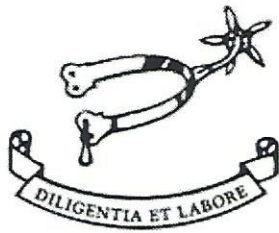


# The SPUR

OLD BRYMORIANS ASSOCIATION



O.B.A. Website: [www.brymoreoldboys.co.uk](http://www.brymoreoldboys.co.uk)



Spring 2018 Edition 12



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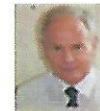
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## Welcome Letter from your Chairman

It does not seem a year ago that I wrote a few lines to you Old Brymorian's in the Chairman's report for the Spur, and here I am doing exactly the same thing for the 12th edition!

Looking back over the past twelve months I suddenly realised that this is my tenth report, but it is not really a report but a series of musings.

As many of you know the Open Day and Country Fair was another successful event for us, the OBA, and the Academy. As your Chairman it was once again an honour and a privilege to represent you all at the Leavers' Service and at the Remembrance Day Service. As we observed the two minutes silence I reflected on my time at Brymore all those years ago: little did I realise then of my present involvement and so well supported by you Old Brymorian's and the Committee.

I feel that I must write a few lines about Michael Fry, our retiring Treasurer. Mike, as you all know, has been the OBA Treasurer since the "new start" some years ago. Mike, right from the beginning, showed a determination and enthusiasm for the OBA, which through passion, tenacity and much dogged hard work, got us to where the Association is today. It was sad, but an understandable decision when he decided to vacate the post, but he still remains a Committee member. We all owe Mike a huge debt of gratitude for all his hard work – thank you Mike.

Please enjoy this, the 12th edition of the Spur and sincere thanks to everyone, whether an Old Brymorian or not, for supporting the Association and its aims in so many ways.

**Peter Harris**

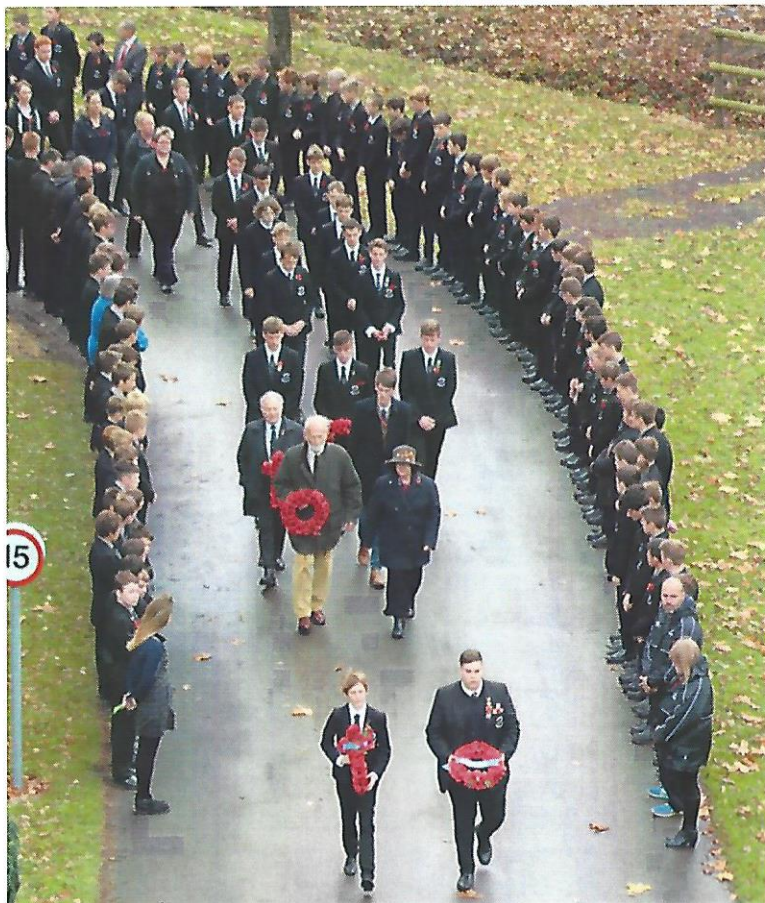
**Head Teacher  
Mark Thomas**

A week in the life of.....

I am often asked what a Head teacher actually does all day. So in order to answer that question I decided to take a typical week in my actual diary, just before Christmas. It turns out I taught six lessons of geography, had three individual meetings with my senior team, one with the SENCO, three joint meetings with the whole of the senior team, with one designated to planning for the following week. I had a meeting with the farm team, one with a new member of staff due to start after Christmas, a meeting with another school to discuss a catering contract and a health and safety committee meeting with various staff in school. Other meetings included one with the Chair of Governors and one with the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer of the Trust to discuss next year's budget, one with the Local Authority to discuss students who have been permanently excluded across Somerset and three with parents of boys wishing to attend Brymore in the future. Finally meeting wise, I had one with Human resources to discuss a staffing issue and another to go through staff appointments to ensure all the relevant checks had been carried out. I also carried out a review of how medication is administered and recorded, reviewed safeguarding procedures and records, attended a conference in Devon to learn how the new GCSE measures will affect schools, interviewed four prospective new students, carried out a boarding duty and managed to catch the second half of a Year 11 rugby match.

Of course there were the usual assemblies, lunch duties and many other tasks that were not formally in my calendar. It is fair to say that clearly there are a lot of meetings and that the week is certainly varied. The variety is possibly why I enjoy the job so much but also the fact that I am working with so many dedicated and committed staff whose sole aim is to do the best they can for the boys. I am always mindful that whether it is an actual lesson, budget meeting, health and safety meeting or meeting with the farm team we must never lose sight that every decision made should be driven by the fact that the boys must come first, because they are not only the 'core business' of the school, but the very reason we all do the job in the first place.

I find it quite baffling at times to think that I may well be discussing the future direction of the farm, a catering contract, a human resources issue or how to manage a £2.5 million budget whereas all I am actually qualified for is to teach geography and physical education. I guess the ability to be resourceful is applicable to me as it is to the boys themselves. What I do know is that being a Head teacher can be challenging and rewarding but being the Head teacher of Brymore, to me, still remains a privilege.



The Senior Student Leadership Team, led by Head Boy Zaid Elmrbati and Deputy Head Boy Rhys Thomas, precede Members of the Old Brymorian's followed by the rest of the school in Remembrance 11.11.2018

## Treasurer's Report

Sunday, 25 June dawned with the prospect of first washing up, then putting back in the roof, the wine glasses used by our members at the Buffet Supper held in the evening after Open Day finished, and the Annual General Meeting of the Association had taken place.

I then had an eureka moment! I realised that I was now the elected Honorary Treasurer and that Mike Fry, our retiring Treasurer, would be a very hard act to follow, but I knew that he would always be at the end of a phone for advice and guidance. Thank you, Mike for being one of the kingpins of the Old Brymorian's' Association since it was resurrected back in 2006.

Our Summer Draw proved a great success and credit must be given to Tim Hurley, Graham Summerhayes and their wives Melanie and Anita for organising it, and to the willing band of helpers who supported them on Open Day. £3465.00 was added to the bursary fund, made up of ticket sales and monies given in lieu of unsold tickets.

Since June we have had a very successful Pym's Night Supper where Old Boys, their wives and partners were treated to a delicious 3 course meal, again prepared in-house, and ably served by Nigel and his team, and supported by nine Year 11 pupils who waited at the tables. Feedback about this event has been very favourable once again.

In early October I gave the Academy Finance Department a cheque for £6000.00 which represents financial support for 4 pupils for the 2017/18 academic year. Your subscriptions since 2006 means you have contributed £102,500.00 to Brymore which has been used not only for financial support for pupils, but also for specific items requested by the teaching staff to enhance the day-to-day activities at the Academy. A great achievement, and one you should all be very proud of attaining. Congratulations to all OBA members.

Each year it gets increasingly difficult to decide who is deserving of financial help with boarding fees. We have seen a two-fold increase in applications for help in the past 2 years alone. Your continued support is crucial. At the time of writing this article we are in the process of contacting in excess of 40 lapsed members who have not paid their subscription fee for 2017. If you realise that your membership has lapsed for whatever reason, please think hard and renew it promptly if you feel able to. 40 plus members at £20.00 a time equates to an amount in excess of £800.00, which would go towards helping another pupil in 2018/19.

Thank you for reading this, and I am open to any suggestions as to how we can enlarge the membership of the Association for the good of the pupils and staff at Brymore Academy.

**Jennifer Harris**

## Visitors to Old Brymorian's HQ

John Dill	1952-1955	Ed Nicolls	1971-1974
John Manning	1952-1955	Colin Napper	1971-1975
Paul Taylor	1952-1955	John Riddle	1971-1975
Eldred Tucker	1952-1955	Bob Druitt	1972-1976
Martin Webber	1952-1955	Andy Ford	1972-1976
Peter Wood	1952-1955	Graham Summerhayes	1973-1976
Alan Hemming	1952-1982	Tim Hurley	1973-1977
Lionel Bagg	1953-1956	Nick Smith	1974-1978
Mike Fry	1953-1956	Nick Tyley	1974-1978
John Hill	1953-1956	Kelton Black	1976-1979
Rob James	1953-1956	Howard Gibbons	1976-1980
Julian Sheppard	1954-1956	Nick Howe	1976-1980
David Weeks	1954-1956	Martin Watts	1980-1983
Philip George	1954-1957	Clive Baker	1982-1985
Roger Hanham	1954-1957	Roy Norris	1982-1985
Richard Pearse	1954-1957	Andrew Bult	1984-1987
Henry Williams	1954-1957	Andrew O'Brien	1984-1987
Mike Chedgy	1955-1958	Richard Criddle	1984-1987
John Mogeridge	1955-1958	Mark Brookes	1985-1988
Martin Ellis	1956-1959	Mark Delaham	1985-1988
Mike Perry	1956-1959	Stewart Hyslop	1993-1997
Chris Fuller	1956-1960	Lee Millard	1994-1997
Mike Yeandle	1957-1960	Josh Fox	2007-2010
Gareth Wilcox	1957-1961	Ollie Mahon	2008-2012
Harold Bult	1958-1961	Charles Coleman	2011-2014
Martin Cox	1958-1961	Ashley Palfrey	2011-2014
Roger Fisher	1958-1961	Joe Parkman	2013-2016
Francis Hunt	1958-1961	Huw Scott	2013-2016
Rex Eastment	1958-1962	Lee Marsh	2014-2017
Adrian Johnstone	1958-1962	Cameron Moore	2014-2017
David Perrett	1958-1962	Oliver Newbury-Barlow	2014-2017
Bob Brice	1959-1962	Gina Bryant	ex staff
Eddie Gould	1959-1962	David Dagger	ex staff

Keith Baker	1959-1963	Colin Munro	ex staff
Peter Harris	1959-1963	Mike Bailey	]
Tom Coleman	1961-1963	Phil Bowen	]
Steve Stoodley	1961-1964	Gary Druitt	]
Stuart Raison	1963-1965	Martin Gooding	]
Peter Hogan	1964-1967	Michael McGuinness	] - Non Members
Tony Bradford	1964-1968	Tim Pearson	]
Geoffrey Taylor	1964-1968	Phil Perham	]
Phil Tipney	1964-1968	Andrew Smith	]
Michael Fackerell	1965-1969	Chris Wand	]
William Bowen	1965-1970	Adam Williams	]
Patrick Collins	1971-1974		

## Summer Draw 2017 Report Tim & Graham

Graham and I spent time before Open Day getting prizes up together. We would like to thank all companies and individuals for the continued and kind support, and for prizes brought on the day.

Graham, Melanie and I put up Graham's gazebo on Friday, returning early Saturday morning to set up.

We again had a help rota for the day which works very well. If any one wishes to help for an hour or two selling raffle tickets please contact me. We would also like to remind all who have tickets sent to them please return before the actual day.

I would like to thank all involved because we have now raised over £100,000. We are now carrying on the good work with bursaries and some other items which the school needs.

Thanks again for your support.

## Henry Scott – Showing Sheep at Brymore

Having now left the school I have had time to look back on the enjoyable and exciting times I had whilst a Brymore student, not least the success I was lucky enough to have over the past summer showing the schools pedigree Kerry Hill show sheep. It started at the Royal Bath and West back in June, when I qualified for the Rare Breeds Survival Trust National Young Shepherd of the Year competition. This had been the second time I had qualified and from this point onwards I was hoping to go one better than the previous year when I had been placed second in the senior category at the final in Yorkshire. Besides the Bath and West the sheep saw success at other shows including Dunster show, where the two ewe lambs won ribbons. I was lucky enough to also come away as champion young handler in the sheep section at this show. The next show I went to was the Royal Berkshire Show where the final of the RBST Young Shepherd of the Year competition was to be held. The school had purchased a new Kerry Hill ram prior to this show, and this was to be his first outing in the show ring with Brymore. Despite not winning his class, he showed great potential, and I am sure will receive multiple prizes in the future. Besides the breed classes, I took him into the Young Handlers final and was up against some tough competition I was placed first. Yet, to be crowned overall champion I had to go up against the winner of the other age group of young handlers. This meant I had to compete against Tom Evans from the Calcott Flock in Wales. Thankfully, the new ram Mario showed himself off well, and the judge chose myself as champion. It had been a great experience and was to be my final time showing sheep for Brymore, due to the fact I have now started college having finished at Brymore. I am sure that the Brymore show team will have great success in the following years with both the sheep and the cattle. My family and I have now purchased some of our own Kerry Hill sheep and are planning on showing them at various shows across the Southwest in the coming year. It was great to get the experience of showing the sheep at Brymore and I hope that other boys can get as much enjoyment out of it as I have done over the past couple of years.



## Pym's Night Supper 2017

Pym's Night Supper was yet again another successful event in the Old Brymorian's Association calendar with 50 members attending. Sincere thanks must go to Nigel Isaacs, Catering Manager, and his team for providing us all with an excellent meal, ably assisted by Brymore pupils who served at the tables – well done everyone.

Before our guest speaker, Les Davies MBE gave us an interesting talk on his life as a Mendip Hills Warden, which was both serious and humorous in equal measure, Mrs Vicky Davis, Deputy Head Teacher, in the absence of Mark Thomas, Head Teacher, gave us a "State of the Union" address on Brymore Academy. It was a rousing and passionate address as well with both speakers attracting long and sustained applause at the end. Tim Hurley gave a vote of thanks in his usual inimitable style – this in itself was worth waiting for.

Thank you to everyone who made the effort to attend Pym's Night, especially to those who donated raffle prizes and this was much appreciated by all the prize draw winners. The raffle made £161.00 which has been added to funds. If it wasn't for the generosity of Brymore Academy for allowing us to use the facilities, this event could not take place, so thank you Brymore for your continued support of our Association.



Looking for that winning ticket!

Guest speaker  
Les Davies MBE

## Old Boy to judge the Burke Trophy

In May 2018 the Devon County Show will be hosting the Beef Burke Trophy Championship as a part of its annual show. Considered by many to be the "World Cup" of Pedigree Beef Showing, the trophy was first presented at the Royal Show in 1951 and is named after Sir Roland Burke onetime head agent for the Duke of Devonshire on the Chatsworth Estate. Sir Roland's connection with the Royal Show started when he became an assistant steward in the poultry tent. After years of service he became the show's Honorary Show Director and President and was knighted by King George VI in 1939 whilst kneeling in the straw at the show.

Since the closure of the Royal Show in 2009 the Trophy has been presented at various County Shows throughout England. The competition is a Breed Society Interbreed Class, made up of a pair of animals, one male and one female, from each Breed competing at the Show. Originally the pair had to be the Male and Female Champion but these days the pair may be made up of either the Male or Female Champion and one other, picked by the judge and the Breed Society from cattle entered in the show classes, to make the best matching pair.

To win the Burke Trophy is the dream of every breeder and stockman and to be asked to judge it is the height of every judge's career.

In 1983 Old Brymorian, Mike Yeandle, showed the 2-year-old heifer Lakeland Sagesse at the Royal Show. She was Female and Breed Champion and part of the Burke Trophy winning pair with Fleets Rascal from Scotland. Now he has been asked to judge the Burke Trophy at the 2018 Devon County Show - "A tremendous honour and something I only ever dreamed of. I can't thank the Devon Show Society enough for giving me this amazing opportunity" Mike says.

Mike has been judging cattle for a number of years and is one of only 4 West Country stockmen/breeders to have been asked to judge at the prestigious Perth Bull Sales. A well respected Interbreed judge, Mike is best known for his involvement with Charolais and Devons, but is equally at home judging any cattle and sheep classes. In 2017 he was asked to judge Dairy Cattle at the Royal Cornwall Show. Having judged at most of the County Shows over the years – from The Royal Welsh to the Royal Norfolk - Mike considers being asked to judge the Burke Trophy as "The icing on the cake".

With his trademark dark suit, red rose buttonhole and bowler hat for Interbreed judging, Mike has already decided which tie he will be wearing for the "Burke" – his Old Brymorian tie of course. - He says that without the ethos of Brymore instilled in him ("Diligentia et Labore" - "Labour with diligence), and the emphasis on Brymore's own 3 R's (Responsibility, Resourcefulness and Resilience) he would not have achieved what he has in his career. " As the saying goes that "you can take the boy out of Brymore, but you can never take Brymore out of the boy".

On leaving Brymore in 1960 Mike started working on the Dunster Estate for the Luttrell family, soon becoming farms foreman. After a stint with 2 pedigree Hereford herds on Exmoor he moved to Bob Leonard's farm in Yorkshire where he worked with the pedigree herd made up of 9 European breeds from which cattle were exported to Canada. Whilst there Bob asked him to take a plane load of 250 in-calf Friesian heifers 25 Fullwood milking machines to Morocco for his company FarmKey. He had to calve them down and make sure they were settled in their new homes. In 1976 he was asked to manage the pedigree Mount Pleasant Charolais herd owned by the then Home Secretary Sir William Whitelaw and achieved great success in the show and sale ring. After free lancing for a while he joined the Cullum Charolais herd as Manager and working partner only leaving when the owner Mrs McAlpine retired. At this point he moved back to the West Country, to manage the Moynton Charolais herd and the Netherpton flock of Dorset Horns for Peter Old, where he has been for the last 22 years. Moynton Charolais has had considerable sale and show success particularly in Perth and at the Royal Show. With Moynton Freesia he became only the second person to win the Supreme Championship with the same animal in the same year at Devon County, Royal Bath and West and Royal Cornwall.



Mike Yeandle judging the Devon at the Royal Berkshire show during his year as Devon Cattle Society President

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**Obituaries**

It is with sadness we acknowledge the passing of

<b>Boys</b>	
Richard Chant (Fred),	died 22/06/2016
Glynn May, 1967 – 1971	died 16/12/2016
Jacob Wilson, 1995 – 1999	died 2016
<b>Staff</b>	
Bill Bolland (1970-1979) Farm Manager,	died 14/03/2017
Geoffrey Bond, 1970 – 1984	died 2016



## The Family Secret – Mike Perry

About 25 years ago my widowed mother informed me that I had a brother, born to a woman that my father had met during his army service, when he was a widower. He had been posted to London in 1940, after getting off the beaches in Dunkirk, France. Being in the Royal Artillery, he was one of those sent to London to operate heavy artillery. As can be imagined my mother's information was a great surprise to me. She gave me no more information apart from the fact that the boy had been adopted. My mother insisted that nothing would be done to trace this child until after her death and I respected this wish.

I did speak to my half-sister, she had no knowledge of this boy but she did remember going up to London in 1941 to visit our father. Her memories of this visit were of great significance as she remembered the surname of the family he was billeted with. After my mother died in the 1990's I did periodically attempt to trace this child, through The Salvation Army and Dr Barnardo's but to no avail.

In 2009 my wife got interested in tracing past generations of our families, using various websites. On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009 (incidentally Mervyn's birthday and the date of his father's death, what a coincidence!)...she messaged Genes Reunited and had a response from the daughter of the woman my father was billeted with, confirming that he had fathered a child with her widowed mother and that the boy had been adopted. His boy had, in the previous October been in touch with her, (no contact having been made prior to this). The result of this was a telephone number, I called it and Tom Perry's two sons spoke to each other for the very first time. He had been adopted by a couple who lived in Kingswood, Bristol and therefore, had spent his life approximately 25 miles from me. The first thing I learnt about him was that his name had been changed, he now had the surname of his new parents and that his first name was also changed, from Stafford to Mervyn!

The first Meeting:-

My goodness, doesn't he look like dad! The wives said 'Don't you two look alike'. **WE ARE BROTHERS.** Mervyn was put up for adoption when he was 9 months old, but didn't find out until he was a teenager, wanting his birth certificate for a passport. One of the questions people ask me is was it emotional, the first meeting.

My answer is lots of excitement, curiosity and great pleasure at finally meeting him but not sadness. More laughter than anything and still when we meet there is lots of humour. Over the past 8 years we have gradually got to know more about each other and from my point of view, he reminds me so much of our father. Mervyn has the same values, interests and outlook as him and they would have enjoyed each other's company, but it was not to be.

We meet 3 or 4 times a year and phone each other regularly. Our wives get on very well and we have met the other members of immediate families.

Mervyn had a sense of rejection at first but when we started to look into the information gathered he realised the dilemmas and difficulties that confronted his parents in the middle of the Second World War. He did ask to visit his father's last resting place and whilst there he took out some small stones and gave one to me and we placed them on the gravestone. He said that proved he had visited his father.

I count myself very fortunate to have found my brother, thanks to my wife's interest in family research. Also that it was the right time for Mervyn to start looking for his biological family. Mervyn and I fit very well into each other's lives and although it's only been 8 years since we met, it feels like we have always known each other. Then maybe on some level we always did!



Mike Perry (1956 – 59) and his brother Mervyn

## Alan Leslie Hemming Born 25.06.1920

I joined the TA in 1938, which was embodied in 1939 when I was sent to join the 43rd (TA) Wessex Division. In 1941 the new Corps of Mechanical and Electrical Engineers (REME) was formed and I was posted to HQ 12th Army Corps at Tunbridge Wells as a Corporal Draughtsman.

In 1943 I was posted to HQ 2nd Army at Oxford, then when 'Neptune' and 'Overlord' began to take shape I was transferred to London. There I was seconded to the mechanical Arm of REME in the War Office, to provide designs of armour for the operator/driver and propulsion unit of the caterpillar ^6-7-8 Tractors which were arriving in Lease/Lend profusion from the United States.

I realised while at HQ 2nd Army that British manpower was going to be a problem for the Army. This was brought home to me when everyone able to do so was invited to 'double-up'. In my case, when not relying on my Norton motorcycle, this meant driving an armoured command vehicle, which was also the 2nd Army REME map room.

We crossed the channel in a US tank landing ship which fed us well and deposited us on Juno beach on D3. It was clear by the use being made of the landing strips that we had air superiority, if not supremacy.

I worked in collaboration with US workshops to define the mounting position of the welded 'Prong' which was to be attached to the front of the British Cromwell and US Sherman tanks to enable them to cross the Bocage. An additional complication arose with the British Cromwell tank because it emitted two characteristic exhaust puffs after idling, which betrayed both its position and its intentions. This we remedied by fitting an exhaust cowl.

After crossing the Seine we headed (often mapless) for Bruxelles, Louvain, Antwerp and Helmond. The 44/5 winter 'one of the worst in human memory' was partially one of hibernation, partially resurrection of vehicles useful in snow and partially preparation for the Rhine crossing in early 1945. A group of us modified the Cromwell chassis to make a towed, infantry element in the Rhine attack.

A British floating bridge took us across the Rhine passing abandoned airfields at Hanover. At Hamburg we provided the armed escort for British padres visiting concentration camp sites and then joined the victory celebrations of bonfires and church services at Luneburg. I was then posted to Plon, formally HQ 8th Corps to await Z demobilisation.

Twice mentioned in Despatches.

Calais, Dover, Nottingham and back to Vickers Armstrong in Southampton before completing an Intensive Education course at Cheltenham.



Alan with his 'Old Boys' at the presentation of the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur

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If you have an article or photo reminiscing about your time at Brymore please don't hesitate to contact the Editor via email [hbradford@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:hbradford@educ.somerset.gov.uk) or snail mail Helen Bradford, The LRC, Brymore Academy, Brymore Way, Cannington, Somerset TA5 2NB

Do it now, don't wait a year and forget, put it down now, click send or stick on that stamp.

The sooner it reaches me, the sooner I can start on the next Edition

## PCC Pride Award

Councillor Rex Eastment has worked tirelessly for the past 5 years on behalf of his community to make the civil parish of Norton St Philip (including Farleigh Hungerford) a safer place for all who live there.

Rex said "This award isn't just for me, but for all of the volunteers that have supported me from both villages, we have achieved a lot since 2013."

New speed limits in both villages, incredible support from the Speed Enforcement Unit and the local Police. We now have our own Speed Indicator Device, as well as a Community Speed Watch team of over 20 volunteers from the two villages. Our Traffic Action Group meet bi-monthly to discuss the ongoing problems of safety, speed and HGV's that break the weight limit through our villages.



"Rex Eastment with his PCC Pride Award, presented by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset Police Sue Mountstevens."

## 50 years of stewarding at The Royal Bath and West

In 1965 the Bath and West Show held its first show on a permanent site at Shepton Mallet. Young farmers in the area were invited to attend as stewards in the livestock section. For myself it was as an assistant Breed Steward for the Dairy Shorthorns. This involved calling the cattle up from the stock lines to the judging rings for each class to be judged. During this I was under the guidance of Senior Breed Steward, the late Garnet Osbourne, a very experienced Shorthorn breeder from whom I learnt a lot. (I now work with his grandson Richard at the Dairy Show) For 2-3 hrs work we were given entrance to show lunch, afternoon tea and a chance to work and listen to some of the best cattle people in the country.

In the early 1970's I was asked to assist Philip Snell as Forage Steward. This entailed the distribution of hay and straw around the show ground. Opening the barns at 6.30 – 8.30 am in the mornings and from 5.00 – 7.00 pm in the evenings and eventually buying hay and straw. About 4,000 small bales of straw was bought at harvest and stored in the barns on site. One memorable year when the barn doors were opened the day before the show started, only a few bales had any strings left on them as the mice had chewed through them! The show contractor brought in a baler and morning and night we re-baled straw for the livestock.

Soon someone realised I had nothing to do between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm so other jobs were found. Silver Cups and Trophies for cattle, sheep and pigs had to be collected from the silversmiths on the showground and taken to the judging rings and at the end of the day collected back again. In the early years no concern was given to keeping the general public and livestock apart. I guess because it was assumed that nearly all the public were country people and therefore used to cattle. However this gradually changed, first 12 Girl Guides holding a length of rope, to now a days, 200 miles of barriers and 15 security guards!

Also to come my way was to organise an orderly loading and departure of stock on Friday afternoon, in those days stock was only on site 3 out of 4 days. After many complaints from the public that livestock were not on site on a Saturday a programme of showing was devised with fresh stock. This meant tents and buildings had to be cleaned out and re-strawed for cattle and sheep to be penned on Friday evenings ready for showing and demonstration classes on Saturday.

This brings me on to another of my duties... Brymore School working party. For some years before the show became permanently sited, boys from Brymore went to show sites to form working parties, some for sheep shearing and others to keep the stock lines clean. The same tasks were performed at Shepton Mallet for nearly 40 years. It has to be said that we had a reputation for the cleanest stock lines of any show in the country, thanks to the efforts of Brymore boys!

Having a team of 30 boys on site was sometimes an exciting challenge to know where they all were!

In 1985 the Bath and West took over the South West Dairy Show, running it for six breeds of dairy cattle, all livestock and judging under cover, so most of the afore mentioned duties were repeated.

In 1997 I became Chief Cattle Steward, 2000 Chairman of Livestock and Vice Chairman of the Dairy Show. In 2008 I became Chief Stock Steward of the main show. 2015 was my 50th. Year as a Steward for The Royal Bath and West Society.

It has been a privilege to serve the Society in all these years; I have seen some of the best livestock in the country and met many exceptional and talented people. I have also enjoyed a very good social side of showing with my fellow stewards, some of whom are Old Brymorian's.

I must mention that I have been able to do all of this because I have a long suffering wife, who has looked after our farming business whilst I was away, especially the last 30 years when we farmed in Cornwall.

#### **Michael Lyons – Old Brymorian – 1959 -1962**



## **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 background 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 out on the farm. I pulled the leavers to feed 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 any of you remember Freda? She cleaned the classrooms for years. She was lovely and was always willing to put down her mop to 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 anyway who would it be moving up and down in the middle of the night.

## Over the Garden Wall

I pass a gaggle of new year 7 boys, washing off their tools at the tap and, inadvertently (!! ) splashing each other, clad in their olive green overalls (less fluorescent than last year's contribution to the kaleidoscope of colours in our department). The lads have been busy on their newly acquired plots, digging, weeding, re-arranging plants, planting and brushing up the paths. The novelty of a fresh opportunity is seen in the frenzy of activity before the term ends.

The long shafts of sunlight stride across the garden from the west, the sun now low in the sky and as I clamber up to my perch I catch a chill breeze around my neck and pull my jacket a little tighter. It's much later in the year as I pen this, and a frost still remains in the lee of the wall at the bottom of the garden, the weak midday sun didn't reach there and the light frost remains for another day. Across the garden the last remaining flowers of the chrysanthemum plants show a little colour amongst the brown blooms and foliage. New rhubarb crowns are nestled in a raised bed and newly planted small leaved eucalyptus bushes are establishing in the far raised beds outside of the poly tunnel. A few remaining scrubby apples, which avoided the eager hands of the pickers, still cling to the bare branches or peek from the grass at the foot of the tree and the odd tool (including a watering can!!) stands jauntily on someone's plot "But I didn't put it there sir!" will be the reply when challenged....how these tools have a strange ability to make their way from the warmth of the tool shed and lie themselves in a plot, exposed to all weathers baffles me!

Below me is our latest change, an area of wildflower/meadow flower mix which has been planted into the first of the demonstration plots, later to have early apple trees planted there as well. As we have reduced personnel in the department after Miss Nash left in the summer, we took the hard decision to take an area of land out of direct production, but instead to try to increase the diversity of the flora and fauna in the walled garden. A bug count showed us that we are lacking a number of species including depleted ladybird numbers and so we hope that this additional planting will help to improve this situation and the apple trees to be planted will increase the cropping season and thereby increase the availability of apples for juicing. I think back over a few weeks now when the cry of every practical group was "Can we go juicing, sir?" "I haven't done it yet, sir, please let me have a go" and then the eager hands collected the apples, washed and graded them, set up the equipment and pulped and juiced the apples. Keen hands dipped into the pumice and desperate tongues waited (not always so patiently) to taste the rich nectar of reward. Fresh apple juice....mmm. The bottled juice literally ran out of the doors, hardly were the bottles cooled before they were sold and consumed. Since the half term cider has been laid down and cider vinegar from last year's batch has been bottled. This is enthusiastically consumed by those not so young in years who wish to keep arthritis at bay (reputedly!).

The boys disappear around the corner to go back to their dorms and Mrs Stanley turns out the office lights. The office is now well and truly lived in and the stark white walls are festooned with photos taken by the boys of all things Horticultural. Even as I write, some year 10 lads are compiling a calendar for 2018 using some of those same photos.

A hen calls from the corner of the walled garden which is where the poultry club have temporary accommodation for their stock, to keep them out of Reynard's grasp. All rare breeds (the hens, not the boys, although some would question that point of view!!!) owned and kept by some of the boys, in the hope that they may show them later in the year.

I swing my legs back over the wall and look into the last rays of the sun and my mind races back to last spring and the usual activity and a glasshouse full of young seedlings, raised to fill the barrier troughs for the centre of Cannington. Once again the village gained a Gold in their category in the Southwest Britain in Bloom competition and the boys' work was noted and honoured by awarding them the Bruford Cup for Outstanding Contribution to the Community. Other plants were planted into hanging baskets and sold on Open Day, as well as borders or hanging baskets to grace the school and many more were sold. We had another successful Open Day Sale in June, which brought in needed funds to enable the department to keep going, providing facilities and tools for the boys.

The lads have had a number of trips out visiting a Garden centre, Knightshayes Court near Tiverton to look at their walled garden, a carnivorous plant grower, a strawberry farm and a peat regeneration project on the Somerset Levels. We also took 'sherpers' to the Powderham Castle show over the May Day weekend. We have had visits from a Garden Designer, a bee keeper, a cactus grower and a number of Primary Schools. As always this is a busy department.

The new group of HoDs have been excellent, led by our head boy, they have managed their tasks with maturity and encouraged the younger boys to do their best even when they did not want to be there! These senior boys are an important part of the Horticultural team which has seen a number of changes. Mrs Richards has moved across to help a year 9 pupil on a one to one basis and so we have welcomed Ms Briggs into the department for most of the time and Mrs Williams plus other TAs help out occasionally, for which we are very grateful with the increased class sizes. Most recently we hear that Ms Briggs is moving across to help English and so we have several TAs on an ad hoc basis helping us. I look forward to more permanent appointments onto the team. Mr Williams and Miss Marks also teach a few lessons of Horticulture too.

Back in the early summer we made Elderflower Cordial and later on Gooseberry and blackberry jelly were made and bottled. The summer saw a good crop of broad beans, peas, carrots and potatoes. We are already planning next years' cropping.

So the year draws on. The sun has gone and the shadows draw around me and I think about the harvest service, just in a few weeks ago, which reminded us of our need to cooperate with nature and recognise that we do not work alone, but we are just a part of a team. What can I do but prepare and sow, care and tend the crops? Yet, I am reliant on a higher power who brings the harvest. We are so fortunate to benefit from good soils and clement weather in this country and even though we have our challenges, these only make us stronger, resilient.

I jump down and lock the gate and doors, turn off lights, stand up a drunk wheelbarrow, pick up yet another brush, jauntily standing in my way to the sinks (it's funny how they are nowhere to be seen when you need one!), wash my hands and leave. Another day done, another year reprieved and a new day tomorrow with its challenges, boys to enthuse and teach, discipline and guide. I'll let you know how this year pans out in twelve months' time. Good night!!

## Rex Steer

Rex and his wife Pat have been awarded the Mendip Star Volunteer of the Year award in recognition of their contribution to the local community.

Rex has been a volunteer at 'Sorts' for the disabled held at the Bath & West showground for 35 years. Prior to the event he and his family prepare the site setting out the equipment, marking out and mowing the grass ready for the many activities over the four days of the games. He is the on-site maintenance man and also organises able bodies help for the contestants.

Rex is also a local fundraiser for skin cancer research at Frenchay hospital "S.C.A.R.F " for 30 years raising much needed funds. He first contracted malignant melanoma in 1985 due to his long career in farming so be warned readers keep your shirt on!!

Today Rex is using his culinary and gardening skills in the community, by cooking meals at his local church Rex roasts and makes pickles and chutneys to sell for charity as well as producing his own vegetables, flowers and fruit.

Rex and Pat went on to the regional finals and won "Star Volunteer of Somerset" and now have a Star named after them in the constellation of Andromeda.



**Rex and Pat Steer**

## Farm Report – Paul Kingston

These reports come around far too often and I hope that I don't end up repeating myself.

The autumn has treated us well with the weather. It has allowed us to re-seed two of the grazing fields around the school. They both came up well and have now been grazed by the store lambs. We decided to re-seed after using the plate-meter over the spring and summer, which revealed that the pastures were well past their use-by-date. This should result in better grazing and hopefully more milk from grass.

In September we started a pig growth experiment. Two groups of four, one group on ad-lib concentrate and the other on a weighed amount plus free access to fodder beet. Both groups housed indoors. The other two groups were on ad-lib concentrate and fodder beet with one group housed and the other outdoors. The pigs are now getting to a weight of 75-80kg and being sold as they get there. The outdoor group look as if they are going to be the last to get there.

We must thank Tim Rowe at the local bio-digester for donating the beet.

The ewes have all been synchronized and have been put to the various selected rams. They will now be scanned in January to confirm pregnancies and exactly how many lambs to expect (roughly).

The final beef cattle were brought in to be housed in December. The ground has held up extremely well with the grass still growing although they were being buffer fed with silage.

We had to sell four store cattle leading up to housing as space was an issue, but they sold really well at Sedgemoor Auction Centre.

The dairy shorthorn cows have now all calved (both cows and heifers) and milking really well. As a bonus we now have two dairy SH calves. We have also purchased another heifer with 100% dairy shorthorn genetics, bringing the total to three now. We have used A.I. on the first one using a 100% bull. The plan is to continue to still replace the rest of the Holstein/Friesians with DSH.

The turkeys have now been prepared for the season ahead. The killing was observed by some yr. 10's who then went on to pluck them. I was very impressed with the care that they took over the job. This allowed the boys to follow the enterprise from beginning to end.

We have recently picked up an older beef shorthorn cow and are working with the Rare Breed Survival Trust to hopefully harvest some embryos from her to use on future occasions. This is a very rare cow with genetics going back to the 1940's. Interesting times ahead!

Lambs have been sorted and finished sold through either SAC or to our loyal customers as halves or wholes. This leaves us a few stores and the ewe lambs to take us through the winter.

## From the Editors Chair

I would like to thank all those 'Old Boys' who have submitted articles for this edition of the Spur, without your input it would be a very light read indeed.

As well as articles I am on the lookout for old photographs and the story behind them, always a talking point.

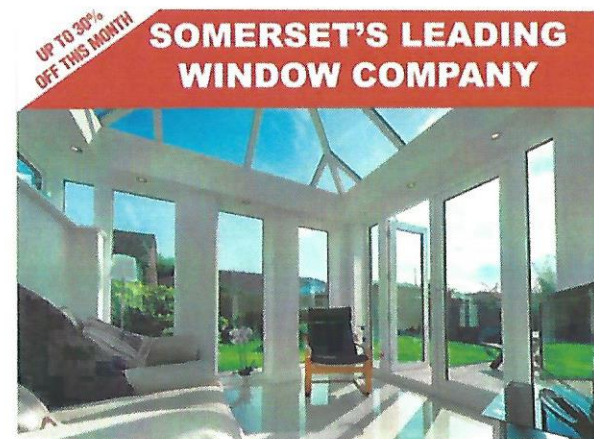
Apologies for the lateness of this edition, I blame the short half term!

### Zaid Elmrbati - Head Boy

This year has been extremely busy for me and my senior student leadership team, who have had to carry out many tough duties. Boys are starting to attend college Open Days and interviews, making the prospect of leaving feel more realistic.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Brymore, especially thanks to all the sports I have taken part in, like athletics, cricket and rugby and all the training that comes alongside these. In year 10 our rugby team won the Sedgemoor Area Finals with a comfortable yet hard fought 41 – 0 win over Bridgwater College Academy and have also made it to the finals as a year 11 XV team, where we will play Haygrove. Sport has become a huge thing for me since I started at Brymore and I hope to carry it on when I leave.

Brymore has encouraged me to get more involved in not just sport but life as a whole, the opportunities the school have given me are endless and I intend to join the Old Brymorian's so that I can give back to the school and help a fellow Brymore boy.



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