

Mark Turner, M.A.
Headmaster

Telephone: 01743 280525
Facsimile: 01743 340048
E-mail: hm@shrewsbury.org.uk



Shrewsbury School

The Schools
Shrewsbury
SY3 7BA

November 2011

Dear Parents,

I trust that your sons and daughters returned to you appropriately exhausted at the start of the half-term Exeat and that, subsequently, you were able to enjoy what I think is now colloquially referred to as 'quality time' together.

From my point of view, half-term provided the opportunity to be reminded of the vagaries of nature and of the important international changes that are taking place with almost revolutionary speed. I was due to experience my first formal visit to our sister school, Shrewsbury International School in Bangkok, Thailand. In the event, the most intense monsoon rains for thirty years inundated two-thirds of the country and, with the Chao Phraya river threatening to burst its banks in central Bangkok, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra declared a state of emergency. The Principal, Stephen Holroyd, made an early, clear and correct decision to cancel various festivities around a 'Last Night of the Proms', which was due to be conducted – no doubt in inimitable style, by our own Director of Music, John Moore, and a dinner to recognise the huge contribution of one of our pioneering Governors, Andrew Hillman, who retires at the end of this term, having been a massive driving force behind the whole notion of Shrewsbury developing an international dimension.

Despite the disappointment of changed plans, the experience did allow me to learn a little more about Shrewsbury International School, Bangkok. It is a dramatic and extremely successful story. In partnership with Chali Sophonpanich, governor expertise from members of our own board, and the energy and vision of Principal, Stephen Holroyd, who was hitherto Housemaster of Severn Hill (1997-2003) and Second Master (2003-2005), the school has moved from simply being an idea to its present state as a successful, functioning and dynamic establishment of 1,499 pupils (more than twice the size of Shrewsbury School). It offers A levels, as opposed to the International Baccalaureate and has already won its first places at Oxford and Cambridge, and at some of the leading American institutions.

The exchange is now proving to be of real benefit to the mother school in terms of material support and in other ways. Shrewsbury International School, Bangkok has cutting-edge technology. We will continue to look for ways to cement and enhance the relationship and make it meaningful for both pupils and staff.

Mention of Andrew Hillman's retirement provides me with the opportunity to give you a little more information about our Governing Body. The details of the eighteen men and women, who give up large amounts of time, on a voluntary basis, to bring their expertise to bear in support of the school, are on the website. I would encourage you to find out a little more about them from their profiles.

The board consists of a number of co-opted and nominated individuals. The local Council, Cambridge University, Oxford University, and The Royal Society are amongst the institutions that are represented. A significant number of members of the board are either Old Salopians, or current or former parents. The Governors have four formal meetings a year, together with a number of sub-committees, who all work very hard on the school's behalf. It was extremely reassuring that, during our most recent inspection, the governance of Shrewsbury School was graded as 'Outstanding', along with other important aspects of the school's operation. With Andrew Hillman's retirement imminent, this is my last opportunity to publicly thank him for his enormous contribution to our Governing Body over a period of twelve years. To Andrew and his fellow Governors, I should like to extend a word of thanks on behalf of the whole school community.

I would like to finish with a reference to two fantastic whole-school events, which took place on the afternoon and evening before half-term Exeat. The Tucks, the annual school cross-country race, was run by over 600 pupils and many members of staff. I applaud George Mallett (Severn Hill, Upper Sixth) for smashing the school record. Whilst there were other outstanding individual performances, the mass stampede of the start is one of those experiences that stays with Salopians probably for the rest of their lives! In the evening, we were treated to another feast of school talent in the form of the House Singing Competition. I can now well see why this is one of the highlights of the Shrewsbury social calendar. Large numbers of boys and girls displayed flair, charisma and real enthusiasm on behalf of their Houses, to produce an evening to remember. I congratulate the winners of the various categories:

- Churchill's – overall
- Severn Hill – part song
- Moser's – unison
- School House – best entertainment
- Ridgemount – most improved

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,

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