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Chairman's Report

Welcome to this, the 15th edition of The Spur. At the time of writing these few words, we are fast approaching the winter months: the clocks have changed and one's mind turns to hoping for better things in 2021. Well, I am trying to be optimistic, 2020 has been the strangest of years with the Covid-19 virus ruling our lives. I am afraid there seems to be no end to this pandemic, although we have been given a glimmer of hope now that 3 vaccines have been announced, but yet to be finally given approval as proven to be preventative against the virus.

Like so many people I have never before read so many books, done so many crosswords or odd jobs. What I believe is that many of us miss the social contact of our families and friends – even our Jack Russell terrier feels socially isolated as he is very much a people person.

On the Brymore front, or should I say the Old Brymorian's Association, this year has been extremely quiet. Our last Committee meeting was in March 2020, and as you are aware there was no Open Day and Country Fair, so no Summer Draw or Annual General Meeting. Looking on the bright side, we as an Association, through prudent housekeeping, were able to meet our financial commitments for the pupils we support financially for the academic year commencing September 2020/21. What happens in the future remains to be seen.

As usual I extend my heart-felt thanks to all of you who support the OBA in so many ways, whether it be financially with donations, kind words, or just your very presence at our events. The Brymore spirit will prevail.

Peter Harris



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Head Teachers Report

I think it is an understatement to say that it has been a difficult year for the Brymore community, the country as a whole and indeed the world itself. I remember speaking to Mr Spridgens just before the country went into lockdown and we discussed how this would be one of the most challenging periods in the school's history, if not the most challenging. However from the minute we were informed that schools were 'closing' (not that they ever did) the response from staff was staggering, across all areas of the school. Understandably staff, parents and boys had many concerns to deal with, from the safety of their family, financial uncertainty and of course the demands of home schooling. The CEO of Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust very quickly made the decision to refund all boarding fees from the moment the boys went home to try and assist parents in difficult times. This cost to the school was in excess of £500,000 in lost revenue which was nowhere near matched by the associated savings. The Trust also arranged for free school meal vouchers to be distributed and laptops/internet access to be provided for all those who were eligible, weeks before the government schemes were launched.

All staff, (teaching and support), quickly agreed they wanted to deliver live online lessons rather than simply sending work home and we were one of the first state schools in Somerset where this happened. Not only were boys being taught live, but tutorials took place live and even the new Year 6 boys were invited. This was all part of our determination to do what we could to look after the mental health of the Brymore family, as much as deliver online learning. We also tried to telephone every family every week which continued through the summer holidays as staff chose to give up their own time in order to continue to support those in need. In all over 3000 contacts home were made during this time.

As a staff team we felt it was important to keep the Brymore community spirit going and with that in mind we produced numerous videos and vlogs ranging from virtual assemblies, a virtual awards ceremony and even a virtual water fight. Boys and their families also got involved through sharing numerous photos and videos of projects and work that they were completing at home. The Senior Student Leadership team also organised a staff versus student's quiz, which they ran themselves.

Throughout this time we were also producing detailed plans for re-opening the school in September, despite ever changing guidance. We held two staff meetings every week to formulate and refine these plans and these meeting again continued throughout the holidays at the request of staff. We were determined that we were going to keep as much of Brymore going as was possible, so we insisted on the wearing of face masks and hand sanitising on entry to every room right from the start, long before the government advised all schools to do this. As you would expect Brymore boys took this responsibility very seriously which is why we have been able to continue to offer activities, practical lessons and PE ever since we returned to school. This has also been possible because we have not brought one supply teacher into school this term. This is because staff attendance has been excellent and the fact that support staff have offered to cover lessons. This is unheard of and has saved the school thousands of pounds. The virtual Harvest Festival and Christmas Carol service may not be the same, but they are other example of trying to keep the Brymore spirit going.

I often say how proud I am to be the Headteacher of Brymore and never more so than I am today. It has been a privilege to lead the Brymore family through what have been very challenging times made so much easier by the attitude, determination and support from staff, parents, boys and all those connected to Brymore. I am determined the Brymore ethos and traditions will live on, and look forward to welcoming the whole community back again, hopefully on Open Day 2021.

From the Editor's Chair

Well, this has been an interesting year; working from home, not easy as a librarian! Coming back into school to socially distance, boys in 'bubbles', staff standing in wide spread circles, looking like a badly formed pass the parcel game.

The staff are striving to ensure that school life goes on as near to normality as possible. All the while continually chanting 'sanitise' & 'mask'.

School Remembrance November 2020

Like the rest of the country, Remembrance Day was a muted event, with a two minute silence at 11 observed by the entire school, who lined up along the drive in their lesson bubbles all wearing face masks. It was a sober time.

The Old Boys Association was represented by a younger member, Ethan Carr, who left last year and had made as his DT Project, which he presented to the school, a container to hold the poppies for this and future years.



Mark Thomas with the Senior Student Leadership Team and Ethan Carr

Honorary Treasurer's Report

My position as Treasurer has been relatively easy this past year: no monies and draw tickets to worry about from Open Day and no Pym's Night Supper to organise. We appealed to our members to consider a donation to OBA funds as there was no Summer Draw in place, and some members took advantage of this and increased the account by over £1000, so thank you to those who contributed that way. The OBA accounts were audited and approved but there has been no AGM this year meaning the committee continues as it stands for the present time.

At our last committee meeting in March 2020 we agreed to continue to support the 6 pupils with a proportion of their boarding fees to the tune of £10,000. We already had this money in the bank account, as £3,334 has been returned from the Academy in July as there had been no boarders for the Summer term. We then had a request from the parent of a year 11 pupil for emergency funding for September and after consulting all the committee members another £1500 was given.

It is very obvious that the monies which will be available for September 2021 to July 2022 will be considerably less, so fund raising with our Summer Draw will be very high on the agenda at the next Open Day.

Thank you for your continued support of the Association, and if any of you are in touch with past pupils from Brymore who are not members of the OBA, please encourage them to join us, and thereby increasing the bank account balances, enabling more funds to be given to the pupils and staff at Brymore for varying projects if the need arises.

Jenny Harris



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Over the Garden Wall

It's all change this year as I climb up over the abandoned fencing to perch on the North West corner of the walled garden. I sit on the brand new, shiny grey coping stones which cap off the newly built section of the wall. The autumnal sun has warmed the stones and I sit, high up, unnoticed as a group of Year 9 students enter the walled garden, barrows and forks in hand. Mrs Osborne (the 'new' part time technician) is with them as they approach one of the raised beds and set about digging up the parsnips which are growing there. Later they will wash and grade them ready for sale, and Mel will admit to me that she has had enough of teenage boys and their innuendos about the aforementioned vegetable. Maybe we will use Years 7 or 8 to do it next time, they are generally more innocent!!

Beneath the apple trees there is another group of boys, with Mrs Franks (my full time TA) collecting apples, the better ones for juicing and the rotten ones destined for the compost heap, although whether they make it that far or end up being dumped short of the heap will very much depend on whether a member of staff is standing over the pupil to make sure they get where they are supposed to be going. The group's efforts are not as successful as we may wish, mainly because these teenagers are keen to try the delicious looking fruit. When given free reign they always go for the cider apples because of their vivid colours but their screwed up grimaces show they do not make for pleasant eating. A few boys head towards the pears, only to find them swarming in wasps.

I can't see Mrs Stanley (the Head Technician) because she and her lads are down in the potting shed where apples are washed and crushed and the resulting pomace is squeezed to get all the juice possible from it. The remainder is sent down to the farm to be eaten by the pigs! No waste here!! Yet I muse to myself over pork and apple sauce, pigs and apple pomace. The resultant juice (if we can stop the lads from swigging a sly mouthful or two) will be bottled, sterilised, capped and labelled and then sold on the Friday afternoon stall. Some will be added to pear juice, some spiced, but it matters not, it will all sell to ready buyers and the boys are involved in each of these stages and of course, as we near the end of the lesson, there has to be the taste test and general approval of all the lads.

We managed to take the lads on a few trips, visiting the walled garden at Knightshayes, where we saw the beauty of a Victorian garden, crop rotation, unusual plants and topiary and Westhay Moor to see the peat regeneration scheme, to bounce on the mire and to marvel at the tiny sundew plants nestled amongst the fluffy sphagnum moss. We have been to Westhay in May in previous years when we saw grass snakes as well, but to better compliment the year 8 theory I brought the trip forward and as it turns out what a blessing. Straight after Christmas we were seed sowing, pricking out ("No, Sir! Not more! We did that LAST week!" I check my records "It was actually 3 weeks ago that you did that last!!"), potting on and pruning. It is so strange how boys remember vividly the things they want to avoid, but cannot remember the essential information we want them to retain. We had a greenhouse full of plants ready for the summer bedding for both here at school and for Cannington in Bloom and thenLOCKDOWN! A new word that has entered our everyday parlance and means so much, yet has different connotations for each of us.

FRANCIS HUNT – A DAY TO REMEMBER

Sixty years ago I was in my last term at Brymore and I cycled from my home at Floodgate Farm, Durleigh to school.

Floodgate was part of the Cricket Malherbie Estate and my father was the Manager.

On arriving home from school mother met me with the news that Claudine, a friend, had phoned to ask if I would be interested in an exchange visit with a Swiss boy. He would stay with us to improve his English for July, and then we would travel to Italy to stay in his family villa for the month of August.

Father then came in "You had better come out and see this" he said. We went out into the yard and in a dark corner box was a golden coloured heifer. "What breed is that?" I said. "It's a Charolais/Ayrshire cross" father replied. It had arrived that afternoon from Cricket Malherbie.

At that time there was a big debate going on in farming circles as to whether to allow European beef breeds into the country. Apparently some straws of semen had been smuggled into the UK in a thermos flask and used on several farms. This was the only successful birth.

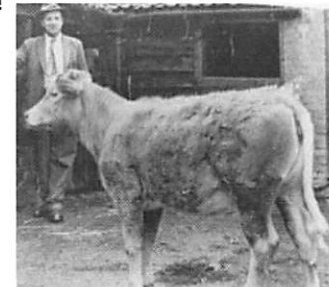
MAFF and Customs & Excise were on the trail of the heifer. She was moved the next day to a farm near Cheltenham. I was of course sworn to secrecy.

The next day at school I went into the Library and the headline in the Farming Express read "Somewhere in England" with a picture of the heifer.

By 1962/63 Charolais bulls had been imported to A1 Centres and in 1965 the first import of Charolais heifers arrived. Soon after that all the other European beef breeds were allowed into the country.

Yes, I had my holiday in Italy, traveling with Raoul on the Golden Arrow to Paris and then the night Blue Train to Ventimiglia. Swimming, snorkelling, eating new foods and gaining a love of wine!

The 1st June, 1961 was definitely a day to remember!



**The heifer with Sandy Copland, M.D.
Cricket Malherbie**

Training to be a Teacher during a Global Pandemic

I have been studying at Plymouth Marjon University for many years now and I am finally completing my PGCE teacher training at the age of 24. This has come during a crazy time! With the pandemic dramatically impacting so many areas of our life it is scary to be training to teach our young and upcoming generation at this time. There is a sort of irony to sitting behind a computer all day for our lectures, feeling the irritation, demotivation, and boredom that some of our young pupil's experience during each of their current online lessons.

I am sure many of us have felt anxieties and pressures in recent months. For many of our pupils, this is tenfold. Their social development has become very rocky, attention span has dropped, and pupils' general ability to recall behaviour and good habits has vastly slipped. Aspects of life that adults have learnt over many years, children are still developing; much progress in this development is lost during this time. The initiative and creativity that teachers are exploring today to maintain their delicate links with pupils also comes with a toll on meeting their expectations. Understanding the children, being available, and exploring new topics through practical environments are some of the things that underpin great teachers, and the limitations right now are very tough.

For my own experience as a teacher in training, much of my in-school experience will not come during this academic year. School teaching next year is a somewhat scary prospect. Not only do we, as teachers, have to help pupils re-adjust to their peers, routines, and focus to learning, but we must also re-adjust ourselves. Wherever you are, whatever you do, please stay safe and continue to support everyone, we all need it, especially our youngsters.

Harry Orr

2010 – 2015 Plus an additional year as a 'Gap' student
Committee Member

The Horticultural Department have 2021 Calendars for sale £5. Each month has a photograph taken around the school by boys entering a competition. If interested please contact Jo.Franks@brymoreacademy.co.uk payment can be made via the finance office

As a team (and I am VERY grateful to the others in the team!) we decided we HAD to come into school to keep the plants growing but the pressure was on to do everything on our own. We came in one day each per week, although Fiona visited every day and Mel came in twice a week as time went on. Then we had keyworker boys helping us, but I did a lot of sieving and sterilising soil, sieving leaf mould and then making up our own compost for all the potting that needed to be completed when I attended. We prepared the walled garden plots and planted cucurbits, tended the potatoes, watering being the main issue this Spring. The barrier baskets and other hanging baskets were planted up and eventually delivered to bloom through the summer. But what to do with produce and plants which normally parents would have purchased? Mrs Kingston the farm manager's wife offered to have a stall outside of their house and they did a roaring trade as local people passed on their daily exercise and were pleased to be able to buy our plants. B.H. White in the village sold plants for us and Blackmore Farm Shop took produce. Mrs Osborne set up a stall at the end of her drive too and beside other orders which came in we found enough outlets to sell our produce and not waste anything.

The sun has dipped behind the trees and a chill wind whips around me and so I clamber down passing the berry bushes which dripped with fruit in the summer and gave us and the boys, hours of fruit picking! The rhubarb, now past its prime is stocking up its crown ready for next season and the wild flower meadow, which was alive with activity in the height of summer (not with boys but much smaller residents) looks unkempt and sad.

I pass groups of socially distanced lads, some with face masks, as they get used to the new routine and protocol caused by the pandemic, but the work has to go on. Tools are washed and left outside of the tool shed to be disinfected before they are returned to their hanging places. Boots and hands are washed, not always as thoroughly as they should. How many times has the conversation gone... "Have you washed your boots and your hands?" The individual stands before me with boots carrying half a plot of soil and hands which are only 'teenager clean' "Yes sir!" is the swift response but, being the mean Head of department that I am, I insist on a degree or two more cleanliness than was at present being displayed. Some lads think its ok to bend down and "wash" their hands in the dirty puddle of water that has gathered by the department gate. Teenager or not, methinks there is a need for soap (anathema to male teens) and clean water.

Masks in confined spaces and hand gel, year group bubbles and split lunch and break times came into being in September but the plants keep growing. A new year group meant fresh gardeners all eager to have plots and before you know it the compost heap has swollen to twice its size, wheelbarrow loads of tools track up and down to the walled garden and plots are transformed. Boys are learning respect for nature, the joy of working with the soil and the intrigue of seeds and bulbs bursting into life and producing a harvest.

The garden is the best place to be in the middle of a pandemic and long may its tranquillity and beauty linger in our hearts and minds. I close my classroom door, gel my hands once more and head home, another day done. **Reuben Willcocks – Head of Horticulture 7**

After Brymore – What Came Next

I left Brymore in July 1955 after 3 fabulous years. Our year was the first to start when the school opened in September 1952.

Soon after leaving, I managed to get holiday work on a farm in Lincolnshire helping with the harvesting. A lot of the corn grown there was cut by binder and had to be stooked up to dry. Combining was in its infancy. Peas were another crop grown and potatoes. It took a whole day to get there from Weston-super-Mare to Market Rasen by train.

Second Sunday there, I was taken to Cadwell Park to watch motorcycling. John Surtees was racing and won his 4 races including the final. John Surtees went onto become World Motorbike Champion and World Formula Champion, the only person to be World Champion of both. He should have been knighted!

I subsequently went to the Somerset Farm Institute from 1955 to 1956. After leaving, I got a job as Under Cowman on a farm near Sturminster Newton in Dorset. I worked alongside 2 Italians and a Cowman who came directly from the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester 2 months after I arrived. We lived in a farm cottage and looked after ourselves. No electricity or gas and we had an Elsan toilet.

I stuck it out for 6 months and then got a job as a Cowman on a Somerset County Council farm at Over Stowey, near Nether Stowey. Along with the cows, the farm had 2,000 layers reared from a day old, half were kept in cages and half in deep litter. This is where I got my poultry knowledge – 2,000 layers in 1956 was a lot! Back then, a packing station at Edingworth took the eggs.

We used to fork through the litter once a week and would find a number of buried eggs, some would get rejected at the packing station, unsurprisingly! One Saturday, the farmer gave me a cockerel to take home, but I had to kill it and pluck it. It had a very thick neck and once I thought I had killed it and plucked it, I put it on the floor to clear up the feathers. However, it got up and walked away! Soon after the farmer came back from playing football, he killed it for me!

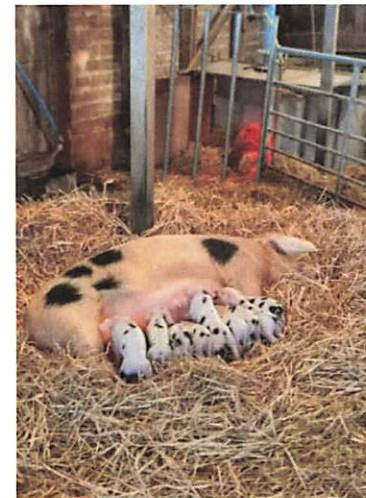
I left the farm after 12 months and got a job as a Cowman on a farm in West Harptree where I gradually built up an egg laying unit on a 2 acre site in West Harptree.

I joined the NFU in 1960-61 and have been a member ever since. I became Chairman of the Wessex Poultry Committee doing three 3 year stints, the only one to do so. I spent several years on the UK's Headquarters Poultry Committee becoming Vice Chairman for several years until it all changed and the NFU moved out of London to Stoneleigh in Warwickshire.

I took part in the first ever farming programme on HTV which took nearly all day to film in the 1980s. The person who did the interviewing told me 2 or 3 years later

Early this year we bought 2 Gloucester Old Spot sows from Will Male a current Brymore boy, they are called Dotty and Doris, and borrowed a GOS boar from a local small holding, which meant that in July we had our first litter of piglets here in quite a few years. We have just had another litter of 10 piglets born and are expecting more in March. This has really allowed our meat sales to improve this year with sausages and pork joints often available. The last day of term we had pork, lamb and turkeys available, this was really well supported by staff and parents at Brymore and we completely sold out!

Beth Parker – Assistant Farm Manager



New Farm Building

Dotty and piglets

Farm Report

Well! What a year we have had. We were very lucky to fit our lambing day in at the beginning of the year before coronavirus struck and lockdown began. We have had a couple of staff changes here on the farm this year as we have appointed Mr Miller as our new Farm Technician, Miss Parker is now our Assistant Farm Manager and Miss Marks as the Head of Agriculture We are hoping that along with Mr Kingston, and our new facilities we can all work together to really push the farm onto bigger and better things in 2021. Can you believe that a whole year has passed since the grand opening of our new parlour and classroom facilities? We made the big decision to go to Autumn block calving so we started our sync programme at the beginning of November. We have now scanned the cows and we did well with 13 cows being in calf with only a hand full needing to be served again. Currently we are looking into the viability of installing a milk vending machine here at Brymore with the possibilities of other products then being available to purchase on site too. We have a market research survey we would like you to take part in if you would be kind enough to, Please contact Beth.parker@brymoreacdemt.co.uk and she will send you the link.

During the March lockdown we undertook some much-needed repairs to our poultry area at Cockle Park, after losing all off our chickens to the fox. We have put up electric fencing and a much taller fence which seemed to be working before December saw us needing to bring them inside due to the avian influenza outbreak. They are now in a pen in our new shed, and the warm environment and artificial light seems to be encouraging them to lay very well so we therefore we always have a stock of freshly laid eggs for sale for £1 a ½ dozen at Brymore Lodge.

We purchased 15 North Country Mules back in the summer bringing our numbers back up to just over 80 ewes. All the ewes have all been sponged this year by the Year 9's which ticks off a box within their BTEC certificate. Scanning took place early January unfortunately due to Covid regulations only a few of our boys were in school to get the benefits of seeing this this year, but we are really pleased with a scanning percentage of 196% so we are sure to have a busy March on our hands. Our new shed is up and being used so we are looking forward to being able to lamb in our new facilities improving our lamb rearing percentage due to having more space if this horrible weather carries on!

he was paid £14 for the day!

Myself and 2 others organised a video of the Poultry Industry in the 80's to give to schools to show what it was all about. Clinton Rodgers organised the filming and Ally Vowles did the narration, both are still on Points West. The NFU wouldn't contribute towards the cost so we raised the money ourselves.

I took part in the making of a film on Farming by Bristol University's film unit which I was assured was totally genuine and had nothing to do with animal rights etc but this turned out to be the case. The person in charge of the unit had something to do with one of those groups. Nearly a year later, I had a phone call from someone to say that they'd seen my poultry unit on TV regarding the film. To cut a long story short, the University film unit got shut down!

I took part in a BBC series called 'Life Science'. The lady who was involved in this part of the filming was Audrey Eyton who wrote diet books amongst other things and was very anti farming practices. She also invented the F Plan Diet and wrote a book on this.

Still in the 1980s, I took part in 2 blockades of Plymouth port and 2 blockades of Poole's ferry port. At the time, we were being flooded with cheap French eggs. At the blockades, we also had the support of strawberry growers who were having the same problem. The person who organised the blockades was an ex- army major and had it well drilled. After the second Plymouth blockade, I left the port about an hour after everybody else and coming back up the A38, a French lorry loaded with eggs was being unloaded from the back by a number of people who had been at the docks. 40 to 50 30 dozen boxes had been taken off and dumped down over the bank of the layby. I got them to stop taking anymore off, they'd made their point and I had just passed a police Range Rover parked in a layby on the other side of the A38. This hit the headlines next day in the Press and on the TV. But, it had the desired effect and virtually put an end to the eggs coming across the Channel. I wonder what the French would have done if it had been the other way around?

Still in the 80's, we went on a march in London to do with the same thing, but this time organised by the NFU. The NFU didn't want anything to do with the port blockades, but its members did. The march set off from the Eggs Authority Headquarters in London on a set route which took us past the turning that led up to the French Embassy. By then, we had broken up into smaller groups and we had the TV and Press along with us. Just before we got to the turning, they tried to get us to go up the turning and would supply us with eggs to throw at the Embassy and we refused to go and after a number of attempts, they gave up and then disappeared and we didn't see them again.

In the late 80's, I took part in 2 Panorama programmes dealing with the Salmonella Issue in the late 1980s, caused by Edwina Currie, who ended up losing her job as Health Secretary.

At the end of the 1980s, I went on Concorde to Rome and also won a 16 day holiday with the lowest number of rejects in a flock of old hens that went through the factory in 1987. The holiday prize was a safari in Kenya followed by the Seychelles.

I did a piece for Points West that ended up out going out on all the BBC TV News programmes during the day. The last main TV we did was with Country File in November 2011 over the European cage ban that was coming into force at the end of that year. It was done with John Craven and he had to do his introduction 10 or 12 times before he got it right, quite funny to watch!

A Daily Mail reporter came to do a piece on cage egg production and free range, he took all his notes from his questions and what he had seen, mailed his article in for the following day's paper. We bought the next day's Mail and each one for the following week, but there was no article.

I gave the reporter a call and he said it wasn't what they wanted. There you have it -he said he could only report on what he'd seen honestly!

You might ask how I got involved in so much of this sort of thing; it was due to my involvement with the NFU. Hardly anyone wanted to stick their head above the parapet and were afraid of the Animal Rights people, we had a good unit and didn't mind people looking at it.

Having said that, we did get attacked by the ALF animal rights group twice in 1981: the first time, they sprayed the vans with paint stripper and slashed the tyres and the second time was when we were grading the eggs on a Christmas morning and a chap came in and threatened to blow the shed up!

In between all of this, my wife, Gillian and I had 4 children and once they had all grown up, we walked the whole of the Southwest coastal path that starts in Minehead and finishes at Poole, Dorset. We started in 1993 and finished the last 150 of the 630 miles in 2000 – absolutely stunning!

**Peter Wood 1952-1955
Committee Member**

FARM BAILIFFS REPORT, 1968

This year we have had a fairly good year. At Whitsun new Heads of Departments took over the Farm. We thank all last year's heads of departments for all the work they did in obtaining such good results for the year.

The most important project of the year was the grain silos, which have been built opposite the farm office, with a blower, able to blow 5 tons of corn an hour, across to the malshed. It's cost was about £135. Boys have gained no end of building experience this year, because of the grain silos.

We have had some hard work with one of the cows - I name! She failed the T.B. test and had to be slaughtered, we are now clear of T.B.

A lift above the parlour has now been put up to accommodate the dairy milk, so it can be tipped into the bins with less trouble than before. A pulley is used to get the milk up into the lift.

Over the summer holidays, the old T.20 was sold and we bought the old 135 that we previously had on hire. We now have a new M.F.135 which we hire off Mansey Ferguson.

The pig department is still going strong with 21 sows, six gilts and an average of 60 fatteners. We still look after the P.I.D.A. Boar, which belongs to the Bridgewater "A" Group Association of Farmers. We now also have a P.I.D.A. Boar of our own. The arks have now been re-arranged for more convenient cleaning out and feeding. General work of this department has gone on throughout the year.

The sheep have again been very lucky with breeding and with our young lambs. The sheep have been down at Combsuch for the past few months. There are 12 ewes down at Combsuch at the moment and 14 were up here at Brymore. We again used synchronator on some of the ewes, which we hope will turn out as successful as last year. In that all the ewes lambed within a fortnight of the first one.

The beef department this year, have again held their own. They are increasing slowly, but surely, their number of cwt.

The poultry are still progressing rapidly and are maintaining their number of hens. At the moment we have 150 Double "A" J hens and 140 Stirling white links. They are selling their eggs to the school kitchens and also to S.P.M.A.

We have plenty of straw and hay this year unlike some others. (Some 10 tons of hay were made at home).

The Farm Laboratory is still progressing, although rather slowly at the moment, but we hope to have it finished before Christmas.

This year we have been able to get hold of Mr. Parkhouse's field for the year, where we have put in potatoes and also potatoes in the top of York field. The rest of our fields, Poole Field, Front Drive, bottom York field, Mark Hill's field and Little Cow Field are into grass. Cattle park is down to kale.

SCHOOL NOTES

Brymore Governors:

Appointed by the Local Education Authority: Mr. S. C. Morland, Mr. A. Whitaker.

Appointed by the Divisional Executive: Mr. G. O. Lockyer, Mr. H. Morris.

Appointed by the Agricultural Education Sub-Committee: Mr. J. G. Gilling, Mr. M. O. Hill.

Mr. M. A. Jeanes (Chairman), Mr. G. R. Sargeant.

Additional Governors: Mr. R. T. Addicott, Mr. A. W. Clarke, Mr. P. Hobbhouse, Mr. N. F. James, Mrs. M. Mervon, Mr. H. F. Scott-Stokes, Mrs. G. V. Sellack.

School Staff in December, 1968:

Teaching: *Mr. R. Adcock, *Mr. A. L. Hemming, *Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. W. H. Evans, *Mr. C. P. Munro, Mr. J. G. Froese, Rev. E. J. Small, Mr. M. C. Miller, *Mr. D. Daggard, *Mr. M. F. Shotton, *Mr. J. Flood-Page, *Mr. R. D. Myerscough, Mr. M. A. P. Ferguson, Mr. R. Howard, Mr. D. E. Miller. (*Housemaster).

Lab/Workshop Technicians: Mr. E. N. Marmott.

Matrons: Mrs. G. R. Adcock, Mrs. F. J. Campson, Mrs. J. Baker, Mrs. M. Shotton.

Secretary: Mrs. P. Attwell.

Clerical Assistant: Mrs. W. M. Hutchins.

Caretakers: Mr. L. Butler, Mr. Harry Williams.

*Outdoors: Gardens—*Jim Williams, Alf Coombe. *Farm—sweeney, General—*Arthur Short.

*Kitchens—*Mrs. N. Palmer—Cook; Mrs. V. Barrett—Assistant Cook; Mrs. J. Aldridge.

Mrs. G. Cotley, Mrs. L. Dabnett, Mrs. A. Hampton, Mrs. M. Bu'Lock, Mrs. B. Gange, Mrs. M. Jones.

Domestic Staff:

School House: Mrs. H. Butler, Mrs. R. Evered, Mrs. J. Jenkins, Mrs. H. Marsh, Mrs. K. Pearson.

Cannington House: Mrs. G. Hurley, Mrs. E. Kingmill.

School: Mrs. F. Lukins, Mrs. P. Kable.

Prefects and Monitor 1968/69:

Head Boy: M. S. Roach, *Deputy Head Boy:* R. A. Greenway.

Prefects: R. J. Brooks, R. Campbell, A. J. Churchouse, D. S. Clark, M. A. Curtis, R. A. Fry, J. M. Pearson, P. Tipsey, P. W. Tipping, S. Wotton.

Special Duty Prefects: M. C. Cooper (Farm Bailiff), N. J. Johnson, M. R. Kemo.

Day-boy Prefect: P. D. Harding.

School House Monitors: M. J. Bowen, J. Norman, P. E. J. Cotley (Library), S. T. Hutchings (Workshops).

Cannington House Prefect: P. R. Griffiths.

Cannington House Monitors: W. L. Boley, T. R. Champion, S. W. Duxing, I. G. Ford, N. D. R. McKaiguz, T. J. Passmore.

Numbers Autumn Term, 1968

Boarders 151

Dayboys 45

196

Brymore Sports Report

After such a fun and enjoyable one and a half terms of the last academic year, things took a turn for the worse in March. No final match for the Year 11, no house finals, no last 3 cheers to Year 11 fitness, no sports day, no athletics or area tournaments to be champions of, county vests not awarded and unfortunately the list goes on.

Since September we have done our best to keep things as normal as possible, rugby practices have continued, following the strict guidelines from the RFU. Unfortunately no fixtures for our boys who feel the injustice as much as any rugby fan will but we hold out hope for fixtures at some point before the Spring Term is over. Numbers in attendance at practices have still been good and hope they increase as the prospect of matches begin.

Chads (post-Bypass route of 3km) has continued, boasting good weekly numbers with lots of the new boys keen to participate. There was a slight change of route during lockdown 2 which meant that they could still run but around the school instead of out in the community!

Fitness has been limited to just the rugby players to ensure social distancing and manageable numbers on the MUGA. Unfortunately circuits and hockey practice has just not been achievable, with current restrictions and ensuring that we have enough staff on rugby, chads and fitness just stretches us too far. However support staff have been great at coming to assist with Chads, both running and also taking names so that we can ensure hygiene measures in place as best as possible.

We held the annual Cross Country but within the year group Games lessons, a notable highlight was a very long standing Year 10 record, held by Brymore Legend Ben Gibbs, being broken by James Ford, who had an epic race with Alex "Chads" Jennings. Year 7-9 have been taking part in a virtual area XC, in which we have submitted times over set distances, we look forward to getting the results back. Also we are ever hopeful that Somerset Schools Athletics Association will be able to host the County XC trials in the New Year.

Front Drive Back Drive continues, it's the post bypass route (down through School, up behind the walled gardens on Mr Bakers track and then down the far hedge of the Sports field, finishing where the Cross Country has always finished, under the big tree by the pavilion).



**Spur Cover page,
Quantocks 1968.
Gordon Ferguson,
Merv Rich, John
Foster and Steve
Boalch**



**Brymore Heads of Departments late 1968 or early
1969**

The traditional Brymore fitness test continues, currently it has moved from the hall and is being completed on the MUGA.

We have had an ECB table cricket coach visit and train 6 worthy Year 8 leaders, in preparation for supporting the Area and County Finals and with an aim to offer some sort of table cricket provision with school.

The sports noticeboard has gone online for the time being to ensure crowds of boys checking out their times is depleted and with Microsoft Teams becoming a virtual teaching resource, it seems only right that PE/Games got in on the act.

One real downside of the current restrictions is that in PE/Games/Friday Activities and other sporting activities boys have had to remain in their year groups. Older boys have always traditionally lead younger years or just worked together and especially for those Year 10 and 11 sports leaders it really is something they are missing out on.

I set out writing this thinking I would have little to report, however in true Brymore tradition, we have just got on with things in the best way we can!

Lloyd Williams PE Department



MEMORIES

Clearing through my office (as one does every 20 years or so,) I found a copy of the 1968 Spur. It is complete and has seen better days, but thought you may be interested in 3 of the pages and a school photo attached.

1. The Spur 1968, Farm Bailiffs Report
2. The Spur 1968 School Staff
3. The Spur cover Page Quantocks 1968. Gordon Ferguson, Merv Rich, John Foster and Steve Boalch
4. Heads of Department picture 1968 or 69

I could name a high proportion of the boys, but did not want to embarrass myself with those I could not remember!!

This was an important part of Brymore farms history, as the Farm Manager Ian (Beefy) Walker, (first on the left) was about to emigrate to Australia. His time at Brymore was so important as he had turned the farm into a commercial unit and although with a limited acreage, Beefy farmed the school farm intensively, certainly for the late 60s.

The issue with Beefy's departure was that the school was without a Farm Manager for about 4 months and therefore had to be run by the third year boys as heads of departments under the supervision of John Floodpage (2nd from the left) and Tony Edwards (3rd from the left), let's say both were more academic than practical. During the holidays local day boys carried out the work until Roger Huxter arrived in spring 1969.

As farm bailiff, I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the farm with a great team of friends and needed no encouragement to help Roger Huxter get to know the farm business.

What an education Brymore was, I may not have left the school with a long list of academic achievements, but I did leave well prepared for life and the REAL world!

Mike Cooper

1966 to 1970 Boarder,

1966 – 1967 Cannington House

1967 – 1970 Brymore School House

We were ferried in trams to the gaudy building where we filed in fours around the leader's embalmed body. On leaving the building overseas visitors were asked to write an appropriate comment in the visitor's book and were then featured on the evening's TV news. Spooky seeing yourself on the evening's television news.

I must have scored well with my presentation as I was invited back for a return visit, much to my wife's horror. On my second visit I was in the same hotel and again issued with a special coloured currency so any movements away from the hotel could be monitored although it was difficult to leave the hotel without uninvited accompaniment. The hotel food struggled to reach utterly average but all western foods and luxury goods were available at special shops where party members and visitors could shop with hard currency, not unlike the old East European days.

I was arrested and returned to my hotel on one occasion when I tried to get on the underground, although from what I saw it would have made a much better visit than the theme park where Health and Safety would have had a field day. It was noticeable how many of the city's population were in some form of uniform and many of the school children jogged to school in lines singing revolutionary songs. On some days in Pyongyang the power was turned off at midday and occupants of trams alighted and pushed the vehicle to the depot. Alas my photographs of the event were never developed as my film was confiscated and from then on I could only photograph when given permission.

My visits certainly gave me something different and proved a fascinating insight into a country where the majority of the population had absolutely no idea of what was happening in the outside world and a powerful mechanism was in place to make sure it stayed that way. My enduring memories of a concrete city with empty highways and a tired countryside, with little colour and virtually no humour, will stay with me for the duration.

Alan Lavers

A PASSION PASSED BETWEEN GENERATIONS

By Lissy Carr

Back in the mid-1990s my husband, Nick Carr (Brymore 1995-1997), would look after the Brymore herd of British Lop pigs when on farm duties; a time he remembers well. When we attended the open day a couple of years ago, Nick was disappointed there were no pigs being kept at the time. It was therefore interesting to see recently, that the School now have a Gloucester Old Spot sow and piglets once again. During and after his time at Brymore, Nick had his own sow at home and his interest in keeping and breeding pigs continued a short while. Now, it seems, that interest has passed on a generation (probably no coincidence!). Going back a further generation, Nick's father has worked on commercial pig units for many years and now scans pigs across the country.

Our ten-year-old son, Sebastian, has this year won the Young Member of the Year Award in the British Saddleback Breeders' Club for his herd of pedigree pigs, kept here at our home in North Dorset. We bought him four gilts for Christmas two years ago and, as they say, the rest is history! Originally planning to pick up two, Nick was more than happy to take all four that were still in the pen! Numerous 'road trips' the length and breadth of the country since have yielded a decent breeding herd for Sebastian and his interest in preserving this rare breed, and the rarer bloodlines within it, is refreshing.

Nick's practical welding, engineering and construction skills, taught and honed in the Brymore DT classrooms and now the mainstay of his own fabrication and steel erection business, have also passed on to the next generation. Sebastian's pigs live in well-constructed housing, with a purpose built 'maternity' suite complete with heat lamp, farrowing bars, Wi-Fi and CCTV! Of course, his father had a lot to do with this, but the boy is also learning! Over the summer, Sebastian became more intrigued by Nick's workshop and, before long, they were busy designing and fabricating together - a new design of pig proof fence posts, complete with welded insulators, an IBC trailer for carrying water, fashioned from an old trailer axle and Land Rover tyres and yet more pig arks.

The pig empire continues to grow! Sebastian now has around 15-20 pedigree pigs at any one time. Demand for pork, fattening weaners and breeding stock is high and, even going into a wet and muddy winter, Sebastian's interest does not wain. I often wonder what the next invention or design will be that emerges from the workshop on a weekend afternoon, but have no doubt that Nick's education at Brymore has gone a long way to inspiring his son's interests.



The Silverbirch Herd
Pedigree British Saddleback Pigs
Sturminster Newton, Dorset

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Traffic on the five lane highways in the city was limited and I was ferried around in an old Volvo, where petrol was issued for each visit daily. As well as my counterpart and the driver we were also accompanied by a translator and a security observer. Discussions were to be frank and open but information flow was decidedly one way and when asked about the treatment of miscreants it took three weeks to be finally told that they were "re-educated"

I was taken to various State farms where we spent more time being entertained by the children from the farm kindergarten than actually looking at their agronomy. Interestingly, the field where I suggested weed control in cabbages was poor was being hand weeded the following day. All residents, including doctors, teachers, soldiers, missile engineers and road sweepers, from a designated block of flats, were mobilised for the task. Fortunately, I remained anonymous.

During the visit each consultant gave a presentation to an invited audience of academics and was "marked" accordingly. Alas, the Soya expert used overhead slides which boasted the American originators name. He left on the next flight out of the country! Morning visits confirmed that agricultural mechanisation, particularly crop spraying equipment, was antediluvian and I always marvelled at the corrugated iron roof and sides on the cabs of the locally made tractors however, it was obvious that this isolated nation addressed certain problems with imaginative ingenuity.

The highlight of the more relaxed afternoon sessions was a visit to the Children's Academy which culminated in a high quality professional show. After daily school selected children from around the city were collected and ferried to the Academy where they were taught everything from public debating, martial arts, table tennis and calligraphy to bricklaying, roofing and carpentry. The musicians, gymnasts and actors then came together to end the afternoon with a brilliantly choreographed concert run with military precision and endless revolutionary songs.

My counterpart always gave me the day's itinerary, written on a sheet of paper rather than discuss it in my room, but one day when collecting me he enquired if I had suitable attire for a visit to the mausoleum of the Dear Leader. On arrival, the car park was full of coaches bringing groups from around the country to pay their respects. Men, unsuitably attired, retired to an adjacent shop on site and were fitted with suitable clothing for the visit.

VISITS to NORTH KOREA

Dr Alan Lavers (1953/1957)

On the demise of Shell Agriculture I joined the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations as a Consultant (the term I believe, for not having a proper job) and suggested I was only interested in visiting countries that I had not previously visited. Of the current 195 countries, including the two observer states, I can claim to have visited 100 countries either on holiday, through the good offices of Shell or for the FAO. For me, Namibia for the FAO, was a pleasant change from my annual visit to the Sudan, where initially with the Company, I travelled the world First Class only to be more than surprised that on boarding a flight for FAO, draw tickets were issued for the in-flight meal !

I would like to think that life has improved for the people in the country since my visits to Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (DPKR), but if the current press is to be believed, probably very little has changed. I joined 4 other FAO Consultants visiting the country, over 20 years ago, following requests to the UN for food aid after another harvest failure. I had to collect my entry visa from the North Korean Embassy in Beijing and although they were aware of my visit it took 3 days for the forms to be completed before embarking with an interesting set of fellow passengers, including East European Arms dealers, on the weekly flight to Pyongyang. Air Koryo, the National Airline, was flying an old Soviet Ilyushin airliner which was bump started on the runway before finally taking off for North Korea.

On arriving in the capital, Pyongyang, we were all taken to pay our respects to the Dear Leader Kim Il- Sung, by laying flowers in front of his vast monument before continuing on to the Party hotel where I met my counterpart for the visit. He was Professor of Agricultural Engineering in the Government Department of Agriculture and explained that my programme would be based on morning technical visits followed by afternoon tourist visits. I still retain memories of revolutionary songs constantly blaring out throughout the hotel and via large speakers in the streets where the local population sat under the street lights at night to read. At this time all citizens were provided with fully furnished accommodation including all cooking utensils, clothes, household linen and a TV but no fridge. All light bulbs were low wattage hence the evening street readers.

Its late morning on the 21st June 2016, I've just finished my final GCSE exam. I'm walking to the front of school house with my suitcase in tow with mixed feelings of relief, sadness and pride. What a relief that all the exams had finished but my time at Brymore had so quickly come to an end. The decision to leave my current school at the age of 13 and attend Brymore was one that took a lot of consideration but looking back now everything paid off. I left with a stack of great results in all subjects, experience that will indeed 'last a lifetime' and the accolade of being head boy at the best school in Somerset!

Just over a week later I started my 4 year land based service engineering apprenticeship at a large agricultural dealership in North Petherton. I left home early 6 days a week on my moped and battled the heat, wind, rain and ice in the winter months as well as holding up huge streams of traffic most days. I think they were more relieved than me when I passed my driving test in March the following year. I attended Morton Morrell agricultural college in Warwickshire in blocks for 12 weeks a year to give me all the technical training needed to carry out my job. The rest of the time I would work with colleagues to complete tasks on tractors and harvest machinery writing most things in my college portfolio to show my college assessor on his next visit. Every day I would learn something new and I think that's what makes the job so enjoyable. Most recently in July this year (2020) I completed my apprenticeship to now become a fully qualified land based service engineer. As for progression within the company I have a whole host of experience over the past 4 years, have my own service van and now take on large responsibility for the harvest side of the business which mainly evolves around the self-propelled forage harvesters. What I enjoy most about my job is with such a large customer base on any day I could end up out with a machine in Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset or as far a field as West Sussex or the Isle of Wight. Another aspect of my job is battling the weather. In the middle of the summer its often unbearably hot to be stuck in the middle of a field with only half a bottle of water to last you the rest of the day, yet in the autumn the weather can change so quickly I might be in my shorts and t shirt in the middle of a thunderstorm wishing I brought an extra coat watching my van sink into the mud wondering how I'm ever going to get out!

Every day I get up wondering what's going to happen today and I think that's what makes it so interesting and enjoyable, even on those wet muddy days. As I write this now the maize season is coming to a close with lots of machines already parked up in their sheds for the winter. There is still lots of acres to cut and with the recent wet weather, I feel it may be a challenge to get the final crops off the fields. The winter will be a much deserved quieter few months as we service and repair the machines for the following grass season in April.

When talking to old school friends about our time at school I don't think there is one of us that wouldn't agree that no matter how good life is at the minute we would all go back to Brymore and do it all over again!

I am in debt to the Old Brymorian's Association for the bursary they gave me to allow me to attend Brymore. If I had stayed at my comprehensive school who knows where I would be now.

Joe Parkman 2013 - 2016



Covid Lockdown as a Groundsman

After having one of the wettest autumn/winters on record, spring was just around the corner with the daffodils just about to flower. There was news of coronavirus going around with the uncertainty of what was to happen next. As a groundsman working in a school on the edge of Bath with wet but very busy winter months behind us we were getting ready for a hectic but enjoyable cricket season and the summer renovations ahead. Then came March 23rd with the words of 'you must stay at home' with that the school closed with no one to go in, but what about the grass growing we asked. It was then decided a week later that one groundsman could go in 2 days a week, with the orders just cut the grass. This is what I did for the first six weeks of the lockdown. Two long days just cutting the grass with the ride on, on a 100 acre site all one my own, not meeting anyone. Now this was very strange with normally around 500 people on the site on school day. We were well into what should have been the cricket season with over 75 games in a 10 week term. After working on my own for six weeks I was then told I was being furloughed, with that I did what everyone else did I worked on my own garden. It was not until June what we were able to go back onto the school site and work as a team again and get ready for the school to start reopening. With that we had to mark out our 400m running track with even more space in between the lanes to allow for a 2meter distance. Oh and the lines to keep the bubbles apart.

The school finished for summer in July with us still not knowing what sports they will be playing in September. We had to plan for everything cricket, rugby, hockey, football, athletics, netball, tennis. Just to name a few. It was not until a week before school returned that they decided on rugby and hockey and some cricket. It was then a mad rush to get as much ready as we can. With no rugby fixtures being played and as soon as the late cricket season finished we took our chance to do a whole field renovation project. Yes we ripped up as much grass and weeds as possible and put down 200 tons of fine sand and 2 tons of grass seed and hoped for good weather to get new grass to grow ready for the next cricket/rugby seasons. We had a lot of comments about why did you turn the field into a beach. But luckily the weather was good and we now have our field back to how it should be. Let's hope that we will be able to play both cricket and rugby on it in the coming months.

Beginnings – The Spur

The original “Spur” magazine was produced by the ‘school’ and contained articles from all aspects of the ‘school’ life i.e. from reports from the various farm departments, sports (in those days namely cricket and rugby) various after school clubs and records of various visits and trips the boys and staff had made during the year.

There was always a section on ‘news of old Boys’ and ‘Salvete’ – “Greetings” (names of boys who had started in the September of that year) and ‘Valete’ – “Good-bye” (to those boys who had left the previous July). Together with many other articles that were written by staff and supporters of Brymore.

One such article – “The Progress of Brymore’s Farm”

It is very surprising, yet true that in four years, after starting from scratch with two billy goats and small gilt, we have now got such a flourishing and prosperous farm as we have. The different sorts of animals that are split into departments, as illustrated on previous pages, and each to each department or club is put a head and a second head, who are in charge and responsible for its departmental health and well-being.

Each year new heads of departments are put forward to the current heads and then passed to Mr Edwards (Then Head of Agriculture). It is a great event when the new heads are elected and i am sure a happy one for those “second Years” who are successful.

The arable side of our farm consists of only 5 acres, but can I assure you a very well managed five acres! We follow Norfolk four course rotation which runs as follows: Wheat, Roots, Dredge Corn under sown and a one year ley. All this ground has been reclaimed by the boys of Brymore, and in places we still see the “first years” doing their share of “stone picking”. There are also thirty-three acres of grass and woodland, of which five acres is very kindly lent to us. On reaching this point of success we must not be content, but keep the traces tight and our heads to the front and still better our hard earned thirty-eight prosperous acre farm. It certainly goes to show that “where there’s a will, there’s a way” it has been proved!

Provided by
Rex Eastment
Secretary OBA

When you are putting your “baubles” on your tree, you would never guess all the hard work that actually goes in to growing it!



John Hardwick grew up in Easton-in-Gordano, studying at Brymore agricultural school, near Bridgwater, and getting stuck on his family’s farm, from haymaking to helping move the sheep off land next to the river Avon whenever high spring tides flooded it. Farming was in his blood.

Jan, John’s wife, did not come from a farming family, met him at the first Young Farmers’ do she had ever been to. She was a state- registered nurse, and later a district nurse, so taking on Cobbs Cross Farm, in Goathurst near Bridgwater, when the couple married was all pretty daunting. When they moved in, she continued nursing, bucking the notion that she should be up with the lark, cooking hearty lunches for the farm hands, with her wellies at the ready to pitch in with the animals.

She would say that she was a new breed of farmer's wife! As the children grew up, Jan swapped nursing and school runs for getting stuck in with farm life.

It was 30 years ago that John decided to grow Christmas trees while out delivering the potato crop door – to door to houses in Bristol and North Somerset.

An entrepreneurial man who is always interested in new ideas, he realised the greengrocers and village shops on his potato round wanted them and decided to give it a go, joining the British Christmas Tree Growers Association to gain knowledge and learning on his feet.

That first year the entire crop died. Every last tree. By the second, things had improved. Now Secret Valley has 50 acres of broad and bushy Nordmann Firs, reaching up to 18ft tall. The quirkier non-needle drop Fraser Firs with their Christmassy smell, potted Norway Spruces and Nordmanns' up to 4 ft tall, and little pot-grown spruces.

It sounds easy but if anything makes you look at your Christmas tree with new respect, it is the learning what it takes to grow one.

John – now both a member and former chairman of the British Christmas Tree Growers Association – starts his day around 6.15 am with a wild swim on the lake on the farm!

At the Christmas tree plantation, John and Roger, his farm manager, check the electric fence, replacing the batteries every couple of days to stop the rabbits getting in and feasting on the trees. It takes around nine years to grow a 6ft tree and new ones have to be planted every year. Each tree must be tended to stop weeds smothering the saplings and protected from the birds. Each tree is repeatedly pruned to train it into a nice shape, it wouldn't grow into a good shape if it were not pruned each year, as it would be completely 'wild'. There is also leader control – the leader is the pointy bit that you put your star on. That has to be treated each year to slow its growth down otherwise it grows at a tangent and your tree would look most odd. Birds can do a lot of damage to leaders and we have invested in a CD of different bird noises to scare them off. We have also put tall stakes with little perches on to encourage the birds to land on them rather than on the tops of the trees.

This year has not been the easiest year at Secret Valley, with glamping booking reduced, weddings cancelled and the weather affecting the vineyard's crop. Now the family is having to adapt again,

ALAN HEMMING

25/06/1920 – 25/04/2020

A personal tribute by Philip Eavis (1952/55)

I still remember when, with my parents, I first arrived at Brymore in September 1952 being met by the then Mr Hemming who, at the time, we thought was the Head Teacher. He was, as always, upright, smart, charming to my parents and seemingly very much in charge. I was surprised later that day to find he was not the Head but the Deputy Head.

Mr Hemming was the strictest of the first four teachers appointed but made a huge impression on me over those three important years at Brymore. I always enjoyed his lessons, particularly history which, more often than not, drifted into politics. His style and methods were both challenging and interesting, so much so that I believe he was an outstanding teacher who set the standards that even to this day continue to make Brymore a very special school.

Alan Hemming was a keen cricketer, tolerating rugby which was the prime sport during our time. Music was important to him throughout his life. I remember being invited to his home in Cannington during our final year and being introduced to classical music. He once took several of us to a concert at Bridgwater Town Hall to hear Jean Pougnet, a then well known violinist who, I well remember, played the Dying Swan on a viola. I was completely mesmerized by that concert and often spoke of it with Alan in the many years since.

My own family have often wondered how their father, now in his 80's could still be calling on the teacher he most admired but some 18 years his senior. Before he became a teacher, Alan was a qualified draughtsman. In 1939 he joined the Corps of the Royal and Mechanical Engineers (REME) and served throughout World War 2. Three years ago some of the Old Boys were invited to attend a ceremony in Bath where he was presented with the award of Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Legion d'Honneur for the role he played in the D Day landings. Incredibly he never once spoke about this time of his life when we were at Brymore. He became a committed Quaker which was probably influenced by his war time experience.

An Australian Experience.

After 52 years in Australia we are used to droughts, floods, and bush fires somewhere in the country. Global warming has changed our seasons, and reduced rainfall to some areas, and we approached 2019 summer, with many areas in drought.

This situation developed into the most devastating bush fires over vast areas of Eastern Australia. Starting in Queensland, moving down the Great Dividing Range into New South Wales, and then into Victoria. In South Australia, we had a big fire in the hills, and another on Kangaroo Island, started like most, by dry lightening. The loss of beautiful bush, native and farm animals and 3000 homes destroyed, across Australia and the sad loss of human life was awful.

Then Covid arrived, what a shock for us and the world! The eastern states were affected first, and the situation was not helped by cruise ships being allowed to off load passengers. Covid was known to be present, they were not checked and put into hotel quarantine, but allowed to disperse into society. Since then, a great many restrictions and procedures have been introduced, implemented by state authorities.

Melbourne, has had some problems in stopping the spread, and was in lockdown for weeks, but recently things have improved. We are extremely fortunate that we have large distance between our main centres of population, so state borders have been closed which has also helped in stopping the spread. The economic cost of lockdowns, job losses, and disruption to travel has been immense, but we think that our present federal government has done a good job, in providing support to workers and businesses during this difficult time.

From the personal point of view, we are both now 80, so we have been able to keep outings to a minimum, just essentials, and complying with the rules, only one shopper, masks, hand sterilisation, and public distancing. In most cases, the public have been supportive, and cooperative with the restrictions. Apart from a small Covid cluster in New South Wales, who are in quarantine, most of us here can enjoy the Christmas season with family or friends, subject to border restrictions.

Ian Walker (1953 – 1956)

The Head Boy – George Davis

With all that has happened over the last year, I am sure most parents and guardians were expecting these first terms to be slightly more hectic than usual, I know I was. However, while the first two weeks or so did bear a striking resemblance to the after-effects of a hurricane, I was amazed and delighted by the resilience shown by the new SSLT team. Now of course, it has not all been sunshine and rainbows. Between lessons, catch up sessions, duties, homework, revision, mock exams, rugby and the myriad other obligations thrust upon Year 11s, many, including myself, have been burned out. However, the team and especially their leaders, have shown a dogged determination that has left me astounded. Each of the SSLT's leaders, deputy George Winslade, assistants Joe Fear, Ethan Gregory and Bennett Wheeler, as well as the senior prefects, have all stepped up and led the charge concerning duties. A miraculous feat considering the size of the SSLT. Now, studying from home different challenges are occurring but I am sure, Brymore boys will again rise to the occasion.

These Articles are from The Spur 1957

Origins of Brymore

The Progress of Brymore's Farm 1957

Rabbit Club

The Rabbit Club is making rapid progress after going through a very bad time when most of the young stock died from Coccidiosis. We are going to sell all the original stock and breed from the young stock.

In the Summer term we were given two Chinchilla rabbits and we were also given three guinea pigs. We are going to build some new rabbit hutches. We have started the planning of them.

We sold a rabbit and a guinea pig to the school for dissection.

Our new housemaster is going to take over the Rabbit Club as our leader.

The Brymore Bee Club

The club started this year with five hives, including one given to us by Mr Bulford. The club hopes in the future to change to National hives. The hives which we now have are three W.B.C. hives and two National hives. The membership of the Club is far better than last year and has risen by 50%.

This year seven members of the Club took Preliminary British Beekeepers Association exam, and all passed. Congratulations to all of them, including Mr Edwards.

In order that the club may thrive we aim to sell as much honey as possible. This year we were unfortunate in not being able to take off the honey as early as we would have liked. The honey was, for the first time, extracted by our own extractor, bought second-hand, together with a wax extractor for £3 10s 0d (£3.50p today!) We sold a fair amount of honey at our exhibition stand on Speech Day. Since then, we have sold a lot to the pupils of the school. The cost to members is now 2/6d (.12.5p today) opposed to 3/-s (.15p today) previously charged. To the non-members it is 3/3d (.16p approx. today) in the Summer and 3/6d (.17.5p today) in the Winter terms. This compares favourably with the shop prices of 3/9d (approx. .19p today) to 4/0d (.20p today) Each empty jar returned was refunded.

The Club is now in a sound financial position with a credit of more than £10. This will help greatly towards the new hives. We have started feeding on two of our weaker hives, 10lbs having been fed to date.

For the first time we tried our hand at showing honey both at Bridgwater and Taunton. We learnt there was much more to showing than meets the eye, but we came away with a few thirds! And a wealth of information on how to show Honey.

If the Club continues to keep up this standard it should be in a good position in the future

"Flu at Brymore"

'Flu came to Brymore on Saturday 28th September 1957. The first three casualties entered the sickbay on this date. Others followed until the 15th. October. The 'flu raged wildly and fiercely, with temperatures ranging from 95.8 to approximately 105!

During this time the boys had medicine as directed by the doctor. Statistics show that 38 pints of his medicine were drunk by the sick and about 75 pints of medicine by the convalescents!

The boy's temperatures were taken twice a day. In the process, for the curious, only four thermometers were broken!

Sister could not do all this by herself and so she had three Red Cross nurses to help her as well as being greatly assisted by two other members of staff. Even so she did a great job for which we are all very grateful.

Feeding was done by the school cleaners and kitchen staff, but these also went down one by one with 'flu!

The routine for the day for patients was as follows:

9.30 am – Temperature taken

10.00 am – Breakfast

2.00 pm – Dinner

6.00 pm – Tea

7.30 pm – Temperature taken

8.00pm – Supper

Between breakfast and dinner, we found our own amusements, if we were well enough. One Monday boys who were still in bed and did not see the film on Saturday were given a special showing in the dormitory.

When we had returned to normal temperature, we had to stay in for a further 24hrs. After that we got up for dinner and then went back to bed for tea. On the second day we got up for dinner and tea and then went to bed by 7.30 pm. On the third day we got up for breakfast, dinner and tea and went outside for an hour. On the next day we went to lessons after break. From then on, we were back too normal. Even lessons were a pleasant change after 'flu!!