Beginnings and endings and beginnings

As a child every September I wasn’t that keen on going back to school, but there was one thing I loved. New exercise books. A fresh page meant a new start. Maybe this year I would be neat (I never was), maybe this year I would finish my work every time (I never did), maybe this was the year (it never was).

Funnily enough as a class teacher I experienced all the same things all over again. By July I was worn out and letting standards slip; come September I had the motivation to get done all the things I didn’t quite manage the year before – fresh starts and new beginnings are like that aren’t they.

It was Henry Ford that said, ‘Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.’ I would like to amend this slightly and say that stopping is the opportunity to start again more intelligently. Maybe I can claim that as one of my own and put it on a poster alongside a picture of a waterfall.

And here we are at the start of a new season with renewed hope and optimism, a new management team, a new-look squad and a lick of paint on the stadium.

You can’t have new beginnings without endings: it’s all part of life’s rich tapestry, the circle of life, the comings and the goings sort of thing. As the Roman philosopher Seneca said, ‘Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.’

It’s sad to say goodbye to those who have moved on, but exciting to have some new faces too, and by all accounts they have settled in very well indeed. Things move on pretty quickly in football, which makes the break at the end of last season all the more important.

And if you think about it this pattern of endings and beginnings reflects nature and the way the universe has been designed. Day and night, wake and sleep, work and rest, and the seasons which allow the land to rest, die back in the winter and come alive again in the spring. We ignore these rhythms at our peril. My downtime is right now as it happens. I will be turning the phone off, catching up on some reading, doing some stupid things with the kids and enjoying a few lie-ins. Someone once said that the greatest of all human capabilities is to be born again, which is precisely what I will be doing in my time of re-creation.