

# Thrings meets...

Peveiril Bruce and family from the Matterley Estate



ying within the South Downs National Park, the Matterley Estate has been home to the Bruce family since 1946. Owner Peveiril Bruce, wife Minna and son Otto discuss diversification, Boomtown, cycling and inquisitive cows with Thrings solicitor Matt Gilks.

#### Let's begin with the Bruce's history with Matterley

(Peveiril) My grandmother bought the farm at the end of the Second World War. In the early days there was one house cow; we now have 300. The farm is also very well positioned, and from Cheesefoot Head there are stunning panoramic views of southern Hampshire. We're fortunate to live and work in such a beautiful spot.

#### What about your day-to-day roles?

(Otto) No two days are the same. One minute we're working in the dairy, the next we're mending fences or managing slurry. One of the best things about the farm is getting to work with cows who are inquisitive, fun to be around and always pleased to see you. However, my favourite time of the year is harvest - it's when we reap the benefits of our year's labour.

#### When did you first consider diversifying?

(Peveiril) The seed was sown when we were contacted about producing a Live Aid-type pop festival in the Matterley

Bowl in the 80s. Since then we have held Tough Mudder, international motocross, tank driving, shooting and numerous festivals, which over the years have attracted the likes of Olly Murs, Pulp and Fat Boy Slim.

#### Has Boomtown always received local support?

(Peveiril) Boomtown has consistently received the backing of local people, not just those who attend the event but also those who write in to support our licensing and planning applications. We're extremely grateful for that. We've worked with Winchester City Council since the first festival in 1998. The introduction of the South Downs National Park Authority in 2011 brought a further layer of authority, but we work well with them to put on a festival which attracts more than 60,000 people, the majority of whom might not otherwise see the national park.

#### Tell us about MooMix

(Minna) Eleven years ago I launched MooMix, a mobile milkshake company. We now sell milkshakes - using the milk from our own dairy herd - at local events including the Watercress Festival, the Alresford Agricultural Show, the Alresford Music Festival and the Hampshire Country Sports Day, as well as Boomtown. Fresh strawberry is our most popular flavour.

#### What about life away from the farm?

(Peveiril) I'm told I often corner people and talk at them about cycling! For the past 10 years the family has taken part in the Cape Town Cycle Tour along with 40,000 other cycling enthusiasts. My other big passions are Wagner, fishing and Scotland. The Bruce family is from Scotland - we're related to Robert the Bruce, albeit 32 generations ago.

#### Finally, what's next for Matterley?

(Minna) The future of the farm is rosy because the next generation is embracing the challenge of taking it forward. We're also lucky that Peveiril is an incredibly logical thinker who deals with people in such a calm and even-handed way.

(Peveiril) It has to be fun, and diversifying has brought fun, excitement and vitality to the farm. I spent four years as an accountant in London, but working in the fields here is special. I can safely say I've never looked back. ♦



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