



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

**Common Room Farewells
Cloister Time 2020
Andrew Leigh**



1986-2020

The verdict of Tacitus on the Emperor Galba is: *capax imperii, nisi imperasset* – capable of ruling until he actually came to do so. One Latin teacher told me to translate it as ‘a man with a glorious future behind him’.

There are no comparisons between the smooth shaven Galba and Mr Andrew Leigh. He applied to WinColl in 1986, with a First in Mods from Exeter College, Oxford, of which he was first Exhibitioner then Scholar, and a First in Schools to follow. He did a PGCE in English, and then taught at Campion School and St Francis Xavier’s College in Liverpool. With uncharacteristic brazenness Andrew suggested to the Headmaster in his application that his wife Cherry, herself an Oxford graduate and trained teacher, would ‘provide every support.’ But, it required no sweeteners to enable the redoubtable James Sabben-Clare to spot a good classicist when he saw one. The deal was clinched – so far as I can see without even a reference.

In the Pantheon, or Academy, which is the Winchester College Classics Department, Mr Leigh is regarded as a veritable Aristotle, though he can do a pretty good imitation of Socrates and Plato as well. None of these three gentlemen, so far as I know, had Mr Leigh’s prowess on the XV’s canvas, in the swimming pool, or in the Palaestra (aka Weights Room) where Mr Leigh has, over the years, honed his strength with visible effect on supplies of keratin: his flourishing mutton chops may be compared only to one of Winchester’s most famous sons, Matthew Arnold, or its Second Founder, the formidable classicist George Ridding, as somewhat lugubriously portrayed in oils in School.

To be sure, Aristotle, Socrates and Plato all achieved literary oeuvres of no small significance and distinction. But then Mr Leigh, ten years ago, wrote the Winchester Latin Course, seven volumes of textbooks in at least two editions each, first published privately but then taken up by the elite publishers Duckworth, which form his crowning academic legacy to the school. Glauk Athenaze runs an ancient Athenian motto – owls to Athens. Loyal to his roots, Mr Leigh would probably spurn the usual translation of coals to Newcastle, for his allegiance to the north-west is a matter of record: the Winchester course requires every boy to learn the Latin name for Wigan, and apparently some have been persuaded

to believe that Mr Leigh knows so much Greek and Latin because they were living languages when he was a boy there.

Now, for the second time, Mr Leigh has a glorious future ahead of him. He is returning to Exeter College, Oxford (home of George Ridding as it happens), to undertake a further degree. His colleagues quip that they will learn a lot from him in Oxford. But for success beside the Isis Mr Leigh lacks only one thing, a mobile phone. He has eschewed such adornments over the years, and I have threatened to present him with one as a leaving gift. He tells me such generosity will be unnecessary, testimony to the persuasive powers of Mrs Leigh, who finally and richly fulfils that prediction of providing every support.

We do not altogether lose Mr Leigh who, though capable of leaving, will not be left. Exeter College, Oxford, is not in Exeter, and neither does it require Mr Leigh's residence in Oxford. So he will still be with us, at his own house in Culver Road, where his hollyhocks bloom in splendour, not only fitting emblems of his productive time with us, but also healthy harbingers of what Matthew Arnold would have referred to as his 'bloom' – the eternal fruit of scholarship.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the gods come down in disguise to test the human race. 100 doors remain closed to them. They arrive at a little cottage, and are (at last) received by a loving couple called Philemon and Baucis, whose generosity surpasses that of all those around them. When Mr Baddeley taught this set text to a Pre-U set a couple of years ago, they instantly identified Mr and Mrs Leigh as modern-day equivalents. We all have no doubt that if the gods were once again to descend, it would be Andrew and Cherry who would take them in and make them tea. And, if the gods didn't already know it themselves, you could bet your last denarii on their hosts knowing the Latin term for a hollyhock.

Thank you, Andrew and Cherry, for all you have done.



Matthew Arnold



George Ridding

TRH
3 July 2020