

Brymore brims with pride



DEPUTY head Victoria Davis and assistant head Nicola Anstice celebrate Brymore's GCSE results with some boys.

BRYMORE School in Cannington is celebrating the best set of GCSE grades in its 60-year history.

The hard work and changes which have occurred over the past three years since head teacher Mark Thomas began have ensured that the school has achieved a pass rate of 88% for five grades A*-C.

Mr Thomas said: "Students have worked extremely hard to ensure that

they've succeeded with their results and I couldn't be more delighted or prouder as a head teacher.

"When they arrived with us the statistics showed they were the least able year group we've taken in, yet they've become the most successful in terms of their achievements, and that's down to their hard work, and the hard work and extra hours our staff have put in."

Old Boys Attending Open Day 2013

- 1952 Peter Wood; John Manning; Eldred Tucker; Richard Morgan; David Meade; Paul Taylor; Norman Howard; John Fry; John Dill; Robert James
- 1953 Michael Fry; John Durman; Brian Godwin; Lionel Bagg; Ray Culliford
- 1954 Philip George; David Young; Henry Williams; Roger Hannam; Robin Irvine; Julian Sheppard; Richard Pearse
- 1956 Mike Perry; Martyn Ellis; John Mogridge; John Field
- 1957 Rex Steer; Mike Yeandle;
- 1958 Rex Eastment; Martin Cox; Adrian Johnstone; Ken Male; Harold Bult; Dave Perrett
- 1959 Peter Harris; Bob Brice; Eddie Gould
- 1960 Keith Baker
- 1961 Tony Horler
- 1962 Martin Tapp; Jeff Howe
- 1964 Tony Bradford; Will Bowen
- 1965 Mike Fackrell; Philip Cotty
- 1966 Bob Fowler; Glyn May
- 1970 Nigel Swain; Edward Nicholls
- 1971 John Riddle
- 1972 Trevor Sellick
- 1973 Graham Summerhayes; Tim Hurley; Ian Shaw
- 1974 Patrick Collins; Alan Davey; Martin Butt
- 1978 Ian Chedzey
- 1979 Paul Steer
- 1980 Malcolm Watts;
- 1981 Gary Bagg
- 1983 Christian Lazenbury; Steven Coates; Paul Williamson
- 1986 Philip White; Simon Larkins
- 1987 Crispin 'Buzz'
- 1989 Kevin Liddle
- 1990 Brian Bennett
- 1992 Ashley Jones
- 1993 Hal Bretherton
- 1995 Jacob Wilson; Vincent Searle
- 1997 Scott Horsham; Matt Cottey
- 1999 Oli Robinson
- 2000 Sam Musgrove
- 2003 Ashley Bedwell
- 2005 PJ Wand; Nick Gilliam
- 2008 David Trout

Summer Draw 2013 – Rex Steer

On a very sunny Open Day at the end of June we held our annual draw and what a day we had! John Field was giving it all with his sales patter assisted by Rex & Lin Eastment, Mike Perry & myself, wife Pat & grandson Shaun soon had a queue of customers eager to buy tickets. With a large number of prizes ranging from a Mountain Bike to camcorders to goody bags, the business was brisk.

Thank you to all the Old Boys who purchased and returned their draw tickets, it gave us a good start but I still had to ring and remind 117 others to do so. Also, all donations sent in addition to the ticket price were spent on prizes, thanks again for this bonus. A special mention must go to Harold Bolt, each year he sends us a very good prize.

Our gross profit was £3,200 net £2,800 a record. It is very important that we raise as much as we can, as there is a big waiting list for bursaries. The school needs our help to get numbers of students up in order to keep going; last but not least our sponsors

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Well done to all involved: see you next year

Brymore—A Challenge

occupants and of purpose during the war years. Evacuated girls' school, British Army, American Army and tanks, German prisoners of war, Italian prisoners of war—all had left their mark. When the school opened in September, 1952, with 38 boys, the task of establishing a working unit was indeed a formidable one. Mr. Edwards, the Agricultural Master, in a reminiscent mood, has this to say about the first few years of the School's life:

"In those days the staff consisted of the headmaster and three assistant masters, and their charges were 38 lads of about 13 years old.

Those pioneers may be likened to a lad given 20 acres and a plough and told to fend for himself. There was a challenge to be met and it was in the shape of an estate of 36 acres with its hedges overgrown, ditches full of silt, drains blocked and the buildings of agricultural importance tumbling down. There were concrete emplacements, loads of stone everywhere, barbed wire entanglements and hut foundations, all of which had to be moved. It was virtually a reclamation job.

How could this fit into a school curriculum?

First, a small patch of approximately three quarters of an acre was cultivated as a four-course

rotation, whilst in the boys' after-school activity periods stones were cleared and roofs pulled down.

In the second year we were in a position to commence some rebuilding out of the wood and metal salvaged from the old buildings.

A couple of pigs followed and the gilt was run on. A gift of two goats was accepted, then some Down ewes were purchased at a reasonable price (to be paid only when they had lambed and been sold as couples!).

All the while the war of attrition went on; bit by bit more land became available, but not before much hard, seemingly unrewarding toil, had been put in. This toil built up the boys' stamina and showed them that where there was a will, there was also a way.

Now as the fourth year draws to a close, we have extended our arable land to six acres. We have enough stock to form a basis for teaching material, and we are consolidating and regrouping before the next stage.

The clearing goes on but gradually we are winning"

Yes, the clearing goes on, there is still much to be done but that is the whole point—we want to have plenty to do because we stand for "learning by doing." A visitor to Brymore will, at any time, always find large numbers of boys doing things and making things, creating some part of a farm out of very little, entirely by their own efforts. In the course of doing this work, which they thoroughly enjoy, they come to understand the principles underlying practice. All the time, as they work, experts are there to help, to guide, and to explain. Whether he is in the classroom, the laboratory or in the open air, every boy is learning, not by being told, but by practice and experience.

Boys coming to Brymore must have a genuine enthusiasm for and interest in farming. Without these a boy would have little interest in the course but where they exist the boys really enjoy their schoolwork and admit that if they are not the happiest days of their lives then they must have some very joyous days to come!

A glance at the subjects taught will give some idea of the broad basis on which the boys are educated: English, French, Mathematics, History, Geography, Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Agriculture, Wood and Metal Work, Art, Divinity, Music and Physical Training. In addition the School is very strong in the games field in both Rugby and Cricket, and the School Clubs which cater for the wider interests include: Young Farmers' Club, Natural History Society, Bird Watchers, Boxing, Badminton, Table Tennis, Film Society, Camera Club, Chess Club, Stamp Collecting.

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A Somerset man is courteous
A Somerset man is wise
You can tell a Somerset man
by the wisdom in his eyes

Or you could read:-

A Brymore boy is courteous
A Brymore boy is wise
You can tell a Brymore boy by
the wisdom in his eyes



The Somerset Farmer

"For Somerset men are courteous
And Somerset men are wise,
And you can tell a Somerset man
By the kindness in his eyes."



BRYMORE . . . A CHALLENGE

by R. ADCOCK, B.Sc. (Agric.)

UNIQUE—the dictionary definition says "being the only one of its kind, having no like or equal or parallel." Obviously then, here is a word to be used with care, to be applied only when one is sure that it fits. Even so, we of Brymore claim our school to be "unique." Certainly no-one has yet been able to name another Secondary Technical School of Agriculture in the country—not even representatives of the Ministry of Education or of the Ministry of Agriculture. There are, indeed, many schools which have an agricultural course or classes in which certain subjects are taught with an "agricultural bias," but only Brymore, as far as we know, uses agriculture as the inspiration and driving force in the teaching of all subjects.

The idea of this type of school was conceived during the 1930's but the outbreak of war made necessary the shelving of the scheme. In the late 1940's moves were made which resulted in the purchase of Brymore House in 1951 from Mr. Richard Penoyer. This grand old house and its estate has many historic associations, the most outstanding—its having been the home of the Pym family for many centuries and in particular the birthplace and home of John Pym the great parliamentarian and Prime Minister. Near the house, on a mound, stands an old oak tree, "Pym's Oak," reputed by some to have been planted by John Pym himself, while others say that it was planted at the time of his birth. Such a house, with such history, was indeed a wise choice for housing a school which was to draw its life from the ageless truth of the land.



Many necessary alterations and essential installations were dealt with in the course of the

next year and the task was not easy because the house and grounds had seen many changes of

Water supplies are low in many areas. Please economize in the use of water wherever possible to prevent the necessity of restrictions being imposed

NORTH

Annemarie Munro-O'Brien

Do you think I count as an 'Old Brymorian'? I lived at Brymore from the age of 7 until I left to go to university. My father lets me read *The Spur* after he has read it and I enjoy reading the stories of so many people who spent three years walking up that long drive, hearing the comedic calling of the ducks in the backgrounds to lessons and who bravely dived into that freezing cold swimming pool water at the teacher's (probably dad's) bark, 'Go!'

I lived in constant hope that girls would be admitted to Brymore whilst I was of secondary age – it never happened. But although I never attended a lesson I did learn a lot. When you all trooped down the drive to church, I rode my bike around the paths between the classrooms, watched the goldfish in the pond outside the hall and wandered the greenhouses absorbing that wetted earth smell. In the holidays I used to help on the farm, I pulled the leavers to feed the cake to the milking cows; I washed cow's udders, stroked the noses of calves and watched the shuffling of the sows getting ready to farrow. Mainly I expect, I chatted endlessly and got in everyone's way!

Do you remember Freda? She cleaned the classrooms for years. She was lovely and always willing to put down her mop and talk of the Royal family, which she loved as her own. Best thing as a young child was the fact that she always had a paper bag of pineapple chunks in her pinny which she would pull out and offer as she embarked on a story of the latest royal escapade.

More than anything I wanted to see the ghost that boys would tell of witnessing, floating along between the dormitories. One holiday I sat up late in the building with only a torch, determined to see him too.

I sat there for hours and hours and then went home disappointed – I saw nothing but the dark and heard nothing but the clanking of the chains of the lift moving from the cellars to the top floor.

It wasn't until I recounted this to Dad in the morning that it was pointed out that there had been no lift in the shaft for many, many years and that anyway who would be moving it up and down in the middle of the night in the holidays? Glad I hadn't considered that fact at the time; I may have been a little less bored and instead more frightened during my ghost watch!

I now teach architecture and surveying at an FE college in Devon: The department is part of the School of Architecture and Construction and the classrooms where I teach are next to the carpentry, plumbing and engineering workshops. I took a short cut through a carpentry workshop the other day and the thought suddenly sprung up; why did I feel so at home and comfortable in this job and this environment? The answer I think is that I feel at home because I am home. I lived for years beside the 'engineering yard' – wandering in and out of the workshops, seeing the sparks from the welding in the metal workshops watching the bats & swallows swoop from the bell tower to the eaves on warm summer evenings: The smells, the dominantly male environment, the old buildings with their polished floors and institutionally painted walls was the background of my formative years and given me a good grounding for working in the construction industry.

Brymore was a fantastic place for a child to grow up, even if being the only girl within the midst of hundreds of boys was somewhat daunting, And although I never knew any of you Brymore Boys particularly (I did have a distant crush on a past head boy, Willie when I was about 12!), I grew up hearing of your activities, adventures and can appreciate the experiences you had when there, I am afraid I slept through the fire alarms that had you tramping out onto the games field in the middle of the night, but I could hear the biology lessons given by Mr Sellick from my garden. I shared meals with you on a Sunday when dad was on duty, and occasionally Fergie would let me draw in the art room (I learnt from him that art was not an area I was destined to have a lucrative career in) and I do know – and still vividly remember – that brain-aching shock of diving into that freezing cold swimming pool when Dad yelled 'Go'!

Old Boys with Old Toys

By John Manning

On retiring from his family farm Old Brymorian, Eldred Tucker (1952 – 55) started a new hobby – the restoration of Tractors from past years.

Part of his collection needed 'an airing' from their sheds in Congresbury. With his near neighbour, Robert James (1952 – 55), they planned a Sunday Run from Congresbury to Priddy in the Mendips, for lunch.

The drivers were Eldred, Robert, Stuart and myself, four Old Boys and Norman Pearce. His three sons Andy (1975 – 79), Richard (1986 – 89) and Tim (1977 – 81) also attended Brymore.

Eldred, Robert and I were all at Brymore 1952 – 55, Stuart, Eldred's son attended Brymore 1981 – 84 and Luke his grandson who was a passenger is now the proud owner of the David Brown.

Tim & Richard have assisted Eldred in the restoration of these tractors. They jointly run Redhill Engineering which also employs Edward Bateman (2008 2011) another Old Boy

