we wish you a lovely half term and I'm sure, along with all of us here at Brymore, wish all our boys a hugely successful term and 2023 beyond. (Mr Watts)

Brymore Lottery

You have to be in it to win it and every penny of profit goes back to the school. So, if you are not already a member please consider joining to support the school. For further information please email: lisa.nash@brymoreacademy.co.uk (Mrs Nash)

The winners for this half term are:

1st prize £40 : Mr W Payn

2nd prize £25 : Mr A Freeth

3rd prize £15 : Mrs E Hallett

Year 11 Rugby Final

Our Year 11 rugby squad played their hearts out at the area final against Haygrove this half term. A tough contest but one that could have gone either way. We were a few short due to injuries but even those hobbling on the pitch carried on to ensure we fought to the bitter end. We may have been defeated but the boys played with the hearts of lions. (Mr Williams)



Iceland 2022

The school trip to Iceland in October was an amazing trip, with a number of firsts to boot!

After our arrival at Keflavik Airport on Day One, boys were treated to several 'tasters' of what Iceland had to offer when we visited the Bridge Between the Continents, a small rift valley and Gunnuhver, a small geothermal area with hot springs and fumeroles. The sights, sounds and smells certainly woke the senses after a, not-quite, three hour flight... before we all had the chance to experience more lovely smells and tuck into the delicious food at Papa's Pizza in Grindavik. Here, Brymore boys certainly didn't let us down, with plenty being consumed; at one point I had feared for Iceland's supply of flour but, the restaurant staff were clearly used to school groups from abroad... so there was no need to worry. Fed and watered, we relaxed as we headed off to Husid, our accommodation. The opening highlights didn't end there either, as the Northern Lights put in an appearance, with a delightful green glow and streak across the night sky that lasted for about an hour or so... one of nature's amazing spectacles.

Day Two involved travelling along the south coast. Our first stop, just 15 minutes from the accommodation, was Stora Dimon, a 178m volcano summit poking out the top of a large flat gravel plain. With a slope of 45° ... we aimed to hike to the top... but as we arrived at the car park, we were treated to an Arctic Fox, a small, white and beautiful creature that gracefully arced and snaked its way up the slope as we approached. Having never seen one on all my previous visits, it certainly made the trip feel special... and it was only the start of Day Two! However, after a short, sharp tiring climb to the summit, the views from the top of Stora did not disappoint. Looking up the valley, Eyjafjallajokull, the infamous volcano that grounded aircraft in 2010, was spectacular and just a stones throw away... plus the views out to the coast were equally impressive with Heimaey island in the distance. We then set off to our first waterfall, Seljalandsfoss (the one you can walk behind). Boys were told they needed their waterproofs and it was sound advice. The spray was tremendous... and we got soaked... but it was well worth it. After a brief stop at the black basalt beach of Reynishverfi, we paused at the coastal town of Vik, where boys ate their lunch and explored the various gift shops on offer, before heading off to the highlight of the day... a three hour guided tour across Solheimajokull Glacier. With crampons on boots and ice-picks in hands, we were ready to attack the ice... and boys certainly did, chipping bits off and tasting the ice as they went (yes... they were allowed to do that... just ask them!). A penultimate stop on our journey back took in the huge Skogafoss waterfall, a thunderous 52m wall of water. After a busy day, everyone managed to relax in the local, outdoor, naturally heated swimming pool... which also boasted a sauna, several hot tubs and a water slide... amazing.

The following day we headed back towards the airport to walk through Raufarholshellir lava tunnel, left behind from an old eruption. Hard hats and caving lamps were needed, although the tunnel was lit in a way that showed off the beautiful colours and shapes on display. Next came shopping in Reykjavik, which many were looking forward too... and secretly so was I... looking forward to a café stop and drink. From Reykjavik, we tried a new attraction and visited the Hellisheidi Power Station, which gave boys a great insight into the geothermal activity beneath our feet. During the presentation, Henry Lawrence stood out; interested, engaged and answering most of the questions put to the group... an absolute star! Next, was the Lava Centre... another visitor attraction that took us on a journey through Iceland's volcanic past. Interactive displays and colourful visuals... along with the video presentation of various eruptions... left us in no-doubt how exciting and dynamic our location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean was. Could there be an eruption while we were in Iceland? (I was secretly hoping so... at a safe distance of course!)



Cont'd

Day Four and the 'Golden Circle'. This time we headed inland towards another geothermal area around the town of Reykholt. Our first treat was The Secret Lagoon, a naturally heated outdoor pool between 38 and 40°. Here we relaxed for almost an hour-and-a-half... taking in the beautiful surrounds without a care in the world. The natural algae and minerals felt like an expensive spa treatment on the skin. We then popped over to one of Iceland's geothermally powered greenhouses, which operates all-year-round. This one, Fridheimar, specialises in growing tomatoes...



and on arrival, we found the air filled with the lovely smell of tomatoes-on-the-vine. After a short talk, boys were able to sample some of the delights on offer... including tomato ice-cream! Unusual but certainly worth-a-try. From there, we travelled to one of Iceland's most famous waterfalls... Gullfoss, the Golden Falls. This enormous two-step waterfall cascades into a deep fissure, created by the earth's crust splitting apart, rather than a gorge. Here, we were able to observe the falls up-close, on the side of the upper step, with the water roaring down a 32m drop. Just five minutes away was our next stop at Geysir. Here, boys got a much better idea of Iceland's geothermal underbelly, with lots of fumeroles (steam vents), bubbling mud puddles and of course, Strokkur Geysir, that erupted a hot spout of water every eight minutes or so. We then hot-tailed across Thingvellir National Park to Thingvellir itself, a World Heritage Site and location of not just the point where the North American Plate moves away from the Eurasian Plate but, also the location of the world's first parliament in 930AD, where Viking chieftains would meet, discuss important matters and take back decisions to their villages, to enact, the following year. Boys were taken along the rift valley to Oxararfoss and then to the actual site of Iceland's original parliament, before heading back to Husid for tea.

Our last day had a tricky start with a stuck coach but, once that was freed, we were on our long journey home, but not ready to say goodbye to Iceland just yet. First stop was Kerid Crater and a walk around the crater rim in bracing conditions. After an invigorating quick trek, we headed off to Iceland's newest volcanic feature, Nathagi Valley, the site of a lava flow from May last year. While Iceland's landscape usually feels other-worldly... Nathagi Valley seemed totally alien, with its jet-black brittle lava flow, still leaking steam and gases trapped within it. Another first and a real treat to end the trip on. After our return flight and coach journey home, we finally got back to Brymore gone midnight, tired and exhausted... but satisfied it had all been worth it.

On a final note, boys were fantastic and were a real credit to themselves and the school. A special mention must be made about the following boys for their attitude, enthusiasm and leadership they displayed throughout the trip and, therefore, extend my extreme thanks and gratitude to... Fred Cudmore, Fletcher Hilton, Henry Lawrence, Toby Lee, Harry Raffill and Kieran Stott. Boys seemed to really enjoy the trip and hopefully felt they got their monies worth... as parents for supporting the trip. I would also like to personally thank Mr Austin, Mrs Franks and Ms Rogers for their invaluable support... and mirth, for making the trip so enjoyable.

However, the Iceland journey doesn't end there... the October 2024 trip has already been filled! New, more luxurious accommodation with twin ensuite rooms... plus a five-hour experience on top of the icecap in 4x4 jeeps... should make the next trip equally memorable. (Mr Sawyer)

DofE Quiz

The village of Cannington runs a quiz once a month in the Friendly Spirit and for January they chose the school to benefit from fundraising. We have re-launched the Duke of Edinburgh programme this year with nearly 30 boys signed up, so it felt worthy that the efforts should go towards equipment for this. Five boys, who are taking part, supported by selling raffle tickets on the night and interacting with the public to talk about their time as a Brymore boy. Oscar Warren talked on the microphone to the whole crowd to thank them and to impart information about the DofE programme and how important it was. (Ms Carter)



Horticulture

The wildlife pond in the walled garden is now lined, filled with water and we eagerly await the arrival of frogs for spawning. Year 9 have continued with the project and using the freshly coppiced hazel have constructed a safety barrier around the pond, ticking the health and safety boxes, but in an aesthetic pleasing and environmentally friendly way. The strip of porous membrane around the edge of the pond is doing a good job at killing off the grass underneath whilst a variety of carefully chosen plants have been planted through. We have also been able to use the woodchip from the apple tree pruning to fill gaps between the plants until they grow and fill the space themselves, creating hiding spaces for frogs, toad and newts. Boys have found it a richly rewarding project on which to work, albeit one that tested their patience, as to quote them directly 'it would have been quicker with a digger, Sir!'



As part of a Year 8 unit of work focusing on the importance and significance of composting, the walled garden now boasts an impressive set of five compost bays, 30 foot long with each bay measuring six by six feet. By filling the furthest right hand bay with all our garden waste, shredded paper from the office and a few helpful wheel barrows of fresh manure from the farm, students will be able to turn the mix from bay to bay and observe the bacterial process break the materials down. Once the compost reaches the further left hand bay, it will be ready for use in the grounds. Inspiration for the five bay unit came partly from the set up used by Charles Dowding, local compost king of Somerset, whose helpful YouTube video have greatly helped the boys to understand the process. A second composting system, but with an open fronted, deeper design, is planned for construction on the other side for the walled garden by the plant sale polytunnel. This is to maximise the amount of green 'waste' we produce and really make the most what is a great horticultural resource. As part of a unit of work celebrating our own Walled Garden and learning about its historical and horticultural importance,

Year 7 have been venturing across the Quantocks and paying a visit Triscombe. Triscombe Nurseries is a small independent plant nursery and the boys are given a tour by the owner, Stuart Parkman. At the time of writing, 7.1 and 7.2 have enjoyed their visit and 7.3 will have their trip following the half term break. The tour included details of how the walled garden would have been operated as a kitchen garden, serving the lord and lady (and their many visitors) back in the day, as well as an explanation of how his business has changed and adapted over the several decades, in which Stuart has run the nursery; from planting techniques, the need for peat free compost and the use of Gold Sebright bantams as a form of organic pest control. The students had the chance to explore the site's aspect, understanding the important role played by the south facing wall and the location of the greenhouses. They also got to see the 500 varieties of grafted fruit trees, in which the nursery now specialises. Three Morello Cherry trees were brought back and will be planted on the north facing wall in Brymore's walled garden as part of the unit. (Mr Naum)

Sports News

In rugby we have been lucky enough to have a few additional fixtures, whilst other schools are playing hockey or football, with more planned after half term. Year 9 played tremendously in the semi-final of the County Cup but sadly lost out to a stronger side. They do, however, still have the opportunity to play in the final of the area cup at the end of February and are an able squad with good depth of players. After half term we have our house rugby and house 7s matches for the boys to get stuck into.



As a result of Area Cross Country finals we had a number of boys head to the Country Trials, a special mention to Milo Mead, who just missed out on the County team this year but with more years ahead we look forward to seeing him and our other athletes improve. We have more athletic events to attend after half term, including two trophies to defend with the Mammoth and King's Cups. The Mammoth, a great looking trophy, is a team event and takes place on Saturday 25th February so team sheets have started to go up for boys to let parents know.

We have taken part in two softball indoor cricket tournaments with both the Under 13 and Under 15 teams taking part with all boys showing some promise that this cricket season in the summer could be a good one for them. We have a cricket coach coming in from the Somerset Cricket Foundation to work with Key Stage 3 students next half term and a table cricket tournament at the end of February.

The swimming pool is being switched on and will be heating up ready for Spring so that boys can begin getting back in it to practice before the gala at the end of the summer term.

Thanks to Mr Bailey for all his support this season on Friday activities as we move to house matches after half term and into summer sports and thanks to FOBSA for sponsoring the new artwork in the changing rooms as the boys are loving it. (Mr Williams)



FoBSA

At the time of writing, we've just had our Bingo on Friday night in the school hall. It was a great night, well attended, with fantastic prizes from local businesses and parents, whom we would like to thank wholeheartedly. Thanks to the team who have collected the business prizes and planned the bingo and raffle prizes. We have made around £600 profit which will support some of the various school departments who have sent some requests for funding. So far this year, we've supported the Maths department with some calculators and the PE department with some Wall Art for the changing rooms.

The new Committee, under Jo Walsh-Quantick as Chair, has assembled and we are grateful for any support we are receiving from any parents or extended family members. We have two dedicated ladies, Linda and Becky, who are looking after the uniforms for us and so far this year, their great work has raised £330. We have a lot of shirts in stock but are low on PE kits. As your boys are growing, please don't forget to ask what we have in stock, we can prepare parcels to be collected on Lambing Day or from Reception, and of course we are welcoming donations of outgrown items too.



Our next event is Lambing Day on 11th March. Again, your support would be really appreciated with tombola prizes (tins biscuits, sweets, books etc) and cakes. We are also planning a children's pedal tractor racetrack so will be grateful for any donation of tractors or lend for the day would be welcome. (Mrs Louis-Andre, Treasurer)

Farm

Despite the weather, we continue to be busy and productive on the farm.

In our dairy and beef enterprise, our calving has ended with the final three heifers calving last week, bringing our total to 15 beautiful calves.

Those three dairy shorthorn heifers have now joined our milking herd so adding to our milk quota, along with 2 lovely new dairy shorthorn fresh calvers that we have purchased. 'Brimclose Flower' and 'Kathleen'. Our milk continues to be sold to Barber's and goes into making their wonderfully tasty cheeses.

We have also bought in 10 Hereford X calves as a growing-on project for the Year 7 & 8's, who will closely monitor, weigh and record their progress in the coming months.

On 6th February we very excitedly welcomed our new young bull on to the farm. His name is 'Anstey Edward' and he is a handsome 21mth old Aberdeen Angus, we are really looking forward to him getting to work as our sweeper bull.

Sheep

We are proud of our achievement of 2nd place in the annual flock competition for our small flock of Devon Close Wools, they are such a lovely breed to have on the farm.

All of our ewes have now come into the shed, in preparation for lambing, which is due to being in the first week of March. We pleased with our lambing percentage of 195% and we are excited to start welcoming our new lambs very soon.

Don't forget our Lambing Day this year is on Saturday 11th March, we look forward to seeing you then.

Pigs

Our pigs have provided us with some tasty produce recently, which continues to sell well, and we are expecting the arrival of a new litter of weaners very soon to grow on.

Poultry

Our chickens have be relocated from the shed, prior to lambing, and placed in a secure covered pen in Cockle Park. We are also expecting 50 new chicks in time for lambing day. These chicks will in time, become our new laying hens.

This year's stock showing is in the planning phase, and we are looking forward to attending some great shows, hopefully we will have some winners along the way.

Year 8 enjoyed a fantastic trip to Readers Farm in Taunton to see their amazing robotic milking parlour, they were also lucky enough to sample their wonderful milkshakes in lots of yummy flavours.

Our YFC group would like to say a big thank you to MP & KM Golding for hosting a recent trip for them to learn about their road reclamation business, with an excellent demonstration of track creation and providing us with burgers and chocolate brownies!

Free Entry

Brymore
experience to last a lifetime

Brymore Lambing

Saturday March 11th // 10:30am - 3pm



An outing for the whole family to come and see our baby lambs and visit the ewes on their due dates.

We cannot promise lambing live but the opportunity to cuddle a lamb and see the newborns is just a step away with us at Brymore Academy. With other animals to see on our farm and a few family friendly activities we definitely hope you will come and see us!

Refreshments available courtesy of the Friends of Brymore Association.

Brymore Academy, Cannington, TA5 2NB
01278 652369 www.brymoreacademy.co.uk

No dogs permitted and pregnant women should not enter the livestock shed.



2023 Upcoming Important Dates

Tuesday 21st February (INSET DAY)

3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 10 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud
6.00 pm - 9.00 pm All boarders return

Wednesday 22nd February

8.30 am All out-boarders return
3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 10 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Friday 31st March

TBC Raising Achievement Session
3.45 pm Students depart for Easter holidays

Summer Term

Monday 17th April (INSET DAY)

3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 9 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud
6.00 pm - 9.00 pm All boarders return

Tuesday 18th April

8.30 am All out-boarders return
3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 9 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Monday 24th April

3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 7 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Tuesday 25th April

3.00 pm - 8.00 pm Year 7 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Friday 28th April

4.00 pm All students depart for May Day Bank Holiday weekend

Tuesday 2nd May

6.00 pm - 9.00 pm All boarders return

Wednesday 3rd May

8.30 am All out-boarders return

Friday 5th May

4.00 pm All students depart for King's Coronation weekend

Monday 8th May

6.00 pm - 9.00 pm All boarders return

Tuesday 9th May

8.30 am All out-boarders return

Saturday 27th May

8.30 am All out-boarders arrive as normal
11.30 am Year 11 Leavers Service
1.30 pm Sports Day
3.45 pm Students depart for summer half-term

CONTACT

Brymore Academy, Brymore Way, Cannington, Bridgwater,
Somerset TA5 2NB

T: (01278) 652369 F: (01278) 653244

E: office@brymoreacademy.co.uk