

# Old Rendcombian Society

## NEWSLETTER



**2004**

**30th ISSUE**

Editor  
W.J.D. WHITE

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## Society Officers 2003/4

At the annual general meeting in June 2003, the following officers were elected:

President:	Julian Comrie (1946 - 54)
Chairman:	Neil Lumby (1968 - 73)
Vice-chairman:	Charlotte Jeffery (1988 - 90)
Secretary:	Mrs Jane Gunner (1975 - 77) Whiteway Farmhouse, The Whiteway Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 7BA Tel: (01285) 658627 Fax: (01285) 658717 e-mail: jane@r2g2.co.uk
Treasurer/school rep:	Chris Wood (1965 - 71; staff: 1976 -) 9 Hammond Drive, Northleach, Cheltenham, Glos., GL54 3JF Tel: (01451) 860871 e-mail: c.j.wood@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk
Committee members:	Michael Miles (1943 - 50) Richard Tudor (1973 - 80) Alex Brealy (1980 - 87; staff 1994 -) Richard Reichwald (1983 - 87) Mrs Fiona Burge (1988 - 90)
Hon auditor:	David Williams (1966 - 71)
Newsletter editor:	Bill White (staff: 1961 - 97) 3 Jessop Drive, Northleach, Cheltenham, Glos., GL54 3JG Tel: (01451) 860943

## Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting 2003

Held on Sunday 29th June in Room E1 at Rendcomb College

Present: Jane Gunner (1975-77), Neil Lumby (1968-73), Frank Dutton (1936-44), Nigel Green (1961-69), Michael Miles (1943-50), Philip Griffiths (1940-43), Gerry Holden (headmaster 1999-), Julian Comrie (1946-54), Charlotte Jeffery (1988-90), Sally Morris (1978-80), David Williams (1967-71), Chris Wood (1965-71 & staff 1976-), Colin Burden (staff 1963-97), Ted Jones (1940-48), Bill White (staff 1961-97)

1. Apologies: Rev. Hussey (1974-78), Sir Louis Le Bailly, Alex Brealy (1982-87)

2. To receive the minutes of the 69th annual general meeting held on 30 June 2002, as published in the 2003 newsletter. It was proposed by Ted Jones, seconded by Michael Miles and passed unanimously that the minutes should be signed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

The chairman reported that copies of *Rendcomb College History I* were almost complete after some technical problems and would be available in the next few weeks. A progress report was requested with regard to O.R.s giving careers talks to current students. Bill White drew the meeting's attention to the fact that he had put an appeal in this year's newsletter.

The headmaster said that Mrs. Hayward was handing over the careers brief to someone else and that he would notify the hon. secretary as soon as he could confirm the name and details. It was agreed that Colin Hitchcock would be asked to promote the cause on the web site. Bill White also explained that the society had only limited knowledge of how the careers of O.R.s had progressed and that he would be including a questionnaire in due course.

4. To receive the hon. treasurer's report

The treasurer circulated his report which had been audited by the hon. auditor, David Williams. He explained that there had not been much activity this year. The business there had been as follows:

(i) the committee had only paid out £600 of the travel bursary. It was proposed by Sally Morris and seconded by Julian Comrie that the remaining £200 should be carried over and added to the £800 set aside for next years travel bursary. This was agreed unanimously.

(ii) the Kathleen James Memorial Fund had not paid anything out but the library and reading room had been revamped and it might be an appropriate time to contact Martin Graham, the librarian, to see what could be purchased.

(iii) Further ties would have to be purchased as stocks were low and Chris Wood was being asked about them. It was suggested that there should be some items specifically for the ladies. The committee would investigate.

It was proposed by Sally Morris and seconded by Julian Comrie and passed unanimously that the accounts should be approved.

#### 5. Election of officers

Sally Morris tendered her resignation. The chairman thanked her for all her work as vice-chairman. It was therefore necessary to appoint a new vice-chairman and it was proposed by Jane Gunner and seconded by Michael Miles that Charlotte Jeffery (née Stephens) be vice-chairman.

#### 6. Nomination of a committee member

It was now necessary to appoint two new committee members. Richard Reichwald was proposed by Sally Morris and seconded by Neil Lumby. Fiona Burge (née Reichwald) was proposed by Charlie Jeffery and seconded by Ted Jones. Both propositions were passed unanimously.

#### 7. Travel bursary

The travel bursary annual award had been increased to £800 last year. It was agreed that this would continue with the addition of the £200 from last year. Meg Barne, one of last year's recipients, had given a talk to the Royal Geographical Society in London. The headmaster reported that the college was hoping to forge stronger links with a school in Uganda, the political situation willing. The headmaster of this school, Mr Godfrey, had already visited Rendcomb.

#### 8. Any other business

Michael Miles expressed his appreciation of the newsletter and hoped that younger members of the society could be encouraged to contribute with more recent events reported in the newsletter.

The O.R. rugby match would have to be on the last Sunday of the term, 7th December 2003, as the college was let in the holidays. This would be put on the college web site. Julian Comrie proposed a vote of thanks to the headmaster, Gerry Holden, for the use of the college for the reunion.

Congratulations were sent to Peter Cockell and Chris Brisley for organising a reunion for those at the college in the 1940s. It was hoped other years would consider doing the same thing.

The chairman then reminded the meeting of the enormous contribution the late Douglas Payne made to the society. He died last summer and is greatly missed.

The headmaster then gave a résumé of the inspector's report on the college, whom he felt really appreciated the ethos of the school. Their words described Rendcomb as a caring community which prepares its pupils for the wider world.

The meeting closed at 12.47 p.m. with thanks to the college.

### **Old Rendcombian Society AGM 2004**

You are invited to attend the 71st annual general meeting of the Old Rendcombian Society on Sunday 4th July 2004 at Rendcomb College.

#### AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive the minutes of the 70th a.g.m. held on 29th June 2003.
3. To deal with matters arising from the minutes.
4. To receive hon. treasurer's report. Update on new subscription arrangements.
5. Election of officers: treasurer and hon. auditor.
6. Nominations for 1 committee member.  
All proposed and seconded nominations to reach the secretary by 14 June 2004
7. Travel bursary.
8. Any other business.
9. Vote of thanks to the college.

### **Dates of Future Reunions and Sports Fixtures**

Sunday 4th July 2004	Cricket match, swimming, lunch and bar
Sunday 5th December 2004	Rugby match, tea and bar
Sunday 20th March 2005	Hockey match, tea and bar
Sunday 3rd July 2005	Cricket match, swimming, lunch and bar

## Sports Contacts

Please ring well in advance if you wish to play, referee or umpire in any of the fixtures.

Rugby:	Mike Slark m.slark@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk	01285 832314 (W)
Ladies' hockey:	Chris Wood c.j.wood@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk	01451 860871 (H) 01285 832314 (W)
Men's hockey:	Alex Breal alex_breal@hotmail.com	01285 831570 (H) From September 01285 831263 (H) 01285 832314 (W)
Ladies' netball & tennis:	Sarah Bell	01285 832314 (W)
Cricket	David Essenhigh c.j.wood@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk	01285 832314 (W)

## From the President - Julian Comrie (1946-54)

At the annual general meeting of the society in June 2003, I drew attention to two particular issues which members of the society can influence, to benefit the present pupils, which I believe is something we should all strive to achieve. Rather than include the whole of my notes in the actual minutes of the a.g.m., here is a distilled and slightly modified version. Please read, note, and take whatever action you can to further these aims.

Firstly, I would like now to advocate yet again the travel bursary, which the society gives to selected students each year. As you may know, the original intention of this bursary was that it would enable certain students to travel, i.e. cover all their costs for an expedition of their choice, but this has rarely been the case due to limited funds being available from our resources, and the considerable cost of travel at the present day. Nonetheless, our contribution certainly helps, and it is not given away lightly. Furthermore, we make it a condition of giving money that we receive a written report from each student at the end of their travels. As one who now travels widely myself, I find these make fascinating reading, not solely for their geographical content, but as descriptions of experiences of things otherwise, previously, unknown. I well remember the excitement I had in travelling to Kenya at Her Majesty's expense as a 19 year old national serviceman, (a pleasure which is now denied to our youngsters!) and the surprises, the delights, and the shocks which that gave me. Do let me offer you a quotation from Alice Hughes (1998-2003), one of our girls who has recently travelled to a remote area in South America, where she saw a woman, of her own age, breast-feeding her baby. She writes: "there are no teenagers in these places, you are an adult or a child." This was clearly a complete revelation to her, and is something which youngsters are unlikely to learn at school, in any lesson. I think it is an example of the sort of experience which is invaluable, and I find it a great pleasure to be able to help our Rendcomb students achieve this sort of realisation about the wide world. So thank you all for contributing to the society's funds, and agreeing to spending some of it in this manner. I am convinced of its value. Anyone wishing to make donations to this particular cause is welcome to send a cheque to Chris Wood!

The second, and very important way, in which O.R.s can help present students at the college is one which has just been put forward in the recent magazine, and it is by offering to come and talk to students who are about to leave, about careers in the outside world. Teachers do wonderful work, but they cannot be expected to be expert in all things, and even the best careers staff probably have limited experience of work beyond education. So, if, for instance, you are familiar with some professional activity, such as law, medicine, accounting, business management or specific arts and crafts, or anything of that nature, the college would be pleased to hear from you.

Do please help if you can. That, after all, is one of the reasons why the society exists.

## Saul

**M. H. C. Martin** (1926-33) has been researching the history of the Goldsmid family for some time. He has recently been in touch with Mrs Jan Seidler Ramirez, Museum Director and vice-president of the New York Historical Society, after discovering that she had written her PhD thesis on William W. Story, sculptor, when she was a student at Boston University. We hereby print her interesting letter about the origins of Saul below:- You have cleared up a great mystery for me, and for other American art historians who have long wondered about the modern whereabouts of this version of Story's *Saul*. How remarkable that it should have ended up as

a conversation-piece in a boarding school near Cirencester (a town which I've briefly visited)! One version of Story's famous *Cleopatra* spent the last century in a midtown Manhattan spaghetti house - with the pasta sauce stains to show for it, and I've encountered a version of his menacing Judith, *Preparing to Slay Holofernes*, performing hat-check duty in a Dublin pub. Sic transit Gloria. I am thrilled to know where *Saul* presently resides, and will make a point of trying to infiltrate your alma mater with my camera whenever I'm next in England because I would love to have a documentary photograph of it for my book files: I have been ever so slowly preparing a biography on W. W. Story, in between my quite demanding and unrelated museum life and equally pressing family life.

I will prove a disappointing correspondent outright by admitting that I've encountered no research records that illuminate the personal dealings between Story and Sir Francis Henry Goldsmid. His nephew, Julian Goldsmid, (1838-1896?) emerges in one late 19th century reference as the owner of this sculpture, with the notation that he had inherited large financial holdings, was prominent in public life, and had an impressive art collection. I would welcome your ideas about



where, in England, one might hope to uncover Francis Henry Goldsmid's papers.

From what I can piece together from Story's surviving correspondence and account books (held in part at the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the Harry Ransom Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin, and the Morgan Library in NYC), Story laboured on the composition for *Saul* in the early months of 1863, flush with the success of his *Libyan Sibyl* and *Cleopatra* statues at London's International Exposition the previous year, and feeling very well-disposed toward the British art press and art-aware public. By March of 1863, the composition was considered complete and had been turned over to Story's chief stonecutter in Rome for execution in marble. It has been surmised that a contributing impetus to his modelling of this dramatic Biblical subject was his blossoming friendship with the British poet Robert Barrett Browning, whose psychological monologue "Saul" Story had read and admired. Likewise, Story was an avid opera goer who followed the career of the Italian singer Tommaso Salvini (1829-1916), who achieved celebrity for his vocal performance of "Saul".

The grand debut of *Saul* occurred at Dublin's 1865 Exposition. The Boston (Massachusetts) Daily Advertiser of October 26, 1865, carried an article stating that the Roman government "had applied to the artist for leave to send, at its own expense, the colossal figure of *Saul* to the Dublin Exposition, in grateful recognition of the credit reflected upon the Roman Department in London, 1962, by Story's *Cleopatra* and *Libyan Sibyl*." The statue was a resounding success at this exhibition. It is unclear whether the figure of *Saul* caught Sir Goldsmid's eye prior to its display in Dublin - possibly in Story's well-trafficked atelier in Rome, or as a result of its critically acclaimed reception in Dublin. In any case, his ownership claims to it are verified in a letter that Robert Barrett Browning penned to Story in Rome on April 11, 1865, in which he commends the sculptor for his latest composition underway (that of *Medea*) and notes, "I rejoice that as good a fellow as Goldsmid has the "Saul", - (for now) I shall be able to see it, moreover, with the rest of the world." (original letter is in the Keats-Shelley house archives in London).

There are many accounts of the theatrical impact that Story's brooding, Moses-like figure of *Saul* made on the Victorian art public. However, the specific travels of this huge work following Goldsmid's purchase of it are minimally accounted for in Story's voluminous papers. In 1914, many years after his death, Story's daughter - the Marchesa Edith Peruzzi de Medici of Florence, wrote to an acquaintance in Boston that "a marble of this statue was made for Sir Francis Henry Goldsmid and is at his country seat in England, but there is no replica in America."

In fact, she was mistaken. In 1881, Story was persuaded to remodel the figure, selling two additional heroic-scale marble versions of *Saul* to his avid Paris-based patron, Count Johann Palfey (this version survives in the Castle Bojince Collection in the former Czechoslovakia), and to a wealthy widow of his former Harvard classmate, Mrs Theodore Shillaber of San Francisco, California. (This marble was later acquired by the art collector, M. H. De Young, who bequeathed it to San Francisco's upstart Fine Arts Museum in Golden Gate Park, where it holds pride of place today). Each paid £1,600 for the work. The original plaster of the figure was donated by Story's daughter to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in Boston in 1915, which eventually transferred it to the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

That, alas, is all that I have to offer you with respect to Sir Goldsmid's prize. I will note that Story enjoyed vigorous patronage among England's mercantile aristocracy of the 1860s-1880's often travelling to visit friends in Great Britain. Late in life, he received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. As you may

know, his two sons - Julian Story, a painter, and Thomas Waldo Story, a sculptor like his father, had their own successes in the Anglo-American circles of Greater London. Their many commissions and friendships, forged at Eton, (which they attended) and at Walton-on-Thames (where Thomas was born, the Storys sometimes vacationed) led to the family's intersection with novelist Henry James, whom they pressed into service as Story's biographer.

**Michael Martin** has recently completed a detailed paper entitled *Saul of Saul's Hall, Rendcomb, and Sculptor, William W Story*. Copies of this work will be available for O.R.s to purchase later in the year. Please contact Jane Gunner about the cost as we are not yet able to give an estimate.

**Michael Martin** has also almost completed a short account of the family of Sir Francis Goldsmid.

### **Rendcombe - A Poem**

The Rev. G. A. E. Kempson, Rector of Rendcomb, published this poem in 1889 - second part:-

#### **RENDCOMBE**

Of rich green sward - there, where they've cleared away  
The forest, that the sun may blaze at will  
With undiminished strength upon its walls,  
And all that pass be dazzled by the sight  
Of Majesty enthroned in Beauty's lap.  
A little further to the right is seen  
The modest tower of Rendcombe's parish church,  
Built by the Lord of Fairford, Edmund Tame,  
When the Eighth Henry sat upon the throne,  
Snugly ensconced beneath those mighty trees  
Which crown the hill's crest - called "The Wilderness."  
Here rooks and jackdaws sit in high conclave,  
And solemnly discuss their ways and means  
In early morn, before they separate  
To seek abroad their daily sustenance;  
At even also, ere they go to roost,  
To settle, I suppose, where each shall sleep.  
A little further to the right peep out  
The grey stone chimneys of the Rector,  
For forty years the home of Joseph Pitt,  
Well-known was he throughout the Western shires,  
Dubbed by the Bishop "Father of the Hunt."  
Gentle and simple, all were "Joe's" good friends,  
For neighbourly he was to all alike,  
As welcome in the mansions of the great  
As in the cottage, or the Farmers' Club,  
A fearless, upright English gentleman.  
Such, sketched in roughest outline is the Chase  
Of Rendcombe, beautiful beyond conceit  
Throughout the year, then perhaps most choice  
In colour, when profuse of browns and reds  
And gold commingled, Autumn spreads his store  
Of Nature's pigments, when the trees are clothed  
In richest hues, and, underneath, the soil  
Is thickly spread with layers of fallen leaves,  
Making a carpet fairer than the looms  
Of Axminster or Turkey can supply.  
To breathe the air of Rendcombe is to live:  
So fresh, so pure, so sweet, you cannot help  
But open wide the mouth to drink it in,  
tempering the heat rays of the scorching sun  
Which loves to shed his splendour o'er the scene.  
From out a firmament of liquid blue,  
Here surely may the soul expand and cry,

“All glory be to God for all His gifts.”

Geo. A A Kempson, Rendcombe Rectory  
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### **O.R. Newsletter 2003**

Frank Dutton (1936-44) observes:

Issue 29 was an extremely interesting number, containing many reminiscences from my era - exactly the kinds of items which failed to creep into the History! Here are a few follow-up comments.

Page 6    **The Local Railway**

Despite Charles Taylor’s acknowledged expertise, this was not a “failed” line. It was in use from its 1891 opening until the Beeching “axe” fell in the 1960s, and was operated by the Midland and South Western Junction Railway Company, running single-line from Andoversford just east of Cheltenham through Withington and Chedworth to Cirencester Watermoor, and thence to Swindon Town (not Junction 1), continuing in a roughly southerly direction to Southampton. It became part of the LMS network in 1923.

I imagine that the rails were taken up many years ago but doubtless the track bed itself is still identifiable in places, (yes, it certainly can be seen, but cannot be used as a footpath as the land is private - Ed) and there is always the Chedworth tunnel!

Page 12    **Reminiscences**

**John Neads** (1934-40) mentions a butterfly collection. We’re talking about two different collections here, because this one is much earlier than that described and held by **John Webb** (1955-63). The latter was collected after World War 2 in the Rendcomb area, while the earlier one, probably donated by Oliver Morel’s father, was a collection of tropical butterflies. It used to reside just inside the Main Hall from Saul’s Hall, opposite the former Quiet Room (now the Bursar’s office). It was housed in two, possibly three, large display cases with sloping glass lids, not unlike oversized schoolboys’ desks, and contained dozens of large butterflies in an amazing array of gaudy colours. I seem to recall a group of huge black-and-yellow swallowtails as a sort of centrepiece.

This collection resided at Rendcomb for the whole of my 1936-44 stay. John Webb tells me he doesn’t remember it and it must therefore have vanished between 1944 and 1955. What happened to it? Was it donated elsewhere or perhaps sold?

Page 13    **The photo of the “henmen” contains some recognisable faces. At the rear, with bucket, is Ian Bryce** (1938-44) and in the centre is **John Murry** (1936-44). The boy in the foreground is unidentifiable, but the other boy at the rear, behind John Murry, is probably **Roy Buckingham** (1941-46).

The Temple photo reminds me that I’ve heard it has “disappeared”. What became of it - was it vandalised or did it just collapse from old age? (It was “dismantled” in the late 50’s - Ed). The same remarks also apply to the boathouse at the lake.

Page 13    **John Neads** (1934-40) may like to know that the fig tree in the “House” courtyard is flourishing. From a somewhat straggly-looking shrub in our time, it is now matching the height of the adjacent roof ridge and is very healthy. Does it bear fruit? (Yes, it crops heavily - Ed).

Page 14    There is confusion here between two similar names. The newsletter shows **Martin Butler** (1941-47) but the records show **Michael Butler** (1941-47) and **Martin Butlin** (1940-47), both contemporaries. From the dates I’m assuming that Michael Butler is intended...

The “17C house” mentioned was, of course, the Old Guise mansion. Philip Hardwick cannot really carry the entire blame for its demolition, because originally both he and Goldsmid wanted to renovate it in 1864. However, a detailed inspection showed it as somewhat decrepit and in a rather sad state - after all, it was almost 200 years old! - and it was mutually decided to rebuild rather than refurbish, as being more economical in the long run.



## O.R. Newsletter 2000

Issue 26 - page 27

Photo of "Gryphons" Canoe Club - Identifications left to right:

**Peter Levett** (1934-40), **Chris Richardson** (1938-45), **Ross Gillham** (1931-39), **Lawson Hatherell** (front) (1936-41), **John Neads** (rear) (1934-41), Unidentified, **Giles Ivens** (1934-42), **Michael Levett** (1934-42)

Photo taken c.1938-39

## Tributes

### **Paul Sykes**

Paul Sykes came to Rendcomb in 1983 to join the mathematics department. In due course he took charge of Godman House with his wife Jane, and later took over as head of maths from Kaye Knapp. Finally he was Director of Studies. A dedicated cricketer, he also coached rugby for many years. Paul was held in great respect, as these tributes bear witness.



*Paul and Jane Sykes*

**Chris Moody** (1980-89) writes: I have very fond and clear memories of Paul Sykes from my 'A' level maths classes with him. In our year there were two streams: one for the 'scientists' taking maths, physics and chemistry, taught by Kaye Knapp; and the rest of us, taught by Paul. This latter group included myself, **Nick Wharmby** (1982-87), **Kev Hewston**, (1983-87), **Simon Kingscote**, (1982-87), **Alex Brealy** (1982-87), **Chris Pope** (1980-87), and **Andy Cayton** (1981-87), (among others). The memories centre on the Friday afternoon double maths test. The test was often a real blow to finish the week, leaving us trudging back from the stable block to the main building, shrugging our shoulders and already worried about the Saturday morning aftermath.

And then break-time on Saturday came and went, and we strolled back to his classroom at 11.20 a.m. for the last and often worst lesson of the week. There were a couple of styles I recall Paul employed.

One was to come in late, after we had all arrived, clutching our tests. He put the pile of papers down on his desk, then with barely a 'Hello' completed the double lesson test with full working and explanation in around 35 minutes on the blackboard.

Another was a more direct approach. He arrived slightly late, shut the door behind him, again clutching the tests. More jovially he stood before us and exclaimed in his distinctive voice (with a soft 'v' replacing any th's): "*Vis was, wivout doubt, ve worst test vay you have ever done for me*". He returned our tests to us, walking around the class, smirking, shrugging his shoulders, sighing appropriately depending on our performance.

All of this was done with great humour and a sense of fun. His explanations of the work were always clear and faultless. It amazed us all how we could not have got the answer right - he made it feel logical and plain. And for us non-scientists he even made applied maths (physics in all but name!) something we could understand.

While I can't speak for the whole class, I seem to remember we did pretty well in the final exams, a true testament to his teaching. Despite dreading the tests, they served us well. Those Saturday morning moments of truth aside, Paul's classroom was one where we were always treated as individuals and adults, with respect and great humour. I'm intrigued to learn more about his Bird of Prey business in France, and wish him and his family every success for the future.

From **Andrew Sage** (1993-2000)

I remember Mr Sykes as a positive, encouraging and very friendly teacher as well as being an effective one.

His skills as a teacher were matched by his maths knowledge, he always amazed me and my classmates with the ease of which he beat us to answers we needed a calculator for just by having a quick think! These qualities are repeated in his coaching role, he was always showing his cricketing skills as well as being a thoughtful yet demanding coach, and so always got the best out of us. I learnt a great deal from Mr. Sykes and would like to thank him and wish him and his family all the best in the future.



From **Graham Monteith** (1989-94)

When I received a letter from Mr White asking me to write a small piece for the Old Rendcombian about Mr Sykes, I knew it would not be an easy task. I have, as I am sure you all do, many great stories from my time in Godman House. The problem was which ones to use to best capture Godman House. After much deliberation I decided just to write a little about both being in Godman House and also about Mr Sykes as a housemaster when I was a young pupil and later as a prefect.

The first day at a new school is always a challenging experience. I remember sitting in the very small common room that we had at the time, as we tried to overcome our nervousness and sound each other out. When we were all present, Mr. Sykes came in and explained the house rules in his very clear and concise way. Mr. Sykes' approach was really very simple; he did not shout; he used to explain slowly what he expected of us and then in very deliberate terms the consequences of pushing one's luck too far. His quiet and clear approach was enough to strike fear into us small thirteen-year old school boys.

Godman was always a happy house under Mr. Sykes; he left us to learn about the system and each other under the prefects, only stepping in when we had sunk ourselves up to our necks. There was always a certain amount of rivalry at the start of the first term between those that had come from the 'Old Rec' under Mr Wood and the newcomers. Invariably this rivalry did not last very long and we soon started to make friends with those in our prep rooms and those with whom we shared a dorm. From this start we made friendships that lasted us through our time at the college and hopefully through our lives as well. I am pleased to say that those friends I first made in Godman House are among the closest friends I have today.

With any boarding house there will always be amusing stories; some that can be repeated and some that cannot. There is one particular memory that always springs to mind when I think of Godman because it involved not just us pupils but Mr. Sykes himself. Our dormitory got caught making too much noise too late at night and subsequently got herded down to Mr. Sykes. We were summarily told to wait outside his study until we had learnt to be silent. So we stood as instructed in near silence. Actual silence was unachievable for us at thirteen! Every so often we would hear a clang from the study as Mr. Sykes opened a drawer or closed a filing cabinet. The time stretched on and our legs began to ache so we crouched or sat on the floor. Still time dragged and the clanging had diminished, but we continued to sit and slowly drifted into sleep. Some time in the early hours of the morning we woke up to a less than impressed housemaster as he had stumbled over some inert schoolboy beneath his feet. It was only later when I became a prefect that he admitted he had forgotten about us!

There was never any resentment towards Mr. Sykes; he was always very fair and just in meting out the reparations for our many discrepancies. I certainly look back with fondness on our time as young pupils in his house.

When **Nick Barton** (1989-94) and I were asked by Mr. Sykes to become prefects of Godman House it was a surprise to us and the rest of the school. We had a less than perfect academic record; it is fair to say we lacked some motivation. Mr Sykes obviously felt that for all our faults we would make a success of running his house for him. For his show of confidence in our abilities we were determined to do a good job and not let him down. We had learnt a bit about being prefects in Godman during the previous year - Mr Sykes used to vet prospective prefects by getting them to take prep between six and eight in the evenings.

When Nick and I took over in Godman House the extension had been built, which gave the house a bigger common room and some more dormitories above. The common room certainly added to the house, giving a room that could accommodate everybody and few games tables as well. The other change was that the school was now co-ed throughout, which added another challenge. However, the girls did not board at this age so we did not have as much contact with them. Most of our duties were based around looking after the house in the evenings and at weekends.

Nick unfortunately is no longer with us, but I still think of him fondly and my memories of being a prefect in Godman would have been very different without him. We were firm friends by the time we became prefects in Godman; we were both farmers sons and preferred the practical to the theoretical! As prefects in Godman, Nick and I spent even more of our time together and became even closer friends.

Godman House was not a difficult house to be a prefect in but it was obviously a lot different from being a prefect in one of the senior houses. As we were nominally 'in charge' we needed to lead by example, which did curtail our mini adventures at the college a little! Nick was determined that our year in Godman should be as comfortable as possible. As prefects we had our own little common room with a couple of comfortable chairs, t.v., bookshelves and a table or two. I came back one day to find Nick had put his resourcefulness to good use and the common room was now equipped with a carpet, pot plants, books on the shelves and lamps strategically placed to add to the appeal. I asked how this miracle had been achieved; the explanation was that he had reallocated some resources! Compared to one of the senior boarding houses Mr. Sykes always gave us a lot of freedom as long as we did not bring the house or himself into disrepute.

As a prefect in Godman there was plenty to do; there was always prep to be taken in the evening and a constant stream of small problems to be addressed. I did not mind taking prep so I used to take one common room and a lower sixth pupil who was being vetted for the following year would take the other common room. Nick would organise the hot chocolate and biscuits for after prep and deal with any other tasks. The hot chocolate was always interesting; Mr. Sykes would quite often make an appearance and there would be plenty of banter exchanged between us all.

As prefects in Godman House we got to know Mr. Sykes a lot better than most other students. Nick and I were never taught maths by Mr. Sykes due to the fact that he taught the top set maths whilst we wallowed in ignorance at the bottom of that arithmetical scale. Nick and I would quite often see Mr. Sykes in the evening after prep, as he was partial to a fried egg sandwich. So we made sure always to have a good supply of eggs in the house! The conversations were often very diverse and we discussed most things concerning the college and our past misdemeanours when presented with similar events from the current year in Godman House.

At the end of each term Mr. Sykes used to cook a meal for us on the understanding that we would cook one for him and Jane at the end of our last term. I remember Nick and I spent many an hour agonising over what to cook and more accurately what we were capable of cooking. It is not good form to end your school life by giving your housemaster food poisoning! The meal also symbolised the end of our time in Godman House and also Mr. Sykes' retirement as a housemaster: he had seen us through from beginning to end. I do hope Nick and I were not the reason he decided to give up being a housemaster! Everybody that passed through Godman House under the tutelage of Mr. Sykes came away with nothing but respect for the way he ran his house. It was a great first experience of Rendcomb where we were allowed the freedom to settle in, and later, as a prefect, I appreciated the trust that Mr. Sykes put in Nick and me to run his house. I think in thanking Mr. Sykes for giving all those that came through his house a proper introduction to Rendcomb it is important that we do not forget his wife, Jane. Though we did not come into contact as much with Jane, she did many things to keep the house running smoothly.

I would like to wish Mr Sykes and his family every happiness for their future in the South of France. I also hope that we might have the opportunity to meet in the future and reminisce about the good times that were Godman House.

*Graham Monteith travels widely for a firm which services agricultural machinery.*

From **Claire Davies** (née Ellis 1984-86)

It was beginning of term, September 1984. Paul Sykes arrived at my first maths 'A' level lesson, plonked his copy of *The Guardian* on his desk and introduced himself to us in a broad Yorkshire accent, and my preconceived notions of pompous public school masters were immediately shattered.

Paul possessed all the attributes of a great teacher. Firstly, he had the total respect of his pupils, and never had to resort to shouting at us to make sure we were being attentive. Secondly, he had infinite patience, so that if his first explanation wasn't understood, he'd try a different tack until we had grasped the problem. Thirdly, he actually managed to make the subject interesting and the lessons fun, not easy when the subject in question is mathematics. I suppose the ultimate test of a teacher's worth is how much of the subject can be recalled after a long period of time. It's therefore testament to Paul that despite 20 years without the need to use the principles of trigonometry the formula for the cosine is still ingrained in my memory.

It was however, occasionally possible to sidetrack Paul in his lessons. We just had to get onto the subject of

politics or cricket and he'd be off. I seem to remember that fellow classmates **Mark Hammond** and **Tom Branston** were particularly adept at these diversionary tactics, and no doubt successive classes learnt the formula for distracting Paul too.

I hope Paul has a fantastic time in "retirement" and looks back at his days at Rendcomb with fondness. I can certainly say that I have very happy memories of the lessons taught by Paul.

### **Martin Griffiths**

Martin Griffiths joined Tom Denny in the art department in 1982, taking charge in 1987. Over a period of 20 years the department has thrived and achieved outstanding success, as these contributions show. Martin also took a major part in Rendcomb's sport and entertainment productions.



Tom Lait, Duncan Bond, Chris Jeffreys, Sam Gunner, Martin Griffiths and Greg Jones

From **Robert Sage** (1987-1994)

Mr. Griffiths or G, had a relaxed and informal approach to teaching art which was I'm sure appreciated by the many who took GCSE and A level art as I did. The relaxed atmosphere was particularly apparent on the eagerly awaited 'art' trips - Paris and Amsterdam being the two regular haunts. Both trips were 'enlightening' in many ways and 'G' ensured we got to savour the atmosphere of the cities in which so many great artists had worked as well as viewing their work.

At Rendcomb the art rooms were often havens, always open and a place to relax and listen to music whilst creating. I am sure this relaxed approach, combined with honest criticism when required, helped many find hidden talents and certainly helped me to develop and enjoy my art. I'll look back on art at Rendcomb as enjoyable and thank Mr Griffiths for his part in that. I wish him all the best in the future.

From **Amanda Beggan** (née Vaux, 1988-90)

Martin Griffiths was a great influence to me; before I met Martin I was one of those children who are not very good at anything in particular, and as a result I lacked self-confidence. Finding my talent in art was quite literally a life changing experience. Martin encouraged me to go to Edinburgh Art College, and following a career in advertising he will be pleased to hear I am now training to teach art and design to secondary school pupils.

Martin was a true professional, but he was not a conventional teacher by any means. The fact that he was known as 'Martin' and not 'Mr. Griffiths' was significant in a school where no other teachers were addressed by their first names. Unfortunately this practice is almost unheard of in art education today. Martin encouraged us to work freely; he would not tolerate detailed 'fiddly' painting. Confident, bold brush strokes were more his style. He had a rare ability to get 'A' grades out of the majority of his pupils without inhibiting their own self-expression or artistic development. He had a terrific sense of humour, and treated his pupils like adults, in return gaining enormous respect from everyone who came into contact with him. The art studio at Rendcomb

was full of lively debate and inspired art work - it was definitely the place to be!

Martin was a great teacher and I am sure he will be sorely missed. I hope that one day I will be able to make a difference to a pupil's life, as Martin made to mine. I wish him the best of luck in whatever he is doing, hopefully having a well deserved rest and concentrating on his own artistic talents!

*Amanda Beggan is now doing a PGCE at the London Institute, training to teach art and design in secondary schools.*

From **Georgina Webb-Dickin** (1999-2003)

I first got an idea of what life was like in the Rendcomb art department with Mr. Griffiths when I arrived for my first art lesson to meet a student standing in a dustbin on the wall outside the entrance, to which he had been sentenced by Griff for being disruptive. Griff's enthusiasm, along with his interesting disciplinary methods, soon became the reason art lessons were such a popular part of Rendcomb life. After I had overcome my initial fear of him, I began to anticipate my art lessons very eagerly, if for no other reason than to see what domestic object he would call upon as a weapon this lesson, his favourite being a wooden mallet which he would bring down with great gusto on the nearest table to silence us. Occasionally, we would do some art in our lessons, but most of them were spent being subjected to renditions of Leonard Cohen's greatest hits whilst we cringed silently, knowing that the alternative was Griff's, "Hold tight - it's the 60's!" cd. His wardrobe was also a continuing source of amusement, with its "Rupert Bear" shirts, and trousers which regardless of their length, showed three inches of sock, the latter which Griff proudly claimed to have bought from a colour-blind woman in Stroud.

It might seem from what I am saying that Griff didn't actually teach us a great deal at all, but, along with all the entertainment of his lessons, he wasn't bad at art either! He would always find the time to stride over to my paintings, hurl abuse at them and proceed to cover them in paint, somehow making them better in five minutes than I could have done in as many hours!

Perhaps what really made Griff unique though, was his dedication and commitment, not only to his students but also to the school. I lost count of the number of school discos Griff put on, always knowing the right songs to play and performing the YMCA with undying enthusiasm term after term. I was also always impressed with his work for charity, and the evenings he would arrange to raise money for school sports tours, the Macmillan Nurses and his sponsoring of the Irigathathi primary school in Kenya.

Griff was reliable, and despite pretending to be terrifyingly aggressive to frighten his first form classes he was actually very understanding and one of the most patient people I know. Although he liked to remind me on a daily basis that I was a "useless waster" and would be lucky to pass A level

art, he secretly had a great belief in the potential of his students and will be greatly missed by them.

I was surprised to hear that Griff had decided to leave Rendcomb, but after having taught there for what he claims to have been centuries, his time seems to have come to its natural end. Rendcomb won't be quite the same without him and he will certainly be missed. I am sure Mrs Blackwell will keep up the good work and the art department will continue to thrive. On behalf of anyone who was taught by Griff at Rendcomb, I wish him every success in the future.

*Georgina Webb-Dickin (1999-2003) is currently doing an art foundation course and is going to read English and art history at university.*

From **Dan Maslen** (1984-91)

Before Robin Williams told us to 'suck the marrow out of life' and 'take the road less travelled by' in the film *Dead Poets Society*, there was Martin Griffiths and the Rendcomb art department.

Surrounded by the strictures of maths, physics, chemistry, geography and English, 'Griff' created a safe haven for pupils to open their eyes to the world and what they wanted to be. As other subjects came under the thumb of syllabuses, coursework and modules Martin increasingly sailed in the opposite direction. 'Loosen up', 'think bigger' and 'don't try so hard' were three of his battle cries as he led his ship of motley fools across the seas of self expression and, much to the envy of more 'orthodox' subjects, towards unrivalled exam success. But results were always secondary to an education and pupils were always encouraged that in the end the only limits were themselves. If you wanted to organise fashion shows, art exhibitions or make 10ft sculptures, you could. You'd just better clean up afterwards. A talented artist and craftsman in his own right, Martin rarely found the time to show us his own work, largely because he was permanently at 'games'. If we didn't get to see his leg-spinning miracles on the cricket pitch, or his perfect crown green bowling technique we certainly heard about it. Perhaps students fared so well under his tuition because, faced with the choice of hearing for the 100th time how he almost beat world bowls champion Tony Alcock or knuckling down to some work, students couldn't find a paint brush quick enough. Like many others, I can't thank Martin enough for everything he did to inspire us, and while art at Rendcomb will undoubtedly carry on without him, I can't

imagine it will be quite as colourful. After all not many teachers would be willing to inherit his gaudy tie collection.  
Thanks.

*Dan Maslen is a concept artist for Universal Films*



Martin acts as auctioneer on Red Nose Day

From **Fiona Burge** (née Reichwald 1988-90)

When I left Rendcomb back in 1990 little did I know what an impact Martin Griffiths would have on me in the future that lay ahead of me. I may have only seen him a couple of times at various O.R. get togethers since leaving but his constant nagging in relation to my creativity still stands strong... *'No sh\*\*\*y black outlines; lots of colour and think BIG!!'* Martin and I constantly fought when I was his student. He had this annoying knack of getting the best out of my work by irritating me in such a way he made me even more determined in my creative achievements. If it hadn't been for his amazing gift of inspiration and venture into the unknown, I would never have got into Cheltenham College of Art for my foundation and then on to Camberwell College of Art and Design in London. My creative skills led me into the world of advertising and eventually into setting up my own business for soft furnishing with an emphasis on colour schemes and textiles. Fourteen years on Martin popped into my head once again as I sat down last week to create a christening gift for my niece Lily. Bold colours and a personal feel were produced from a blank canvas as my gift to a special little girl. Which leads me on to finish with my views on Martin ... bold, colourful and the greatest of talents.

### **David White**

David White took over as head of music in 1989. His vitality and expertise immediately permeated Rendcomb life. These tributes show how much his pupils valued David's teaching and flair. For the past nine years he has also run the Junior House, despite caring for his wife Judy.

From **Theo Berry** (1993-99)

What struck both my co-conspirator, **Beans Boughton** (1994-99), and I most about Mr White's view of the role of junior prefect was the total seriousness with which he took the appointment process. As nerve racking and even at times political as the application and interview process was, it was eventually incredibly useful to us both. Not only did we both feel immensely proud to have been appointed, but the formal process by which we were chosen gave us a sense of authority additional to that which 6th formers tend to assume is their by divine right. (That sense was to come in very useful, for the 1st and 2nd years of 98-99 were vintage trouble makers, although naturally not quite in the league of the class of 93-94!) Authority was something Mr. White never lacked: it seemed to rest naturally within him and never really needed serious exercise - the boys knew it was there and just let it lie. Nor were we prefects above the odd telling off either - I believe both Beans and I were slightly too judicious in the use of the rectory keys on a couple of occasions. He was, however, incredibly tolerant of us and our errors: he didn't seem to mind at all when Beans' electric heater blew the fuses and accidentally set off the fire alarm at 1 a.m. Nor did Mr. White object to regular visitors - in fact he positively encouraged them, with our sitting room at one point becoming the unofficial 6A common room. The sight of Tara Sleggs (1991-99) asleep on the sofa was a fairly common one. He was also very supportive and helpful to

us both during times of academic stress and strain, never forgetting that it wasn't just the 1st and 2nd years who were under his charge. We liked to think that we helped to run a smooth boarding house that year - though in truth Mr. Patterson and Mrs. Taplin probably contributed far more than we did - but what little we did do proved of immense value to our own development. I hope it had the same effect on others. We had a fantastic year assisting Mr. White in the Old Rectory and it was with pride that we added our names to the list of our illustrious predecessors on the wardrobe door. Our best wishes to Mr and Mrs White.



David White with the choir in 1991

From **Thom Gilbert** (1992-99)

Most of my fondest memories of Rendcomb, in one way or another, involve the extraordinarily eccentric musical life of a wonderful place which holds enormous significance to everybody who is fortunate enough to have been a part of it. David embodies this unique musical culture which has shaped an overwhelming enthusiasm for music in me and countless others.

I have to confess that much of David's uniqueness took time to grow on me, but in doing so, is irremovable. David typifies a passion for music that is all encompassing. A passion which, from the perspective of an outsider, is difficult to understand and often confused with some kind of artistic insanity. After seven years under the musical guidance of David, I too have been afflicted with this very special madness.

In every facet of his work at Rendcomb, David expresses an unstoppable energy, commitment and enthusiasm to the musical activities of the college for which I have always been both amazed and bemused. Whether undertaking the mass exodus of choristers to an evensong in Bristol once a year, or cultivating his own unique brand of soapbox conducting, David expresses the love and passion of both a committed artist and an incredibly caring, knowledgeable mentor.

In addition to the mountainous task of overseeing the musical activities of the college, David took the running of the Old Rectory and proved to be fantastic in introducing the junior boys to the spirit of Rendcomb. I cannot even begin to understand the level of energy that David was able to put into the life of the college.

Trying to list David's countless achievements or my memories of him would be an endless task, but one defining moment in my relationship with him does spring to mind. Whilst studying *The Marriage of Figaro*, David showed me how deep a love of music could extend. Listening to the Countess's aria '*Dove sono I bei momenti*' being gently intruded upon by the noise of the lesson change pupils flooding up the drive, I had never seen David so at peace and as the aria approached and drifted over its recapitulation he calmly said "I pity the rest of the world because they don't hear what I hear." This expression of a sentiment which is now all too familiar to me is one that I will never forget. I am sure that everybody who has dealt with David will have similarly poignant and happy memories.

David is a small man in stature, but an enormous presence in every other way. I am inexpressibly grateful for his talent, enthusiasm, encouragement, kindness and most of all his friendship. David leaves a difficult position to fill in many aspects of the college's life and I give him and Judy my fondest regards and my very best wishes for the future.

From **Hannah Willcocks** (1992-94)

My time at Rendcomb was literally crammed with music thanks to Mr White. Indeed the amount of music he ensured was continually on offer was one of the main reasons for my choosing Rendcomb over any other school and I shall always remain eternally grateful to him for convincing other staff that my practising the piano was for more important than my playing hockey or netball!

Although I was the only person studying music A level in my year, Mr White still approached my lessons with as much enthusiasm and dedication as if there had been 20 of me, and his unending patience (especially where harmony and counterpoint were concerned) was quite remarkable. He is one of those rare teachers who truly inspire their pupils and I know that I, along with many others, came away from Rendcomb with a much greater love of music as a result.

It is perhaps my memory of singing in the choir though that makes me smile the most. Hours of practice spent with Mr White, more often than not perched precariously on a box, literally bouncing up and down with relentless energy, shouting out expressions of either sheer delight or utter horror at our vocal attempts. Thus it was that Faure's *Requiem* and many other fantastic pieces came to be performed both in concert and in church. I am sure that Rendcomb will find an excellent replacement, yet I cannot but help feel sorry for those future pupils who will never experience Mr White's contagious love of music and ability to make it fun.

Mr White I hope you have a very happy and enjoyable retirement.

*Hannah Willcocks is a practising barrister*

From **Paul Sumsion** (1985-92)

David White's appointment as director of music was an inspired choice. His engaging personality and lively temperament soon made their presence felt all round the college community, but especially (of course!) in the music department.

Music flows in David's veins, where the rest of us have to make do with blood. He is a master of harpsichord, piano, organ and viola - the first and last of these point to his love for baroque. He will be particularly remembered at Rendcomb for the succession of superb concerts he produced, starting with Faure's *Requiem* in November '89, but continuing through a great array of composers and styles, from the large choir items (the 1990/91 *Nelson Mass* was unforgettable) to chamber music concerts and concertos. He particularly encouraged pupils to move out of their comfort zone and to shine to their potential by a careful balance of coercion, encouragement and dogged determination! His praise was always heartfelt and genuine, bubbling out of the joy (and perspiration!) that demonstrated his enthusiasm and commitment. On a personal note, David was a key formative influence in my life. His blend of pastoral care, encouragement, pursuit of excellence and no-messing discipline provided a unique atmosphere in which a self-effacing and slightly out of place character (one English report suggested 'eccentric'!) could flourish and find self expression and a place to be. I am sure that I was not alone in this.

**John Tolputt** talked in 1992 of the Rendcomb values of kindness, absence of snobbery, individuality of thought and high standards in academic work. They came with a friendly atmosphere, committed staff and care for individuals. For many years David has personified and fostered these values, as teacher, director, housemaster, colleague and friend, and will leave a disproportionately large pair of shoes for his successor to fill. He and Judy will be sorely missed. I am sure that all who had the privilege of being taught by him will wish them both a long and happy retirement.

*Paul Sumsion is in his final year of training to be ordained in the Church of England.*

From **Tim Shaw** (1990-97)

My first encounter with David White was the fearful day of the first form entry exam, and my audition for the music scholarship. So fearful it was that I was taken ill with stomach cramps and escorted to sick bay by the other 'bigger' Mr. White. It was there in the midst of my torso-clutching that the then bearded and slightly demonic David White appeared to me. A few seconds in his company dispelled my impression of his demonic visage, a few more my stomach cramps. Yet a few more and his extremely affable and animated nature had magicked me from my bed and into the Reading Room where he coaxed me into scratching through the audition pieces on my violin. Such is the power of David White, and I was to have another seven years of witnessing his miraculous deeds...

...Like producing transport out of thin air for an allegedly Bristol Cathedral bound choir. Like boxing both the bursar and half of the freelance musician population of Gloucestershire into line to create colossal musical extravaganzas limited only by the size of Cirencester church. Like herding together the choir every single Sunday for as long as I can remember, and longer, and in the face of great adversity, complete with post-alcoholic bass section. Like getting more ffff's out of a Steinway than a jackhammer could dream of. And in later years all this alongside running the Old Rec boarding house to Monopoly-purple standards and caring for Judy, his wife. How he manages this leaves me still befuddled: though rivalling the alcohol intake of the bass section with cups of coffee may play a part!!



In between his manic gesticulations, David is also a very attentive and sensitive shepherd and I'm especially sure that there are many Old Rec inmates who will testify to this. Throughout my time I always thought of him as a second housemaster, though he was never invasive with his counselling. He seems to use an acupuncture-style approach to advising pupils, disciplining them, or just getting them to do what he thinks is best for them, whereby they aren't really aware of what's going on until they find themselves remotivated, admonished, reassured or compliant. I remember him accompanying me in rehearsal for a recital of a Vivaldi violin concerto. "Why don't you try the first movement from memory, Tim, just to see if you can do it?".. So off I reluctantly went. At the end of the first movement David stretched his neck as far as he could to peek an eye over the music stand... "Carry on, Tim"... by which stage I was in full flow and physically unable to refuse the offer, so on I fumbled to the end of the second movement. Whilst jackhammering away David craned his neck once again... "Carry on, Tim"...and on it went until I managed to scrape my way to the end from memory. I discovered his master plan a week later when I stood up to perform to one and all in the church and the manuscript had mysteriously disappeared.

I fear that when David leaves, the very fabric of Rendcomb may collapse in protest in an apocalyptic, Mordoresque fashion. I just hope for the sake of all those still there it does not!

*Tim Shaw read Philosophy at Durham, and then was offered a place by the music department on one of their electroacoustic music modules. He acquired his M.A. in 2002.*

From **Marion Preen** (1991-93)

Firstly, I would not even be writing this contribution had it not been for David White. He was kind enough to offer me a music scholarship for my two years at Rendcomb and I am extremely grateful that he was able to see the slightest hint of potential on the day of my very poor audition! However, that is exactly what makes David White such an outstanding teacher - he sees the potential in everyone and can make the impossible happen. For anyone that has ever met or been taught by David White one of the main memories you will have is how much energy he has. In every lesson and rehearsal I ever attended, Mr. White was always full of exuberance and enthusiasm. Even the pace he walked between the school buildings was hard to match, and I often found myself jogging to keep up with him as Roger (Gorman) and I discussed 'Sonata Form' with him on the way to tea.

This infectious enthusiasm Mr. White has for his subject is reflected in all he has achieved over the years at Rendcomb. After now having been in teaching myself for 6 years, I am beginning to understand just how much impact Mr. White has had on so many people during his time at Rendcomb.

Just to teach lessons alone is a huge task, with additional hours taken up outside the classroom preparing for exam classes, researching set works and marking essays. As an A level group (and what a group we were!) Mr. White gave us a different essay to do each week assuring us that it was 'the greatest educational process one could go through'. Roger (Gorman), Claire (Germaine) and I were not convinced at the time but I've sadly heard myself saying exactly the same words to my sixth form groups.

In addition to teaching lessons, Mr. White ran the choir (performing every week in chapel), senior orchestra, organised the music for stage productions such as 'Oliver' and 'Bugsy', held school concerts ranging from Sunday morning recitals in the Reading Room to magnificent renditions, such as Handel's *Messiah* in Cirencester Parish Church and if that wasn't enough, took charge of the Junior House.

It is amazing that anyone could physically take on all this responsibility and do such a wonderful job, especially with the additional problems caused by his wife Judy's disabilities. I have enormous respect for David White on both a professional and personal level. I know I speak for pupils past and present and his colleagues, when I say that he will be sadly missed and Rendcomb will never be quite the same again without 'small' Mr White.

*Marian Preen has been teaching geography at a school in Gloucester, and assisting with music and sport.*

## **Obituaries**

We record with sorrow the deaths of the following members of the society and extend our sympathy to their families.

**John Gilchrist M.A.** 1932-2003 (1944 -51) from **Peter Cockell** (1943-52):

John and I met, in Form 1 at Rendcomb, in the Easter term in 1944. We became good friends from the outset although we had differing interests; John had a great talent and passion for cricket and I was never a cricketer, and while John read history and English in the VIth form, I was a scientist.

Boarding school was tough in the 40's: schools were short staffed and boys had to undertake various domestic and gardening duties. Fuel was short so we spent a lot of time sawing logs, and there never seemed to be enough to eat. Meals were unappetising, which particularly upset John as his mother, Margaret, was a

wonderful cook and his step-father was Constance Spry's son so he was used to high standards. But John's impish sense of humour and slightly rebellious nature often kept us going through the bad times.

John's cricketing talent was apparent very early, but when 12 or 13 he developed an obscure bone condition and his leg was in plaster for two terms. This wasn't going to stop his cricket; he could still bat but couldn't run between wickets and I became one of his runners. That was the closest I ever came to making a significant cricket score!

We shared interests in school debating and drama, very active at Rendcomb at that time, and in jazz music where John became a very competent drummer and played in the school jazz quartet. As we both lived in London, John in Kensington and my family in Hampstead, we often got together in the vacations and enjoyed the theatre and cinema with two holidays in boats on the Fens, and the usual rounds of parties in later years. Leaving school in 1951, John was commissioned in the Royal Ordnance Corps for his National Service. He claimed that they never managed to teach him to fill shells although he did learn to drive, and played a lot of cricket and hockey for the Regiment.

We caught up again in 1953 when we both went up to Cambridge and saw a lot of each other in the next three years, although we were in different colleges. The 50's in Cambridge really were golden years: the hardships of the post-war years were lessening, dons were back from the war, the teaching was excellent, and there were endless opportunities for sport and social life. John thrived at Trinity making many good friends and contributing to the life of the college, gained a respectable degree in history, and played cricket for the *Crusaders*, the University 2nd XI. He played for the university several times and was unlucky not to get a Blue but was elected to the Hawks Club.

Coming down from Cambridge in 1956, John decided that no gentleman could afford to live in England when a good graduate would be lucky with a starting salary of £500 a year. He joined Birds, a well-known trading company operating in India and the Far East, and set off for Calcutta by sea. He had a varied and interesting career in India involved in the management of coalfields and major trading partnerships, besides playing a lot of high-class cricket and enjoying an active social life.

John and Roma married towards the end of his first three-year tour and they stayed with us during their first six-month leave. Raoul was born during their second tour, but India was becoming difficult for British companies and the family returned to England in 1964. Raoul was at Rendcomb from 1972 to 1977 and John was chairman of the Old Rendcombian Society for several years in the 1970's.

John then worked overseas in the Caribbean and Indonesia for Reckitt and Coleman and other companies and travelled extensively in the U.S.A. We met from time to time over those years and with John one was always able to pick up the conversation without a break after a year or two because he was always interested in his friends and their families and never forgot their activities and relationships.

Returning to England John worked for a year or two with his step-father, Tony Marr, running Constance Spry Ltd, including the Mayfair florist, the Cordon Bleu Cookery School, and the Winkfield Place school, but by this time the company was under funded, the merger with another organisation was not a success, and Tony was ready to retire.

John met Aydin Ezen at about that time and worked with him in several businesses including a very comfortable hotel in Surrey, where we dined well on more than one occasion! This partnership where John was mainly responsible for accounting and financial matters flourished over the years, and John also developed an accounting and tax advice practice for a number of clients in London and Surrey. He was a great help when I became self employed and had to wrestle with the mysteries of VAT. John set up a delightfully simple system, which enabled me to deal with my tax in an hour or two each month.

He had unusual ability in persuading the Inland Revenue to understand and sympathise with his client's business problems and difficulties. This is unusual in that most accountants seem to think it their duty to pick a fight with the Revenue, usually at their client's cost! He achieved his aims through use of his very considerable charm, his endless patience, and his completely unflappable nature.

John and Anne met in the late 70's and married in 1980. They settled in Sunningdale and built a very happy life together both at home and on their many travels in this country and abroad. Anne arranged a weekend in Bath for John's birthday a year or two ago and asked my wife and I to join them for a surprise dinner. I well remember wandering into the bar at the Francis Hotel when it was a joy to see John leap to his feet in surprise with his usual warm welcoming grin.

We had not met since last summer but talked several times during the year and John was helping to arrange the reunion at Rendcomb in October for those who entered the school 60 years ago. John was looking forward to meeting old friends he had not seen for years and he was much missed.

**R. M. (Bob) Lewis** (1939-46) died at his home in Barnt Green, Worcestershire, in September 2002, aged 73. He had fought bravely against motor neurone disease for several years. A foundation scholar in 1939, he left Rendcomb at the end of the war with Higher School Certificate in English and history. He subsequently achieved professional qualifications in banking and an LLB degree from the University of London. He worked for Lloyds Bank in Bristol, Guildford, Worcester and Cheltenham before retiring in 1988 after ten years as manager of their trustee branch in Birmingham. Bob is survived by his wife Christine, his children Mark, Ann

and Jane, and grandson Matthew.

**Bertram Peacock** (1931-38) died in December 2002, aged 82. His widow wrote to say that he had been in failing health following a stroke. She says that he often spoke of the time he spent at Rendcomb, of the staff and of the headmaster, Mr Lee-Browne. Clearly his schooldays were a pleasant time, spent in lovely surroundings and led to scholastic achievement. He won a scholarship to Bristol University where he obtained a first class degree in civil engineering. It was then wartime and having failed the necessary medical requirements for the Royal Navy, he was directed to employment with Westland Aircraft at Yeovil. He worked in the design office there until his retirement.

**Rev. Professor Gordon Dunstan**, December 2003. He was a governor of the college from 1982 - 1995.

**Graham Ball** (staff 1982-86) died in 2003. He took over as head of French in 1983 when David Sells (1955-83) retired. He left Rendcomb in 1986 to be head of modern languages at Ellesmere College. Among Graham's many notable contributions to Rendcomb life, O.R.s will remember his fine counter-tenor singing in a range of musical presentations.

**Eric Davis** (1943-50) died in February 2004 after a long illness resulting in cancer of the lungs and liver. He would have been 72 in April. His brother, George (1939-46) writes:  
'He enjoyed his time at Rendcomb where he joined me after I had been there for four years. Popular with his peer group, he was a good sportsman, keeping wicket for the 1st XI (he is in the group photograph of the cricket team in Vol. 1 of the college history) and playing inside forward for the hockey XI. He carried on both sports after he left Rendcomb, playing hockey for his regiment during national service in Germany, and later played for a few clubs in the Bristol area, getting two county trials for Gloucestershire and playing in one County 2nd XI match.

He trained as a teacher, and was master in charge of music at Speedwell School in Bristol, but, after a few years, transferred to the Avon Adult Education Department, becoming head of one of the Bristol areas until his retirement. A good musician, he was for many years conductor and musical director of the Bristol Savoy Operatic Society, enjoying a good reputation locally. He leaves a widow, Margaret, and three sons, Philip, Robert and Peter.'

**Oliver Morel** (1930-34, staff 1938-42)

The following article appeared in March 2003 in *The Times* and is reproduced with kind permission.

Oliver Morel, cabinet-maker whose raised marquetry capitalised on the colours and graining of different kinds of wood.

DELICATE decorative effects and a deep knowledge of a variety of woods set Oliver Morel's work apart from a lot of other handmade furniture. A trademark of his mid and late career, his three dimensional inlay, or raised marquetry, is astonishingly fine to have been produced by such a big man, whose large hands - his friends relate - were unable to cut a straight slice of bread. Even in his smallest pieces he would use as many as five different woods, powerfully capitalising on the natural colours and graining of each.

Morel belonged to the Cotswold school of furniture-makers, an offshoot of the Arts and Crafts movement created when Sidney and Ernest Barnsley and their friend Ernest Gimson set up workshops in Gloucestershire in the 1890s. He was perennially fascinated, as were they, by the nature of wood and the ways in which its inner beauty could be revealed, and he worked hard to promote a general understanding of the craftsmen of that earlier era. A modest and reticent man, he firmly drew the line at anything approaching self-publicity, but was most generous with his time as a teacher and guide, and was happy to contribute to the sum of artistic knowledge so long as it did not mean having to put his own achievements forward.

Son of the radical campaigner and pacifist E.D. Morel (who was elected labour MP for Dundee in 1922, defeating the sitting MP, Winston Churchill), Oliver George Morel was educated at Rendcomb College, a progressive school near Cirencester that was a brilliant choice for a future furniture-maker, given its head teacher's interest in craftwork and his encouragement of links with a number of furniture workshops. At 18, Morel became a pupil at one of these, run by Sidney Barnsley's son Edward at Froxfield in Hampshire, which was possibly the best exposure to Arts and Crafts principles, style and methods that he could have had at that time. A tall, strong, young man, he coped well with the hard physical side of the work, taking more readily than some of his fellow pupils to such strenuous routines as Dutch sawing (vertical sawing with the saw teeth away from the body).

He taught woodwork classes at another progressive school, Bedales, just down the road in Petersfield, and, after studying part-time for a teaching qualification, he left the Barnsley workshop for a time to teach woodwork at his own former school, Rendcomb, where he met his future wife Adelaide Always, a maths teacher. They married in 1942.

In the same year - in response to an appeal from Barnsley - Morel, a conscientious objector, returned to the Froxfield workshop, which had lost many of its craftsmen to war service. Towards the end of the war the

Morels moved to a small, run-down hill farm in an isolated valley on the Wales-Herefordshire border, where Morel set up as a furniture-maker on his own account, creating a workshop in an old barn. It was there, in the 1950s, that he developed his raised-inlay technique, perfected in such remarkable pieces as his Sussex chest of 1974 with its inlaid image of Chichester's market cross on the outside and inlaid branches of foliage and flowers on the interior.

Inlaid panels of plants and birds were recurring features of Morel's work, the images being based on sketches by the artist Alice Barnwell. 'When I start on that sort of thing I can think of nothing else until it is finished', he wrote in 1979. 'It is a sure road to bankruptcy, so I do very little'.

In the 1960s, the Morels moved to Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire, where Morel created - and for ten years ran - a resource centre, dedicated to the memory of his great inspiration and fellow woodworker Eric Sharpe. The Eric Sharpe Centre became a repository of information not only about Sharpe but about many others in the Arts and Crafts tradition, notably Romney Green and Stanley Davis. Benefiting from the start from many of Sharpe's artefacts, his workshop equipment, papers and photographs, Morel worked energetically to expand the collection, and a large number of local and not-so-local woodworkers, both professional and amateur, visited the centre. When it closed in 1980, a lot of its contents were transferred to Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal.

Morel also developed a close working relationship with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, where the extensive collection of Arts and Crafts pieces now includes three of his own works (and several by Eric Sharpe, thanks to Morel's influence). A Morel casket in the collection at Cheltenham is typical of his late work, making eye-catching use of five woods: 19th century Cuban mahogany, pearwood, walnut, ebony and stained oak.

Tragically, arthritis curtailed his career shortly after this piece was designed and made in 1988, when he was 72. His wife died in 1996. He is survived by three of their four sons and a daughter.

George Davis (1939-46) writes:

He was the 'manual' master when I joined in 1939, but as from one pupils were not in those days deemed fit to handle woodworking tools, I had no close contact with him until Autumn 1940. He was a large man with huge hands and the smallest handwriting ever saw (I have most of my school reports from that time where these days I have to use a magnifier to read what he said about me!) The only other thing I remember about him was that he smoked a pipe containing herbal tobacco which he augmented with dried willow herb collected from the park -when he lit up you had to retire some distance from the shower of sparks!!

It was in that same autumn term that Miss A.M. Alway joined the school as maths teacher taking over from F.C. Coleman who had been drafted into the navy and as far as I can tell from my reports she remained until the end of the easter term in 1942. As a matter of interest, she had joined the school at the same time as Mrs M.K. Manifold who came to teach French in place of P.K. Wright who had also been called up. I believe that Miss Allway and Mrs Manifold were the first two ladies ever to teach at Rendcomb.

Mrs Manifold was married to an Australian poet called John Manifold, educated at Geelong Grammar School and Melbourne University, who was serving with the British Army in the Intelligence Corps. On one of his leaves Mrs Manifold brought him into one of our French classes where he read some of his poems and accompanied himself on the guitar to sing *The Ballad of Ned Kelly*, a 19th century Australian rebel and folk hero.

### **60 Year Rendcombian Reunion - 12th October 2003**

Blessed with a fine day and with the Cotswolds looking at their best, 19 of us who entered Rendcomb between 1941 and 1946 got together to celebrate having survived 60 years (give or take) from first entering the College, and to satisfy our curiosity. Those who attended were:-

Michael Brain (42-51), Martin Boase (48-50), Chris Brisley (41-50), Peter Cockell (43-52), Julian Comrie (46-54), Lionel Crawford (42-50), Tim Denehy, Ken Hanney (41-50), Howard Hayter, David Humphries (42-47), Roger Kendal (42-50), Martin Knight, Raymond Lawrence (42-45), Michael Miles (43-50), Michael Petter (44-52), Philip Quick (45-50), John Reed (44-52), Dick Smith (42-59), John Smith (42-46)

The church service was quite different from the services which we experienced/endured in our time at the College. There are many pupils front overseas now, so that the Anglican liturgy that we heard is no longer thought appropriate. However the music was familiar, largely, no doubt, because Peter was asked to choose the hymns! The choir, mostly girls, was excellent. We were used to compulsory attendance, but that is no longer the case. The church would be too small now, and in any case there are many pupils who do not board. It was not difficult to recall the Reverend Inge moving effortlessly from page 2 of his sermon to page 4, page 3 having gone "AWOL".

Following the the service, (at which the headmaster gave the address - Ed.) we were kindly provided with

coffee and biscuits in Clock Hall as it is now called. This gave us the opportunity to renew old friendships and to talk to members of staff.



Peter Cockell and Chris Brisley

We were then taken wherever we wished to go by the head boy and some of his colleagues. Yes, it's all different, rooms bring put to different uses and new buildings etc but Saul remains blindly in his place in front of the stained glass, and there is still a table at the bottom of the main stairs where the weekly pocket money could be given out if such a quaint notion were thought desirable. The asphalt continues to be used for hockey. Reminiscence was all at this stage of the proceedings, needless to say. It may be that our guides were mildly surprised to learn of a few of the rather more "unusual" things that went on in the 40's...

The Bathurst Arms is much the same as it was. The atmosphere in our private room was very relaxed, and we enjoyed the excellent fare laid on for us. In a welter of anecdotes, recollections and questions, we brought ourselves up to date. It was very good to have the headmaster, Gerry Holden, who had addressed us in church, with us for lunch. It is clear that much of the ethos remains, even if on the face of it the College is unrecognisable from the College of our day. For the more wayward of us it may be a comfort to know that a school council still operates! Inevitably the word "remember" took a good hammering.

Perhaps the last word should go to Martin Butler, who wrote in reply to his invitation to attend, "What a perfectly awful prospect - yet in its macabre way quite intriguing!" Right on!



**Phil Griffiths** (1940-43) has lent us this postcard. Can anyone shed light on the date and the people taking part? Ed.

### Why Rendcomb?

**Paul Heppleston** (1956-62) suggests that it might be interesting to learn why various O.R.s came to Rendcomb. He thinks that although many will feel there are only ordinary reasons that brought them to the school, there could be some who have interesting stories - of coincidence, contacts, unusual circumstances etc. that made their parents choose Rendcomb. Contributions welcome!

### AROPS (Association of Representatives of Old Pupils' Societies) Report

The 36th annual AROPS conference took place at the School of St Mary and St Anne, Abbots Bromley on Saturday 17 May. The chairman, Roger Moulton (Old Pauline), welcomed participants from all parts of the country.

The Headmistress, Mrs Mary Steel, welcomed representatives to the school and gave the opening address. She gave a brief outline of the history and development of the school. It was founded as two schools, St Anne's in 1872 and St Mary's in 1880. The two schools were amalgamated in 1921. She also spoke about the foundation, development and work of the Guild of St Mary and St Anne.

Vanessa Connor (Guild of St Mary and St Anne) introduced Canon John Hall, chief education officer of the Church of England who gave a most interesting talk about the Church of England's developing and expanding role in education in this country. The second session was chaired by John Edwards (Old Wellingtonian). Chris Charter, who is the development director of the Repton Foundation spoke on the topic of *Working With The Development Director*. Judging by the questions asked and the fact that the session had to be stopped in order for the representatives to have lunch this talk raised many interesting points. After lunch Margaret Carter-Peg introduced a session entitled *The Running of an Old Pupils' Association*. There were three speakers, each of whom came from a different type of society and was therefore able to give a different perspective about the running of a society. The final session of questions and answers was chaired by Michael Freegard (Old Haileyburian) and was as popular as ever. Once again the session could have lasted for a great deal longer. The chairman closed the conference saying that he hoped to see many representatives at the AGM at the City of London School for Girls on Tuesday 18 November. The 2004 conference will take place on 15 May at St Swithun's School, Winchester. Tea and tours of the school followed.

The annual dinner took place in the evening at the school when 25 representatives were entertained by guest speaker Lorna Sheldon about her experiences in life as well as her time as a pupil at the School of St Mary and St Anne, Abbots Bromley.

(The Old Rendcombian Society subscribes to AROPS, and representatives attend conferences from time to time - Ed)

### Travel Bursary

There are no reports this year as last year's recipients have not yet completed their projects.

### Marriages

**Bridget Goldsmith** (staff 1988-93) to David Trump, October 2003  
Chris and Penny Wood, Paul and Jane Sykes, David and Joan Essenhigh and Mike Craddock attended the wedding. Bridget and David run a company that sets up water purification using reed beds.

**Jonathan Quick** (1979-86) to Laura Wain, October 2003.

**Richard Reichwald** (1983-87) to Amanda Smith, August 2003.





David and Joan Essenhigh, Jane and Paul Sykes, Chris and Penny Wood and Mike Craddock

### Births

**Katrina** (née **Walsh** 1984-86) and Jeremy Brown, a daughter, Arabella, January 2003  
**Catherine** (née **Faircloth** 1984-86) and Adam Schallamach, a son, Oliver Marco, May 2003  
Libby and **Simon Reichwald** (1982-87), a daughter, Lilly Jane Margaret, August 2003.  
**Fiona** (née **Reichwald** 1988-90) and Steve Burge, a son, Thomas Frederick, 2003.  
Bernice and **Nigel Burgess** (1974-77), a daughter, Cerys Elizabeth Anne, February 2004.  
Jo and **Paul Sumsion** (1985-92), a daughter, Ruth, 2003.  
**Claire** (née **Ellis** 1984-86) and Hugh Davies a daughter, Millie, 2001 and a son, Tom 2003.  
Abigail and **Angus Waddell** (1977-84) a daughter, Rebecca 2002 and a son, Archie 2004.

### Left in 1977 or 1979?

Calling all 6th form leavers of 1979 (or indeed 5th form leavers of 1977).  
Did you realise that it is twenty-five years, yes, 25 years, since you left??! At the Summer old Rendcombians' day on Sunday 4 July, you are all invited to attend a reunion to see how everyone is getting on.  
**Keith Winmill** and **David Marshall** are attempting to co-ordinate a 'get together' and all those in the above category will be receiving a letter encouraging you all to come along, so keep your diaries clear and try and get back to Rendcomb to renew old acquaintances... and see how the school has changed. If, in the meantime, you would like further information, e-mail Keith ([windy@winmill186.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:windy@winmill186.freeserve.co.uk)) or David ([bendall.ciren@virgin.net](mailto:bendall.ciren@virgin.net)) for more information. If you get this via someone else, let us know your address!!

### Old Rendcombian News

**Hartley Moore** (1965-71) BSc. (C.Eng) was recently elected a fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers. Hartley lives in Thailand and he and his wife provided a 'base' at their home for Chris Wood's (1965-71, staff 76-) daughter, Pippa during her recent travels in Thailand.  
**Tim Hill** (1991-98) has secured a job with Johnson Matthey as a development chemist working in their environmental catalysts and technologies division. They make exhaust catalysts (for cars and motor bikes to static engines and chainsaws) to reduce emissions, and are the largest producers worldwide.

**Simon Hardie** (1984-91) is a director of Harrison & Hardie, estate agents of Bourton-on-the-Water.

**Richard Dunwoody** (1975-81) Following his expedition to the magnetic pole, Richard formed part of a team of nine to conquer Mount Aconocagua, at 22,841 ft. the highest mountain in South America. Only three of the group reached the summit. Richard was struck down with altitude sickness at Camp Nido de Condores (17,700 ft). "At minus 25 degrees, it was colder and felt a lot harder than walking to the Pole", Richard reported. He was raising money for Spinal Research.

**Henrietta Rothman** (1985-87) now lives with her four children near Annecy. She would welcome visits from O.R.s and would be happy to try to arrange exchange visits.

**Chris Scarth** (1991-98) who read for a European business degree at Nottingham University has recently set up

a company to develop a new software tool for primary schools. In partnership with a fellow graduate at Nottingham, they have received a grant from the Department of Trade and Industry's SMART award. "The process effectively builds up a pupil's end of year reports throughout the year and so removes this heavy burden on teachers in June", Chris said when interviewed for The Wilts. and Glos. Standard. A prototype is now being tested in a number of schools and L.E.A.s and feedback is extremely positive.

**Paul Maguire** (1972-78) was saddened to read of **David Butler's** (1970-77) death. It was a sobering thought that two of their year had died - **Chris Lee** (1972-77) being the other. Paul is keeping busy with a small space communications company he set up with a colleague in the U.K. He lives in Ireland but with six children is thinking of moving ... into a cow shed!!

**Rose Thrower** (1997-99) lives near Girona in northern Spain and is overseeing the building of a hotel "all the usual stuff, diggers for the pool, electricians etc."

**Jonathan Quick** (1979-86), whose marriage is reported elsewhere, runs his own travel company, Cities Direct, in Cheltenham.

**Rebecca Hodgkinson** (1988-90) is living in London, having recently qualified in interior design. She and her husband, Rupert, are expecting their first child in June.

**Richard Reichwald** (1983-87) runs a successful gift accessory firm in Cheltenham.

**Lucy Brummitt** (1988-90) has been teaching in a London secondary school, but has recently moved to Yorkshire with her partner.

**Taryn Nixon** (1975-77) appeared (briefly!) on BBC news in February in connection with the work of the Museum of London's Archaeology Service at the burial chamber believed to be that of an early Christian king who ruled over Anglo-Saxon Essex.

**David Mabblerley** (1959-66), Professor in the Nationaal Herbarium Nederland, University of Leiden, was awarded the Burbridge Medal in Melbourne by the Australian Systematic Botany Society "for services to Australian plant science."

**Andrew Branston** (1987-92) joined the R.A.F. Regiment three years ago after a spell of hockey coaching in local schools. He has served in Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq - most recently at Basra airport, where, although in immediate reserve, they did not have to go to the front line. His trade is signaller. He is also in the Mountain Rescue team. His brother, **Ean** (1989-94). runs an equine therapy centre from the family farm.

**Peter Binks** (1935-41) sent us news of his recent celebrations for his 80th birthday. He had just attended a reunion in Melbourne of the Institution of Electrical Engineers at which all present gave a brief account of their careers. He has also discovered that he is related to the Tarrant family in Rendcomb village - the Tarrants were the blacksmiths for many years. He is expecting a visit by his brother to see his son who married an Australian. On seeing the regatta programme in last year's newsletter he telephoned **Jane Gunner** (1975-77) from Australia to say that he thinks the car in the foreground was his parents' Daimler in which he learnt to drive. He believes the small person in the top left picture was **Peter Forrest** (1935-42).



**Ben Almond** (1978-85) has taken on a number of new departments under his CAO responsibilities at the German investment bank, Dresdner. In addition to administration, he now runs expenditure management, contract and vendor management, marketing, presentation and graphic design and all IT Support Services - about 400 direct staff in addition to the 3000 staff under his CAO role. He says it is exciting, a massive new challenge, even if at times a little daunting in view of the number of people directly affected by his decisions.

**Nigel Burgess** (1974-77) has been working for the past 5 years at the Nationwide Building Society's head office in Swindon. For the last two and a half years he has been with the fraud control department. As he once had ambitions to be in the police, he is now combining the two professions, he says!



**Dan Maslen** (1984-91) did a foundation course at Cheltenham before studying social and political sciences at Cambridge for four years. He then found himself researching, writing and producing 'The Big Breakfast', 'Dennis Pennis' and more recently the wildlife t.v. series 'Bug World'. He then realised that he wanted to work in feature films and, after stints at the Royal College of Art and National Film School, is now a concept artist and story consultant for Universal Pictures. He is married and has a baby boy called Luca.

**Paul Sumsion** (1985-92) writes "After a year reworking maths and physics A-levels (which could be attributed to the breadth of character forged at Rendcomb, but was probably more to do with spending more time reading novels than revising) I spent a year out working with a Christian mission organisation in Bristol, Albania and France. This set me up nicely to go to UMIST in Manchester to read physics and environmental science, which I greatly enjoyed. While at university I met Jo. We got engaged in Spring 1996, just before spending a summer in Albania. This time we were working in an orphanage, and exploring the possibility of doing so as a long-term plan. Instead what came out of the trip was a strong sense that God was pointing me towards ordination in the Church of England. It seemed that the orphanage work, while entirely necessary, was putting a sticking plaster on a broken society. The children we looked after were generally there because Albanian society is very uncaring and intolerant of single mums. The alternative was to put them into an orphanage, often due to intense family pressure. The call to ordination came from the conviction and experience that nothing can change people's lives around for the better more completely than faith in Jesus. Whilst aware of cultural considerations, I believe that this is the most positive way of transforming a society decimated by years of enforced communism and atheism. However, the road to ordination proved less than smooth. Jo and I were married in September 1997. (Which incidentally neatly fulfilled **Tim Underwood's** (1985-92) prophetic jibe that I would marry the first girl I went out with... no regrets!). We continued to live in Manchester as I went through the laborious process of selection for the C of E, whilst working in Stockport, managing service contracts for a photocopier company. A C. of E. selection conference in 1998 was both affirming of my call but also said 'not yet'. Since Jo and I had been thinking of working abroad at some point we looked around for suitable opportunities, and found that the orphanage we had been to before was looking out for some help to develop the children's play. Since this was not an area in which we had professional expertise, we had help and support from a child psychologist friend and also a social worker. Combined with a good deal of recommended reading we sorted out some of the basic principles and ideas to put into practice. The orphanage was run as a joint project between the Albanian government and an American mission organisation, each of which supplied a director. This inevitably led to a degree of tension, particularly whilst the American director (a pioneering type) tried to gradually hand over management to the Albanians. In the middle of this we got on with introducing a variety of activities, some of which (like jigsaws) we taught to the staff as well as the children. In retrospect there are things we would have done differently, but as time passed we perceived a change in the way some of the staff saw the children and their work with them. The orphanage began to feel slightly more like a community and less like an institution. During the two years we lived in Albania we had trips back to the U.K. every six months for a few weeks. This gave the opportunity to go through the C. of E. selection process again, this time successfully. In July 2001 we returned to the U.K. and moved to Bristol, where I started ordination training at Trinity College (just off the Downs). Since then I have been studying a diverse range of subjects\* and have added a BA to the BSc from Manchester. I am currently working towards an MA and am coming to the end of my time in Bristol. We have also added a baby to our family; Ruth is now ten months old and still amazing. In June we will move back to Manchester Diocese, where I will be a curate (assistant vicar) in Holcombe and Hawshaw; a couple of parishes just north of Bury. I would be delighted to hear from any friends who would like to get back in touch."

*\*Philosophy, History, Christology, Soteriology, Hermeneutics, Homiletics, Ecclesiology, Spirituality, Ecumenism, Mission... and so it goes on.*

**Tim Shaw** (1990-97) writes, "Since leaving Rendcomb I have completed my BA in philosophy at Durham, during which it became more apparent that I wanted to join the select band of fools who want to follow a professional career in music. I managed to salvage a 2:1, mostly on account of persuading the philosophy department to allow me to write my dissertation on the difference between music and noise. I was lucky enough in my final year to be accepted by the music department on one of their electroacoustic music modules. Electroacoustic music is a strange outpost of traditionally academic music which uses recorded, processed and synthesised sounds as the fundamental compositional materials. Varese and Stockhausen are some of the earliest composers who dabbled in this area. I went on to study an MA in the department, and passed the course in September 2002. During my time at Durham I have released various singles and EPs, having managed to cross the Styx to the sought after status of 'signed artist' early in my second year. I now have around 20 different releases under my belt and am hoping to be completing an album soon. I have also recently started performing live on a couple of laptops which run programs I have written myself and allow me to improvise weird and occasionally wonderful music on stage. Since my debut in August I have played a couple of venues in the U.K., and next year if all goes to plan I will be playing Holland, Spain and the U.S. thus far. Sadly this type of 'work' makes very little money at all, and what does appear takes more than a year to do so I am supplementing my artist career with less glamorous production work such as karaoke backing tracks and

library music. For this type of work I have set up a production company (*Sensible Footwear Productions*), which is at the moment little more than a bank account which gets emptied into my landlord's pocket at the end of each month. My client roster is beginning to increase though, and I am hoping to get some bespoke composition work for film, t.v. or 'new media' as I do more work for bigger companies such as BMG. Since I finished my MA I have been living in Leeds, having followed my girlfriend, Jess, who has just finished studying her MA there. We originally met at Durham where we were both at Hatfield College. She is now living in Manchester working for the BBC.

**David Richardson** (1930-37) has appeared in the national press and on television campaigning for pensioners rights.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to the Under 11 lacrosse team who are going to Manchester on 13th June to represent the southwest of England in the national lacrosse championships.

### O.R. Web Site

Many O.R.'s have found this site and have enjoyed making contact through it. Our renewed thanks are due to Colin Hitchcock (1971-78) not only for setting up the site but keeping it up to date so meticulously.

### Some entries from The Rendcombian Guest Book

Date: 10/02/04, Name: **Angus Waddell**, (1977-84), Location: Cirencester.

I have just moved back to Cirencester after a 20 year absence. Married to Abigail we have 2 children Rebecca, aged 2 and Archie, just 6 weeks old. I am now a consultant surgeon in the Great Western Hospital, Swindon which comes as more of a shock to me than to others. We live next door to **Colin Burden** (staff 1966-97) who caught me smoking back in 1980 - a fact he hasn't yet remembered.

Date: 29/01/04, Name **Alison Smith** (now McClune 1982-84), Location: U.S.A.

I join the group of bored web-surfers who happened on this site by accident and couldn't stop reading! Actually I was waiting for my four month old son to wake up ...yep, I'm an 'older mother' much to my surprise. I have failed to keep in touch with anybody over the years - but would love to hear news of anyone who remembers me (kindly, hopefully). Whatever happened to Susannah Ewing Brown, Kerstin Waterloh, Alison Twyman, Jane Merrett? I live in the US, married to an American.

Date: 27/12/03, Name: **Alex Bowers** (1997-00), Location: Sydney, Australia.

It's been a long time since I've been here! I am in Australia now getting some sun to my pasty white skin before I go to university next year to study physics. The weather here is lovely! It was 23/33 degrees here on Christmas Day!

Date: 24/12/03, Name: **Richard Hughes** (1986-92), Location: Tampa Bay, Florida.

Wow... Christmas Eve bored at work and discovered this site. Great to see all my old friends names and pictures. I have moved around a bit and lost touch with a lot of people ...I was in Dubai for 4 years and then about 5 years ago moved to Florida where I work as a creative director for a record label.

Date: 15/11/03, Name: **Paul Bongiovanni** (1994-01), Location: Cheltenham.

I'm halfway through a three year degree course at the University of Portsmouth, enjoying every minute. Funny how university is just like a continuation of Rendcomb with none of the silly rules! I still have aspirations of joining the RAF at the end of my studies. I'm about halfway through my elementary flying training at RAF Boscombe Down and looking forward to (hopefully) getting my wings! Get in touch people, it would be good to hear from you all.

Date: 14/10/03. Name: **Robert Barrett** (1969-76), Location: Bath.

Scary typing in 1969 as a start date - Anthony Quick as HM and Knapps in charge of Junior House. Having spent 20 years as accountant, have changed tack and bought a complex of holiday cottages in Bude: so all O.R.s interested in surfing!! and even discounts!! Exchanged e-mails with **Martin Griffiths** (1987-94), (but wife Carrie read e-mail reply and then deleted it by mistake so have lost address, also **Mart Pitt** and **Phil Everatt** (1969-76). Have one daughter at Monkton Combe school in Bath - old memory of playing U14 cricket

at Monkton and being captain and getting out for a duck 3rd ball. Meeting up next week with **Mandy Jones** (1974-76) and her daughter. Good to hear from anyone from those days - most memories still pretty positive.

Date: 10/09/03, Name: **Tara Sleggs** (1992-99). Location: Oxford/Cirencester.

So nice to see familiar names. I've just graduated from Exeter and am about to do a PGCE in geography at Oxford (maybe I'll follow Mr Brealy back to Rendcomb...who knows!!)

Date: 21/04/03, Name: **Tim Dyke** (staff 1976-81)

I taught English under JNH for these five years -my first job! - and ran the drama. Good to see so many pics from the seventies. Well done! Now at Blundell's school, Devon.

Date: 05/01/04, Name: **Lindsay Haslett** (Staff 1985-96), Location: Dublin.

Hello to all who remember me whether as teacher, housemaster or colleague. I left Rendcomb in 1996 to become DHM of Wisbech GS and am now head of St.Columba's College ([www.stcolumbas.ie](http://www.stcolumbas.ie)), a boarding school not dissimilar to Rendcomb, in Dublin. Marie, Sophie and Kate are well. I am in regular touch with **Mike Newby** who also left in 1996. Drop me a line if you remember the good times we shared!

Date: 23/06/03, Name: **Alistair Hedderwick** (1978-83) Location: Somerset.

Was trying to find some e-mail addresses for a 20 yr reunion (10 days before the event!!) - found a few.

Update on me: transplant doing fine after nearly three years - off to represent GB in world transplant games (only way I could ever have expected a 'national' call up) in July. Still in civil service, about to move up to London to write contracts to privatise yet more MoD work! Apart from that, divorced (not so good), do yoga (try it you'll be surprised!!) spare time work trying to protect/promote artisanal food producers (see [Slowfood.com](http://Slowfood.com)). Hope everyone is enjoying life - Rendcomb was a fantastic environment in many ways - hope when I go back the fading memory isn't shattered!!

Date: 28/05/03, Name: **Mark Webb** (1972-79), Location: North West Wiltshire.

Great site, Colin. Living near Castle Combe, married to Kay, 1 horse (hers), 1 cat, 0 kids. Self-employed working as an agricultural valuer/land agent with a business based just outside Swindon. **Robin** (1974-81) married **Rebecca Norman** (1979-81); they have 3 children and live in Gwent. **David** (1977-84) is married with 2 children and lives in Dorset.

### College News

**Paul Sykes'** departure to France had quite an effect in many areas. **Stephen Clark** came from Wootton Bassett College to teach mathematics; **Paul Dodd** became director of studies; **Claire Gallon** joined the English department; **Mike Slark** takes over the cricket 1st XI with **David Essenhigh** as coach.

**Sophie Blackwell** replaced **Martin Griffiths** as head of art, **Ralph Mann** joined the art department and **Georgina Harford** started psychology as a new sixth form AS subject.

**Mike** and **Ann Slark** are moving out of Park House in the summer, having returned it to its co-educational roots so successfully. They will be replaced by **Hugh** and **Rosalind Marsden** from Rougemont, a school Rendcomb plays at rugby.

**Martin** and **Lynne Watson** took over the running of the Junior School, which has now expanded into most of the old study block. Already they are extremely busy as in September 2004 even younger pupils will be welcome at Rendcomb.

There have been small changes to the timetable: school finishes at 4.10 on a Friday and most lessons begin at 9.10 on a Saturday, unlike many of our competitors who have abandoned Saturday school.

Sport continued to flourish at Rendcomb: the rugby XV had a winning season and toured to Barcelona; lacrosse has been introduced successfully alongside netball by **Barbara Shiells**, who also organised a popular athletics day in the summer and **Alex Brealy** has organised a record number of fixtures for hockey on top of last year's tour to Dublin.

Ski trips are popular again and **James Stutchbury's** holiday to Val d'Isère was a great success. Another is planned for next year. James is also heavily involved in our link with Lord Meade school in Uganda. He travelled there this March and we hope to report further on this in the next newsletter.

Drama and music are still important components of life at Rendcomb and **David White's** departure reminds us of this (see articles about David). Drama is studied at GCSE, AS and A level and this is supported by many visits, workshops and productions. Recent ones have been Christopher Hampton's *Dangerous Liaisons*, Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Bouncers and Shakers*.

Most departments have been issued with a laptop to enhance ICT teaching. The school now has a true network, which is wireless in many areas. Where there was once a snooker table, visitors are greeted by a plasma screen (as well as *Saul* still) giving details of forthcoming events. In fact, when **Commander Chris Hodkinson**

(1975-82) visited the school in January, he and his flight crew were welcomed by a video of their landing on the grass by the Art Block.



Chris was very pleased to visit Rendcomb and to talk to members of the junior and senior schools. He insisted on eating with the pupils in the dining hall and many turned out to wave a fond farewell in the afternoon. He is currently commanding HMS Southampton, which is just completing a major refit.

### Old Rendcombian Cricket 2003



#### SQUAD A

Manager: Paul Sykes  
 Will Witchell (c)  
 Luke Baghdadi  
 Chris Jeffreys  
 James Spackman  
 Chris Sykes  
 Harvey Davies  
 Chris Scarth  
 Nick Stanfield  
 Sam Maylott  
 Ashley Taylor  
 Phil Webb  
 Laurie Barton

#### SQUAD B

Manager: David Essenhigh  
 Rich Deacon (c)  
 Ian Thompson  
 Stuart Taylor  
 Charlie Webb  
 Charlie Barton  
 Kevin Holmes  
 Steve Jones  
 Robin Witchell  
 Francis Barton  
 Manny Garcia  
 Freddie Lait  
 Charles Hutton-Potts  
 Guy Healey

New Old Boys won the toss and elected to bat:  
142 all out  
Maylott 47 (ran out Scarth for one)  
Witchell, W. 21  
Stanfield, N. 15  
Three run outs!

Garcia 2 for 16  
Lait 2 for 7

Old Boys:  
146 for 6  
Barton, C. 22  
Barton, F. 29  
Hall, M. 20

Webb, P. 2 for 6  
Davies, H. 2 for 33  
(14 of which came off his last three deliveries!)

Result: The 'Spirit of Cricket' won the day but the Old Old Boys won a bit more!

### **Old Rendcombian Rugby 2003**

Steve Jones (captain), Ian Thornpson, Pat Boydell, Ali Harris, Craig Marcham, Jim Graham, Charles Yardley

Francis Barton (captain), Charlie Webb, Chris Jeffreys, Tim Bates, James Spackman, Ash Taylor, Phil Webb

Barton Battlers 56  
Tries: Spackman 3, Taylor 2, P Webb 2,  
Jeffreys 1, Barton 1, C Webb 1  
Conversions: Barton, Taylor, Spackman

Steve's Steelers 37  
Tries: Jones 3, Boydell 3, Thompson 1  
Conversion: Boydell

The groans of pain from muscle stiffness will have reverberated around many a household on the Monday morning as the players put their all into this 7-a-side head-to-head. Enduring four ten minute periods (even in the wonderful O.R. spirit) took its toll on these fine young men. The day was notable for several things:

- Tim Bates and Chris Jeffreys (two of last season's unbeaten 1st XV) maintained their winning streak
- There was a notable absence of white boots adorning Steve's feet (defeat was certain without their presence!)
- Steve realised that goal posts are very sturdy
- Jonny Wilkinson needs to come and give some drop-kicking lessons as there was an absence of this skill in most of the players' repertoires
- Perhaps the first ever penalty was awarded for a 'truck and trailer' move masterminded by Ash Taylor
- The final try was a masterclass in handling and angles of running by the Battlers



Match tea

### Old Rendcombian Hockey 2004

On a very squally Mothering Sunday, the Brealy Bulldogs took on the Hastings Hustlers for an exciting and skilful match that ended 3-3.

Bulldogs: Toby Brealy, Charles Hutton-Potts, Phil Paterson-Fox, Andy Payne, Dan Appleton, Ian Thompson, Alex Brealy, Pat Boydell plus college support from Ryan Watson (GK), Ivan Ho, Dennis Ho, Louis Leung, Yoshiya Mori.

Hustlers: Mark Hastings, Marcus Rann, Ben Maslen, Jason Carter, Paul Griffiths, Grant Hughes, Russell Ogden, Giles Somers, Charles Yardley, Armen Topalian, Craig Marcham.

In the afternoon the OR 1st team took on the college 1st XI (now run by Alex Brealy). The energetic encounter resulted in a 5-2 win for the college.



OR 1st XI from left to right: Francis Barton, Matt Harbottle, Tom Lait, Matt Hutchins, John Morgan, Ian Thompson, Pat Boydell, Joe von Rotenhan, Dave Roper, Adam Phelps (not in photo - Freddie Lait, David Ashby and Graham Hulbert),

### Mozart, Mendelssohn and Haydn

20th March 2004

David White organised and conducted a hugely successful concert in Cirencester parish church. It commenced with a superb performance of Mozart's piano concerto no. 23 in A major by James Bladon, aged 14. This was followed by an equally impressive rendition of Mendelssohn's violin concerto in E minor by Peter Liang, aged 17. Both boys are music scholars of the college. In the second half the audience of about 300 was treated to Haydn's Nelson Mass by Rendcomb Choral Society. ORs taking part included: **Ralph Barnes** (1991-98), **Ian Forster** (1994-99), **Sophie Barltrop** (1999-2003), **Thom Gilbert** (1992-99), **Simon Webb** (1991-98), **Phil Webb** (1992-99), **Louise Bongiovanni** (1997-99), **Naomi Gibbons** (1995-97, staff 2001-), **Rebekah Demczak** (1999-2002), **Richard Demczak** (1997-2002), **Claire Germaine** (1990-93), **John Kitto** (1944-51), **Patta Tolputt** (staff 1987-99).

**John Tolputt** (headmaster 1987-99), **Kim and Chryssa Taplin** (staff 1997-2001) were also in the very appreciative audience.



Peter Liang, David White, James Bladon

### Destination of 6A Leavers 2003

Tim Bates	Durham University	Engineering
Duncan Bond	University of Surrey	Business management
James Daborn		Unknown
Charlie Fothergill	Gloscat	Electrician
Sam Gunner	Nottingham University	Electronic engineering
Matt Harbottle	Hartpury	Greenkeeping & groundsmanship
Sam Hicks	Cotswold Farm Park	
Alice Hughes	Bristol	Zoology
Matt Hutchins	USA	Golfing
Chris Jeffreys	Reapplying	
Greg Jones	Cheltenham College of Art	Art foundation
Tommy Lait	Hartpury	Sports coaching & conditioning
Tom Lockyer		Property development
Dave Roper		Triathlon & duathlon training
Emma Sykes	Keele University	Music & music technology
Zuki Turner	Banbury	Art foundation
Joe von Rotenhan	Oxford Brookes	Biology
Georgina Webb-Dickin	Cheltenham College of Art	Art, English & art history
Henry Wilson	University of West of England	Geography & environmental management
Jenny Wulkop	Salzburg	Hotel Management

### O. R. Shop

Polo shirt	£14*	Blazer badge	£5
Sweat Shirt	£17*	Print of the school	£40* (packed in very strong tube)
Rugby	£34*	Framed Print	£65 (not by post)
Shirt	£5		*plus £ 1.50 P&P in UK

Any of the above may be purchased at the school or by post (not the framed print) from:  
C J Wood, 9 Hammond Drive, Northleach, GL54 3JF      c.j.wood@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk  
Cheques should be made payable to: *The Old Rendcombian Society*

Please do not forget to add p&p where appropriate

Details and photos of the above items may be viewed at:  
<http://www.rendcombian.org.uk/Stuff.htm>

### Histories Now Available

History I    £6 minimum\*  
History II   £10\*  
\*plus p&p

Cheques should be made payable to: *The Friends of Rendcomb*

Either of the above can be obtained from:  
Mrs Jane Gunner, Whiteway Farmhouse, The Whiteway, Cirencester, Glos GL7 7BA  
Email: jane@r2g2.co.uk

### **Friends of Rendcomb College Trust**

It is now twenty years since the trust was founded by Sir Louis le Bailly, and the purpose of this note is to let O.R.s know what it has achieved since 1984 and to ask for your support.

I followed David Jenks as chairman of the trustees in 1998, and am about to be succeeded by Richard Wills. The chairman is always a governor of the college when appointed. The other trustees are all, like me, O.R.s: John Webb, executive trustee, Jane Gunner and Chris Wood. The headmaster attends our meetings.

The aim of the trust is, by means of scholarships or bursaries, to enable boys and girls of the sort who used to benefit from the former Gloucestershire Foundation Scholarship to receive a Rendcomb education. I was one of those boys and know how much it changed my life.

Since 1984 the Friends have funded eight pupils with grants to cover all or part of their fees. Three are at Rendcomb at the moment and two of them hold scholarships named by the trust in honour of two of Rendcomb's most distinguished teachers: Jack Fell and David Sells. In total the trust has now funded or part-funded twenty-nine pupil years of Rendcomb education: a very impressive achievement made possible by gifts, large and small, from Old Rendcombians and others over two decades.

In the last three years the fall in the stock market has had a marked effect on the trust, as on all charities, and though the income from our capital has recently picked up, the capital itself has fallen in value and we are having to eat into it to support our current scholars. We therefore need the renewed help of all who wish Rendcomb well to augment our capital and income so that we can continue this impressive record of providing scholarships and bursaries. There are three ways in which you can help others to benefit as we did from what Rendcomb offers:

- You can make a donation, by using the form included at the end of this issue of the magazine and send it to John Webb.
- You can make an annual donation in the same way.
- You can include a bequest to the trust in your will. John Webb will explain how this can be done

We hope, of course, that you will want to do all three, but please do at least one of them. Rendcomb and Rendcombians will benefit directly from your generosity.

David Vaisey (1945-54)