

CELEBRATING EDUCATION



The joint trip to Medic Malawi in July last year.

CARING FOR THE WIDER WORLD . . .

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL PUPILS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ENCOURAGED TO THINK OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE. A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION IS A PROJECT WHOSE ORIGINS ARE IN THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN ERAS AND IS STILL GOING STRONG TODAY. **ANNABEL WARBURG** REPORTS.



Shrewsbury pupils at the Shewsy in Liverpool during a Social Studies course.

Calls for independent schools to demonstrate their 'public benefit' have been the subject of a good deal of national debate. But for many, including Shrewsbury School, it is a responsibility that they have taken very seriously for a great many years.

In the 1890s, Shrewsbury was one of a number of prosperous boarding schools that founded 'missions' in poor areas of big cities. The aim was to dispense Christian charity in the form of food and clothing and to support financially a team of people who would help keep children off the streets.

In 1896, Shrewsbury School set up a mission in the East End of London, but the distance between them made communication difficult and in the early 1900s the Headmaster asked a member of staff, Digby Kittermaster, to found a mission in the School's name closer to Shropshire. The chosen location was Liverpool, in the poorest area of the city he could find. And so it was that in November 1903, Shrewsbury Boys' Club' opened in a disused pub in Everton.

Shrewsbury School's support for the club has continued ever since, and in 2017 the links between them are stronger

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FROM TOP:

A group photo from the Shrewsbury House Camp of 1923; these young Liverpudlians get ready for a three-legged race at a Shrewsbury House Camp at Shrewsbury School in 1914; pupils on the Shrewsbury School sponsored walk on the Long Mynd, which raised £80,000 for the Shewsy last September.



than ever. The word 'mission' was dropped many years ago, and Shrewsbury House – or 'the Shewsy' as it is more familiarly known – is now a thriving youth and community centre attached to a local church.

Despite huge changes over the past 114 years, Everton remains one of the poorest wards in the UK, with 48 per cent of local children classified as 'living in poverty', 32 per cent of families having no one in work and life expectancy six years below the national average. The Shewsy provides a lifeline for many children and young people living there.

Over the years, the relationship between Shrewsbury School and the Shewsy has developed into one of strong mutual benefit. Local council funding in Liverpool has been reduced drastically and the Shewsy has become increasingly reliant on the financial support of Shrewsbury School and other grants. But the Shewsy plays a central role in the life of Shrewsbury School too. There are regular exchange visits, and over the years good friendships have been fostered. And since the 1960s, the Shewsy has run an annual series of Social Studies courses for Shrewsbury School Sixth Formers, who spend time at the club joining in with the young people and learning about life in the inner city, social care, crime and justice.

Last July, the links were strengthened still further with a joint trip to Malawi. Nineteen young people from the School and the Shewsy spent two weeks volunteering together at a project run by the Shropshire-based charity Medic Malawi, which includes a hospital, two orphanages and the Shrewsbury School Eye Clinic.

Fundraising for the Shewsy takes place at Shrewsbury School all year round, but every five years a whole school sponsored walk is organised to give a major boost to the club's coffers. The last one took place in September, when more than 900 pupils, staff, governors and parents walked 20 miles across the Long Mynd and the Stiperstones. They raised over £80,000.

"The fundraising total breaks all previous records," says Headmaster Mark Turner. "It demonstrates that the commitment this current generation of Salopians feel towards the Shewsy is stronger than ever."

