Robert: Hello – can everybody hear?

Jack: No? Good. Nobody has to fear a speech in sometimes stumbling verse.

Robert: And then they’ve made the project worse. To try and present today’s bonanza from the centre of a Baked Alaska.

Jack: Who cares? However hot the school, in here, we’re like, totally cool. Although in Bake-Off terms, we’ve met surely our biggest challenge yet.

Robert: We must review a – thinking – quiet year.

Jack: Its true folks, nothing happened here. There’s nothing special to report.

Robert: Didn’t we do quite well at sport?

Jack: We always do. The Nat West Vase for junior Rugby now is ours.

Robert: Rory Macmillan – wasn’t he chosen to be in Team GB?

Jack: He was, Rob, but for Chemistry. That doesn’t count. Let’s say instead, we’re grateful to our wise young head – The mighty Ralph, whom guvnors gave us
when things were just too quiet, to save us

*Robert:* whatever he saved us from,
and did it with a rare aplomb.

At least we’ve had a busy day;
as Mr Barlow’s apt to say,
we’ve heard some readings, said some prayers
and sung some hymns.

*Jack:* Soon Black Rod spares
the time to spoil us children with
wisdom, experience and pith.

*Robert:* Meanwhile, sorry, you’re stuck with us,
and almost nothing to discuss.

*Jack:* It’s quite like sitting an exam
and wishing you’d made time to cram.

*Robert:* Shhhh! Isn’t Dr Filtness near
‘cause you wouldn’t want him to hear
you actually needed study-leave this year

But, thankfully, worries melt away
with Mrs Clayton’s tips of the day.

*Jack:* Some seem quite profound. Here’s one:

*Robert:* Prepare.

*Jack:* Or failing that, there’s always prayer.

*Robert:* We’d ask the Rev., but she fell flat
listening and dancing to Take That –

**Jack:** Yes. From afar, she saw a star. Lo!

It led to Mr - Gary - Barlow.

**Robert:** On the other hand, the trusty Rev. Mercer has wielded his computer’s cursor so far ahead he can remember who says each prayer till next December. It looked as though we’d need a miracle to make inspectorates wax lyrical, but when the School was on the spot that was precisely what we got.

**Jack:** I heard the verdict from a chap I met down at the Digby Tap,

**Robert:** Did you buy him a pint?

**Jack:** Oh, Several!

and we got talking, as you do, until we’d seen the evening through. Then, when I asked him how it went, he told us we were excellent.

**Robert:** Now, much of this we can attribute to staff, so let us now pay tribute to those who’ve given us so much – let’s hope that you can stay in touch.
Jack: It’s been a help that Mr Jones has Hellenism in his bones –
his accent, and guitar, make meter
in odes and epics all the sweeter.

Robert: Mr Pannill’s filled our chapels
with lovely talks; apparently he’s powered by apples.

Jack: They say he eats a bag a day

Robert: And I hope that keeps the doctor away!
He’s written poems that eclipse
the doggerel coming from our lips.

Jack: Apples tempt Ben Kalinsky, too.
This Princeton apples thing - who knew?

Robert: But what he really can’t resist,
Strangely, is The Economist.

Jack: I love the electronic mail,
especially when staff regail
600 boys with gleeful tales
of how their cricket team prevails;
Tom Flowers’ tenure’s reached an end,
but please, sir, keep on clicking “Send”.

Robert: Now that we’re 18, Mr Carey
doesn’t seem somehow quite so scary.
That first-rate rugby and tennis coach
is someone we can now approach.

**Jack:** Careful, he could be watching you.

**Robert:** I’d worry, but I’m leaving too.

I heard that Mr Kimber taught young Classics students how one ought to translate that forensic flow of Lysias and Cicero by dressing up in toilet roll to be unravelled like a scroll.

Jack, you’re quite good at Latin.

**Jack:** Yup.

I’m pretty much the Andrex pup.

**Robert:** Speak for yourself!

**Jack:** It’s Dr Stiff who will declare that Geography is everywhere.

Once he was on the SMT he soon embodied Geography.

**Robert:** The one-stop call for Soviet Foreign Policy’s always Mr Warren,

**Jack:** *Discerningly:* Come on Rob you can do better than that!

**Robert:** Sorry

He always gave his set excellent marks –

**Jack:** He means, Karl Marx; our Richard harks
back fondly to Cromwell’s protectorate.

Robert: So when the ISI inspectorate said that the school keeps getting better, it’s ‘cos they hadn’t seen his sweater. It’s fading fast.


Robert: Now, those of you who’ve ever had reports from Mr Haigh, be sad.

Jack: Be very sad. Yes, when he ran Wallace, its residents began to see if they could use a word that Mr Haigh had never heard.

Robert: They never could. To win the cup you really had to make them up. And even then you weren’t so sure he hadn’t chanced on that before, or he’d invent some synonym.

Jack: It’s time for a report on him: *(big breath)* – Patrick’s unceasing lucubration are seen by some as exhortations to join in the semantic games evocative of Henry James
while deconstructionists prefer
the joy of text – and I concur.

**Robert:** Jack, steady on. I should remind you
that Mr Haigh is right behind you.
Sir, if the wording wasn’t right,
we really meant to be polite.

**Jack:** That’s really what we’ve learnt from you.
We’ve picked up some choice language, too.

**Robert:** Are you all right, Jack – enjoying it so far?

**Jack:** I’m OK,
but need another tip of the day
if I’m to keep us on the tracks.

**Robert:** Good. Mrs Clayton says – relax.
Breathe in. Play Minecraft. You’ll soon *find*
things flooding back into your *mind*.

**Jack:** Thanks Rob – it’s working! I recall
that this year wasn’t quiet at all!
The school sent all those letters out –

**Robert:** Oh, what letters, I don’t know what he’s on about –

**Jack:** to warn the townsfolk that the boys
of Roc.Soc really make some noise!
Here music is a massive thing.
When we sing masses, masses sing.
Robert: Phew. Art this year has been intense.
I don’t know how we can dispense
with Mr Cuerden and his wife,
who brought such colour to our life.

Jack: They made Shirburnians so right on
we’ll want to go with them to Brighton.
Drama’s intense, too – Mr Reade
makes actors give until they bleed.

Robert: They leave the audience wanting more,
till there are organs on the floor.

Duchess of Malfi? That was fun.

Jack: For sure. Chopped liver, anyone?
Theatre shocks. Oh jeepers creepers –
King Oedipus popped out his peepers.

Robert: In 2015 came the age
when drama took a national stage,
so party leaders and their fates
were mirrored by our own debates.
Junior debates were apparently so well run –
so good that everybody won.

Jack: So, as in the UK election,
there was, bizarrely, a rejection
of Labour.
Robert: Yes, we turned on Ed for being far too weird, and Red.

Jack: Yes, funny as it sometimes seems, throughout the night, Ed Polsue dreams of raising the taxation scale and nationalising Network Rail.

Robert: Time to spruce up the nation’s health. Righto, chaps, redistribute wealth.

Jack: Those winds of change that blow and blast ceaselessly bear us to the past and bear aloft our royal flag so that morale can never sag.

Robert: Yes, each term, when the flag’s unrolled, you’d almost think the school was old.

Jack: It is? That’s why directors came to film _The Imitation Game_.

Robert: Hurray! Each time the Courts appeared our schoolboy audiences cheered so loud in front the Yeovil screening it was easy to forget its meaning.

Jack: Still, if Napoleon was beaten upon the playing fields of Eton, then on some sunlit Sherborne green
We broke the German code machine.

Robert: You see, like flags, it’s hard to hide that funny sentiment called pride. Sometimes we fear that it’s adjacent to being cocky or complacent, which isn’t a good look when set against a world we haven’t met.

Jack: We face the future, yes, but feel our past experience is as real. If Sherborne’s history empowers, the past five years of it were ours –

Robert: ears that we doubt we could have spent in a more wonderful environment.

Jack: And so, although we leave you now –

Robert: although we take our final bow,

Jack: our thoughts will keep us coming back –

Robert: and so might we – Robert –

Jack: and Jack.