

Heads of School Speech, June 2013

Archie – Dearly beloved, we are here

to mark the passing of a year;

Akhmad – to say a thank you and goodbye

to Heads and Governors on high

and then a teary cheerio

to all the riffraff down below.

Ar – It's like some ancient ritual,

or festival, or carnival,

where Roman households tell the slave

to tell the master to behave.

Ak – Hang on; you mean the Heads of School

are like the masters of misrule?

Ar – Would I say that? No, it's the custom

to show the world how much we trust 'em.

Ak – They think that Archie Hamilton

never goes on and on, and on.

Ar – Oh thanks. And no one's going to scoff

at poems by Akhmad Rakhmatov.

Ak – My verse had Pushkin's grace and wit

till Archie here translated it.

Ar – Come on, then, let's not make them wait –

there's so much to commemorate.

Let's give good wishes, from the heart

to teachers planning to depart.

Ak – We're sorry that we're sending off

our most enlightened philosophe:

Ar - Dr Pascal, we say goodbye

to you and to your leather tie.

And obviously, there's so much more
the boys here have to thank you for.

Ak – The man who'd analyse each movie
is, without trying, in-the-groovy.

Ar – No one who meets him is surprised
that those he taught are civilised.

Ak - Culture of all kinds is his passion,
from high art to the latest fashion.

Ar – No teacher here is better styled,

Ak – except, perhaps, for Dr Wild.

It's our last chance, before he goes,
to say a sorry *adios*

to Mr Bryson. He could manage
to sound at once English and Spanish.

It's like you're listening to two talkers:

me llamo –

Ar - Craig –

Ak - *(Yo vengo) de*

Ar - Sandford Orcas.

Ak – Could he deliver this line here?

Ar – Senor Simon Correia's career's
moving on upwards, and he scales
new heights of management, in Wales.

Ak – Another move is even crazier –

Ar – Yes, Mr Backhouse, to Malaysia.

He's expert in the martial arts,
and rodents.

Ak - Yes – as he departs
from a big, scary aerodrome

he's asked if we can find a home
for two Egyptian spiny mice.

Ar – He's serious. They're really nice.

Ak – Now, here's someone who's never silly –
We're going to miss you, Mr Lilley.

Ar – That genius of the Rugby field,
and no less magic when he filled
a bus with the wrong kind of fuel.

Ak – The trip was barely out of school
one chilly dawn. He had to brake
when few mechanics were awake.

Ar – Of course, if Lilley is on board
he's bound to have with him a horde
of muscle men who'd push a ton
of minibus uphill for fun.

Ak – He's going further still, because
he leaves us for the land of Oz.

Ar – Let's hope the plane stays in the sky.

Ak – Sure – it's refuelling in Dubai.

Ar – Yes, staff are off all over the place;
next, Bow House puts a man in space.

Ak – At least each year we say two hellos
to a brace of brilliant Princeton fellows.
So thanks, first, to Miss Kent, who taught
English and History, and brought
some calm to others' wild obsessions
with putting on the Sherborne Sessions.

Ar – Mr Weylandt need only start
to talk and, boy, you know he's smart,

while Mr Bates will always try
to break things down, and simplify.

Ak – Before they go, I wonder whether
their two techniques could work together.

“So the foregoing data are
to differentiate laminar
and turbulent flows.”

Ar – “Some numbers give us
the gen on slow or choppy rivers.”

Ak – “We must confirm velocity
as well as fluid density
and it’s incumbent upon us
to find hydraulic radius;
we call these the inertial force.

Take it away, Batesy.”

Ar - “Of course.

To know what rivers do, the trick
is seeing if they’re quick, and thick.”

[Akhmad can say “I see what you did there” if he wants.]

Ar – There is another law, that states
that when you meet with Mr Bates
he’s bought the latest Apple gear.

Ak – The iPhone 5? That’s so last year.

Ar – We need to keep you up to date
on all that’s making Sherborne great.

Ak – Good news – the structure of the week
is almost perfect.

Ar - Every tweak

ensures that every day and hour
is used to boost our learning power.

Ak – Before first period, we're met
to hear talks no one can forget.

Ar – Undoubtedly. I can remember
the whole lot, starting from September;
especially – you know the one –

Ak – that guy –

Ar - Yes, *that* guy – no, it's gone.

Ak – And so to lessons, which now "flip"
to show that boys can quickly grip
the subject.

Ar - But – not being rude –
the best development's the food.

Ak – How about lunch? Would you have chanced it?

Ar – Most certainly, now they've enhanced it.

Ak – The lunches linger; best of all,
they feast us half-way through our Hall.

Ar – The cooking season started with
big roasts, because good Dr Smith
said we should have "substantial tea".

Ak – He didn't leave so much for me.

Ar – A healthy mind alone won't do –
You need a healthy body, too.

Ak – In Rugby, things are looking up –
the Daily Mail's prestigious cup
eludes the First XV, but wait –
they made it to the final eight!

Ar – You'd hope so – all those England caps,
and proteined-up bus-pushing chaps.

Ak – The hockey team's impressive journey
was led by skipper Julian Bernie

Ar – No, he's called Bertie.

Ak - Not this time –

I changed his name to make it rhyme.

Ar – Then cricket. When the term began,
bowlers took wickets, batsmen ran,
and then they dropped those leather balls
to haunt examination halls.

Ak – Then Third-formers could make the team.

Yes, Sherborne Preppers – dream the dream.

Ar – We're proud of that, but spare some thoughts
for people doing *minor* sports;

Ak – the stars of pools, bikes, field and track –

Ar – I've got it now, it's coming back –

Pete Wilson came to do a speech
and said you didn't have to reach
such peaks of fitness to beat Pete's
stunning clay-pigeon-shooting feats.

You don't need to be ripped and strong.

Ak – So there's still hope for Patrick Long.

Ar – Our music's always good to hear –

Ak – Concerts get bigger every year.

There's one assembly I recall

When Mr Henderson told us all

to go and hear Gerontius

and he began persuading us

with tales of life, death, heaven and hell.

Ar – and so we thought, we might as well.

Ak – Drama was equally intense,
and even Shakespeare made some sense.

Ar – We laughed hard at *The Rivals*, too,
so Mrs. Robinson,

Both - Here's to you.

Ar – I liked the Abbeylands house play,
Black Comedy, where night was day.

Nobody knew quite where to sit,
and Toby Rush looked far too fit.

[Something about the guest speaker to be woven into these next lines]

Ak – We really do remember things,
and as our lengthy patter brings
our time at Sherborne to an end
a host of memories ascend –

Ar – The audience might ascend, so please
let's spare them the soliloquies.

Ak – I will; I'll simply say, we'll miss
the school, our friends, and all of this – *[Akhmad can tear up if he wants]*

Ar – And in a moment, I've a hunch
that what we'll miss will be our lunch.

Ak – All right! Without much more ado –

Ar – From Archie

Ak - and Akhmad –

Both Adieu.