

Brymore

experience to last a lifetime

Newsletter

April 2024

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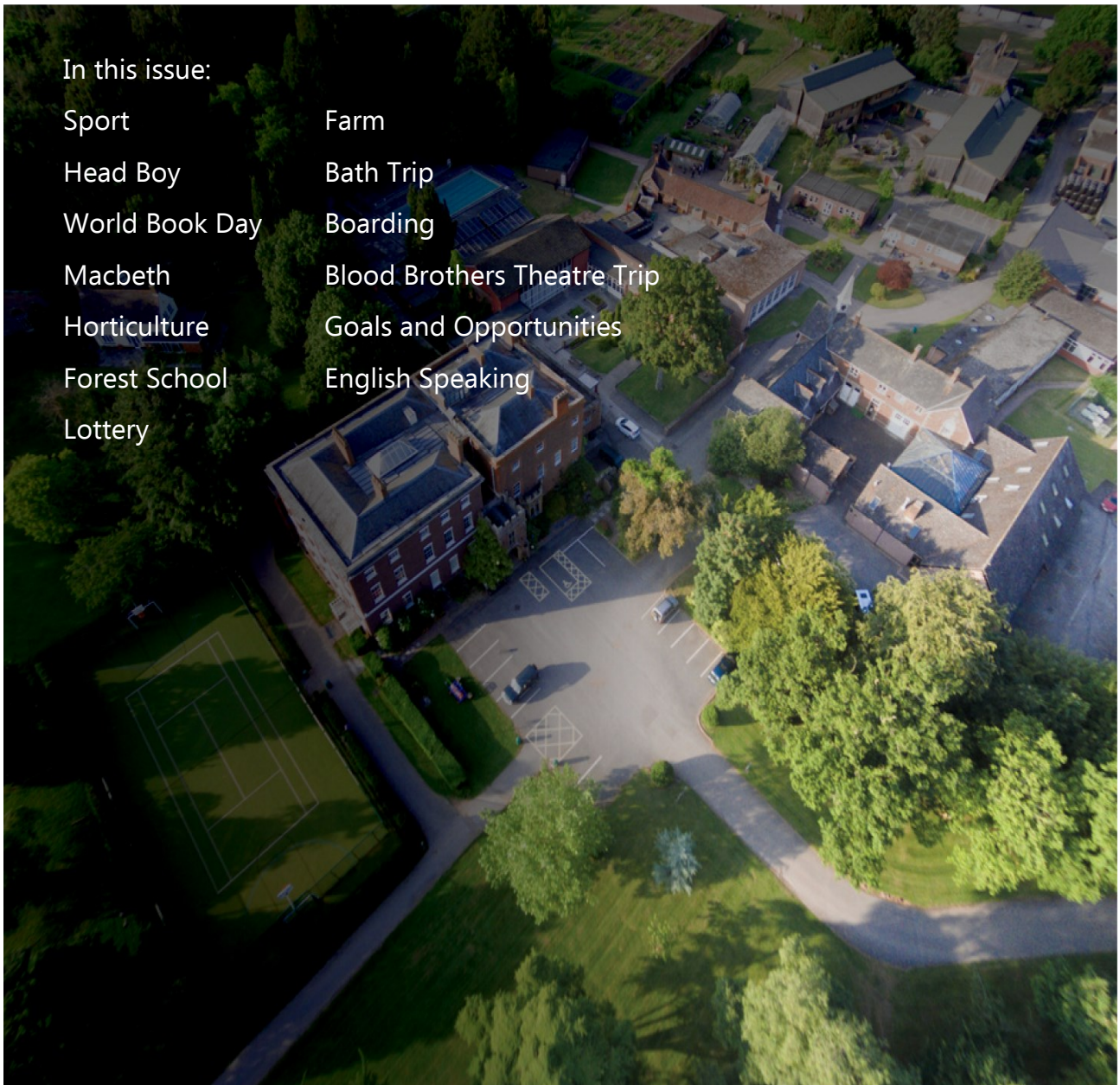
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Message from the Headteacher

I was hoping to be able to share the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection however, at the time of writing this it has not been published. I have read the draft report and it is fair to say I am delighted that Ofsted have officially recognised the excellent work that everyone connected with Brymore continues to carry out every day. It was a section 8 inspection, which means that the school will not receive a new grade (we were previously graded as good) but inspectors were clear that the school has made further improvements since the last inspection. I am unable to share the contents of the draft report however, it does state that boys are proud to be 'a Brymore boy' which in turn makes me incredibly proud. I will, of course, share the report as soon as it is published.

It has been yet another challenging term and I know of several schools locally who had to partially close for a number of days, due to staff absences through illness with a particularly debilitating bug affecting many people. Fortunately, we were able to remain fully open and this newsletter highlights the sheer range of opportunities that staff were still able to run for the boys. These included World Book Day, Goals and Opportunities evening, a trip to see Blood Brothers, a visit to Bath, hosting a theatre company who performed Macbeth and the many activities (that are available to all) that took place in the evenings and weekends, such as circus skills, iron man club, cliff scrambling and golf. A special mention also for Mr Ashton and all the staff that gave up the first week of the Easter holidays to take the boys skiing in Italy, yet another experience that the boys will remember for life. Despite all of this, I am also delighted that Year's 9, 10 and 11 were also crowned area rugby champions which must be the first time in the school's history.

Elsewhere in this newsletter Ms Warren pays tribute to Mr Winter, who sadly passed away earlier this term. I would like to pay a personal tribute to Mr Winter, who I appointed as a science teacher before promoting him on several occasions, until he became Deputy Headteacher. That rapid rise shows how much faith and belief I had in Luke, both professionally and personally and I learnt a lot from him. Our aim is to have some sort of memorial in his memory, and the boys will be involved in deciding what that will be over the coming months.

To those parents who left early to come and watch the House Seven's, I can only apologise for the late decision to postpone the matches. We had an electrical storm during the lunch period and I thought it was just too dangerous to have boys on the field exposed to lightning. We hope to play the matches during Friday activities in the first week back, and a message will be sent to parents next week to confirm the details.

Finally, I hope you have all managed to have a rest and spend some family time together over the Easter break. I think everyone needed a re-charge of the batteries ready to go for another busy term in the summer. It will be especially challenging for Year 11, who hopefully managed to balance the rest with periods of revision in order to prepare for their upcoming GCSE exams. Good luck to them all!



Boarding

As we head towards the Easter holidays, we can look back at the huge sense of achievement that our boarding community has reached. They have come together this term and supported each other in so many different settings, be that supporting their House charity events - raising funds for their selected charity, trying a new activity like our circus skills and karaoke club, joining the Iron Man club, or by simply making new friends with the new faces that have joined boarding since Christmas.

A number of Year 11s have started to enjoy the newly introduced Year 11 exeat privilege, allowing them to organise and plan an exeat of their choice to a local restaurant, bowling or cinema, to enjoy themselves without the direct supervision of staff attending with them, providing them with the freedom and life skills to manage these types of situations with growing maturity. Along with the extended freedom afforded to Year 11s, many have been showing great determination and effort throughout the term revising and completing additional studies in preparation for exams, showing personal pride and efforts to achieve in their final mock exams before the real exams next term.

Our boarding staff continue to offer endless opportunities with weekend trips still proving popular and it has been great to see the boarders flourish at Extreme Laser, The Farmers

Market, improving their golf skills at the driving range whilst also scaling new heights with a Cliff Scrambling trip to Bossington. We are all looking forward to sunnier weather next term allowing for the wide range of field-based activities, bike track, and swimming to be enjoyed by all. (Mr Watts)



World Book Day

Another fabulous effort by boys and staff to celebrate the joy of reading. We had some amazing costumes this year, showing the boys' ability to be truly resourceful! The serious side to World Book Day - other than who will win the Dinosaur Race - is to raise money for the charity Read for Good. This charity is supported by children raising money to buy books for children in hospital and also to give back to Brymore where the boys will get a say in what books we purchase. The boys have worked really hard and we have raised £464.06!

A great effort from Matthew K in Year 8 raising £100 all by himself, what a commitment to charity; the mark of a Brymore boy. The day was full of reading, reading related activities such as escape rooms and competitive quizzes. World Book Day at Brymore wouldn't be the same without some form of competitive race and I'm happy to say this year didn't disappoint. Lunchtime we set the predators against the prey with a T-Rex hunt for the farm animals (the boys who had dressed up, not the real ones!) I'm glad to say that it was winner, winner, chicken dinner for Rafe in Year 8 who, dressed as a chicken, out-ran the pack of hungry dinosaurs to be crowned the winner. Amongst all this fun the serious side was clearly evident, with boys enjoying the opportunity to be creative with their reading. Well done Brymore, let's get ready for next year! (Ms Rogers)



Forest School

During the Spring Term we have mainly avoided the showers and it hasn't been too cold. The boys have made mallets and this term we have been working on the conservation side of Forest School. There are new habitats being built and maintenance of the 'base camp' area, rebuilding the walls and new stumps replacing worn away ones. Can I please take this time to remind parents that boys should come with weather appropriate clothing and must have old clothes underneath the overalls, not their uniform. (Ms Carter)



English Spoken Exam

Year 10 have just finished an extremely important part of the English Language GCSE, by delivering their prepared speeches to an audience of their peers. This is quite a daunting task and the boys rose to the challenge well, writing, re-crafting and practising a speech which had to last for more than 4 minutes. The staff have supported them along the way, as was evident when they delivered on Wednesday some amazing and quite powerful speeches. Well done boys, this is a great achievement and something that you will remember later in life.

Mr Winter

During this half term we learnt of the very sad death of Mr Winter. As a staff team we were all truly saddened and our hearts immediately ached for his family, in particular his partner Jen and their beautiful daughter Esme, who they welcomed whilst Mr Winter worked here some six years ago. They, along with his parents, sister, nephews and wider family have lost someone truly special. As someone who already worked here when Luke came for his interview (to teach science and at which he excelled) I can honestly say he put the Brymore boys first in all he did for his whole time here. Moreover, this became even more apparent as he developed into his SLT role and that of our Designated Safeguarding Lead, but more than that, he always tried to make sure that our staff team were on the agenda in everything SLT did. Sometimes he'd try new things, like baking a cake for the staff room or we all had to write motivational things on the wall, but ultimately just knowing he cared, that we were emotionally coping with life and work was enough. Luke was never one to shy away from saying what he thought but always, always listened if you felt he had got it wrong and that there was something he needed to hear, which made him special because not everyone will like to hear that they are not always right. Over 35 current and previous staff attended Mr Winter's funeral, and whilst utterly heartbreaking for us all, we were so proud of Mr Thomas who read the Eulogy written by Luke's family, which was not easy, but I know Luke would have been really touched by this gesture. (Ms Warren)



Goals and Opportunities

We held our annual 'Goals and Opportunities' evening for the Year 9, 10 and 11 boys and their parents this half term. It is a great opportunity for them to look at their post-16 options and to discuss with employers, colleges and universities what routes are available to them once they achieve their exam results. We had representatives from local employers with their apprenticeship availability, colleges both locally and further afield, the armed forces and institutes offering degrees so it gave a real flavour to the boys as to what is out there. (Ms Warren)



Horticulture

With February having been the 4th wettest on record since 1871, and March being not too dissimilar, many a horticulture lesson has been spent rain dodging. Requiring the flexibility of the proverbial willow as opposed to the stoic oak, students have been excellent at adapting to the amended lesson topics. With polytunnels and glasshouses, there's always a plan B, C, D, and often, E. In fact, one of the many compliments of the recent Ofsted visit was that the subject is 'well planned and managed in the moment-responsive.'

Year 7 have planted sweetpeas in the hope of early blooms. The toppermost polytunnel has a central line for ease of harvest, whilst a section of the glasshouse has a series of wigwams to demonstrate the different aesthetics and growing practicalities. The sweetpeas will be used to brighten up reception and other offices around the site once the steady succession of flowers hit their stride. There are few flowers as beautifully fragrant as the sweet pea.

Year 8 have begun to understand the importance of utilising green waste and creating the own compost. Last year's walled garden series of composting bays will be adapted to improve the speed and quality of the end product. The end product of the southside bays, also created last year, has already been used to mulch various beds and borders around the school site.

Year 9 have been busily being assessed for their Level 1 in Practical Horticulture and after taking hardwood-cutting to boost our stocks, they donned rubber gloves and safety glasses to prove their mettle at testing for the pH of soil and working through texture and soil type assessments. As the ground warms up and the weeds emerge, this will provide them with the opportunity to study and identify the various native weeds which would happily take over a border for their third assessment.

Year 10 Land based students have been working hard too, although not as hard as the Year 11 students, who over the past fortnight (at the time of writing) have been busily putting together their synoptic, worth a whopping 60% of their course. For students who are naturally blessed with an affinity for working outdoors and always being on the go, sitting still in front of a laptop for consecutive days has been a trial, and one worthy of doffing a cap or two as they have worked incredibly hard. Hopefully their effort will be reflected in their grades. (Mr Naum)

Blood Brothers

Year 10 have had a busy few weeks in English. Following the completion of their mock exams on 21st March, the whole year group headed to Torquay to see a live performance of Willy Russell's musical 'Blood Brothers'. The boys studied the text back in September and by watching it live in a theatre environment, it really brings the play to life and help to further cement their understanding of the text, just as Russell intended. As usual, the boys were a real testament to Brymore, with many members of the public commenting on how polite and responsible they were. Something that we take for granted here at Brymore

and it's nice to be reminded of what a superb group of young men we have. The boys were buzzing from the experience which helped them understand some of the nuances of the characters but also gave them the experience of a real west end show, here in the Southwest. An excellent day out was had by all involved and we are proud of the way they conducted themselves throughout the day. (Ms Rogers)



Sport

The rugby season has come to an end in splendid style as Years 9, 10 and 11 are all crowned Area Champions! It has also been brilliant because the Year 10 team made it to the semi-finals of the County Cup again. Thirty boys have played and represented the school in Year 7 and we had an amazing presentation dinner organised by the SSLT. This academic year the whole school have played in over 60 matches! An amazing feat, especially for a state school. My personal and very grateful thanks go to all those staff supporting me in delivering all these fixtures and training, including Mr Lines, Mr Underwood, Mr Jonathan Watts, Mr Nurton and Mr Jack Williams - we could never fulfil this many fixtures without their help.

The boys have all enjoyed house rugby, with many getting stuck in where they usually would not play. Unfortunately, the end of term House 7s finals had to be postponed due to bad weather.

A number of boys went to the County trials for cross country and congratulations to Rufus A for getting his county vest - the first ever Brymore Year 7 to do so. We attended the cross country series of events and gained three second places and won the Kings Challenge Trophy, so thank you to all those boys taking part as it was great seeing boys from all year groups supporting the cross country team.

We had a number of badminton matches for the PE students at Haygrove with more to come, the boys seemed to have enjoyed them.

We took two teams to a table cricket competition in Yeovil and came home with a first and third place, which is excellent. Thanks to Mr Boulton and Mr Coles (our PGCE student) for taking the boys to this.

Boys need to keep up to date with Chads and also check the noticeboard for team and match information.

We look forward to a season of cricket, athletics and opening the swimming pool. (Mr Williams)



Brymore Lottery

The winners for this half term are:

1st £40 C & J Selwood

2nd £25 N Swain

3rd £15 T Bruce

Bath Trip

Earlier in the half term I was fortunate enough to accompany the Year 8 students on their Latin Roman Baths Trip.

The aim was to learn about Roman society and its traditions. The boys would be visiting the Roman Baths as part of their Latin studies and to help them understand more deeply the language and history behind it.

Despite the weather, on arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the staff and in our groups were able to take part in workshops, which prompted lots of interested questions by the boys and the opportunity for them to handle many artifacts from the museum's collection and investigate their historical sources. The sessions covered Roman bathing, religion and belief, Latin language and life in Roman Britain. We were all also able to take part in a tour of the Roman Baths, helped by each student receiving an audio handset to help transport themselves back 2,000 years as they explored the Baths. The boys learnt many facts including the reason why the Romans settled in Aqua Sulis (modern day Bath) was because the city lies on natural hot springs and that the actual Roman Baths were four meters below the current street level! There were also some realistic smells too, as the whiff of sulphur caused humour amongst some of the boys!

The tour ended at the famous spa water fountain containing 43 minerals. Most of the boys were brave enough to taste this famous water, which was definitely acquired taste! Finally, after a wonderful trip that was both fun and educational, we all got back onto the coach and minibuss and arrived back at school in glorious sunshine. It had been a good day! (Mrs Franks)



Message from the Head Boy

This is my final write up before the SSLT and myself hand over our badges to the next group of boys to help lead the school next year. We have had a great year as a team and a whole year group, and during a year of change I feel the boys have stepped up in lots of ways to ensure that many things have run smoothly, including breaks and lunchtimes. I would particularly like to thank Tommy, Liam, Ross, Freddie and Olly along with the prefect team, for always going the extra mile when needed and ensuring that we, as a team, have come out stronger and working together better. As an SSLT we had the idea to start a Players Presentation dinner this year, for all the rugby teams and also senior hockey players, we wanted a way of thanking the staff that helped us and for celebrating together as a group the unique way Brymore does sport. We also wanted to help Mr Williams getting more boys into hockey or rugby and also, and maybe more importantly, those that do play running more Chads. We felt the night went really well and were very happy Dan Frost, from Exeter Chiefs, came along, and we hope that the SSLT next year run one and that it continues to be a legacy we started.

As a year group, when we started Mr Winter was a key part of our first couple of years at school, especially with the lockdowns and social distancing because he really cared about how we were feeling, so we were all really shocked and also very sad to hear that he had died. I remember him as someone I could always talk to, who would also joke with me, listened to anything I had to say and a person that I looked up to.

I can't finish this without thanking all the staff that have helped me, and also my whole year group, in getting to the end of Year 11. We aren't easy and we don't always work hard but we do appreciate everything you do for us and we promise to (try) to revise to make you proud of us. Good luck to all my Year 11 group in the upcoming GCSEs and I hope to see you all in the future after we leave Brymore. (Oscar Warren)



Farm

Lambing, lambing and more lambing.....

Spring has sprung on the farm and we are inundated with lambs that appear to be Free Range when the boys go off up to Tea. We are now down to the last few ewes to lamb and overall, a successful lambing, even though the weather has not been so kind, with the sheer amount of rain we had during February and March, that led us to bring the ewes and lambs that had been turned out back in, as they had started developing flippers.

Beef: Earlier in the term we unfortunately failed our annual whole herd TB test, we had one reactor and an inconclusive result. APHA decided that both animals should be slaughtered for further testing and the results thankfully have been found to be negative. We are still in full restriction and will await further testing in May to hopefully go clear, saying this it is unlikely we will be able to show any cattle this year. The dairy cows are now well into their lactations, and we are hoping to turn them out during the day next week, so look out for the girls sunbathing in Pond Field. The chickens are still firing on all cylinders and our free-range eggs are available to purchase at Brymore Lodge.

Curriculum: The Year 9 students are busy wrapping up the Level 2 Agriculture Certificate in order for an Easter completion date, whilst the Year 11 Land Based Studies students have spent four intensive days completing their GCSE coursework referred to as the Synoptic. This has a value of 60% of their overall grade and has accessed practical and theoretical skill.

This half term Brymore Farm hosted a Farm Safety Day on behalf of the NFU, which was well attended by local farmers, and many of our students were able to join in with the various talks and practical activities, including the Air Ambulance, Sepsis



Trust, Clarke Willmott, NFU specialist, and Traffic & Rural Crimes teams from Avon and Somerset Police. Everyone also enjoyed the Brymore pork rolls cooked by the school catering team. During the Easter holiday we are hosting the AHDB Curious about Clover convention with a predicted two hundred people attending for interactive workshops and speeches by various Clover specialist, Once again, Brymore Farm will be contributing to the catering supplying our lovely pork for the event. Don't forget you can purchase meat from our farm shop, just email any requests and we can arrange collection.

Looking forward, we have submitted our entries for Devon County Show and continue to look forward in the hope that our future TB test comes back with a negative result. We will be welcoming our new Farm Manager Adrian Lax next half term and a farm technician, Miss Atyeo. We would also like to congratulate Miss Wakeman on being promoted to Assistant Farm Manager. Since Mr Kingston and Miss Nicholls have departed, Miss Wakeman has led the farm through a busy lambing with professionalism and determination, we have had a difficult half term but look forward to having a full team of four again soon. (Miss Marks)

Macbeth

On 26th February we were visited by Quantum Theatre, who staged a truly brilliant performance of Macbeth for our Year 11's in the school hall. The play was performed in a way that allowed the students to really understand how Shakespeare intended his tragedy to be seen and really helped the boys to fully understand the play and key themes as part of their revision. The performance has helped the boys to continue their revision in preparation for their GCSE Literature papers in May. (Ms Rogers)



2024 Upcoming Important Dates - Summer Term 3a & 3b**Summer Term 3a****Monday 15th April (INSET DAY)**

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

Tuesday 16th April

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

Monday 22nd April

3.00pm - 8.00 pm Year 7 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Tuesday 23rd April

3.00pm - 8.00pm Year 7 Parent Consultation via SchoolCloud

Thursday 2nd May

3.45pm Students depart for May Day Bank Holiday weekend

Monday 6th May

6.00pm - 9.00pm All boarders return

Tuesday 7th May

8.30am All out-boarders return

Saturday 25th May

8.30am All out-boarders arrive as normal
11.00am Year 11 Leavers Service
1.30pm Sports Day
3.45pm Students depart for summer half-term

Summer Term 3b**Sunday 2nd June**

6.00 pm - 9.00 pm All boarders return

Monday 3rd June

8.30 am All out-boarders return

Saturday 29th June

10.30 am - 5.00 pm Open Day and Country Fair

1st - 5th July

Work Experience Week (Year 10)

8th - 12th July

Activities Week

Saturday 13th July

8.30 am All out-boarders arrive as normal
10.30 am Swimming Gala (Years 7-10)
12.00 pm approx. All students depart for summer holidays

Thursday 5th & Friday 6th September 2024 (INSET DAYS)**CONTACT**

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

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

E: office@brymoreacademy.co.uk