



## **Principal's Address at Prize-giving, September 2010**

Professor Guille, Dean, Ladies, Gentlemen and boys.

There is an old joke that runs thus: what is the collective noun for headmasters? A lack of principles. And it is principles that I would like to talk about this evening. Defined in the Oxford English dictionary as 'fundamental sources or propositions upon which others may depend', it is essential that any school has clear and well-defined principles, many of which have stood the test of time. After all one has to be wary of Groucho Marx's famous ending to his fictional Presidential speech: 'these are my principles and if you don't like them I have plenty of others'.

So what are the principles of Elizabeth College? All headmasters should be able to answer that question of their school and as a new headmaster, one usually spends his first year in post trying to establish exactly this. And yes, I have been unashamedly badgering Directors, staff, parents and boys with this very question over the last 12 months, as well as trying to get an innate feel for the spirit and ethos of College by that much more immediate means; just seeing what people do and what's going on. I can assure you there is plenty going at College; but more of that later.

One principle that should abound in all schools is the respect of others, particularly one's elders, and I would like to start by paying my personal respects to two long-serving members of staff who retired in the summer. Stuart Morris left College after 37 years of service, 24 of which were as Vice Principal. I know this comes as a painful realisation for many Old Elizabethans of a decent vintage, who, previously safe in the knowledge that one of their dear old teachers remained at College, saw this as a sign of their eternal youth. Sadly, gentlemen, that is no longer the case. I could say so much about Stuart Morris but respecting his wishes that absolute

minimal fuss is made over his departure, I will simply say two things. Firstly, that his support in helping me settle as Principal last year was immeasurable, and secondly that his service to the school over the last 37 years has been outstanding, the same word recently used by Inspectors to describe the our levels of pastoral care at College, as led by Stuart for many years.

Art teacher Liz Adams retires after 21 years at the College. Her inspirational and immensely enthusiastic approach to teaching has had a huge impact of generations of art students and it is particularly apt that she is succeeded by one of her very own students, Charlie Buchanan, who was inspired herself to teach thanks to Liz's great influence. The great poet William Butler Yeats said that 'education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire'. Liz Adams lit many artistic fires.

Anna Thibeaut and Alan Jewell have also moved on having given many years of service to College, contributing very significantly to the teaching of languages and English respectively during that time and in Alan's case, also providing a particularly kind and caring Head of Year. We wish all four the very best in their future lives.

A religious studies teacher recently set his Sixth Form class an exam essay question 'what is the difference between ignorance and apathy? He was obliged to award full marks to the student who simply wrote 'I don't know and I don't care'.

Another of Elizabeth College's key principles is that all individuals should be given the opportunity to make the very most of themselves. This can perhaps be most easily seen or at least measured, by examination performance and I am sure many of you will have read about our excellent GCSE and A level results in the Press over recent weeks. Such results clearly illustrate that we have boys to match the very best academic students of any school across the whole of the United Kingdom; our three young men who achieved 12 straight A\* passes at GCSE, for instance, and the three boys who are off to Oxford and Cambridge universities, having achieved a glittering array of six A\* and five A grades at A level between them. There is no doubt that this school achieves the best for the best.

Taking a slightly broader perspective, we were also delighted that over a quarter of the Upper Sixth achieved at least three A or A\* grades at A level and that 63% of all GCSEs taken were graded at either A or A\*; a statistic that places us amongst the top 20% of all UK independent boys schools and as the highest performing school in the Channel Islands, well ahead, I can't

help myself slipping in, of another boys' school in Jersey named after another great English monarch...of the female variety.

But well done also to all the boys in last year's Year 11, every single one of which, for the fourth year running, achieved GCSE passes in English, mathematics and science, and well done as well to the great majority of boys in Upper Sixth who achieved their grades, of varied levels, to get onto their first choice university courses, despite the grave warnings of disappointment in the media. Yes we are an academically selective school, but we still support a wide range of academic abilities and pride ourselves on getting the very best out of all our pupils, whether they are straight A\* boys or boys for whom B and C grades are excellent achievements. There are many boys at College, who have their greatest talents in other, non-academic areas and that brings me to another key principle of Elizabeth College – that strong tradition of inclusivity whereby all pupils have the opportunity to get involved and excel at school, whatever their gifts be they academic, sporting or in any of the other multitude of activities we offer.

One famous English public school describes its sporting and extra-curricular activities collectively as 'the Other Half' and I like that; the implication being that those activities are recognized as equally important in terms of education. Indeed, this is the main reason that excellence and commitment in such activities is now formally recognized by the awarding of Junior Colours on blazers and it is great to see so many coloured badges on display here tonight. Critically, not only do such activities provide immense enjoyment and pleasure for our pupils, but they are also the key to supporting another principle of an Elizabeth College education; the development of character. Confidence, motivation, enthusiasm, drive, creativity, teamwork, risk-taking, sensitivity, leadership, self-awareness; these are all things that cannot be easily measured and not all of them, by any means, can be developed in classrooms or examination halls. That list is not mine by the way; it is what the UK Graduate Recruitment Agency list as the key criteria future employers look for. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I repeat from last year my old headmaster's quote: 'qualifications will get you an interview, character gets you the job'.

And it has been another year of extraordinary activity, involvement and success for the so-called 'Other Half' at College. So much success in sport and outdoor activities to celebrate, in fact, that we are having our first Elizabeth College Sports Presentation Evening here in St James next Wednesday, with 27 teams and individuals having been nominated for nine major awards. As ever, there are too many highlights to list here and now and I am wary of pre-empting any of

the sports awards next week, but here are just a few to give you a taste of the varied activities and levels of success we provide: our fencing team won the English public schools trophy for the fourth year running, our swimmers again reached the national relay finals at intermediate and senior level, the 1<sup>st</sup> hockey team reaching the West of England schools finals and the final of the Island mens cup competition, our first competitive Elizabeth College rowing team won four trophies in the gruelling Sark to Jersey race, our Year 9 and 10 athletics teams are Guernsey champions, our CCF teams all completed the grueling Ten Tors challenge and our small bore shooting team won the British national league.

Great individual honours, too, for Adam Clark who was been selected for the England U18 hockey team a year early, Tim Ravenscroft for playing for county 2<sup>nd</sup> team cricket and being awarded a lucrative contract with Hampshire cricket club and for Max Barber, becoming the first ever boy from Elizabeth College to win the Grand Aggregate Trophy at Bisley, as the highest scoring cadet of the 100s competing at the annual national shooting competition.

Beyond sport and outdoor activities there were further notable achievements; against other schools on the island we won the Guernsey Youth Speaks competition, the Collas Day Moot, the De Putron Quiz, the Channel Islands Senior Maths Challenge (with some help from Ladies College) and our Year 7 team of budding short-story writers achieved global success by winning the worldwide, web-based Write Path competition.

In drama, we enjoyed a stirring and magnificent production of Macbeth followed by an immensely entertaining Wizard of Oz in the Lent term. In music, a number of excellent concerts, including the remarkable spectacle here in St James of over 120 pupils from College and Beechwood performing a choral piece for the finale of the Foundress's Concert last March.

And that reminds me that it's not just the successes we should be celebrating at College but the level of involvement in such activities too: 60 boys singing in the choir, over 50 students involved in the Wizard of Oz production, over 184 boys in the Combined Cadet Force, 66 boys from Year 10 signed up for Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award this year, over 50 boys in the fencing team, 72 boys involved in the house debating competition and every single boy in the school, for better or worse, involved in the house singing competition. Such involvement, of course, cannot be sustained without the commitment and dedication of the College staff and perhaps this therefore is an appropriate time to thank the people behind me, for all they do, in the traditional way.

I would also like to announce that a new major prize will be awarded at next year's Prize Giving, which reflects the importance we place on sporting and extra-curricular activities. The Collenette Cup, named after legendary College schoolmaster Vernon Collenette, who would have very much approved of such an award, will be given annually to the boy who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to and involvement in such activities over a number of years at school.

And so to my final, and perhaps most important, principle of Elizabeth College. Dr. Thomas Arnold, Victorian headmaster of Rugby School and widely recognized as the founding father of the modern British Public School, told his senior boys: 'what we must look for is first, religious and moral principles, secondly, gentlemanly conduct and third, intellectual ability'. Whilst we could spend forever debating the order of the three, those of you who know me know that I unashamedly put a great deal of weight on traditional Christian values and morals, courtesy, manners and gentlemanly conduct. It is the very least, of course, one should expect of a Christian foundation, but also, a school with a great tradition of complementing and supporting the community in which it exists. This is reflected not only in our boys' conduct and behavior, but also their generous attitude to charity and provision of service to the island community. All boys from Year 10 upwards are required to be involved with a service activity on a Friday afternoon and all boys contribute to our numerous fund-raising events during the year, raising over £5000 last year. This year we will be proudly supporting Les Bourgs Hospice on the island, the UK leukemia charity Anthony Nolan Trust and Lepira and as we have done over recent years, Surovi school in Bangladesh.

So the Principles of Elizabeth College:

- Allowing boys to reach their academic potential
- Giving all boys the opportunity to excel in their own field
- Getting as many boys as possible involved in a variety activities
- A strong emphasis on the development of character and personality
- And the nurturing of Christian values, manners, charity, service and respect for others

Now I have to respect that we have some prizes to give out and that our honored guest Professor Guille may want to say a few words. Thank you.

