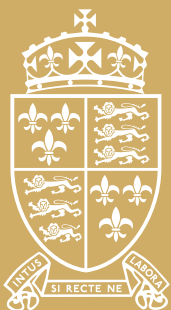




The Place of
Port Hill and Radbrook in the
History of Day Boys



The History of Day Boys from 1552-1984

The School has admitted both Day Boys and Boarders throughout its 471-year history. The changes in the relationships between the two groups and more widely between the School and the Town have been one its most interesting and prominent themes.

At its foundation, the School was intended to provide an education in Classical Grammar for the sons of local townsfolk. Many such 'Grammar Schools' were founded, all over the country, in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I and were funded, in part, on the proceeds derived from the abolition of clerical and monastic foundations. The inhabitants of Shrewsbury had taken the initiative in petitioning Edward VI for the foundation

of such a school; they considered that it was 'their' school and they conceived its purpose as being to provide education for local boys to become literate professional men, to serve the local community as administrators, doctors, teachers and clerics. However, Shrewsbury was in an exceptional position from the start, since it recruited from a wide area of the Welsh Marches and attracted pupils from considerable distances.





At the very beginning of the School's history, it was recorded that the numbers of Day Boys ('oppidani' or townsmen) and Boarders ('alieni', aliens) were exactly matched.

However, the decision of Sir Henry Sidney, (who, from Ludlow Castle, effectively ruled much of that area on behalf of the Crown), to send his son Philip to the School in 1564, no doubt encouraged many local gentry to follow his example. The result was that, by 1580, the historian Camden was able to record that Shrewsbury was the most populous of such schools in the whole of England.

The consequence was that many of these pupils, obliged to travel long distances, had no alternative but to board and this was done, for many decades, on an 'ad hoc' basis. Boys boarded with local families or with individual members of the staff, but it was not until the nineteenth century that the embryonic form of the modern 'boarding system' began to emerge. Then larger numbers of boys began to congregate under the pastoral supervision of the headmaster and subsequently of two other colleagues, in particular. These groups, when the School moved from its location in the centre of the town to Kingsland, in 1882, formed the nucleus of the present School House, (of which, until 1932, the Headmaster was himself the Housemaster), of Rigg's and of Churchill's.



A Generation of Day Boys' Housemasters (1949-87)

Standing (left to right):

Gawen Harvey (Port Hill 1984 on),

David Gee (Day Boys 1972-83),

Stewart Roberts (Radbrook 1984-87),

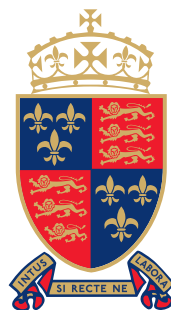
Jonathan Peat (Housemaster Designate of Radbrook from 1987),

Seated (left to right):

Basil Saint (Day Boys 1961-66),

Stacy Colman (Day Boys 1949-61),

Arnold Ellis (Day Boys 1966-71).



Meanwhile significant changes in the government, status and location of the School had taken place, which seriously damaged the relationship between the Day Boys and the Boarders and between the School and the Town. The first contentious issue concerned the government of the School. Originally, the Bailiffs and Burgesses of Shrewsbury were empowered to appoint the Headmaster and Under-Master. Later an acrimonious arrangement operated in which the Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, from whose graduates most of the subsequent Headmasters were selected, together with the School authorities, who all shared Tory sympathies, were habitually opposed by the Whig corporation of the town; a situation moderated by the occasional intervention of the Bishop of Lichfield. In 1798, an Act of Parliament reformed the constitution of the School: such powers as the Bailiffs and Burgesses had retained in the management of the School were removed and transferred to the Bishop.

The second blow to the influence of the town authorities in the School occurred seventy years later, in 1868, when the Clarendon Commission, which was established to identify those schools, the excellence of whose education qualified them to be considered élite schools of national standing, numbered Shrewsbury among 'the Clarendon Nine': Seven of these schools were boarding schools: they were Eton, Charterhouse, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Westminster and Winchester: two of them, St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors' were Day Schools. Only two of the schools, Rugby and Shrewsbury, were north of London.



A performance of 'Journey's End' - memorable for the emotional tension heightened by the fact that the parts of Stanhope and Raleigh were played by two brothers, Timothy and Jeremy Spafford.

The Commissioners' judgment that Shrewsbury should be included was based upon two principal factors: the outstanding quality of the School's classical teaching and the notably positive influence of its prefects, the *praepostors*, in maintaining its daily routine. The reaction in the town to this development was extremely hostile: it appeared to the burgesses of Shrewsbury that the government had 'stolen their school'. Shrewsbury would subsequently attract a far wider clientèle than ever before and many products of the Arnoldian system of Public School education would build their careers far beyond Shrewsbury, as diplomats, entrepreneurs and as proconsuls of the British Empire at its zenith: only a small minority would apply the skills acquired in their Salopian education to the benefit of the town. A century later

Headmaster Ted Maidment (1988-2001) would remark upon the number of Salopians establishing flourishing careers in the capital city, competing successfully with the alumni of the other schools in the Clarendon Nine, observing proudly that ‘they are *in* London, but not *of* it’.

A third development further exacerbated the difficulties in the relationship between the Town and the School. Headmaster Moss (1866-1908) had taken care that a clause should be inserted in the Act of Parliament, which had established the School’s new status, entitling him to move its premises from its cramped buildings on Castle Gates (now occupied by the Municipal Library) to a new, more spacious location within three miles of the centre of the town, thereby distancing the School physically, as well as ideologically, from its origins. This move proved to be the crucial and indispensable precondition for its future development and expansion. However, the choice of location was the subject of another heated controversy and the migration to Kingsland, which the experience of subsequent decades has proved to be inspired, was the result of a reluctant compromise at the time. It was forced upon the Headmaster to allay the many causes of resentment experienced by local traditionalists. Their anger was exacerbated by Moss’s own subsequent misjudgement when he inflicted 88 strokes of the birch, as punishment for drinking, upon a boy, who, ironically enough, was a Day Boy, the son of a prominent local family. This egregious *faux pas* attracted attention in the national press and

questions were asked in Parliament! As the burgesses looked up across the Severn in 1882 to the former Foundling Hospital and Victorian Workhouse which now served as the Main School Building, dominating the skyline across the river, it was a constant reminder to many of them of the power of Parliament to overrule the will of the local population.

All this had a drastic and deleterious effect upon the status of Day Boys, whose position only gradually began to be repaired in the 1960s, after fifteen subsequent generations of Salopian schoolboys. It was a cruel irony that the *oppidani* of the mid-sixteenth century had now, in effect, become *alieni*. For several decades the participation of the Day Boys in the School was largely confined to their attendance in class. They made their own arrangements for sport, and, for a time, they instituted their own Salopian Hunt: so far as the great majority of the staff and their schoolfellows were concerned, Day Boys were both inconsequential and peripheral.

But Moss, who had been a Day Boy at Shrewsbury himself, was an exception: he personally regarded them as an integral part of the Salopian community and safeguarded their interests. In 1904 he appointed a master to exercise specific oversight of them, the first significant initiative to provide them with pastoral care at the School. When Alington succeeded Moss as Headmaster in 1908, he made a deliberate effort to draw the Day Boys into the School’s wider activities.

In 1934 Headmaster Hardy (1932-1944) made the decision (remarkable at the time) to appoint a Day Boy, H.C. Owen, as Head of School, but in general the Day Boys continued to be viewed as 'second-class citizens', a despised minority. This attitude was reflected in the term used to describe them in Salopian slang, where they were known as '*skytes*' (Scythians) and, hence, 'barbarians'. They were accommodated on the ground floor of the Main School Building, with an assembly hall, changing rooms and two large studies at their disposal, which together now serve as the Staff Common Room. They took only one meal a day at school; lunch being served for them in the School Shop. They were required to report for First Lesson on weekdays at 7.45am, most of them having arrived on foot or on bicycles: attendance at all chapel services was obligatory. However, there was one particular reason for which their schoolmates appreciated them; they were in a position to lend bicycles to boarders, who were generally forbidden them!

During the 1960s, however, much more significant and powerful changes were at work in wider society which were greatly to improve the status and condition of Day Boys. The 'ivory tower' in which the boarders who were members of such schools as Shrewsbury had isolated themselves for so long, in which they continued to maintain their rigid hierarchy, antique customs and private language, was being demolished brick by brick and Headmaster Donald Wright (1963-1975) was both a powerful advocate and a vigorous agent of such change. He was determined

that the School should turn to face the Town. Two of his administrative changes worked powerfully to the Day Boys' advantage: the first was the abolition of 'First Lesson' in 1967; there was no longer to be teaching before breakfast; classes were to begin at 9 o'clock rather than at 7.45. This single change, in itself, made it possible for Day Boys to travel from greater distances to the School.

The inauguration, in 1969, of Central Feeding in the newly-built Kingsland Hall, was even more significant, for it broke down barriers not only between Boarders and Day Boys but also between the boarding houses themselves. These developments were reinforced by the appointment of top-class academics to take charge of the Day Boys at this time. Stacy Colman was the supreme Classical scholar of the period: Basil Saint, an extremely able mathematician, who succeeded him, matched Stacy's academic eminence. It was a good move to appoint



The victorious crew in Senior Challenge Oars.

these notable scholars to preside over a community of boys, whose background, as sons of mainly professional families, enabled them then, as it always has since, to make an important contribution to the academic standards and achievements of the School, (yet another splendid irony, they consistently proved themselves to be anything but 'Scythians'!)

The next priority was to build a sense of community in Day Boys and there could be no couple more caring, skilled and qualified to do so than Arnold and Margaret Ellis (1966-1971), who subsequently took charge. It was clear to all that 'The Master of Day Boys' had really become 'The Housemaster of Day Boys'. There had been a crucial change of atmosphere and status, but not yet a change of location, or a physical 'House', to accommodate them. In the last week of Arnold's tenure as Housemaster, Day Boys won all three of the inter-House football competitions, indicating a supremacy in the sport which has been closely replicated by them in very recent years.

In spite of an abrupt change of policy in the middle of the decade, the 1970s were years of consolidation and diversification for Day Boys. The Headmaster's instruction to the next Housemaster, David Gee (1972-1983) was to reduce the number of boys in the House, (which had grown so rapidly that the Day Boys had acquired an unacceptable advantage in competition with the boarding houses), to a total of five more than the average total in theirs (i.e. one extra boy per year-group). David began to implement this

policy, and in the seller's market which followed, he found that he was able to impose a higher qualification for entry to the House and to insist on a more rigorous integration of Day Boys in the day-long activity of the School, which, he believed, was the essential condition for attaining parity of esteem. Since Day Boys, after 1969, could have supper in Kingsland Hall, it became both possible and convenient for them to remain at School to complete their Top Schools.

There was a large influx of professional families into the town at this time, as Shrewsbury became, in effect, the administrative centre for mid-Wales, and many of these families were eager to secure places in Day Boys for their sons. Headmaster Eric Anderson (1975-1980) therefore reversed Donald Wright's policy and instructed the Housemaster to double the numbers in the House. Between 1975 and 1983 they grew from 75 to 123. In each year, from 1976, double numbers were admitted and the intention was that, as this policy was applied in each ascending year-group, its members should compete as two separate 'Houses'. There was a long-standing precedent for this. School House, for many years, had been such a 'double house' and had provided two distinct 'teams' for competitive purposes, named 'Headroom' and 'Doctor's'.

Similarly, Day Boys would subsequently produce two such teams, first at Junior Level and then in the Sixth Form also. By the time at which it became necessary to name these teams, Day Boys had moved to its present location. Their Housemaster

noted that, while on the Top Common the Houses were usually (but not exclusively) named after their founding Housemaster, the names of the Houses then existing on the Lower Common, Ridgemount and Severn Hill, had topographical names; so he chose 'Port Hill' and 'Radbrook' as the names of the embryonic Houses, first listed as such in Brown Book in 1980. There was strong feeling in the town, at the time, that the new houses should retain the purple colours under which they had 'fought' in the previous generation. Accordingly, it was initially decided that while members of Radbrook should retain the purple and white colours of their forebears, members of Port Hill should wear purple and black. Subsequent experience showed that these new colours were hard to distinguish and, die-hard sentiment in the town having been placated, new colours of Gold and Red were soon discreetly substituted for Port Hill, without dissent.

Another problem arising from the rapid growth of numbers was that the accommodation in Day Boys Hall equally quickly became inadequate. Classroom by classroom, Day Boys took over nearly all of the remaining space on the ground floor of the Main School Building and, as a final expedient, an outpost was even formed in 'The Poplars' at the top of Butler Road, where it was difficult to maintain adequate supervision. Meanwhile the lack of teaching space in the Main School Building was presenting an even more serious problem for the School as a whole.

The solution proposed and implemented was to move Day Boys entirely from the School Building to the large Sanatorium on Port Hill Road, which had been constructed in 1900 to deal with the raging epidemics of those days (victims used to be conveyed to and fro in a pony trap!), but in recent years, as the result of advancing techniques in preventive medicine, the building had scarcely been used. A large-scale reconstruction of the interior provided study and changing accommodation for Port Hill at one end of the building and for Radbrook at the other. A flat was constructed for the Housemaster in the centre of the building.

The migration of Day Boys took place on a cold, frosty morning on February 16th, 1979, when they simply picked up all their possessions and carried them, on foot, to the first physical 'House', they had ever had, at the other end of 'The Site'. All Day Boy families were invited to the Official Opening of the House by the Mayor of Shrewsbury, Councillor George Marston (himself a former Day Boy) on 1st May. Although sceptics warned that the move might consign Day Boys once again to the fringes of Salopian life, the opposite proved to be the case. Distance had certainly not dimmed the fortunes or lessened the participation of members of Ridgemount and Severn Hill during the previous half-century and the experience of a house of their own proved to enhance the community spirit of Day Boys. The study accommodation provided in the new House also made it possible to extend the practice of remaining at School to do

'Top Schools': by 1980 Day Boys were staying at school for four evenings each week, with a final assembly at 8.45pm: and many senior boys stayed considerably later. In subsequent years it turned out that The Grove, Mary Sidney Hall and finally Queen Elizabeth Hall were to join Ridgemount, Severn Hill and Day Boys in a neighbourhood of Houses which matched those previously established on the Top Common.

One further administrative problem needed to be addressed. Should the expanded House remain as one unit or be divided into two? There were powerful arguments for the former option. All Day Boys were already members of a close-knit

urban community. The policy and regime of a single Housemaster could more easily and consistently be applied: comparison with the relative slackness or severity of a colleague, literally, 'next door', could cause tensions. The reputations and performance of the two Houses would be the subject of close scrutiny in the local community: the licence of parents to choose could quickly cause an imbalance of numbers; refusal to allow them to do so would cause resentment. The experience in School House, where only ten years previously, a similar attempt to divide a 'double house' into its two component parts had failed miserably and had been reversed within two years, provided an ominous warning.



The Great Trek.

*Led by their Housemaster, Dr. D. H. Gee,
Day Boys leave the School Buildings for
their new home - the old Sanatorium.*

However, the decision was taken to make such a division and the perceived dangers mitigated, administratively, by conceding the parents no choice, with the single exception of allowing brothers to succeed each other in the same Day Boy House, if the parents so wished; by strengthening the content and application of School rules referring to Day Boys and finally by the tolerant recognition of the pairs of Housemasters of the imperative necessity both of implementing the same policy and of mutual co-operation.

A much more positive factor in countering the potential disadvantages of separation, however, was the marked expansion of social activities and of the vigorous participation of Day Boys' families in the House, which had taken place during the 1970s, as a regiment of Day Boys' mothers took pity on the bachelor housemaster, arranged splendid parties, produced costumes and otherwise assisted in the staging of large-scale plays, specifically chosen to engage as many as possible of the large number of boys in the House and by the institution of musical concerts each term, also made possible by an extraordinary influx of talented instrumentalists to the House. This greatly increased parental involvement led naturally to the formal inauguration of the Day Boys' Parents Association.

The 1970s, too, witnessed the appointment, in turn, of three Day Boy Heads of School, a very significant indicator of the integration of their House, and Day Boys have supplied their

full share of occupants of this position during subsequent decades. The formal separation into two Houses took place on 1st January 1984; assembly halls were subsequently constructed for each of them on the lower ground in front of the original building and the two Housemasters, with their families, then occupied the staff properties on each side of it.

The Day Boys' situation naturally qualified them to serve as emissaries and ambassadors between the School and the Town at a time when wider social changes were drawing them ever closer. Their contribution and their achievements have been a very significant feature in the School's record during recent years and this has been enhanced and reinforced by the still more recent and very successful admission of Day Girls.

Andy Barnard and Richard Case report on the recent history of Port Hill and Radbrook respectively, in the following sections. Although the numerical balance between boarding and day pupils has seen many changes since the days of Elizabeth I and Thomas Ashton, the equality of access and regard which pertained then will be fully restored by the formation of unitary houses and this development offers the day pupils, both boys and girls, the opportunity to make a still more significant impact in the School and to derive still greater benefit from it.

David Gee

Twentieth Century Housemasters of Day Boys



| 1904 - 1983 | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| W. H. Witherby | 1904 - 1906 |
| Revd. E. W. Huntingford | 1906 - 1909 |
| J. R. Pound | 1909 - 1910 |
| J. B. Oldham | 1910 - 1911 |
| Revd. J. O. Whitfield | 1911 - 1917 |
| R. F. Bailey | 1918 - 1921 |
| R. Sale | 1921 - 1929 |
| J. M. West | 1929 - 1940 |
| W. J. Pendlebury | 1940 - 1949 |
| D. S. Colman | 1949 - 1961 |
| H. L. B. Saint | 1961 - 1966 |
| A. D. Ellis | 1966 - 1971 |
| Dr. D. H. Gee | 1972 - 1983 |

Housemasters of Port Hill and Radbrook

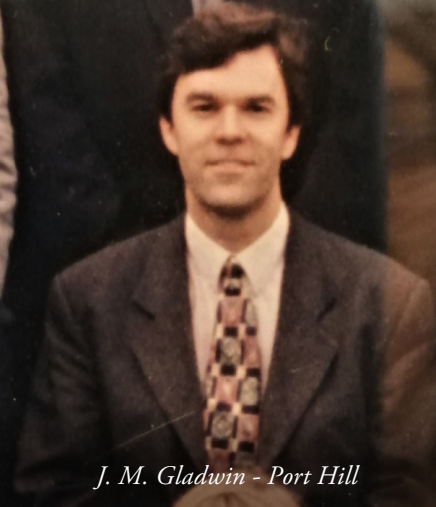


Port Hill 1984 - 2023

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| W. G. Harvey | 1984 - 1992 |
| J. M. Gladwin | 1992 - 1999 |
| M. J. Barratt | 1999 - 2002 |
| Mrs. S. L. Hankin | 2002 - 2007 |
| S. Hellier | 2007 - 2011 |
| A. S. Barnard | 2011 - 2022 |
| K. M. Lloyd | 2022 - 2023 |

Radbrook 1984 - 2023

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| S. B. Roberts | 1984 - 1987 |
| J. C. Peat | 1987 - 1995 |
| D. Kirkby | 1995 - 2010 |
| D. M. Hann | 2010 - 2014 |
| Dr. R. A. J. Case | 2014 - 2023 |



J. M. Gladwin - Port Hill



Mrs. S. L. Hankin - Port Hill



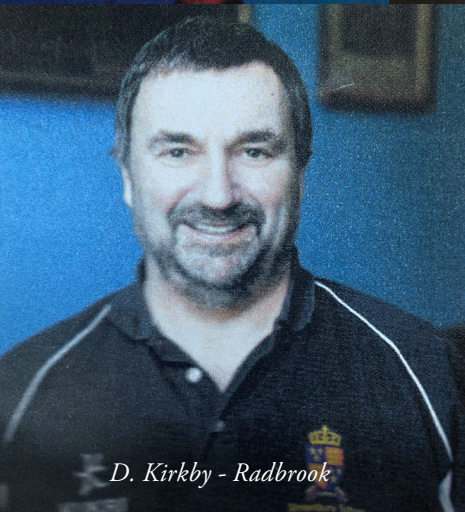
M. J. Barratt - Port Hill



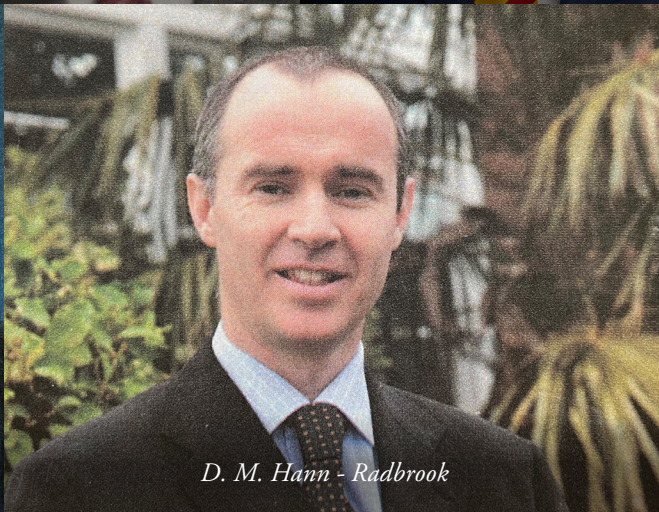
S. Hellier - Port Hill



K. M. Lloyd - Port Hill



D. Kirkby - Radbrook



D. M. Hann - Radbrook

PORT HILL 2011 to 2022

Housemaster Andy Barnard reviews the changes brought about by him and his wife, Helen, during his time in charge.



My teaching career began with 5 years in Hampstead (Lyndhurst House Prep) in 1981. This was followed by 16 years at Kingsland Grange as Senior Master, before I joined the staff at Shrewsbury as Master-in-charge of Cricket in 2003. After joining the School, I spent eight years teaching Geography and helped to build the reputation of our cricket, fives and football. By 2011 I felt ready to take on the hugely important role of leading Port Hill.

Port Hill already held very fond memories for me, as I used to walk past it three times a week, during my own school days at Priory Grammar School, on my way to play rugby and cricket at the playing fields just beyond the roundabout. The broad experience I had gained during my time at Shrewsbury, with the support and encouragement I had received from the Headmaster, Jeremy Goulding, and from Mike Tonks, suggested that Port Hill would be the right challenge for me.

On arrival, there was much to do and plenty of great work to build on. Top of my list of our priorities was further to improve the image of Port Hill as a vibrant, inclusive and successful House.



Working closely with the Radbrook housemasters (Duncan Kirkby, Des Hann and Richard Case) and with the Admissions Department was essential in ensuring the betterment and growth of Port Hill as one of the two Day Boy Houses. The private side had been decorated and improved during the

late summer and we moved in with our youngest son Edward, the day before the pupils arrived. Our two eldest boys had both enjoyed two years in the Radbrook Sixth Form and were at that time studying at university.

Helen and I set about improving the physical environment and building a new support and tutor team that would ensure that the boys could develop and grow up in a safe, caring and clean environment. Port Hill accommodation had remained little changed since boys first arrived there in 1984 and whilst it provided the basic needs of the boys, we set about making the House warmer and more homely. Restoring all the House Photographs and Honours Boards brought our history back to life. By developing the outside block study rooms into modern, bright and functional spaces we not only helped the pupils to study better but also helped the school to market the House more successfully.

We also worked closely with all our cleaners, who did a brilliant job. Because they often acted as the first point of contact for the boys, particularly during the morning, they helped us better to understand what actually went on in the house.

At the beginning of our tenure the House had about 55 to 60 boys, a population that enabled us to compete well across the board in all house-based events. Initially our new entrants were limited to The Third Form intake and a single Lower Sixth Former but when Kingsland Grange Prep was taken over by the High School Trust, the number of boys moving to Shrewsbury from there was reduced. This proved to be a small 'blip', as over



the following decade the number of pupils arriving in the Third and Fourth Forms and in the Lower Sixth increased. The greater numbers, together with the ongoing arrival of our music, academic and sports scholars, ensured that Port Hill's contribution to school life remained very strong.

Before and just after the pandemic, school numbers continued to rise. By the time we completed our service in 2022, we were caring for some 80 boys and there were close to 160 Day Boys in total. Port Hill had become a very significant and particularly important minority.

Once we had got our feet under the table, it became clear that we had much to do to persuade all new potential parents that the Day Boys were a fully integrated part of school. The common view from the many parents arriving on school visits was that Day Boys were a 'lesser' part of the school community. To change this perception, we made it our goal to ensure that the members of Port Hill had the same degree of commitment to House and School that boarders had. We encouraged boys to stay on after normal hours, to meet their full commitments to sport, music and academic work and to get involved in as many aspects of school life as they could. We entered all House

competitions and made sure we turned out smartly to all formal occasions *en masse*. We worked assiduously to improve the boys' discipline, appearance and punctuality. Port Hill was never perfect, and we had plenty of occasions when the boys fell short and brought dark clouds to the house, but bit by bit the boys took on board the standards we set. Teamwork and integrity were emphasized, and there was distinct progress.

By the time we celebrated 30 years of Port Hill and Radbrook in 2014 we felt that past and present pupils and parents gave both Day Boy Houses a huge endorsement for the role they were playing in the School: and furthermore, we also sensed that the connection between our houses and the local community was strong.

From 2015 to 2017 numbers arriving for visits declined slightly and the interest in Day Boys appeared to dwindle. We felt that we were doing a good job and worried that our hard work was not getting noticed beyond the school gates, but the appointment of Martin Cropper as Head of Admissions marked a significant change in the fortunes of the Day Boy Houses. Thereafter visitor numbers increased, communication lines improved, and confidence grew, recently, almost at an unprecedented rate.

Supporting pupils under stress or helping them recover from significant mistakes was the most challenging part of being a Housemaster. The extra dimension of stress and concern brought about by the pandemic greatly intensified that

challenge. Caring in remote, in front of a screen or on the end of a phone, is clearly not the best way to do the job but we persevered during the two years of disruption and tried to keep the pupils engaged, motivated and happy. Only time will tell if we did a good enough job for those bruised and upset by the time away from friends and the lack of contact time with teachers and carers.

In addition to the outside study block developments, there were other initiatives which helped the House develop. The changing room area was old and cramped when we moved in and despite numerous pleas for improvement it was not until 2017-18 that the shower area was refurbished. The new showers were greatly appreciated and made the quick turn-round after sport in the winter timetable so very much easier. In 2021/22 a new dry play area was added in front of the House, which enabled boys to play out more often. But perhaps the most significant improvement in recent years was the appointment of a single Matron (Jo Crisp) to both Port Hill and Radbrook. Until 2018 both houses (more than 140 boys altogether) had shared a Matron (Kerry Medicott during my time). Subsequently each Matron had her own office, and this significantly helped the emotional and social support which could be offered. Two safe spaces in such a populous environment were most welcome and made us all feel more secure. Nevertheless, Matrons remained part time and a move towards full-time support in the House would have been better still, particularly as we came out of the pandemic.

We have been fortunate in, and proud of all our achievements in the past eleven years and feel sure that Port Hill is going out with heads held high. Port Hill was dominant in sports by the time we finished, because we clearly had good numbers and excellent sportsmen. The boys were expected to win sporting competitions, and, increasingly, they managed to do that very well. Winning the double treble in house football in 2021 and 2022 was clearly a standout.

We also found great enjoyment in our participation across the board. House Singing is a good example. Although we won very few prizes in this competition during our time, it gave us as much satisfaction as any other activity. To organise and rehearse for House Singing in a Day Boys' house is a logistical nightmare but year on year we harmonized a very respectable song and stuck religiously to the rules. In recent years our success in debating has

also brought great joy and pride to Port Hill. But our greatest success was in our wholehearted participation, involvement and commitment.

As a footnote and perhaps as a reflection of the influence and importance of Port Hill, I would like to point out that there have been three Head Boys during our time who were members of Port Hill: James Whitaker spent his first three years in the House, while Tom Breese and Finn Sansom remained in it for the whole of their time in the School.

As we say farewell, I am sure that my successor Kevin Lloyd would join me, with all the other Port Hill Housemasters, in saying that Port Hill was a hugely important part of the School during its 38-year existence: never more so, perhaps, in all the years since the School was first established, primarily to educate the sons of residents in the town.

Andy Barnard



RADBROOK 2014 to 2023



Given the ancient history of *oppidani* and *alieni*, and the modern history - from 1984 onwards - I felt I had a background which would help me take up the challenges of a Day Boy Housemaster, when I was appointed in 2014.

Brought up in Ingram's, where I had a good sense of boarding life, I was educated in Port Hill, under the inspirational guidance of Gawen Harvey and Jeremy Gladwin. Now, as Day Boys and boarders alike take up their places in the same Houses, it falls to me to celebrate the future that lies ahead.

So much of housemastering in Day Boys has been about making sure that "the boarders who sleep at home" get the most out of life at Shrewsbury. This was true for the great names of the past as well as for my predecessors, the resourceful and energetic Duncan Kirkby and Des Hahn, whose humane and cultured influence fashioned the house I took over. We have all done our best to ensure the significance of Day Boys in the School community, into which they now become fully integrated. As David Gee writes in *City on a Hill*:

The Day Boy stands to gain a great deal if he commits himself fully to life in a boarding school, in terms of the benefits from its strong communal life,

its freedom from external distractions and its generous provision of extra curricular facilities. These, taken together, provide a totality, richness, and variety of experience not generally available in a Day School. But to take full advantage of these assets requires both considerable



self-discipline and sound judgement to be exercised at a comparatively young age. It is easy enough to spend the time available for sport and cultural activities at school completing Top Schools and then to pass the evenings in front of the television at home.

With this in mind, I was very keen to make sure that the benefits of boarding were available to all the boys in Radbrook, and to ensure that it wasn't just somewhere where boys simply changed for sport and stored books. I hoped this would be a family enterprise, which began on day one by inviting new boys into the kitchen during the evenings of Foundation Fortnight for hot chocolate and reassuring conversation. My promise to myself was to ensure that my office door would always be open and that boys would always be listened to. I hoped that I could encourage each boy to fulfil his potential so that the House would make significant contributions to academic excellence, and also in the theatre, the music school, and on the playing fields. And by and large, I am pleased to say it has done so.

Radbrook boys have always packed a punch when it comes to academic performances and accolades, and although scholars were spread as equally as possible between Port Hill and Radbrook, we regularly featured in dispatches and I took great pride in the "geek chic" that resulted in a myriad of school prize-winners, Olympiad medals and nine successful Oxbridge applicants between 2014 and 2023. Many more were



unlucky in that hot-house lottery, but a critical mass of ambitious and hard-working individuals has always been a feature of Radbrook.

Day pupils have also always contributed a significant proportion of individuals to school teams and crews. However, I can't deny that the victory in First House Football in my first term was one of many memorable moments. Both players and supporters were outstanding, with Port Hill swelling the ranks of supporters. The trophy cabinet is currently well-stocked from notable wins last year in Bumps, with all three crews at the head of their divisions.

This year we also claimed the cup for the Overall Prize in House Singing. The latter was particularly sweet given the challenges of getting Day Boys together to practise, and it reflects consistently excellent leadership from the Upper Sixth, who have always done well over the years and nailed it on their final chance. I should also add that we have had many exceptional individual musicians in Radbrook; it is not surprising, therefore, that we have always enjoyed some soirées at which Chiara, my wife, has been pleased to accompany, and had more

than our fair share of players in school orchestras, bands and other ensembles.

Our successes have in a way reflected our recruitment. Total numbers declined from 58 to 48 between 2015 and 2018, but have risen to the current total of 75. Finding time for each pupil has therefore become a little harder recently, but I have been very ably and happily supported by an excellent team of tutors, which has increased in size. Equally importantly, the role and presence of the Matron has become more central; we now have one matron for each of the Day Houses, and she is much more sympathetically located in the building than she was. And of course we could not do without our support staff and cleaners. There is no doubt of the great contribution that Matron and tutors make to a happy and successful houseful of boys!

There have inevitably been a few tough moments - not least during the COVID epidemic, which, nonetheless, so often brought individuals and the community together in unexpected ways - but these difficulties are far outweighed by pride in the boys' achievements both large and small, and no job can offer the endlessly varied rewards that housemastering provides. It has been a privilege to be part of the distinctive and successful pieces of Shrewsbury history that are Radbrook and Port Hill, and while I feel for those caught in a period of change, there can be no doubt that Day Boys at Shrewsbury will continue to thrive. They are coming home.

Richard Case







"The final entrants to Port Hill and Radbrook."

