

## NEIL'S 25 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE



Founder's Day at Edward Betham School, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007: Maralyn Kehely, Head Teacher and Ray Allen, Foundation Governor presented our Rector Prebendary Neil Richardson with a Mont Blanc pen in an engraved case. This occasion marked Neil's 25 years as Chair of Governors.

---

### **PAM AYRES ORIANA POEM (Explanatory notes)**

Overleaf is a poem written by Pam Ayres during our world cruise. She had been booked as one of the entertainers during the first leg, Southampton to San Francisco, and was accompanied by her husband. When we set sail from Southampton in January the weather soon became atrocious. Our first few days on board were a truly intrepid introduction to being on the high seas, with storm force winds of 11 and a 15 metre swell (translates as 45 foot high waves) – absolutely horrendous and pretty scary! We were literally clinging on to the bed during the night for safety. Battling against such high winds meant our progress was slow, as Pam indicates with her reference to the Cornish coast! It remained stormy and rough, though with a gradual reduction in the force, but still it proved too difficult for us to land in the Azores as planned. Pam mentions the wardrobes, the creaking sound of which is difficult to describe but which must have reached several decibels in volume and raised our fear level considerably. There had been reports of “fracas” in the launderette to which she refers, and the ‘terrifying vacuum toilets’. To top all this, the ship then experienced electrical problems and lost all power for several hours. This was pretty eerie, with lighting on stairways and corridors reduced to tiny spotlights at floor level and crew in lifejackets mustered and stationed everywhere. The ship just adrift in silence!

Pam ends by making reference to a P&O sister ship, the Aurora, which left Southampton the day after we did on a 101 day grand voyage but which completely broke down and never got further than the Isle of Wight! So in comparison we were very lucky.

Once Pam had recovered from her sea sickness, she handwrote this poem and read it, as only she can, to the audience during her extremely funny act. In order to reproduce it here in Magna, I contacted her through her agent and she very kindly gave permission. However, due to its copyright, it cannot be on our website. I wish everyone an enjoyable read.

**Maria Dillon**