**Heads of School speech, Commem 2016**

Fergus Hamilton, Will Vitali

F- Please stand! (*Pause in case anyone does*)

W - No, don't.

F- I'm sorry – I'm

Longing to do that one last time.

Please stand!

W- They might. Try it again.

F - Please stand! Parents, I should explain.

There's a tradition that persists

from ages past – lost in the mists

of time –

W - last year –

F - Right. It insists

that ere the Head arrives at Lists,

we shout "All Stand" and wave our stick.

W - Now for a different kind of shtick:

Yes, there's a still more ancient rule

that every year, the Heads of School

review the year in dodgy verse.

F - You think that's bad. It could be worse –

back in the day, it was in Latin.

W - I bet you're glad we packed all *that* in.

So never mind all that. Please sit

while we reel off this piece of

F - wit.

Commem has brought us all together

in spite of all the British weather. (***Courts version*** *– thanks to a break in Britain's weather)*

**Abbey version:**

W - We're kept dry by God's ancient roof –

F - Please God, make sure it's waterproof –

(***Courts version –***

*W - We're lucky that it's in the Courts –*

*F - Will nearly wore Bermuda shorts.*

*W - Strange you should say that, Will – I did.*

*They're on now. Just – very well hid.*)

The lightning's flashed, the thunder's thudded,

and then the bursary was flooded.

F - I thought I saw a parent grin –

Normally, her money's pouring in.

W - How British of us – when in doubt

the weather's what we talk about.

F - We promise we've a lot to say;

but isn't it a frightful (*lovely*) day?

W - Come on, Ferg. It's our function here

to take a look at this past year.

F - Quite. Let's do this. Time to review

these crazy times we're living through.

W - That's right. OK. So. Let's get on

with covering these three terms just gone.

F - No more ado, and no more fuss –

But first, we need to talk about us.

W - As Head of School, Ferg's a clear choice –

his upright bearing, pukka voice

and rugby blazer mark him out

as somebody with natural clout,

F - whereas Vitali worked his way

up to the heights he's reached today.

He started low –

W - The Third Form.

F - Wow.

He's come so far. Look at him now.

He's cast off blues and humble roots

and put on some fantastic suits.

If you've a vision, then pursue it:

as Shia LeBeouf would say,

Both - JUST DO IT.

F - When Ali Collins' time is through,

you have to think, it could be you.

W - So dream the dream, and make a wish,

Xandy Dembinski – Conrad Fish.

F - So look at us. It's not so odd

that I captained the rugby squad

and Will here led a tough regime

as skipper of the football team.

W - It's fair to say we had great seasons –

not always for the best of reasons.

F - In parts of Somerset and Devon

I hear you're called the Smokers' Eleven.

W - We couldn't smoke – we lost our matches. (*If you can persuade the drummer in the band to go b'dum ching, that's probably the moment.)*

We're grateful, though, for nicotine patches.

F - The rugby team were all match fit,

but better still, check out our kit.

W - The football team has shorts that scratch

and light blue shirts that sort of match,

while rugby's metrosexual jocks

take to the field in cashmere socks.

F - We open wardrobes and we say

"What tracksuit shall I wear today?"

W - They're starting to accessorise

with bags –

F - no, totes -

W - - and masks for eyes

like those posh people wear on planes.

Parents, you'll realise it explains

in glossy, Vogue-like detail, why

the school shop bill is flipping high.

F - But teams don't win by cash alone,

as the England – Iceland game has shown:

chants from the touchline brought us luck –

Both - D17 MUK – I said D17 MUK.

F - That strange outpouring spurred us on

to vict'ry over Wellington –

W - - so never underestimate

the power of Muckalt's number plate.

F - Now, as we move away from sports

and cast our eyes around the Courts,

what do we see?

W - Some well-brushed hair,

no fidgeting in any chair,

F - no morning shadow on the chin,

and almost every shirt tucked in –

W - Yes, well done, dads, we're proud of you.

The boys have made an effort too! ;)

The visitors are blown away –

but we look like this every day.

F - It's thanks to our new leadership

that super shiny shoes are hip

and Mr Jamieson, as we speak

is rocking serious Sandhurst chic.

W - He's so grand he calls Sandhurst "Sernst".

F - Isn't it funny, what thou learnst?

W - As you can see, the days are past

when ties and trousers flew half-mast.

F - No turning back. Think happy thoughts –

you can't see Will's Bermuda shorts.

W - And nobody's allowed to laugh

when boys look scruffier than the staff.

F - It's true: one master thought a creature

like Hugo Houlton was a teacher,

and in the future, every child

will learn to dress like Dr Wild.

W - This smart initiative is led

by Dr Luckett, our new Head,

and now the school's got Dr Luckett in,

Sherborne has a new motto: tuck it in.

We welcome you to Sherborne School:

we're sure you'll have a splendid rule.

F - We'd like to add our gratitude

to Mr Barlow, who pursued

a steady course through choppy times

and led us on to sunnier climes.

When there's a crisis bad as Brexit,

you can be sure that Ralph unwrecks it.

W - As ever, music has been great –

the whole department's passed Grade 8,

and some have their diplomas now,

so, Mr Henderson, take a bow.

F - Ensembles wow beneath your baton;

it's time to put a Panama hat on

and leave all matters European

so you can tour the Caribbean.

W - And weirder still, we went to Wells –

far from the sound of Sherborne's bells

so more people could hear our choir

lending its might to *The Messiah.*

The swing band has our kind of cool.

Apparently they played in Poole

and ended up with more applause

than Canford's local band.

F - Of course.

Then the boys shouted out, "We won!"

W - Music's like sport.

F - And sometimes fun.

W - For cricketers, it often rained:

at least the drama entertained.

F - I so loved seeing Will in *Bouncers*,

where boys who talk like news announcers

mastered the art of sounding rough.

W - Yeah, thanks, mate. It was pretty tough.

Meanwhile – love musicals? Love blood?

We have the answer: Sweeney Todd.

F - And did you see *Lord of the Flies*?

Third form goes nuts.

W - There's a surprise.

Art imitating life: I hear

of Third-form lockers full of beer.

160 cans of it

In one locker. How did they fit?

F - We've lost him.

W - Were they tiny tins?

Wouldn't the empties fill the bins?

F - House plays produced a range of thrillers –

*Dick Barton* and *The Lady Killers* –

W - They showed us a good time, and then

the Digby did *Twelve Angry Men*.

F - They did *Eleven Angry Men.*

W - No, twelve.

F - That's right. I thought you meant

their team in the football tournament.

W - Drama reminds me that we're grieving,

because, like the UK, we're leaving.

F - So, as you'll hear, are several staff –

but not, like some years, nearly half.

W - One year, more staff left, I regret,

than Corbyn's shadow cabinet.

Drama reminds me that a play

can have a message to convey.

F - And our speech, too, has had a theme –

are things entirely what they seem?

The rugby kits, the shoes, the acts –

are they supported by the facts?

W - And can a speech, for all its art

explore what happens in a heart?

F - Some things that we most want to express

may end up sounding so much less,

while what we take from here is more

than UCAS or a rugby score.

W - That's deep. The thing that's worth expressing

is often the least obvious blessing:

the sense of camaraderie;

getting away with being me.

F - That's deeper still. Soon we'll all sit,

but let's point out, before we quit,

two good things that we can express.

W - Welcome to Sherborne: we possess

a library that still has books

and, as you'll see, amazing cooks.

F&W So. Sherborne. It's as good as it looks.