

Heads of School speech, Commem 2009

1: Welcome to Sherborne. Welcome to Commem.

2: It's Sherborne, yes. Didn't you see the sign?

1: You saw the penny? Isn't it a gem?

2: I think it looks particularly fine.

1: It isn't just a market stratagem –

2: No, it's the very symbol to define
the school from the Third form up to Abbey Grange:

1: It looks quite old school, *and* it looks like change.

[*Produce a 2p piece?*]

2: The change spins on. It's like a revolution.

1: A parent portal brings you all our news
thanks to iSAMS, the new sanctions solution;

2: And yes, the Blue Book's lost its weary blues.

1: But if our values can survive pollution,
the credit crunch and eighteen different 'flus,
then we can take them where the rain don't patter.

2: You see, it never rains in Sherborne, Qatar.

[*If it's hot, go for: The weather's just like this in Sherborne, Qatar.*]

1: Let's first thank Canon Phillips, our fine preacher:

2: Your words were wise; now let's go out and live them.

1: Then, prize-giving: the cricketer and teacher
from Radley, Dennis Silk, 's the man to give them.

2: Before that, though, Commem's regular feature:

1: the Heads of School must speak, so please forgive them.

2: This farewell poem's been a pig to write.

Bear with us, please – we've had a heavy night.

1: But now, when there are loads of teachers leaving,
it's time for us to say a fond goodbye.

2: This isn't easy: soon we'll all be heaving
a great big sigh – but not yet *that* big Si.

1: There's one year left before that pitch of grieving,
but even so, feelings are running high
for smaller Simon Thomas;

2: also gone
will be the business brain, Bruce Richardson.

1: We'll miss the caveman chemist, Mr Tuggey;

2: We'll miss those pillars of Abbey House, the Pryors,
beetling northwards in their Volkswagen buggy,
golf clubs and dog beds weighing down the tires;

1: and to Calcutta, where the climate's muggy,
for *one last job* before the man retires,
off with his booming voice goes Sherborne's darling –

2: how long has this been coming? –

1 & 2: Mr Carling!

[*some "altogether now" business*]

2: He's preached so many sermons to provoke us
when no one could predict what he would say,
1: and yet, his finest hour is Third Form focus.
2: I'll look back on it when I'm old and grey.
1: Another giant leaving is West Coker's
big-bearded scholar, Mr Holiday;
2: Runner and thinker, Bernard makes us pray,
1 & 2: I wish it could be Christmas every day.

1: A while ago we lost the lovely Cindy,
who showed that libraries can be cool, and cared
about our reading tastes – hers were quite indy.
2: We're sad she's gone; excuse our French, but *merdre*.
For Mr Patterson, wizard of windy
Norn Iron (we'd do the accent but we're scared),
We have commissioned something from the nib
from that great teenage poet, E J Thribb:

1: So, farewell then,
Mr Patterson,
Rugby coach, Chaucerian scholar, cyclist,
you were all these things,
and Examinations officer too.
2: "You have one hour left."
1: Yes, that was your catchphrase,
and now, Mr Patterson,
2: You have one hour left.

1: Ciao to the raconteur and bon viveur
and legendary quaffer, Mr Waldron.

2: He got results like some tough restaurateur
and turned our pressure cooker into a cauldron.

1: We'll miss them all. How wonderful they were;

2: And yet, although hot tears than really scald run
because Bow House lost many a good egg,
what made us really sad was

1: Hilly's leg.

2: His right leg had to spend two months in plaster –
two months – a hairy leg. Boy that must itch.

1: His brave teams met with triumph and disaster
While Hilly bounced on barrels by the pitch.

2: Meanwhile, our normally benign headmaster
became Sherborne's Roman Abramovitch:

1: When football scores left much to be desired,
he had to say,

2: Steve, with regret, you're fired.