

July 2011

Dear Parents,

'And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things'

We have just experienced, survived and even enjoyed the most frenetic finale to what has been a hugely successful year for Shrewsbury School. The last week consisted of an unrelenting programme of concerts, formal and informal, drama and sporting events, covering the elite (1st XI at the Silk Trophy) to the mass involvement of the House Bumps, together with all the usual formalities of an end of term.

Casting my mind's eye back over the period since my last newsletter, a number of events stand out.

I was most grateful to Sir David Barnes (OS), former Chairman of Astra Zenica, for being our Guest of Honour at Prize Giving when we celebrated the academic achievements of Salopians with the award of 78 prizes. Sir David started his talk with the quote from Sir Philip Sidney, which appears at the start of this letter. It seems an appropriate mission statement for a busy end of year. He talked of aspiration being the trigger to release human energy and potential. Inspiring stuff.

I also thoroughly enjoyed the Junior Play, 'The Mignonette' – a light-hearted tale of cannibalism on the high seas. This was a classic Shrewsbury production in that it was written and directed by member of staff, Chris Cook, and displayed some outstanding acting talent for the future.

On Speech Day I enjoyed the opportunity to present my address to an audience of some 300 Parents, Governors and other supporters. This was an occasion to highlight policy direction for the future. Raising academic standards and expectations, and tightening of policies and disciplinary protocols, as well as laying out some of my thoughts and ideas prior to the strategic review '2020 Vision', which will be presented to Governors in September.

The opening of Emma Darwin Hall (which had filled its quota of new girls even before the builders had finished!) and the expansion of numbers in the sixth form, has presented a wonderful opportunity for us to come of age as a school with a fully co-educational sixth form.

In all parts of the school our girls are making a really significant contribution. I applaud the impact that they have made to all areas of life – including on the river.

The last few weeks have been a celebration of all that Shrewsbury stands for. In my final assembly I urged all members of the school to review their reports from a self-critical perspective – to celebrate achievements, certainly, but also to identify ways to change and improve. Of the 300 or so I have personally reviewed, numerous successes are identified and achievements noted, but there are also words of constructive criticism that should be heeded and acted upon.

Common Room

Farewell

Our 2010/11 Harvard Fellow, Karl Hirt, and Bordeaux Fellow, Virginie Taillade, now leave us, having made invaluable contributions in their different ways.

Richard Johnson, who joined the Chemistry Faculty two years ago, is transferring to Bryanston School. Jason Stanley, a member of the Geography Faculty for the last two years, is moving to King's College School, Wimbledon. Having taught in the English Faculty for two years, Nick Wakeling is taking up a post at Charterhouse. I am extremely grateful to all three and wish them well in their new positions.

Kathryn Burningham, Director of the Chapel Choir for the last three years, is moving on to pursue other opportunities associated with University College, Oxford, and St Chad's Church in Shrewsbury. She leaves us with our grateful thanks and very best wishes for the future.

Pam Nickolaus retires after nearly 30 years at Shrewsbury. She has taught in both the Modern Languages Faculty and in the Learning Support Department. Her personal attention to the struggling boy (and, latterly, girl) is legendary. We are sad to see her go, but wish her well in her retirement.

Last, but not least, Bob Kendall retires after 27 years as a member of the Maths Faculty, and 15 of them as our Examinations Officer. He has played a major part in 'keeping the ship afloat' – patient, meticulous and wonderfully calm under fire! He will be greatly missed, but deserves a long and happy retirement.

Welcome

Mrs Celia Ainsworth returns to the Biology Faculty as a part-time teacher for one year.

Mr Richard Charters has been appointed to the Spanish Faculty on a temporary full-time basis whilst Paola Wright is away on maternity leave.

Mr Steve Clancy has been appointed as a Graduate Sports Coach. Steve has a BSc in Applied Sports Science from the University of Loughborough.

Mr Seb Cooley will join the Maths and Physics Faculties. He was educated at the University of Warwick and has a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Seb has spent the last three years as a fives coach at Eton, where he has also coached cricket and football.

Mrs Lesley Drew has been appointed to teach English and Theatre Studies. Lesley has taught English at Wrekin College since 1998.

Miss Annabel Hartshorne has been appointed as a Graduate Sports Coach. She has been working at Thomas Adams School, Wem, and has a Coaching & Sports Development degree from Manchester Metropolitan University.

Mr Daniel Ithurbisque has been appointed Bordeaux Fellow 2011-12. Daniel has a degree in Criminology and has recently graduated from the Judicial Studies Institute in Bordeaux.

Mr Alex Mason will succeed Kathryn Burningham as Director of the Chapel Choir. Alex is currently Organist and Master of the Choristers at St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire. He has previously held posts at Lichfield Cathedral and King's College School, Wimbledon.

Mrs Jackie Matthews will join the Biology Faculty as a part-time teacher for one year.

Miss Rachael Pile has been appointed to teach Maths. She was educated at Nottingham University and has recently completed her PGCE through the University of Chester.

Miss Charlotte Rule has been appointed to the Geography Faculty. Charlotte is currently employed as a teacher at Sherborne School and a resident house tutor at Sherborne Girls School.

Mr Nils Sceery will succeed Karl Hirt as the Harvard Fellow 2011-12. Nils has recently graduated with a degree in the Comparative Study of Religion. He has been President of Harvard Club Soccer and a member of the Harvard Heavyweight Crew. He is a native French speaker.

Mr Mark Schofield will join the Chemistry Faculty. Mark has been Head of Science at Rossall School since 2007 and spent the six previous years teaching at Abingdon School.

Internal Appointments

Housemaster Changes

Matthew Mostyn is stepping down as Housemaster of Rigg's Hall, after 10 years in post, and will be succeeded by Peter Middleton.

After two stints as a Housemaster (three years in Churchill's and four years in Port Hill) Struan Hellier will be handing over the reins of Port Hill to Andy Barnard.

Head of Faculty Change

Laura Whittle will succeed Michael Morrogh as Head of History. Dr Morrogh has decided to step down after 15 years as Head of Faculty, though he will continue in a full-time teaching role within the History Faculty and will retain his post as School Archivist.

Heads of Section

In order to enhance support for the academic and social well-being of the five year groups throughout the school, there will be three Heads of Section in September. Struan Hellier will become Head of Sixth Form; Toby Percival has been appointed Head of Middle School and will be responsible for the Fourth and Fifth Forms; Torin Morgan will continue in his role as Head of Third Form. All three will work closely with Martin Cropper, our Director of Studies.

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In conclusion, Elizabeth and I have thoroughly enjoyed our first year at Shrewsbury. This is a special place, which I look forward to seeing develop still further to consolidate its position as one of the leading boarding schools in the world.

Whether you are on expedition to Malawi, playing to packed audiences at the Edinburgh Fringe, pre-season touring with our sports teams, or just lying on a soggy beach under overcast Cornish skies, I wish you a really refreshing and relaxing break.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Mostyn', with a long horizontal line underneath.