

MT END OF TERM ASSEMBLY 2021

"My family tree begins with what in fact is a tree, a cedar of straight grain that grows in Northern California and Oregon. Now contemplate all the saws and trucks and rope and the countless other gear used in harvesting and carting the cedar logs to the railroad siding."

So starts, curiously, the autobiography of a pencil, written by – well in theory her head - but in reality by Leonard Reed in 1958. She goes on to say:

"My "lead" itself—it contains no lead at all—is complex. The graphite is mined in Sri Lanka. Consider these miners and those who make their many tools and the makers of the paper sacks in which the graphite is shipped and those who make the string that ties the sacks and those who put them aboard ships and those who make the ships. Even the lighthouse keepers along the way assisted in my birth— and the harbor pilots"

An autobiography of a pencil, what's the point you may ask? Well, it's all about the supply-chain, the myriad makers, miners, manufacturers, movers that are needed to bring us the food on our plates, the present under the tree, a complex global process even for the humble wooden pencil. It underlines just how interdependent we are.

In this last week of term, my sixth-form Economics set have enjoyed some well-earned sleep while I have been talking about this issue at the front of the classroom. Because, just now, we are seeing lots of signs that there are serious problems with this global system. Often unnoticed, since we don't think through the process involved in that thing we buy on Amazon, but there when you look for it and sometimes affecting us significantly. You may have noticed a fuel crisis earlier this term, caused by panic buying but that panic came from a disruption to fuel supplies. You may have heard of the shortage of lorry drivers too. These forces as you can imagine, affect our bus service for example, the cost of food for the kitchens, and much more besides thanks to the global complexity that is the consequence of our everyday production.

China's strict Covid policy causes delays in containers coming and going from their ports. That reduces the supply of silicon chips, which increases the cost of new cars, which causes the prices of used cars to rocket in England. A shortage of

American lorry drivers creates a backlog in Long Beach, California and there is a similar long chain of effects across the globe.

What's this economics lesson got to do with me? Well it's quite a lot as it happens but I would not lose sleep over it because across the world millions of men and women are working hard in response to each little problem they face adjusting in response to each challenge, so you can enjoy the luxuries to which you have become accustomed. You will never meet most of these people who deserve our gratitude for the comforts we have.

But if material things are the luxuries we enjoy, and indulge in even more over Christmas, love is the necessity, kindness the kernel, and cruelty the killer of our everyday lives. And the supply chain that delivers us that love kindness is a little closer to home. It is the interactions we have in our everyday lives. **It is the message on the phone which thinks of a friend in school, who smiles at the person in the year below, who walks a bit taller, who gains the confidence to put their hand up, who gets praise from the teacher, who jollies along the tutee, who thinks life is that little bit better, who includes that other girl in the house in their conversation, who goes home happy, and so on, and so on.** Or it is the mean-spirited comment, the exclusion of someone from the group, that similarly, perniciously, like a rat in the drainpipe, causing fractures and pressure, working its way through our emotional supply-chain that includes me, you, that sixth-former, that year 9, his mood, her self-esteem and **my righteous anger that any of us, even when we are tired** should get a cheap thrill from being nasty to others.

"I, Pencil, am a complex combination of miracles: a tree, zinc, copper, graphite, and so on. But to these miracles which manifest themselves in Nature an even more extraordinary miracle has been added: the configuration of creative human energies—millions of tiny know-hows configuring naturally and spontaneously in response to human necessity and desire and in the absence of any human masterminding."

Nor does it take a mastermind, or any real hard work, in our much closer and smaller community, to deliver under the tree the kindness we crave, we deserve, and is the spirit of this season. It just takes you, me; a kind word.

I, person, am a complex combination of miracles, and they are all in front of me this morning.

Moving on, our community includes those many staff who have worked tirelessly throughout this term to correct those unkindnesses where they can, shouldering the burden and sharing in the joy of your progress.

We say goodbye this term to Lulu Brown who has worked at the college for almost nine years as the Eastbournian Society events organiser. In her time she has helped increase the number and variety of events and participation from OEs, parents and friends of the College. Using her breadth of knowledge, expertise, experience and an enviable list of contacts across a variety of industries, Lulu ensured everything she turned her hand to had a successful outcome.

Behind the scenes, but quite literally part of our supply-chain, we say goodbye to Sally Skaife. She is an original and we will never again reproduce what she has done working away to assist us with teaching resources. *Sally Skaife began her time at Eastbourne College in June 1991 and has supported the needs of staff and pupils for over thirty years. From seeing the very first computer installed into the college, to helping to support a large, disparate, and sprawling IT estate. Having to adapt to changes that would test anyone's mettle has earned our respect and acknowledgement of all Sally has done for us.*

[Applause]

From the teaching staff I thank Harry Ford for his energy and contribution to modern foreign languages and coaching games. Pupils in the music department have found his brilliant bass playing invaluable and inspiring, as he has been as a Gonville tutor and resident tutor. We wish him well as he looks to new horizons.

[Applause]

Lydia Jourdain, happily for us, is not going to be a stranger to our community, but we say goodbye to her excellent teaching and inspiration in English and Drama. Mrs Jourdain over seventeen years has brought creativity and imagination to her teaching. She is a patient and thoughtful teacher, always willing to help a pupil in a 1:1, engage pupils in different and exciting classroom activities, and mix

technology with a human face and sensitive understanding. Junior reading lists, prize competitions, public speaking and debating competitions, marvellous productions, are just part of the incredible things she has achieved. She has put heart and soul into Pennell house too, not least as a tutor whose care for those in her charge has been peerless. She has in recent years made her classroom an inspiring and welcoming learning space, lifting the spirits nearly as much as her magnificent shoes. We wish her well for, and look forward to hearing about, her exciting new career in consultancy.

[Applause]

After twenty-four years working at the College, Wayne Trinder has decided, and thoroughly deserves, the opportunity to hang up his overall and put away his gown for the last term.

Wayne was an inspirational Head of Department for ten years. He helped design and realise the move to the Design and Technology centre which we enjoy now. He nurtured numerous successful Arkwright scholars, Young Craftsman of the Year successes and been recognised with accolades such as the Teacher award from the Institute of Electrical Engineers. Whether as a tutor of boys or girls, pioneering the mountain biking club, or patiently supporting pupils in Design and Technology, Wayne has always had the pupils best interests at heart. They will be bereft, I know, and stumped the next time their high-end bicycle component needs an expert eye. Mr Trinder did not want a big fuss made despite the near quarter of a century he has worked with us, but I do not think a bit of generous applause is too much in recognition.

[Applause]

I now hand over to Mr Symes, and wish you a very happy Christmas, and a start to 2022 that is full of joy.