

Old Rendcombian Society

NEWSLETTER



MAY 2007

33rd ISSUE

Editor
W.J.D. WHITE

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Editorial

We were very saddened to learn of the death of Anthony Quick (headmaster 1961-71) in September 2006. The governors had plans for the school to be expanded in numbers and for improved accommodation to be built. They appointed Anthony Quick to instigate these plans, and a very wise choice it was. Studies and study-bedrooms were built over the drying-room, wash-up and changing-rooms together with much needed purpose-built classrooms: numbers in the school steadily increased, and thanks to Anthony and Jean's steadily increasing local contacts, the school became better known and more in contact with the 'outside' world. Anthony's legacy to Rendcomb was to establish a foundation for the steady development of the school over the next three decades, without losing sight of the founder's wishes. All Rendcombians owe him a tremendous debt for the sensitive way in which he achieved this. Tributes to Anthony can be found elsewhere in this issue.

A memorial service for Anthony Quick will be held at Bradfield College, Berkshire, on Saturday June 23rd 2007 at 3.00 p.m. Old Rendcombians are most welcome to attend.

Society Officers

At the annual general meeting on 2nd July 2006 the following officers were elected:-

President:	Bill White (staff 1961-97)
Chairman:	Neil Lumby (1968-73)
Vice-chairman:	Fiona Burge (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: woodc@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk
Committee members:	Richard Tudor (1973-80) Julian Comrie (1946-54) Alex Brealy (1980-87; staff 1994-) Patrick Boydell (1988-95)
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 73rd Old Rendcombian Society Annual General Meeting

Held on 2nd July 2006 in Room El at Rendcomb College

Present: Julian Comrie (1946-54), Jane Gunner (1975-77), Neil Lumby (1968-73), George Davis (1939-46), Gerry Holden (headmaster 1999-), Geoff Bye (1940-48), Colin Burden (staff 1963-97), Bill White (staff 1961-97), David Henshaw (1940-49), Richard Tudor (1973-80), John Henshaw (1940-46), Nigel Green (1961-69), Sam Gunner (1996-03), Luke Gunner (1998-05), Alex Brealy (1980-87, staff 1994-), Phil Griffith (1940-43)

1. Apologies: Frank Dutton (1936-44), Michael Miles (1943-50), Peter Cockell (1943-52), J.D. Williams (1966-71), Chris Wood (1965-71, staff 1976-)
2. To receive the minutes of the 72nd annual general meeting held on Saturday 2nd July 2005 as published in the 2006 newsletter.

It was proposed by Alex Brealy, seconded by Richard Tudor and passed unanimously that the minutes should be signed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

The hon. secretary reported that the Friends of Rendcomb had placed History I and History II on Amazon but so far there had been no sales. However, sales continued through the newsletter, particularly of History I.

The book written by the late Douglas Payne that described his time at Rendcomb during the war was currently with the typesetters.

Michael Martin's (1926-33) definitive history of Saul of Saul's Hall had now been printed and copies had been purchased by the college for the governors. Others were available at £3 each in aid of the Friends of Rendcomb.

Travel Bursary - Jane reported that Christine Dai had had to postpone her trip until this year.

The headmaster reported that the school had been running careers sessions with the parents association. So far there had been talks on law, journalism, midwifery, electronics and services. The college would welcome input from O.R.s. The event is to become an annual fixture for the last Friday in June.

4. To receive the hon. treasurer's report

In the hon. treasurer's absence the hon. secretary circulated the report and explained that the society was now five years through the seven-year programme on making the O.R. subscription a termly deduction on pupil's bills. The cushioning effect of this would therefore be diminishing.

Total balances at year-end stood at £12,596.38.

The newsletter was once again the major cost incurred during the year and the committee continued to monitor the proposed changes in the way letters were to be charged as this could have an impact.

It was proposed by Geoffrey Bye, seconded by Richard Tudor and agreed unanimously that the accounts be adopted.

5. Election of officers

After 5 years as president Julian Comrie had reached the end of his term. He spoke of how quickly his time as president had flown by and he invited the meeting to consider the committee's proposal of Bill White for president.

This was seconded by Colin Burden and it was agreed unanimously.

Bill White then received the president's badge of office from Julian and thanked all the committee members for their hard work.

The chairman then thanked Julian Comrie for his tireless efforts on behalf of the society. Julian agreed to remain on the committee.

6. Travel bursary

After consideration of the society's finances, which are likely to remain fairly static from now on, it was agreed to accept the committee's proposal to keep the fund at £1,000 and that there were no additional funds at present to support a late application by an older O.R. It was proposed by Julian Comrie, seconded by Geoffrey Bye and agreed unanimously.

7. Any other business

It was suggested that it might be time for another register of members to be printed, but Jane explained the difficulties in getting permission from all members. Currently the society acts as a conduit for members getting in touch for the first time.

The headmaster assured O.R.s that the college is always pleased to conduct tours around the school and all O.R.s need to do is to ring up and make an arrangement.

The meeting's congratulations were expressed to Professor Roger Alder of Bristol University who had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society.

The chairman thanked the headmaster for the use of the college and for making members welcome.

The meeting closed at 12.53 p.m.

At the a.g.m. in July 2006 **Julian Comrie**, (1946-54) the retiring president, spoke as follows:

"There are several things one doesn't learn at school, and one is that time goes faster as one grows older. The time between being in form one, at age ten, and being in form five, at age 15, seemed an eternity; and indeed, it was of course, one third of one's life by the end of it. Now, I find that the five years for which I have been president have gone like a flash - the years seem now to roll by as quickly as the months used to; but conversely, five years now is only one fourteenth of my life.

I have no intention of reviewing the things that have happened within the O.R. society in the last five years; they too, proceed like the ever-rolling stream, now bearing all its sons away. It is time for me to retire, and hand over to another president to carry on the good work of representing the Old Rendcombian Society.

It is the perennial question of continuity versus change. Progress and change, though sometimes unwelcome, are inevitable and essential, and of course we find that the Rendcomb of today is different from the one we remember as school children. Mostly for the better, but some things we know, and accept, are lost, and cannot be repeated.

Before I invite you to elect the new president, there are two items of news that I would like to pass on, which were too late for inclusion in the newsletter. The first is the sad news that **Vera Fell**, (staff 1934-73) wife of **Jack**, has died. She was a splendid lady, though a little removed from college affairs. She was a good friend of mine, and lived to the grand age of 92. Bill White and several other representatives of Rendcomb were present at her funeral.

The second item is excellent news concerning **Roger Alder** (1947-56), who came to Rendcomb in about 1948, and subsequently became professor of chemistry at the University of Bristol. You may have seen from the notice in the front hall that he has recently been elected a fellow of The Royal Society, one of the highest distinctions that can be awarded to a scientist. I wrote to congratulate him on this, and in his reply he paid great tribute to our chemistry (and physics) teacher **Jack Fell** (staff 1934-73); in those days, there was no chemistry taught before O level, and people - such as myself as well as Roger - wishing to do science in the sixth form, had to learn O and A level chemistry in two years: quite an achievement both for the pupils, and Jack Fell!

My final words in this paragraph, before I hand over to our next president, are a quotation from Canon Sewell, an early chairman of the governors, to the school one founder's day: "Noel Wills, your founder, gave you a priceless

weapon: see that you keep that weapon bright!”

Now, to the important business: with regard to the next president of the society, I would like to propose a certain gentleman who is the personification of all things Rendcombian: Bill White.

Bill was appointed to the staff here in 1961, and retired from that post as recently as 1997. During his years in office, several hundred pupils have come under his careful eye, jurisdiction, advice, and I am sure, excellent tuition.

He has done good works for the school, the village, the church, and particularly for this society, editing our newsletter for more than thirty years. When I suggested at our last committee meeting that we should propose Bill for president at this meeting, the suggestion met with unanimous approval. (I might add that Bill was there!)

I have therefore great pleasure in proposing that this meeting should elect Mr. W.J.D. White as our next president, and I would like a seconder from someone who is not on the committee, please.”

From the President:

I would like to say how very honoured (and embarrassed) I was to be elected president of the Old Rendcombian Society at the a.g.m. last July. I am proud to be associated with such a flourishing society and I hope I will be able to contribute to its continuing success. The way in which O.R.s continue to keep in touch with each other long after they have left (there are examples of this in reunions mentioned later in the newsletter) has always amazed me, and proved, I am sure, that the founder’s vision of educating pupils in a “family atmosphere” has not been lost despite the changes in the school. Our web-site, so ably managed by Colin Hitchcock (1971-78), Friends Reunited, Facebook and the newsletter all combine to allow O.R.s to keep in touch, and I am confident that the society will continue to go from strength to strength.

I should like to thank the retiring president, Julian Comrie (1946-54) for his long period of service both as chairman and president. His deep commitment to Rendcomb, sound advice and humour has been greatly appreciated and I am delighted that he will continue to serve on the committee. Perhaps this is the right moment, too, to thank officially and most sincerely the other long-standing committee members - Neil Lumby, (1968-73) the chairman, Jane Gunner, (1975-77) without whose tireless work as secretary the society would fall apart, Chris Wood, (1965-71, staff 1976-) the treasurer, and Alex Brealby (1982-87) who, along with Pat Boydell (1988-95) shoulders the task of getting together the sports teams.

From the Headmaster:

Dear OR,

The year 2007 finds me in strangely nostalgic mode: it’s not just that as I reach my half century (“Headmaster, doesn’t it frighten you to think that you were born in the middle of the last century?” one of my first formers recently reminded me) but also this academic year sees the retirement of deputy head Bobby Morgan, and my predecessor John Tolputt. Tributes to Bobby appear elsewhere in this newsletter, but as another pupil asked me recently, “Who runs the school when you are away headmaster?” “The same person as when I am here”, I replied, “Bobby!” John’s retirement, coming in the same academic year as Anthony Quick’s death and Roger Medill’s 80th birthday has made me reflect on the very nature of my headship and why I feel continually privileged to be Rendcomb’s sixth headmaster (excluding John James who acted as headmaster).

There is a great deal of change in the college, as Chris Wood writes in his common room news section, with the school reaching record numbers of 280 and set to grow again. I recently read a paper by Roger Medill written in 1984 stating very clearly that the college’s upper limit should be 150 - if we exceeded this number, we would cease to be a community. At the risk of sounding disingenuous, I am not sure that he was correct.

As many of you who visit us on old Rendcombian days realise, we are still a very strong and welcoming community; recent innovations such as our new buddy system where every first former is individually matched with a sixth-former is designed to strengthen that whole school link. And it is this feeling of collegiality, of the extended Rendcomb family that brings me on to you, the Old Rendcombian Society. There are some of my fellow headmasters who actually dread their old boys and old girls visiting. I hope that I do not sound sycophantic when I confess that I actually look forward to Old Rendcombian days and thoroughly enjoy meeting you either collectively or individually. It is with this reason in my mind that I wish to discuss with the Old Rendcombian Society ways in which we can strengthen the links between the college and the society. Rendcomb is not my school, it is our school, and rest assured that with all the challenges which we face in independent schools today, I wish to work hard with current pupils, parents and past pupils to preserve the school which we all love, for future generations.

If your “flight path” takes you across Rendcomb, do please feel free to pop in and see us. We would be delighted to see you and show you round. If you can think of ways in which we can strengthen and support the excellent work which is carried on by the OR society, please do contact them.

Perhaps, we might even have an OR on the governing body or addressing us as our guest speaker on founder’s day. Now there’s a thought!

With warm best wishes,
Gerry Holden
Headmaster 1999-

74th Annual General Meeting

You are invited to attend the 74th Annual General Meeting of the Old Rendcombian Society on Sunday 1st July 2007 at Rendcomb College at 12.00 noon.

Agenda:

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive the minutes of the 73rd A.G.M. held on 2nd July 2006.
3. To deal with matters arising from the minutes.
4. To receive hon. treasurer's report.
5. Election of Officers:
6. Nominations for 2 committee members. All proposed and seconded nominations to reach the secretary by Friday 23rd June 2006
7. Travel bursary.
8. Any other business.

Dates of Future Reunions and Sports Fixtures

Sunday 1st July 2007

- 10.30 a.m. Coffee in Clock Hall
11.15 a.m. Cricket match
12 noon Bar
12.15 p.m. AGM in Room E1
1.15 p.m. Hot Lunch with vegetarian option for cricketers and visitors.
Main course to be collected from servery for lunch in Reading Room.
Please let Jane Gunner or Chris Wood know if you want lunch to help catering for numbers.
No charge: donations to O.R. Society
Presentation to Bobby Morgan
2.15 p.m. Cricket match resumes on top

Saturday 1st December 2007 Rugby match
Sunday 16th March 2008 (prov) Hockey matches

All provisional dates and those not listed here will be shown on www.rendcombian.org.uk as soon as they are agreed.

Sports Contacts

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

Either:

Alex Breal 01285 832314 (W) and 01285 832363 (H)
alexbreal@hotmail.com

or

Patrick Boydell 07968 24414
patrickb@tindirect.com

Summer Reunion, July 2006

After the a.g.m. lunch was held in the dining room and a presentation was made to **John and Sandra Williams** on their retirement after 17 years at Rendcomb.



This was followed by some tours of the college. Tea was provided in the pavilion where O.R.s were able to watch a cricket match between a headmaster's XI and an XI raised by Richard Wills, a governor. Unfortunately there was no O.R. match.

The projected O.R. rugby match failed to materialise partly because of a change of school fixtures and partly because of lack of support.

John and Sandra Williams would like to thank those O.R.s who kindly wrote about them last year and also the O.R.s who contributed to their retirement present. They were very touched. John and Sandra intend to spend their time in the Yorkshire Dales and at their apartment in Spain. In January they flew to New Zealand for 2 months and had a wonderful time. They send their very best wishes to O.R.s.



Colin Burden with Des Knox, Stuart Honeyball, Nick Hance, Neil Lumby and Trevor Patrick up top in the pavilion.

The Friends Of Rendcomb College

From:

Chairman: Richard Wills, The Snicket, Lower Dean, Cheltenham, Glos GL54 3NS
Telephone: 01451 860234
Executive Trustee: Colin Burden, 21 The Whiteway, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2ER
Telephone: 01285 655240

Dear Old Rendcombian,

We are in urgent need of your help.

The Friends of Rendcomb was founded in 1984 by Sir Louis Le Bailly, the then chairman of the governors. It is a registered charity and its finances are kept entirely separate from those of the college. Its aim is to establish bursaries and scholarships for boys and girls from Gloucestershire primary schools who might not otherwise have the opportunity of a Rendcomb education.

Such scholarships are the very essence of Rendcomb, reflecting Noel Wills' desire to offer boys a sound education in attractive and stimulating surroundings. The need for support for these places has intensified since the demise of the subsidised Gloucestershire foundation places scheme in the mid 80s and the ending of the assisted places scheme. The Friends have funded 8 scholars - 43 years worth of education at Rendcomb. The last 2 scholars will be leaving this summer. Our remaining funds of £50,000 will not produce enough income to support any further scholars in any meaningful way.

The Friends over the last 23 years have, through their generosity in the form of covenants and gifts, given our scholars an excellent start to their education. We are very grateful for their help and support.

How can you help?

1. By making a monthly or annual contribution for 7 years. This would enable the Trust to budget for future scholars. (Standing Order Mandate at back of this newsletter).
For example:
 - a) 250 ORs contribute £5 per month for 7 years using Gift Aid. This would generate over £19,000 per annum — enough to fund one day pupil at 100% or 2 at 50%.
 - b) 250 ORs contribute £10 per month for 7 years using Gift Aid. This would generate over £38,000 per annum — enough to fund one boarder and one day pupil or 2 day pupils at 100%.
 - c) 250 ORs contribute £15 per month for 7 years using Gift Aid. This would generate over £57,000 per annum — enough to fund two boarders or three day pupils at 100%.If one of these targets would be realised a scholar or scholars could be entering Rendcomb in September 2008 or 2009.
2. Send a one off gift - eligible for gift aid. (Forms at the end of this newsletter).
3. Remember *The Friends of Rendcomb* in your will.
4. Purchase a copy of *The History of Rendcomb, Vol II* (published 1995) for £10 (cover price £20). All proceeds to *The Friends of Rendcomb* - 01285 655240
5. On 26th and 27th October we are holding *The Ultimate Christmas Food Fair* at the college. This is a joint venture with the Cobalt Appeal Fund - Crack Cancer Campaign - who support patients in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and are based in Cheltenham. As the first event of this nature held locally it will be sure to receive much media attention, aiming to be one of the biggest events in the food calendar. There will be a Gala Evening - entry by ticket only - on Friday 26th October with a charity auction and raffle. On Saturday 27th the fair will be open to the general public from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Please come and support this event and/or donate an item for the raffle or auction.
Contact Richard Wills, 01451 860234 or Colin Burden 01285 655240

Present Trustees of the Friends of Rendcomb:

Richard Wills	Chairman, governor, Rendcomb College	Appointed 2004
Colin Burden	Executive trustee, staff 1963-97	2005
Jane Gunner	O.R., Parent, hon. sec. O.R. Society	1994
David Vaisey C.B.E.	O.R., former governor, Rendcomb College	1998
	O.R., former chairman Friends of Rendcomb	
Chris Wood	Staff 1976-	1987
Madge Lyman	Visiting academic fellow	2006
	Henley Management College	
Gerry Holden	Headmaster, ex officio	1999

We are seeking new trustees with a variety of expertise. If you can help, please contact Richard Wills or Colin Burden.



Father Christmas.

Tell Jane Gunner which retired member of staff this is!!

My Time at Rendcomb

by Eric Collett

I left Rendcomb in 1937, and as it is perhaps unlikely that anyone there now will remember much of the pre-war times a few reminiscences may possibly be of interest.

It has occurred to me in my later life that I had never actually thanked anybody at Rendcomb for the education I received. You managed to get me through London matriculation and instilled a degree of self-confidence that has helped me in my occupation as a telecommunications engineer carrying out major projects in many countries round the world, including the UK, Norway, India, Africa, Jamaica and Australia. Eventually building what became a successful telecommunication industry for a British company here in New Zealand. I now look at the college web page with astonishment and can see that things are very different to pre-war times, and that the school has developed very successfully. Co-education was unheard of in our time.

What did interest me was the formidable rule book on the web site. There was nothing ever written down in our days. It was generally known that one should wear a tie in church - put on on the way there and taken off on the way out. One was supposed to wear a cap in Cirencester or Cheltenham, presuming you had remembered to take it, which was not very often. We were free to roam the surrounding countryside without having to say where we were going. Somehow we did not need anything written. I think Lee-Browne instilled a sense of responsibility in everyone so that we did not need to have prefects, and the teaching staff only appeared at lesson time and were never around at any other time. If Lee-Browne said something was not a good idea it became law.

D W Lee-Browne was an excellent headmaster. He was a biologist, had played hockey for England, was a very good craftsman and drove a 4.5 litre Bentley. His brother, who used to visit occasionally, was a commander in the Royal Navy and known as Hairy Browne. They inspired considerable respect.

Lee-Browne continued the policies of the previous, and first, headmaster, a Mr Simpson, who was an authority on the subject of modern educational theories in the nineteen twenties and had written books on the subject. I never met him but later met his daughter, a Mrs Drake who, with her husband, farmed over at Cranham in the nineteen sixties but I have had no contact since then.

Amongst the many attributes of Lee-Browne was his interest in craftsmanship. He had a William Moms-like philosophy and instilled in us a sense of good design in the furniture he made for his own use and our work in the carpentry workshop, where I spent a lot of my time We made the reclining oak chairs for the library. Perhaps they're still there?

We also built canoes and used them on the lake by the Cheltenham Lodge and there were expeditions to the river Severn. They were quite large substantial boats and we used trailers to tow them behind our bicycles. There was a Geoffrey Ash who, at the end of one term put his trunk into his canoe, hooked it on the back of his bicycle and towed it home to Ipswich. Every boy had a bicycle as there was no other way of getting to Cirencester or Cheltenham and there was the wonderful surrounding Cotswold countryside to explore. We thought nothing of a hundred miles in a day and I could be in to Cirencester in seventeen minutes. I remember passing an open Austin Seven going down Leckhampton Hill into Cheltenham when I could see its speedometer reading forty miles an hour. The more modern

bicycles available could no doubt, easily exceed all this today. At the end of one term Hugh Bates and myself cycled to his home in Newcastle-on-Tyne in three days, despite atrocious weather. We battled strong northerly winds and rain all the way up the Great North Road, as it was called then. I was in charge of the cycle shed, as I was the only boy who could take a Sturmy Archer three speed apart and put it together so that it worked. We also developed a game of hockey on bicycles played on the big asphalt square in the front of the building. This was a bit destructive on bicycles as people tended to put their sticks through the front wheels of the opposition. Replacing spokes was well within our abilities.

There was the marvellous great marble sculpture of Saul then in the centre of the hall, mounted for some strange reason on a turntable; we used to turn him round to face the wrong way. At that time there was only the big Palladian house, a house to the east near the church where a small number of boys and a master slept and the old stables that had been converted into biology and physics laboratories, as well as two flats for married masters. I cannot think where the others lived. Lee-Browne had a flat in the main building, where he lived with his wife, two children and a nanny. The new headmaster's house was built some time later (1962 - Ed.). We studied a range of subjects: history, maths,



physics, biology, English, French, Latin and drawing. The latter was an optional subject that gave me an easy credit for matriculation, as I did not have to do any work for it. For some reason there was no geography. (*Geography was introduced as an 'O' level by Colin Burden (staff 1963-97) in 1975 - Ed.*) We did a large painting of the school building showing the appropriate activity in every room to which several of us made a contribution. It should still be around. (*It 'disappeared' in the '70s - Ed.*) I cannot remember the names of all the staff but I do remember a Mr Fell, who taught us physics. He once had set up a very complicated experiment with lots of glass tubing and flasks in the physics lab. With her over-enthusiastic dusting the cleaner, a Mrs Mills, brought it to a crashing finish. Mr Fell could not help but make the obvious comment. "The Mills of God grind slowly but they grind surely".

At that time there were only eighty of us and we came from all over the country. There was the 'London clique' and many from Gloucestershire, otherwise we were well scattered. One boy named Russell had a sister who was an internationally known ballet dancer. His mother travelled with her and he never knew to which capital city in Europe he would be going at the end of term. I lived in Withington, not far away, and there was Bellamy, who lived in Cirencester. We were the only two who lived in the vicinity. It was illegal for me to go home in term time and I only did this once or twice.

Whatever the weather there was the early morning ritual of a run in the park, out to a marker and back, a skipping session and a cold bath. In the winter we arrived at breakfast in various shades of blue. The marker was a griffin's head on a pole. I was given the job of making it. The head was finished in gold leaf on a black and white striped pole; I doubt it is has survived until today.

We seemed to be endlessly immersed in water: the early cold bath, the shower after the daily hour of field athletics before lunch, another shower after any afternoon sport and a bath before bed.

The daily hour of field athletics before lunch was taken seriously. Long jump, high jump, discus throwing, weight putting, running, both sprint and 'round the lodges'. Although we only once achieved success in the annual public school sports event when a boy whose parents lived in South Africa threw a javelin further than anybody else. We presumed the locals at home had taught him.

At that time the Jewish people were unpopular in Germany and we took in two members of the German olympic team who, because of their racial background, had become persona non grata. They taught us athletics, in exchange we taught them English. I will never forget Herman's emphatic "zoo must take zee short pushy steps" for the long jump. We also took in two boys of Jewish nationality whose parents had also sought refuge in England. One received a strange cylindrical object in the post each week; we suspected it contained a German sausage. He always secreted it away so that we never saw him eat it. The two were of totally different personalities; I do not think they ever spoke to each other. During the winter term we played football; we could not play rugby as, with a total of only eighty boys, a game with two teams of fifteen introduced too much disparity in the way of physical size. Hockey in another term and cricket in the third term. Whilst I showed some aptitude for hockey, I was not much good at football and found cricket a bore. In the cricket term, with the approval of Lee-Browne, I preferred to go out into the countryside with a sketchbook to complete a series of drawings of Cotswold barns. He agreed it was a more constructive use of the time. In the nineteen thirties, motorcars were of more interest than they are today and the numerous makes differed widely

in their appearance, performance and quality. For those with an interest in the cars of that time I can recall that when I arrived Lee-Browne had an Alvis Silver Eagle 16/95. This was a quite respectable motorcar but the visiting dentist from Cheltenham had an Alvis Speed Twenty, which was considered to be rather superior. Not to be outdone our headmaster bought one of the massive 1928 6.2 litre straight 8 Lanchesters. Their enormous size and running costs made them unpopular on the second hand market.

We were all very impressed by this very large and imposing motor but unfortunately, on his second trip to London to attend the monthly board meeting, the oil pressure failed and it ruined all its bearings, mains, big ends, the lot. The cost of repair was prohibitive. It ended its days in an outbuilding where we amused ourselves taking it apart. I had an idea that we could fix it sufficiently to drive it around the school grounds but this proved to be beyond our capabilities. To replace the Lanchester, a 4.5 litre Bentley with a Le Mans Van de Plas open body was purchased. They were considered one of the best, and most expensive sports cars of the time following their numerous successes at Le Mans. Again they were not too costly second hand. This was a far more successful motorcar and much admired by all. There was another Bentley of the same era, rather more touring than sporting but very elegant. It was owned by a master named Gross, a very quiet and gentle man with obviously independent means. He taught us English but concentrated entirely on literature as he said you learn all about grammar in your Latin classes.

Mrs Lee-Browne had a Swift two-seater. It had a notoriously stiff gear change and as she was not particularly muscular she always took the matron with her on her excursions to the outside world. To change gear she applied her left foot to the clutch and the matron applied two hands to the gear lever.

The goings-on and social life of members of the staff was always a subject of interest to us. There was a master who taught French. He was of small stature and slight build who spent a great deal of his time with the matron, a charming woman but tall and with very ample proportions. As she had rooms on the first floor just at the top of the stairs and he lived over in the house, his comings and goings were easily observed. There was much speculation on their relationship. We were not surprised when it was announced that they were contemplating matrimony and were leaving us for another school at the end of term. We thought perhaps 'anticipating' would have been more correct.

My last term was spent in the big dorm on the first floor. We moved around each term and it was a lottery as to which dorm you finished up in. My bed was by the window, over the big bay window in the library below. A boy in the next bed, whose names escapes me, frequently disappeared out of this window, with fairly easy, if acrobatic access to the ground via the quoins in the bay window, and returned in the early hours. He said he was meeting a most beautiful girl who lived in South Cerney (*perhaps North? Ed.*) Soon after leaving Rendcomb I met her and could only agree with his opinion. By this time she was more attracted to young men with ample money and expensive cars - I did not qualify.

The top floor dormitories had easy access to a flat lead roof and it was considered good fun to take somebody's bed apart and reassemble it out on the roof.

There were also loose floorboards where bottles of cider could be hidden for nocturnal consumption. These were never discovered by anyone in authority.

Each week the school gave us pocket money; it of course came out of the school fees, but this was subject to a tax. We had weekly meetings when we all assembled in the large classroom known as 'big school' where we decided how much the tax would be and how it would be spent. Someone might say that the net on one of the tennis courts must be renewed, someone else might insist on new hockey sticks and others suggested a record player for the common room. Committees were elected to investigate the costing and report back. Lee-Browne would sit at the back but never say a word. The record player was debated for several terms and eventually purchased, but it was never an outstanding success. A more successful purchase was an ice cream bucket for making a sort of Italian type ice cream for the tuck shop. We ran the tuck shop as a profit-making venture.

One hears of people who hated their time at boarding school. I cannot imagine anyone who was at Rendcomb ever saying this. There was so much to do you could never be bored. However we were very detached from the outside world. I cannot remember reading a daily paper. There was no television and there were no such things as portable transistor radios. One did not listen to the wireless, except on one occasion to hear of the abdication of Edward VIII

The General Meeting



when Lee-Browne brought his own radio down to 'big school' where we were all assembled. * *See end*
Everyone boarded full-time. Parents only appeared once a year on founder's day, when they were tolerated for a few hours. We put on exhibitions of field athletics, showed them round the classrooms and laboratories and put on the annual, mercifully short, school play.

There was otherwise very little theatrical activity except for this annual school play. However, a small travelling group known as 'The English Classical Players' spent a weekend at the school every term and put on either a Shakespearean or modern play. They were very popular. They included attractive young ladies.

We were digging a swimming pool but it was far from finished when I left. It required a very large excavation and we only had buckets and spades. Several of us used to cycle to Cirencester to the public baths. Sometimes Lee-Browne would see us setting off and say "Come on chaps, let's all do an hour's digging first and I will take you in the car". We all piled in sitting on top of each other. He excelled in swimming like everything else. We attended the church in the village every Sunday morning: compulsory unless one was in some way totally incapacitated. Best suits were worn. One popular hymn was re-phrased as "Hark the herald angels sing, Mrs Simpson's pinched our king". We rang the bells, formed the choir and a boy named Lambert played the organ with a resounding voluntary as we were leaving. The local well-meaning vicar preached a sermon, usually going round and round the point and finally just missing it. Religion did not otherwise feature very prominently. Lee-Browne held a weekly scripture class but used it to discuss a variety of subjects, rarely religion. When asked why we had to go to church on Sunday he said our parents would probably object if we did not go and it looked well in the village. There was also a Canon Sewell who lived near Gloucester and was on the governing board. He took a lot of interest in our activities and presumably had some influence. I never knew why but Lee-Browne took me over to see him one day. Maybe I was being assessed for something but I never knew what. Nothing seemed to come of it so I presume I did not qualify.

Lambert, who played the church organ, did more for our musical education than the rather austere gentleman who came out from Cheltenham every week and played endless gramophone records of classical music with little explanation of their origin or information on their composer. This was called 'musical appreciation'. Lambert came from a very musical background; his father owned the only company still making harpsichords, as well as other instruments. He seemed to be able to play excerpts from Mozart, Chopin or Beethoven on the battered school piano without effort. He sounded very good to our untrained ears.

One should mention the food. Contrary to what one heard about other schools the food was very good. One odd thing was that we had brown bread all the week but white on Sundays. This was supposed to be a treat but I think most of us preferred the brown.

Lunch was a very convivial affair. The headmaster and any guests sat at the top table and members of the staff at the heads of the other tables in the beautiful oak panelled dining room. The seating arrangement was changed every week so that we moved around. One might find oneself seated at the top table next to an important guest.

The maids brought the food from the kitchen to the serving room and whoever of us were on duty for that week brought it from there to the tables and removed it afterwards, usually scoffing anything that was left of a popular dish. The evening meal was less formal; we were unsupervised in the big dining room, the staff dining on their own. This was a sort of knife and fork tea. After evening prep there was a supply of bread and dripping and cocoa available in the serving room. Sometimes there was a strange concoction called, I think, 'instant postant' or something. A sort of cross between cocoa and coffee. Very few found it drinkable. I have never come across it since. The kitchen with the big Aga stoves was ruled over by a large and formidable looking, but kindly cook. Sometimes when we had free time in the afternoons we used to pick the mushrooms that grew in the park and take them to her. If they were not too busy she, or one of her minions, would give them a quick sizzle in butter and hand platefuls of them back to us.

I see that you have now grown into a much larger establishment with day boys and weekly boarders. I once came across an article in the 'Sunday Telegraph' listing desirable areas in England in which to live because of the proximity of good schooling, Rendcomb was mentioned.

** In 1965 Jack Fell had a television set installed in Big School so that everyone could watch Winston Churchill's funeral. An interesting comparison.*

Bobby Morgan's Retirement

From **Chris Scarth** (1991-98):

I perhaps worked with Mr Morgan as much as anyone who has been through the school during his time. I played hockey with the 1st team when he was coach, studied history GCSE and A-Level with him, was a prefect, and was probably sent to him after being caught doing things wrong more than most too.

Overall, my over and abiding feeling towards Mr Morgan was one of absolute respect. He was totally fair in all of his dealings, always had time to discuss things and to listen to your point of view, and most importantly you always knew exactly where you stood with him. It meant that, as a pupil, you knew exactly where he drew the line and when you crossed it, you knew exactly what his reaction would be - he is still the only person I have ever seen shut up a Maylott

with only the raise of an eyebrow! He often had the role of disciplinarian and there were a few times when I found this out the hard way, but you knew he would never hold it against you, and he was never unfair. Many of us should perhaps learn something from the level of integrity that he always showed, often in the most unreasonable of situations (some of which I personally apologise for!).

My most enjoyable times at school were often on the sports field and Mr Morgan was a fantastic hockey coach. I had the pleasure of being involved in a brilliant hockey season when we were in 6A - the entire season goes down as the highlight of my sporting time at school. That of course doesn't include Seb Grey's rocket shot from about 20 yards that missed the goal by a mile but almost broke Mr Morgan's ankle! We went virtually unbeaten that season, a remarkable feat of coaching considering our lack of any collective talent. I enjoyed it more than any other sporting season even if Mr Morgan made it clear that he thought I had no significant hockey talent! My role in the team was to man mark and intimidate the opposition centre forward as much as possible and use whatever tactics were required. Incidentally, that didn't seem to count when we almost lost a game after I was sent off for deliberately kicking the ball away on the edge of the area.

Mr Morgan was also a great teacher, dragging me through A-level history when it seemed pretty unlikely at times. No matter how many times he told me that the extra reading was required it still took me a good 18 months to start doing it properly. Fortunately, and I am sure almost solely for the benefit of me, we'd covered everything in plenty of time to recap most. It is without doubt a testimony to the quality of his teaching that I can still pull facts from the A level syllabus - for instance no matter how hard I try, I can't forget that Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenburg in October 1517. So far, I'll admit it hasn't come into use that often during my career but it has helped in the odd pub quiz. Also without doubt a massive "thank you" must go to him for all the hard work that he put into the school bar over the years. His dedication in providing such a mainstay of every 6th formers' social diary was always "under looked". I doubt there are many of us who don't look back to those evenings with a great fondness - the beer was certainly far cheaper than in any bar I go to these days. To give up every Saturday night so as to spend the latter half of the evening serving beer to us can only have been done with a drive and commitment to our development beyond anything that can have been reasonably expected, particularly when he might have had to spend the first half of the evening chasing most of us around the wilderness trying to stop us drinking!

There is no doubt that he will be greatly missed at the college and will be irreplaceable in so many ways. He can be rightly proud of being such an integral part of what made Rendcomb and I hope that the college will find someone with the same commitment, ability and integrity that have characterised his tenure. I wish him all the best in his retirement, and owe him a massive thank you for the impact that he has had not only in my personal development but also in the development of so many other Rendcombians.

From **John Tolputt** (headmaster 1987-99)

"Look, Bobby", I said as we stood in my study looking out at that wonderful view, "some pupils going for a walk."
"No, headmaster", he replied; "they are going for a smoke."

My working relationship with Bobby was one of the happiest times in 12 very happy years at Rendcomb. Calm, realistic, completely unselfish in wanting the best for the place and for the pupils, utterly unconcerned about getting the credit due to him, he has nonetheless become one of the great figures in Rendcomb history.

I first met him at Mill Hill when I went visiting looking for a deputy. He and Esther showed me round the boarding house they ran and I was instantly certain that this was the man for me. We seemed to have very little in common: he is a distinguished sportsman who played hockey for England and still absurdly runs the London Marathon; my athletic career on the other hand is still ahead of me. He assiduously attended my plays, bitterly complaining that they didn't take place on the stage. I stood on the hockey touchline marvelling at his economy of movement and wondering how he knew where the ball would inevitably go next. Perhaps our differences helped us to get on. He would bluntly tell me off in private and then in public go down with me fighting on whatever sinking ship I happened to be embarked. Often he would politely ignore me and take the lead: his work on preparing for the all weather hockey pitch was an example. He realised early on that I would never see the point of it so just went on pushing it through and thus helped the school acquire one of its most valuable facilities.

But perhaps I remember him most at the sixth form bar which he ran and stocked personally and thus gave the school one of its most civilised gathering places for staff and senior pupils. In one of the most ludicrous of many recent laws affecting schools, running such a place has been made much more difficult, but in those days it was a real pleasure to turn up there and spend an hour with Bobby and the sixth formers. It was typical of him that, when I ordered him to delegate such a menial task to somebody else, he took no notice whatsoever.

Bobby is a rare man of complete integrity and I am privileged to have worked with him. My thanks to him, and to Esther, James, Alison and Sarah for such happy memories and very best wishes for many more marathons.

From **Nick Hall** (1994-2000)

He was a hockey coach who coached with a passionate and accomplished skill and the tracksuit to prove it; a history teacher who taught with a necessary dry wit, an inside out knowledge of European history, bringing a sense of gravity and authority into the classroom. An Emperor's right-hand man is a headmaster's deputy head, trusted, thorough and steadfast. Bobby Morgan was the man behind the scenes, the glamourless master coordinator and a disciplinary giant.

Bobby Morgan had the most respected and feared reputation of all his contemporaries. Together with his piercing blue eyes he was a shrewd deputy head. But never could you call him unfair, unjust or heavy handed, one got what one deserved with Bobby, be it picking litter with interesting geographical variations, cleaning toilets, or running to Shawswell every morning at 5 a.m. for a week. However, discipline was only one of Bobby's fortes. He was a thorough and comprehensive teacher and a deputy headmaster with a colossal ability for organisation, qualities that will surely be missed.

When we leave school, we leave with many, many things. Memories, motivation to grow beyond the cushion of schooling, skills, friendships that last a lifetime, and values. But as we grow older and further from our childhood these things merge, blend, fade and instil; they make us what we are as adults. And in the collage of my memories and lessons learnt at Rendcomb, I am left with one clear and lasting value from Mr Morgan. I thought it rather stupid and over the top when he used to say it and he always used to say it, right before he finished speaking to a group of us who were about to venture beyond Rendcomb's boundaries. "Remember, when you go there your behaviour and the way you conduct yourselves represent this school; you are all ambassadors for Rendcomb College."

Now that rash, youthful criticism has turned to fond reminiscing, I see his point and I see how it transcends every single aspect of our lives. We represent our family, our friends, our employers, our sports team but most importantly ourselves. For me, Rendcomb stood for two things; firstly beauty, seen everywhere around the school, and secondly values; values that permeate all of society and provide the cornerstone of that which guides us as individuals. Perhaps the former headmaster, John Tolputt, represented the appreciation and love of that beauty and if so, then his right-hand man, Bobby Morgan represents the values.

From **Mike Newby** (staff 1978-96)

"So if his initials are HM, why do we call him Bobby?" so began Howard Morgan's time at Rendcomb College. There may have been an initial lack of clarity over nomenclature, but, from day one, there was certainly no lack of clarity over the nature of the man. Though Bobby exhibited the textbook approach recommended for all second masters new to the post, by keeping a relatively low profile and feeling his way into the job, it was clear from the outset that this man had an extraordinary amount to offer Rendcomb.

I certainly regard myself as lucky to have worked with Bobby during his first decade at the school and a number of us undoubtedly learned an immeasurable amount from him to set us on the way to senior management.

As a true academic and historian, Bobby had clearly carried out a considerable amount of preparatory work prior to walking through the door. He had carefully studied both the history and nature of the school, and its current personnel. Consequently, he knew a great deal about the traditions and structures underpinning the establishment, along with the roles of each member of staff. In his early days he spent lots of time asking questions, finding out about this special place on the hill, and, in particular, finding out about its people. It was this in-depth knowledge and breadth of understanding that enabled Bobby to contribute so positively from day one.

It could not have been easy for Bobby when he first arrived. How easily would someone from a large, London, mainly day school adapt to the idiosyncrasies of a small, rural boarding school, built on very different educational foundations? In his earlier staff meetings, he would often question why we did things in a particular way. So often colleagues leaving meetings would be heard to mutter "we have always done things this way at Rendcomb; who does he think he is?", but so often after a period of reflection the same colleagues would be heard to say, "actually he really has got a point!" This was Bobby's way; before the current nationally accepted policy of "Whole-School Self Evaluation" had ever been contemplated, he had made us all re-assess what we did, not simply for the sake of changing things, but to ensure all aspects were carefully thought through and everything we did was for maximum benefit of the college and, in particular, for our young people.

Bobby's style when chairing meetings gained him great respect; he had the extraordinary ability to be able to quietly listen to heated debate between colleagues, then, at the appropriate time, intervene to 'pull things together' but succinctly summarising the issues and suggesting a rational and pragmatic way forward.

His clarity of thought was helped by a highly intelligent and logical mind, allied to sheer common sense, never losing sight of the all-important need to ensure that the Rendcomb ethos was maintained.

The position of second master is a very tough one ('been there, done that, got the t-shirt!'); yet Bobby's personal qualities and total professionalism enabled him to fulfil the role with apparent ease. The dichotomy of the inevitable remoteness as a senior manager and right-hand man to the head, with a need to be an integral part of the SCR is not easy to cope with, but, again, Bobby was able to achieve the perfect balance. This reflected the great admiration and respect held for him by the staff, strengthened by his genuine friendliness and sincere support for all members of the common room. Colleagues were always confident in asking him for guidance or in sharing problems with him. No matter how busy he was, he could always find time to chat; he was not only a very good listener, but highly regarded for the valuable advice he would offer.

This respect was also earned through the fact that Bobby always demonstrated the highest integrity and honesty, never compromising his principles and always being prepared to be frank if he thought something or someone was wrong. Though in his dealings with colleagues, he never lost sight of the clear division between the principle and the person. Consequently, despite a heated, strong exchange of views, he would refreshingly greet one 'post-debate' with a smile and professional wink; it was never in his nature to hold a grudge.

Another ex-Rendcombian who went on to a deputy headship said "this job can be a nightmare; you get it from all



angles – from the parents, the staff, the kids and from above!” This again reflects the extraordinary qualities of the man, that no matter what problems he had to deal with, he was always sensitive, measured and pragmatic in a crisis. He was never condescending and always professional, be it with colleagues, pupils or parents. He showed a remarkable ability to deal rationally with a number of issues at one time. Whether he felt rather like the swan - calm, smooth and graceful on the surface, but paddling frantically beneath the surface, we may never know. His role as second master ensured he was kept extremely busy, but he always found the time to commit himself to activities outside the classroom. His value as a hockey coach proved immeasurable, showing an ability to support, motivate and get the best out of young Rendcombians of all ages. His experience in the sport, including as a member of the GB team, gave him a knowledge of the subtleties of the game far beyond the modest levels of the schoolmaster. The extraordinary manner in which he imparted such knowledge, meant that the pupils not only understood the point he was making, but were given the confidence to try it out and invariably they improved as a result; the record books show his success. Bobby is undoubtedly a very talented sportsman; not only as a GB hockey player and successful marathon runner, but rumour has it that he even represented his country in the prep. school boxing team! Again, it was not only the admirable talent that he displayed in his sport, but it was the modesty and unassuming nature of the man that always came across. The bottom line with Bobby is that what you see is what you get and what Rendcomb got back in seventeen years was a true professional who, through his extraordinary qualities, commitment and hard work, has helped guide the school forward and enable it to remain the wonderful place that it still is today.

Jessica Weston (1998-2005) and **Heather Roper** (1998-2005) record some of their memories of Bobby Morgan

Noticeable Quotes and Sayings:

“It’s pot time” (Upon nearing a ceramics factory in Barbados 2006)

“That’s a fresh air job” (When one goes to hit the ball, but no contact has been made with said ball, resulting in an embarrassing swivel.)

“Ooo, that’s a headache job” (When said ball is not clearly struck - it can happen to the best of players - being miss-hit, with one scuffing the top of it, resulting in a rolling of the ball effect and a thoroughly unsatisfactory hit) NB - these tend to happen under pressurised situations e.g. 16 yard hits.

“Now what’s going on here in trouble corner” (Trouble corner is an area of the pitch where people are banished to practice if they have been uncontrollably laughing and giggling, which is apparently not ‘constructive’ towards training). NB - said trouble corner existed largely when Jess and Heather were playing.

“To be honest, that first half was shocking” (A summary from many pep talks)

“RUUUUUUUUUUUUNNNNNNNNNNNNNN” (Generally pointed at Jess for her lack of fitness and general dawdling).

“GET BACK” (To all players at one point in the match, when it is realised Heather is the only defender left).

“Fitness levels are really quite appalling” (Beginning, middle and end of the season).

“What are you DOING??” (Bellowed at numerous players).

“Play it right” (Rendcomb girls like playing it left).

“Hockey’s all about scoring goals” (Some insightful wisdom from the great man himself. A subtle nuance of the game that many were unaware of...hehe!)

Memories

1. Pep talks in the history room before games, including intricate diagrams on the board and telling us to NOT do most of the above.
2. Dented shins – a lesson to all in why to wear shin pads.
3. Very gracious about playing for England (even when Jess asked him on many occasions if that was his England tie that he was wearing and being confronted by a loud, “NO!”.)
4. The colour yellow and many assorted yellow clothes - that yellow mac has shone through many a grey day on the astro.
5. The mini metro.
6. Fitness tests where he would always win and then make a comment on how unfit he was.
7. Very rare to compliment your game so when he said it really meant something.
8. Huge appreciation of players like Charlotte Ellis and Carra Williams for saving the day on numerous occasions.
9. Scary - when you were younger, and the first day you trained with him thinking that you'd never be able to do anything right.
10. Tiny white shorts.
11. Hockey dinners - great speeches and gracious acceptance of yet more yellow items of clothing.

From **Bill White** (staff 1961-97).

In 1989 the governors, in tune with many independent schools, decided to rebrand the post of second master - and so Bobby Morgan arrived in September 1990 as Rendcomb’s first deputy headmaster. He had played hockey for England and had just ended his housemastership at Mill Hill.

Bobby’s affable, easy-going manner enabled him to fit easily into the staff common room and to establish a relaxed, but authoritative, relationship with the pupils. I was very grateful for the warm friendship that we at once established - it cannot have been easy initially for him to have to cope with someone who had been about for years!

In my opinion there are perhaps three areas in which Bobby has made a particular contribution to Rendcomb. Firstly, he took over the university entrance applications, which Denis Price (staff 1969-90) had masterminded for many years. This had involved a great deal of work and co-ordination and many O.R.s owe him a real debt of gratitude for the time he spent putting together each pupil’s application. Secondly, Bobby has been in charge of the sixth form club and bar; the fact that this has continued to function satisfactorily and to provide many enjoyable and relaxing evenings has been due to Bobby’s sound understanding of where to draw the line without spoiling the general atmosphere. Thirdly, there has been Bobby’s enormously valuable contribution to Rendcomb hockey, at all levels, but especially with the 1st XIs, boys’ and girls’. His exceptional coaching skills have provided highly proficient players and over the years the boys’ and girls’ 1st XIs have been remarkably successful.

But, of course, Bobby has been involved, and his influence felt, in all aspects of life at Rendcomb over the past sixteen years, from dealing with disciplinary matters to being part of the senior management team and the headmaster’s right-hand man. Both pupils and staff alike have appreciated his wise advice, and his pervading presence has proved essential for the smooth running of the daily routine.

The Morgan family has been very much involved not only with the school, but also with the church and with Rendcomb village. They will be much missed and all O.R.s will want to wish them a long and happy retirement - in Northleach, which seems to be becoming a second alma mater for Rendcomb staff!

Nicola Gill (staff 1994-2006)

From **Charlotte Emerson** (1993-97)

I would like to say a big “thank you” to Mrs Gill for being one of the reasons that my years at Rendcomb were so memorable. She brought a fresh face to the geography department in ‘94, which, along with her enthusiasm and support, encouraged me to further my education in studying geology and environmental sciences at university. I am sorry to hear that she is leaving and I wish her all the best of luck at Westonbirt and in the future.

From **Alex Brealy** (1982-87, staff 1994-)

Tectonic activity is not usually associated with Gloucestershire yet in 1994 there were seismic waves emitting from the county and the epicentre was the idyllic Cotswold village of Rendcomb. Nicola Pryse had arrived from Alleyne’s School in London and she brought with her a new spirit, creating her own zeitgeist for Earth goddess whose every touch brought enlightenment. Academic rigour was brought to bear on the department, even more so than before, and she set about reworking the schemes of work so that fieldwork, multimedia and ‘cross-curricular’ IT were brought to the forefront - indeed, that geography would be the leading light in the IT ‘push’ of the college.

Despite picking up some extra responsibilities over the first few years such as Elliott (Gill, what an apt name) and Will

and Madi, Nicki always held the department very high up her priority list.

The rich tapestry that is Rendcomb life is held together by stalwarts such as Nicki, who give so, so willingly of their time in order for everything to go smoothly. Apart from the academic life of the college, Nicki has played a huge role in many aspects:

Pastorally - she has been a houseparent to both Park House and Godman House along the way - scores of young ladies have been influenced by her sensitive, yet firm touch.

Sports - despite turning blue on the netball court, Nicki always persevered with her teams

Activities - the director of so many interesting opportunities for the pupils, as well as turning out some useful cooks by herself!

Trips - from Basildon Park for some 'Pride & Prejudice' refinement to adrenaline junkies at Alton Towers or Thorpe Park!

She is the real deal, the complete package.

Nicki has been the consummate geography teacher, who has prided herself on enabling her students to not only reach their academic potential but also to love the subject in its own right, to broaden the minds of her geographers so that they will have a greater understanding of the workings of the world, and of its fragility.

It is a testament to her that while there has been a crisis in the subject nationally, the department at Rendcomb is going from strength to strength; next year sees overwhelming numbers continuing with the subject to GCSE!

"Geographers don't end, they just lose their bearings" may have some truth as Nicki will be going off in the opposite direction to Rendcomb three times a week as she makes her way to Westonbirt.

Nicki, thank you for all your dedication, devotion, enthusiasm, passion and integrity towards all things 'Rendcomb'.

Thoughts On Returning To Rendcomb, 2006

By George Davis (1939-46)

By the kind offices of **David Henshaw** (1940-49) I was able to return to Rendcomb on Sunday July 2nd to attend the a.g.m. of the O.R. society. Apart from a very brief visit with my family after the 75th anniversary service at Gloucester Cathedral when time was of the essence and all we could manage was a cup of tea and a good look at Saul, I had not been there for well over fifty years and I soon found myself unable to turn a single corner without memories flooding back, followed rapidly by some pretty hefty nostalgia!



2nd Cricket XI, 1958

I had been prepared for the sight of the many new school buildings erected since I left, having seen them from photographs and the second volume of the History of Rendcomb, and I had also viewed the school web-site. However, what I had not been prepared for was the way these buildings had created a large complex that blended in so well with the old site. You must remember that the Rendcomb of my day was the college, Rendcomb House, the church and the stable courtyard with the Cirencester and Cheltenham drives still intact, together with their lodges.

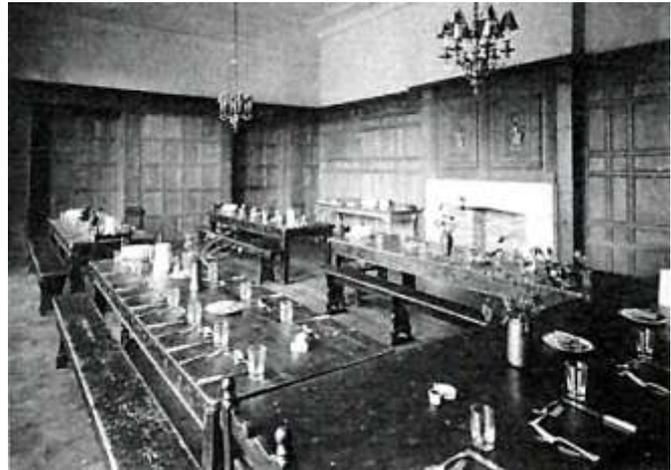
The first surprise of the day, after being greeted by Bill White and Jane Gunner and given a cup of coffee, was to be escorted upstairs for the meeting to find ourselves in the old dormitory three, the site of the famous night when the local Chief Air Raid Warden (D W Lee-Browne) flooded the Churn valley with light through the unshuttered windows, an event I described in the O.R. news of 2005!

David and I then spent a few moments trying to remember how many beds there had been, and, I think, came to fourteen or fifteen.

The next shiver of enjoyment was buying a g&t from a bar set up by the caterers at the bottom of the main staircase. Many of you will recall that the three bêtes noirs of the regime in those days, were smoking, drinking and talking to village girls - not necessarily in that order! Then to lunch in the extended dining room, where I had some difficulty in

finding my bearings. The original room was totally panelled, with the painting of the founder on the left hand wall and the plain stone fireplace facing the windows. The dining room was also used for prayers every morning and on Sunday evening, and I recalled that Sunday was a special day at Rendcomb. An extra hour in bed, dressing in our Sunday suits, walking to church, putting our ties on and an hour later walking back taking them off again! Straight into the

General Meeting in Big School (the experience of this weekly event served me very well in years to come), then lunch and free time for reading, walking or any other activity. High tea at about 5.30 was followed by Q.P. This stood for quiet period, where one sat in a place of one's choosing, having written on a notice board list where you were going to be, and was meant for letter writing home or quiet reading. A staff member would take a few minutes from dinner, which was taken in the staff dining room, and check that all were where they should be. On one memorable occasion **R N D Wilson**, the English master, returned to the staff room and said, "the boys are Q'ing and P'ing very well this evening!"



After that came prayers, and I recall vividly the peace and tranquillity of those occasions. As a prefect, I stood with my back to the fireplace on a summer

evening looking along the avenue of beech trees and listening to the head reading some relevant piece and then saying a prayer. My favourite was the Prayer for Holy Rest that went:

"Oh Lord, support us all the day long* until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world lies hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in Thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen."

I am not a religious person, but I have never forgotten that prayer or Rendcomb Sunday evenings. The atmosphere pervaded the whole school because on filing out of the dining room nobody ran, nobody shouted or laughed, every one went quietly to bed.

After lunch, David drove us up the village street and here changes were very evident. First the Post Office in the old village school building. There was previously a post office cum shop in Lower Rendcomb run by a rather miserable lady called Mrs Wooster who carried on an endless battle with the head, point blank refusing to accede to his demands that she should stop selling cigarettes to us! She was the only source of food off the ration that unfortunately consisted only of some very dubious potted meat spreads. They tasted good on wartime bread and margarine though. Mrs Wooster also took stamps instead of cash; this somewhat restricted the flow of letters home!

The village street, however, was a revelation. During the war years nobody there had a car. You could walk up the street and see nobody, except possibly someone in Tarrant's forge. Now the place had come to life - it seemed lived in - mothers pushing prams or pushchairs; traffic driving through and it had a purpose about it.

We then went "On Top"**, if that's what they still call it, to watch some cricket. I struck up a conversation with **Julian Comrie** (1946-54) and his wife who, until that point, I did not know was the eldest daughter of **John and Kathleen James** (staff 1932-69). We sat outside the pavilion chatting about Rendcomb of long ago.

And there the old nostalgia really took over! A wonderful day with marvellous memories.

*(**Douglas Payne** (1940-48) in his memoirs pointed out that for some reason D W Lee-Browne always omitted the words "of this troublous life" that occur at this point in the prayer. Ed.)

** (*Now Up Top*)



Sam Gunner's (1996-2003) 21st birthday. From left to right: James Daborn, Tommy Lait, Greg Jones, Alice Hughes, Duncan Bond, (guest), Sam Gunner, Tassilo Unger, Dave Roper, Henry Wilson.

A London Reunion

An account by George Davis

I met up with five Old Rendcombians on Monday last, April 3rd, in an event organised by **David Henshaw** (1940-49) at John Allen's restaurant in Exeter Street, London. I had seen none of them for exactly 60 years; so, not surprisingly, nobody recognised anyone else except for two London dwellers who see each other fairly regularly, I understand, for business reasons. Apart from David and I, the others were **Geoffrey Bye** (1940-48), **Gerard Benson**, previously **Chagrin**, (1944-50), **Martin Butlin** (1940-47) and **Michael Butler** (1941-47).

David, Geoff and I seemed to be the only ones who retained an interest in things Rendcombian and we were unable to sell to the other three the idea of coming up to Rendcomb for the OR agm in July (which means, of course, that the first mentioned three will be coming as Geoff expects to be back in the UK at that time). Nevertheless, once the ice had been broken, names and memories came flooding back mostly of course DWLB, JCI, AGGR, although there was much affection showed for a name that never crops up in any magazines – that of “Aunty B”: Mrs Basnett, the cook throughout the wartime period. Always wise to keep in with Aunty, especially during rationing! I recall visiting for the weekend whilst I was still in the navy and bringing her 200 duty free cigarettes! It was as if I'd given her the crown jewels!



From left to right: Gerard Benson (44-50), George Davis (39-46), Geoffrey Bye (40-48), Martin Butlin (40-47), David Henshaw (40-49), Michael Butler (41-47)

I am no photographer, and it is with some trepidation that I am enclosing the best I was able to take with my daughter's digital camera. The local experts (my kids!) tell me it's not suitable for publication, but if I get a suitable e-mail address at your end I can apparently transfer to that address directly from the camera, and the recipient (if suitably knowledgeable) can enhance the image to make it printworthy. This is entirely beyond my comprehension but I'm sure it will make sense to somebody - Jane Gunner perhaps?

Congratulations

Frances Burden (1995-02) on obtaining a 1st class honours in biological sciences at Warwick University.

Roger Alder (1947-52), professor of chemistry at Bristol University, on being made a fellow of the Royal Society.

Roger Medill (headmaster 1971-87) on his 80th birthday. He featured in the Wilts and Glos Standard receiving a commemorative tankard from the Cirencester Golf Club seniors captain. Roger plays regularly in senior's competitions.

David Roper (1996-03), running for Tri Team Glos, came second in the Burton Goldsmiths 10k race in February.

Jane Gunner (1975-77) was one of three “Charity Heroines” honoured in March by the mayor of Cirencester for raising thousands of pounds for charity. Jane has been the driving force behind recent initiatives at the Cirencester Housing for Young People (CHYP) project, which opened a shop in Cirencester at the beginning of 2007 and is currently running its Buy-a-Brick campaign in conjunction with the Wilts and Glos Standard, to raise money for the district's young homeless.

Births

To Catherine and **Patrick Morgan** (1987-93) a son, Max, 31st May 2006

Marriages

Patricia Renny (1990-92) married Simon Houchell, June 06 at Rendcomb

Graham Lawton (1985-92) to Sophie, July 2006

Alice Lethbridge (1991-93) to Ed Sinton, July 06 at Rendcomb

Stephen Jones (1988-95) to Anna Brain (right), October 2006. **John Morgan** was best man, **Fred Ingham** and **Annabel Iles** were ushers.



Obituaries

The society has been saddened to learn of the deaths of the following and sends its deepest sympathy to their families.

Anthony Quick (headmaster 1961-71) died on 27th September 2006 aged 82 years.

Anthony Quick's funeral was held at the little Dartmoor Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Holne. The church was full, with people from Charterhouse, Rendcomb and Bradfield as well as from the local community where the Quicks are well known. The service was a splendid celebration of Anthony's life: Oliver read *Death Is Nothing At All* by Henry Scott Holland; Jonathan read Psalm 121 and James gave a moving tribute to his father with appropriately humorous references.

The service was sensitively conducted by Rev. Corynne E Cooper, Rendcomb was represented by **Jonathan Smith** (1969-74), **Christopher Horton** (1967-73), **Simon Wormleighton** (1968-75), **Paul Rose** (1968-75), Helen and **Julian** (1946-54) **Comrie**, **Colin Burden** (staff 1963-97), **Chris Wood** (1965-71, staff 1976-), Joyce and **Ron Kelsey** (staff 1968-95) and **Bill White** (staff 1961-97).

From: Major M.T.N.H. Wills:

The governing body, under the chairmanship of Sir Louis le Bailly, were very fortunate when Anthony Quick agreed to become a governor of Rendcomb, after he had retired as headmaster of Bradfield. His knowledge of Rendcomb was extensive, having been a much loved and successful headmaster for 10 years - a period of expansion for the school. Latterly, coeducation was introduced to the sixth form. In spite of having retired to Devon, he never missed a governors meeting, (there was one each term then), driving up himself with Professor Gordon Dunstan and normally spending the night before with the then headmaster, John Tolputt. He was someone who had an uncanny insight into what was best for the pupils. His contributions to discussions were always well thought out, never on an impulse. He always waited until asked his opinion by the chairman, often after all the other governors had had their say. If it was a serious matter he never allowed it to become too serious without a lighthearted chuckle, which always brought everyone down to earth again. With Anthony, common sense always prevailed. We were, of course, not bound by over regulation and health and safety issues, which dominate today.

From: Julian Gray:

I was at Rendcomb from 1965-1971, which covered the final years of Anthony Quick's stewardship of the college. He was headmaster of the college when I arrived and he left in 1971 to move to Bradfield College, when appointed headmaster there. He had appointed me as head prefect in the year before he left and, because of my position, I had an opportunity to get to know him quite well.

I have quite strong and fond memories of him. By one of life's odd coincidences, I was sitting in the dining hall of Bradfield College, looking at a portrait of him, within 24 hours of learning of his death. It is a rather fine portrait and, at least in my recollection of him, a good physical likeness. It captures his physical presence very well. I remember him as a big man, tall although rather stooping, which somewhat mitigated his height, and in certain respects rather ungainly. The portrait succeeds in emphasizing his presence and authority, which is perhaps unsurprising for any portrait of a headmaster. Although I do not remember his being an intimidating presence, contemporaries of mine who were more often at odds with authority may tell a different story!

However, what the portrait does not capture - and what no mere likeness could capture - was his warmth, which in turn reflected his essential kindness and good nature. Although at first meeting he could appear rather forbidding, it quickly became apparent that those craggy features would very frequently and easily soften into a grin or a smile. That smile, sometimes rather shy, was never far away and was very willing to be provoked by his students, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

He was also a tolerant and fair man. My elder brother, three years ahead of me, had a somewhat chequered history before his arrival in the sixth form. Indeed in other schools he might not have survived until then. However, Anthony Quick was prepared to support him and was vindicated by my brother's success at 'A' level and Oxbridge leading to eventual inclusion on the school's honours board. From my own perspective, as senior 'enforcer', his relatively few strictures were reasonably and perceptively fashioned leading to a relaxed approach to discipline in keeping with his

forward looking approach to the school generally. Perhaps the best testament I can offer to Anthony Quick as headmaster of Rendcomb is that I was very happy at the college and I remember it as a happy school. I doubt that he alone was responsible for the fact that it was a happy place to be and indeed I very much suspect that he would have been at pains to attribute that to many other things, not least to the other staff at the college. But, if it is the function of the headmaster to set the tone for the school, for the other masters and for the prefects, then I believe he succeeded in doing that in a way of which he should have been very proud.

From: Nicholas Dakin (1964-68):

There can be no doubt that Anthony Quick did a great deal for Rendcomb, bringing many aspects of D W Lee-Browne's idiosyncratic school into the modern era. My late father (**Douglas**, 1920-26) always felt this, and there can be no doubt that my generation of the sixties enjoyed the benefits of better facilities (the studies and study-bedrooms most of all), while not being deprived of Rendcomb's progressiveness and the admirable principles of its founder. I think history already tells us that Anthony Quick played a crucial part in Rendcomb's fortunes in the modern world.

From: Martin Ashe-Jones (1957-64):

Young boys can be a bit negative about changes and the air probably hung heavy with suspicion when Anthony Quick first arrived. We had been used to life under D W Lee-Browne, who appeared to have been there forever, and when John James, (staff 1932-69) who had been there about a century(!) replaced him, it all seemed like 'business as usual.' But now we were faced with someone who could have come off another planet as far as we were concerned, a strangely other-worldly presence in our close-knit family. He seemed to be bringing with him an unsettling glimpse of the outside world that we knew existed beyond the Cirencester and Cheltenham lodges, and we wondered what it foreshadowed.

For a while his tall, angular figure seemed as unexpected as the fact that he was going to live in a purpose-built headmaster's house rather than in the headmaster's flat. His style was different too - he seemed to be treating us with a slightly diffident respect rather than the close contact we had been used to.

We were also apprehensive about what he might do. How was Rendcomb going to change? But our worries about our cherished traditions gradually evaporated, as he seemed as keen as any to retain them where possible. However expansion of the school was in the air and changes were already afoot. We had our misgivings, but they were moderated by what to us seemed the relatively measured pace of change. A year is a long time to the young.

As his first year blended into his second and third and we got to know him better, we began to feel a grudging respect for him. He certainly seemed to be working hard at whatever it was that headmasters did, and when I came into contact with him more, after being appointed senior prefect, I was impressed, as I think many of us were, by his transparent sincerity and conscientiousness. I felt this was a man of integrity, and by the time I finally left, in his third year, I think we all had the feeling that Rendcomb was still in safe hands.

From John Tolputt (headmaster 1987-99):

When, in a governors' meeting, I had to report on some difficult situation, Anthony Quick would always say that it had been much worse in his day. And when I worried that there weren't enough prospective pupils hammering at the gate, he would draw on his deep knowledge of the educational scene and his many governorships to assure the other governors that pupil recruitment was a problem throughout the south of England.

I could not have asked for a kinder or wiser mentor/governor. Unlike some great men, he wore his knowledge and experience lightly, and his advice was always coloured with self-deprecating humour. In the governing body he took on the tricky issues: I remember driving down to a pub in the south-west to discuss staff salaries with him. Everything he did for Rendcomb came from his deep love of the place and of its people. We loved him in return. Some of my happiest Rendcomb evenings were spent in his company listening to Tales of Yore. He had a detailed memory of his early days as headmaster, of the building of the wonderful house we were

lucky to occupy for 12 years, and of the life of that time. But he was never sentimental or nostalgic: he firmly believed the present was better than the past, and that Rendcomb had rightly moved on. He had been one of the chief architects of that movement forward: his election in the 1960s to the Headmasters' Conference was a tribute to the work he and his staff and pupils had done together to build the school's reputation in the wider world.



Patta loved walking round the garden with Jean learning about the plants she had laid down when the house was built. In so many ways we felt the benefit of what Anthony and Jean had done all those years before, and so did generations of Rendcombians.

From Robin Bowen (1963-70):

I was a child of the sixties. My parents for some inexplicable reason were concerned about getting me an education. The right school was required but they did not know where that was. Fortunately for me, when we were on holiday abroad, we had one of those blessed chance encounters. We were in a small village in Austria. There was one other English couple there and whilst the boys were enjoying the holiday my mother and father learnt about Rendcomb. My grandmother lived in the Cotswolds, so, soon after the holiday, an expedition was arranged. I well remember that first sight of Rendcomb on the hill. It is a sight one never grows tired of. Entering the school past the boards commemorating past achievements of its pupils, I was blissfully unaware of how fortunate I was going to be. The reason for this was that I was a small boy who needed time to develop. Educationally I understand I was a bit of a challenge. However as luck would have it I met a wonderful headmaster. He accepted the challenge and the pressing issue of what to do with me was resolved.

In due course, after a lot of effort from AOHQ, Bill White and the rest of the team, I passed various exams and became a crown prosecutor. However to this day I feel sure none of this would have been possible if Anthony Quick had not shown faith and taken a gamble that he could do something with me. I have fond memories of his guidance and his kindness to all of us.

As an example of the care he showed, I recall Mr Quick having to come and rescue me after a day out post O levels. I had decided to go on an adventure. This resulted in my missing the train back to Cirencester and school and running out of money. I had to tell the transport police in Bristol of my plight. The result of this was that he had to pick me up late at night from Cheltenham bus station and pay for my ticket. The headmaster was not best pleased, I am sure, but handled the situation with his usual style.

I count my blessings that I went to Rendcomb and had Mr Quick as headmaster.

Brian Geoffrey Hugh Levers (1943-48), May 2006

Arthur Wilcox (1921-28), January 2006, aged 96.

His widow wrote to say that Arthur won a scholarship to Rendcomb at the age of 10 and often spoke of the happy days he spent there. He realised how very fortunate he was to have had the wonderful opportunity. He went on to become a professor of mathematics and wrote several books, one of which was a popular scientific book entitled *Moon Rocket*, published in 1947. In it he explained how rocket technology might be used to land a man on the moon: his basic ideas were vindicated in 1969 when man indeed landed on the moon. Mrs Wilcox adds that Arthur was not just a very intelligent man with great foresight, and a very warm man, but also always held education in very high regard. She made a donation to the college in Arthur's memory.

Dr P E Coffey, School Medical Officer, 1963-86, died in June 2006 in Australia aged 92.

Philip Giles Auden (1949-58), nephew of W.H. Auden died in March 2007.

Mary Dennis, wife of **Roy Dennis** (staff 1959-82) died March 2007.

Mrs Vera Fell, widow of **Jack Fell** (staff 1934-73) died on 31st March 2006 aged 94.

Vera was a well known figure in the college and in the village; she was much involved in looking after Rendcomb Church and in village activities. Sixth formers will remember being invited to dinner chez Fell where they found Vera to be a delightful hostess as well as an excellent cook! Vera moved to Cirencester after Jack's death and then to a residential home nearer her daughter Judy and son-in-law **Geoff (Smith 1960-67)**. Amongst those who attended her funeral were Chris and Penny Wood, Margaret Knapp, John and Anne Holt, Colin and Dorothy Burden, Ron and Joyce Kelsey, and Bill White.



Frederick John Batten (1926-31) died in July 2006 aged almost 92 years.

The following account of Fred's life is taken from information sent by his son, Michael.

Fred was born on 14th August 1914. His father served in the Coldstream Guards during the first world war. Fred had three sisters whose lives were very short - one was run over by one of the first cars on the road, another died after running down the road after eating fish and chips and the cause of the death of the third is unknown. Fred spent his early years round Frampton Cotterell. In 1926 Fred won a scholarship to Rendcomb: one of his closest pals was **Norman Slade** (1929-36) (*who died in 1997-Ed*). Fred was taught woodworking skills - this became one of his hobbies together with fishing. In 1931 Fred left Rendcomb and used to cycle each day from Coalpit Heath to Bristol - a 10 mile journey - to work for the Vacuum Oil Company Mobil and then as a costing clerk for Heinz. His wages were five shillings a month. He lost his job after an argument with a manager, but still cycled to 'work' in his suit, not telling his mother, as he was one of the family's breadwinners.

In 1936 Fred followed his father into the Bristol Constabulary. He was called up in 1939 and served in the R.A.F., being sent to Cape Town. When he returned to Bristol he married Winifred Jones in 1940. They

lost their first child, a daughter, and in 1949 Michael was born. Fred's career in the police force progressed: he was promoted to sergeant and then inspector, running the "information room" at Bristol police h.q. He was promoted to chief inspector, running various divisions of the Bristol Constabulary. Fred retired from the police in 1966 to be able to be with his wife who was suffering from depression. He then took up a less stressful post as security officer for Osborne & Wallis, a shipping and coal supplier. Ex-police colleagues then enlisted him into what is now the traffic warden's department, shortly after his wife's death.

Fred remarried in 1971 and worked for the county of Avon as a court officer for the social services department. They lived in Minety for a time before returning to Clevedon. Fred was a devoted gardener and enjoyed the allotment near the sea. After his wife's death in 2000, Fred moved to a flat above his son's business in Bristol: he had by now suffered a heart attack and had a pace-maker. In early 2006, his health deteriorated and he was moved to a nursing home in June as he could no longer cope with the stairs of the flat and his eyesight was poor. He died in his sleep on 18th July.

(Fred Batten recently made a generous donation to the O.R. travel bursary - Ed.)

Michael Jefferies (1939-43) died in April 2006.

His daughter, Cindy, has sent this tribute to her father.

Edward James Michael Jefferies was born in Cirencester on 4th June 1926. He was the youngest son of Edward Jefferies, who owned John Jefferies and Son, the local Royal Nurseries and seed merchants. The decision was made by his family to remove him from Cirencester Grammar School, where he was being bullied, and send him to Rendcomb College. The decision was a good one, in spite of his early homesickness. To begin with he complained that the food wasn't very good. 'We never see a piece of cake', he wrote wistfully to his parents in an early letter. However, it was wartime, and he knew that everyone had to make sacrifices. A few letters later he was happily explaining the school day and asking if his father's chauffeur could drop off some chocolate and apples the next time he passed.

It didn't take him long to settle in, and as he moved up the school he enjoyed lots of the activities on offer. Making and flying model aeroplanes was his passion: puppeteering, playing cricket and football were also favourites, although trips to play other schools could be hazardous. He often told the story of a car journey to play a Cheltenham school in which the rear wheel came off the car and bowled past them. This sounds a lot more exciting than today's Rendcomb vans breaking down occasionally! He also took part in dramatic productions and became very keen on jazz. He was not only an avid collector of jazz records, often riding into Cheltenham from Rendcomb on his bicycle to buy the latest releases, he enjoyed playing boogie woogie on the piano as well as attending dances whenever possible.

He took his turn on fire watch, clambering over the roof of the Old Rectory with his stirrup pump and bucket. He was an enthusiastic plane spotter, and harboured the desire to be a pilot. Michael, known also as Jim and Mike in his teenage years, loved his time at Rendcomb under the headship of Mr Lee-Browne. He was never an academic, but worked hard and always gave the impression that he felt valued at the school. He entered wholeheartedly into the school activities and looked back with great fondness to his time there.

He joined the air cadets and took his duties very seriously, getting as many hours flying as he could locally as well as taking part in parades and training courses. Once he'd got his school certificate there was nothing except happy memories to hold him. He left Rendcomb College in the summer of 1943, and signed up at the RAF. Looking back over the year in his diary he described what a formative year his sixteenth had been. In this year he learned how to smoke a pipe and drive a car, fell in love for the first time and left school. Not a bad tally! Once in the RAF he was bitterly disappointed to find that his eyesight wasn't good enough to enable him to fly, but a sympathetic warrant



officer suggested he choose a different trade, one that he wasn't at liberty to explain. "But I think you'll enjoy it", he told aircraftman 3034578 and he was right.

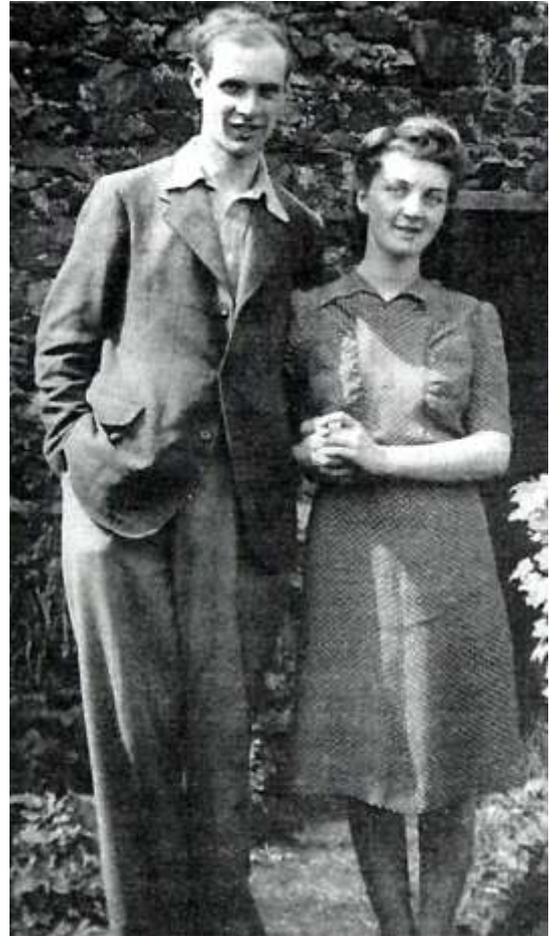
The trade turned out to be a job as radar operator, still something of a secret at the tail end of the war. Michael thoroughly enjoyed learning the new technology and often remarked how grateful he was to the officer who had pointed him in the direction of such an interesting job. It was whilst he was stationed at Ballinderry in Northern Ireland that he met a young girl called Liliias, who would eventually become his wife in 1947. He writes of this

meeting in his contribution to *Radar, A Wartime Miracle*, a book by Colin Latham and Anne Stobbs, ISBN 075091114X.

He spent time stationed in Lincolnshire and overseas, visiting Ceylon, India and Singapore, at one point attending a Japanese war crime trial. The war was over, and it was frustrating being stranded overseas, when all he wanted was to be at home and to marry. But many thousands of troops were stranded abroad, and it took a while to get them home. Eventually Michael was allotted a berth, and returned home to enter the family business.

He and Liliias married young. She was only sixteen when they met and Mike was eighteen. At nineteen and twenty-one they were a married couple and living in Crawley whilst Mike learnt the nursery trade. Housing was very difficult at this time, as many houses had been damaged during the war, so when they were expecting their first child they returned to Cirencester, living with his parents until they could find a home of their own.

Mike and Liliias had four children. Christopher was the eldest, followed three years later by Cindy. Ruth arrived five years after that and Rachael a year later. Mike settled down to family life with great contentment. He was a gentle man, who made his wife and family the centre of his life. He had a wonderful sense of humour and invariably had a twinkle in his eye. It was important to him to be fair in all his dealings with others. He never looked for arguments but was unafraid of standing up for what was right. He had a strong Christian faith. Animals liked him and he them, especially dogs. He also took an active role in Cirencester Chamber of Commerce, and as early as 1943 was interested in setting up model aircraft clubs. He was indeed a founder member of the Cirencester and District Model Aircraft Club. Many years later he was made life president, and the club still thrives today. In 1995 Michael read a review of Ernest Neal's *The Badger Man* in the Old Rendcombian newsletter of that year. Ernest Neal had



taught Mike biology at Rendcomb and Mike was moved to write to his old teacher. This led to a very happy few years when they met several times, Ernest Neal's ninetieth birthday celebration being one of them.

Mike's beloved wife Liliias died on January 1st 2006 of a stroke, a severe blow that he bore bravely, after their fifty-eight loving years together. Barely three months after her death he was himself taken ill, and died three days later, on April 2nd 2006. He is survived by two of his older brothers, his four children, fourteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren, and is remembered with great fondness by them all.

Mike was exceptionally pleased when his grandson won the Noel Wills academic scholarship in 1999, at nine years old the youngest child ever to do so.

A reminiscence of my grandfather, Michael Jefferies, by Seb Goffe (2000-06)

On August 17th of 2006, I returned to Rendcomb to pick up my A2 results. The BBD I had achieved gained me my place to read history at Lancaster University, but the person who perhaps would have been proudest was no longer around to know. I missed out on being an Old Rendcombian with my grandfather by a few short months, and yet I still have many happy memories involving him and the college.

In my first year, being picked up by him to spend the weekend at his house in Cirencester, he told me that my dorm in the Old Rec. was adjacent to where he had slept almost 60 years previously (now the prefects' room). There were many stories of how the college used to be, with a run to 'half way' and a cold shower each morning before breakfast, not to mention the notorious fire watch. At one time he saw two Spitfires escorting a captured Axis fighter plane, then read about it in the papers the next day. To have been educated in such times must have been scary, but definitely exciting.

One tale that really surprised me was of him being asked to cycle into town to collect the staffs wage packets from the bank. I must admit I found it hard to imagine myself or any of my peers being entrusted with such a task today! I remember him turning up to witness my infrequent forays into the world of Rendcomb sport, despite the cold, wet, or whatever act of God was being meted out against top pitch at the time. Sadly football, Mike's sport of choice when he

was at Rendcomb, has long since been replaced, but hockey is by no means a poor replacement. *

I am unaware of any other grandchildren of alumni who attended Rendcomb, although there is certainly a sizeable list of children, including Fiona Hicks in my year, whose parents met at the college. It would be interesting to find out if there are any similar family connections.** I miss my grandfather a lot, as does the whole family, but I will always have fond memories of him and his links with the college to take with me through life.

** Rugby replaced soccer in the '50s. - Ed*

*** Karen Swan (1988-90) was the granddaughter of C J Gough (1920-24). Perhaps there are others. Please let me know - Ed.*

Caroline Eldridge (1984-86) died in Cheltenham Hospital on 31st May 2006.

Her sister Angela Sweeney (née Eldridge, 1981-83) sends this tribute:

I can still hardly believe I am writing this, but my sister died on 31st May 2006 after an illness, which tragically took her from us too soon.

Her love of painting and of the arts was a constant thread throughout her life and brought her great pleasure. Having left Rendcomb, where she took full advantage of the arts department, she went on to achieve a degree in theatre wardrobe at Wimbledon Art College and then lived and worked in London for many years. This gave her the opportunity to visit exhibitions and art galleries and indulge her passion. She worked for the English National Opera and in her role as buyer had to source materials for their latest productions. Her skills in dress design and procurement were put to good use when she made my wedding dress and I remember fun weekends in London choosing silk, buttons and beads.

Her effortless elegance, natural beauty and gentle grace were captivating. We called her our kingfisher, something of great beauty that flew in and out of our lives. She was a free spirit, some have called her a 'Peter Pan' figure, who enjoyed life to the full.

She loved to travel, she particularly liked the South of France and would often 'up sticks' and spend time over there painting and drawing and in latter years, Italy, spending time living and working in Venice and Rome, but she always called Edgeworth her home and managed to return as often as she could to walk and cycle for miles in the peace of the countryside. I remember her joy at becoming an Auntie. Emma adored her, she loved it when Auntie Caro popped in for coffee, the two of them sitting at the table drawing and colouring together, she was always full of fun and so creative.

I realise these few lines do her scant justice. She touched so many people's lives in so many different ways. We have been overwhelmed by the kind letters and loving words we have received since last May. I can only be glad that I have so many special memories to treasure and will always be proud of my beautiful and talented sister.

Michael H C Martin (1926-33) died in February 2007 aged 93.

He was a great supporter of Rendcomb and of the O.R. Society. He was very pleased that the O.R. society published his work on the history of the statue of Saul last year. He had also done a great deal of research into the Goldsmid family who built what is now the main College building in 1865. We hope to publish a tribute to him in the next edition. Ed.

Miss Dorothy Sumner (staff 1941-) died in March 2007

Her son, Andrew writes the following obituary:

Miss Sumner (1915-2007), as many will know her, started working as matron at Rendcomb in 1941 at the age of 26. She arrived at the college from a nursing career punctuated by enemy action on the General Hospital, Birmingham. After the forced reduction in hospital services there, she was promoted to manage a unit for evacuee children at a hospital in Shipston-on-Stour.

From Warwickshire village origins, Dorothy brought her countryside interests to Rendcomb. One of her wild flower books has marginal notes on collections she made in the Rendcomb woods. At the college, she was a counsellor of young boys coping with boarding school life and she sided with the views of the headmaster, Denis Lee Browne, on development in the adolescent. Soon, she met Bryan Frowd, a qualified architect who, as a conscientious objector, was the woodwork teacher. Dorothy was attracted by his left-wing sympathies and came to share his progressive outlook on education. Their 'dates' took place in the tea-shops of Cirencester. They moved to London at the end of the war when Bryan resumed his architectural career and married shortly afterwards.

Retirement to Dorset in 1969 was interrupted thirteen years later by Bryan's untimely death at the age of 65. Dorothy stayed on in Sherborne until 1993 when she moved to join her only son, Andrew, in Canada. To the end, she used her expressions of modesty and self-denial that had endeared her to so many throughout her life.

Contact: Andrew Frowd, P.O. Box 719, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada J8P 8B5 (afingh@yahoo.co.uk).

Barnaby Kellett (1997-99) died tragically in an accident in February 2007, aged 21.

He was a talented singer and actor.

In Memory

On March 24th 2007, a mother whom many of you would have known as **Veronica Thresh** (O.R. 1975-77) and her only daughter Charlotte, just ten and a half years old, were lost to their husband and father for ever after an elephant attack in the bush of Zimbabwe abruptly ended their journey back from South Africa to a new home in France.

In memory of these two beautiful, sensitive creatures a charity is being established in Veronica's daughter's name: *The Charlotte Parker Charitable Trust for the Advancement of Education in Africa*, or *The CharChar Trust*. The trust plans to ask schools in the west to raise funds for the charity, and then have wealthier schools in Malawi (where Veronica first went to school), South Africa (where Charlotte was schooled) and Zimbabwe contact disadvantaged schools, discover their needs and then send wish-lists to the trust to be filled and shipped in time for each new academic year. Simple, basic materials such as textbooks, notebooks, pens or perhaps mosquito nets or shoes for a long walk to school will be supplied. Nothing big, and no cash.

Many in South Africa and Zimbabwe have been moved by this tragedy and have already offered their services - legal, accounting, transport or simply physical effort - to help the trust achieve its goal of delivering 99 pence worth of aid for every pound donated.

If you have funds, know of schools ready to help raise funds or have ideas to help keep costs to a minimum and make the charity a success, please contact kelvin@zoom.co.uk. Donations can be made by mail to: The CharChar Trust, 103 Ashcroft Road, Ipswich, IP1 6AE, England, or by bank transfer to The CharChar Trust, Barclays Bank, Ipswich, England. Sort code 20-44-51, a/c no. 40180459.

60 Years On

Julian Comrie (1946-54) sent this account of a reunion in 2006.

On 17th September this year, it was exactly 60 years ago that I arrived at Rendcomb as a timid young boy, excited, but not knowing quite what to expect. Another "new boy" was **Martin Richards** (1946-54), who became, and remains, my "best friend" - best man at my wedding, and a lifelong treasure. One year later, we were joined in form II by **Richard Sumsion** (1947-54) and **Howard Hayter** (1947-54), who likewise kept in touch with each other, and us, over the intervening years.



This year seemed a good opportunity for a celebratory lunch, and this picture was taken before we all got too drunk to remember how to pose for the camera! Would it be self flattering to say that we all have very charming wives, from left to right Penny Sumsion, Helen Comrie, Elizabeth Hayter and Sue Richards, our constant companions for well over 40 years, in every case?

I hope all the present pupils may have such a happy and moderately prosperous life as we eight have had.

Richard Sumsion	Estate agent
Julian Comrie	Computer systems manager, photographer
Howard Hayter	Farmer
Martin Richards	Solicitor

The Mystery Photo

(page 45 of 2006 newsletter)

Keith Stimson (1955-63) thinks that the boy in the middle is his elder brother Robert “Baron”. His brother thinks the one on the left is **Robert Comley** (1951-59) and notes that it must have been a Sunday as Robert is wearing a tie. **Robert Comley** (1951-59) also comments on this in his letter in O.R. News.

Musical Memories

John Gosden (1947-54) writes:

Some time in the early 50’s there was a theatrical production in ‘Big School’ (one among many) for which **John Tooze** set, arranged or whatever two, maybe more, songs:

Blow the winds:

“Blow ye winds, hi ho, a roving I will go
I’ll stay no more ‘round England’s shore, so let the music play
I’ll be off on the morning train, to cross the stormy main
I’ll be on the move to my own true love, three thousand miles away”

and Fifteen Men on Dead Man’s Chest:

“Fifteen men on a dead man’s chest
Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the Devil had done for the rest
Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of rum!”

The songs have wedged in a corner of my memory ever since, but I have not the faintest inkling of what the play was (except that I suppose it was something to do with pirates).

Do you suppose there is anyone among my (shrinking number of) contemporaries who might have better memory – or maybe even took part?

30th Anniversary Reunion

On Sunday July 1st 2007 there will be a 30th anniversary reunion for those who left the college in the summer of 1977. This includes all those who came to Rendcomb in September 1970 in the first form and those who joined the school in September 1972 in the third form. Girls who joined us in 1975 are also invited together with those who took 7th term Oxbridge exams in the autumn of 1977.

School reunions are not everyone’s cup of tea but this special occasion does offer us an opportunity to meet up with old friends and acquaintances and promises to be entertaining, interesting and at times, no doubt, quite surreal.

Chris Pulford (1970-77) is drumming up support from his O.R. contacts and encouraging those contacts to do the same with their contacts. Please register your interest on the O.R. website. Past experience has indicated that these occasions are better attended when a list of those expecting to be present is available. Please contact Chris if you would like further details.

Founder’s Day 2006

Head girl, Fiona Hicks, gave a vote of thanks to Mr Porritt and started her speech by referring back 30 years to when her parents were both at the college.

“Thirty years ago the head boy and a fellow prefect of Rendcomb College remarked that by leaving Rendcomb, they very much felt that they were leaving home. Those two people were my parents. Standing here today, I am able to share their sentiments. Imagining my mother and father as teenagers is hard enough, but what I find more amazing is the fact that over all this time, the ethos of the college has not changed. I feel so privileged to have been able to enjoy the atmosphere of friendliness, fun and enthusiasm that my parents so relished during their time as students here”, and finished by saying that “leaving Rendcomb really does feel as if I am leaving home. From



the teachers; endless jokes, which I will not inflict on you, to effervescent cookery lessons with Mrs Grey, catching up on gossip with her immortal words, "I am not nosey, I just must know!", it has been a truly great two years. When I first arrived one member of staff, on learning that Rendcomb was in fact the place where my parents met, amazed me by asking if I had come here to find a husband! I can firmly say that I have not, but I have gained a wealth of enjoyable experiences. I think I can speak for all of this year's leavers in saying thank you to everyone who has made our time here so memorable. Who knows, in thirty years time maybe I will have a daughter or son here!"

Bill White's birthday cake in 2006.
Which birthday was it?
Tell Jane Gunner!!



Old Rendcombian News

Graham Lawton (1985-92) has sent some details of his career after leaving Rendcomb. He went on to Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospitals and qualified B.Sc., MBBS in 1998; he worked in London before joining the army fully and serving until August 2002 as medical officer to 1 PARA. During this time, he travelled extensively - Canada, Kenya, Oman etc. Deciding on a career in surgery, he did his basic surgical training for 3 years in Leeds and Bradford, gaining his membership in November 2004. In his aim to become a burns and plastic surgeon, he spent last year doing research at Porton Down. He says he still keeps in touch with O.R.s - including **James Grafton**, **Henry Pugh**, **Antony Palin**, **Matt Smith** and **Julian Madeley** (1985-92). He was married in the summer in Chelsea.

Mark Whittering (1956-61) has been appointed the first president of Cirencester Hockey Club, of which he was one of the founder members in 1978. (**Chris Wood** (1965-71, staff 1976-), **Roy Dennis** (staff 1959-82), and **Fraser Glennie** (1959-67) are vice presidents.)

Richard Dunwoody (1975-81) was quoted in the national press following the death of Desert Orchid: he claimed that people loved Desert Orchid for much the same reasons as he did as a jockey - the front-running style, gutsy performances and a never say die attitude to racing. He counted it a privilege to ride a true legend of the sport.

Nathan Houseman (1985-92) was featured in the Wilts & Glos Standard recently. He has organised a short story challenge to raise money for charity in aid of the St. James's Place Foundation.

Peter Binks (1935-41) wrote to Jane Gunner last year to tell her of his winning award for water saving; his prize was an Ecoverta worth \$500 fitted. He says that the rainwater tank coupled to the toilet works well. He also sent a picture of himself as passenger guide on the Puffing Bill Steam Railway. He welcomes visitors to the railway and explains the options for the day's operations. He also encourages those who live nearby to be volunteers. Peter has been connected with the railway for 23 years. He still does voluntary work for the Garden Centre, of which he was a founder member 27 years ago. once a fortnight,.

David Vaisey (1945-54) found that the memoir on **Bob Muchamore** (1945-53) in the 2006 newsletter "rang bells". They were in the same class that joined in 1945 - seven of them, four of whom won



exhibitions or scholarships at Oxford or Cambridge (**Stephen Richards** (1945-52), **Martin Rayner** (1945-53), **Nicholas Walter** (1945-52), and **David**). David also says he shared a study with **Timothy Gay** (1948-54), who was a very good actor - for virtually all the term, he was Lord Fancourt Babberley in *Charlie's Aunt* - on and off the stage! He also recalls the production of *The Mock Doctor* on the outdoor stage with music by Lully in the intervals.

Austin Caverhill writes: "I attended Rendcomb from 1936-40. My reason for leaving Rendcomb aged 14 was that a Canadian relative volunteered to look after me in the safety of Montreal during the war. Our house was in fact uninhabitable for a time but as the bomb that landed in the front garden was a time-bomb, there were no casualties. Back to Rendcomb! The system of fee-paying pupils mixing with the brightest of local boys was for me a mixed blessing as I found myself losing my self-confidence in maths (everyone else seemed so much better!) On the other hand, the facilities were unbeatable - marvellous grounds, extensive playing fields, high jump, long jump etc. Of course the best thing was being allowed (after a test - hands on, hands off) to bike to the nearest town.

John Middleton Murry (1936-44) was a close friend.

Then everything changed again as I was evacuated to Montreal. I was enrolled in what would be called a public school in England. I found myself academically well able to cope in the classroom except in the dreaded maths! In the Easter holidays before my matriculation to McGill University, my guardian was informed that special coaching was needed. A very fierce lady was found! After matriculating, I joined the R.C.A.F. and was in the middle of training as a wireless air gunner when the Canadian authorities decided that the war would soon be over and they could save money. I managed to get a berth on a boat sailing from Prince Edward Island. Home again, I was soon conscripted and volunteered to take the equivalent of Sandhurst out in India. Never had I seen such poverty - as I entered my sleeping quarters a woman with a child in her arms and another about 9 years old tried to sell the poor child to me! Apart from those lads joining the Ghurkhas, the rest of us were sent home and I found myself attached to 107 H.A.A. Regiment at Grays in Essex. Fortunately I managed to persuade the C.O. to supervise N.C.O.s teaching veterans the basic skills of reading and writing. Finally demobbed, I went back to Canada for university and some time later returned to the U.K. to marry and raise a family. I have enjoyed a very happy life; I loved teaching and ended up helping dyslexic children."

Christopher Hart (1970-77) is happily settled in Bath where he has established a new office of Knight Frank. He has already been in touch with O.R.s living in Bath.

Martin Stitt (1977-86) has given up a career in an international finance house to enter the world of film. His latest film "What Does Your Daddy Do?" a 14-minute piece, was chosen from hundreds of entries to compete for the Corto Cortissimo competition section at the Venice Film Festival. O.R.s will recall that Martin joined the army after leaving Oxford, serving in Northern Ireland and the far east.

Ted Jones (1940-48). His wife, Doreen, would like O.R.s to know that Ted is now in a nursing home, not far from their house. She visits him daily and so feels she is contributing to his care. Other than his dementia, he keeps fit and well and enjoys walks and drives.

Calum Dewar (1976-83) writes: "Having finally got round to the change of address, and having read the recently dispatched O.R. magazine, I think I should take the opportunity to cover, in brief, the events of the last 23 years! Or, at least, the events that relate to me.

Leaving Rendcomb in the summer of 1983 I went to Edinburgh University to read politics & modern history. Discovering that "modern" meant 1250 onwards I dropped the modern history and graduated with MA hons in politics in 1987. My time at Edinburgh reading politics was, I have to say, in keeping with the current trend of trying to get a "work/life balance" and playing rugby and working in a local tavern took up a considerable amount of my time which could have, and probably should have, been dedicated to reading texts on the "fascinating" subject of urban political theory and the like.

With graduation approaching I had no idea what the next step should be and first considered a career in journalism. However, I discovered this required another year of studying at journalist school and after 4 years I was "studied out". Additionally, the Bank of Scotland was very clear that my next move should involve an activity that ensured that money was going into my bank account at close to the rate that it was going out!

I had missed the normal graduate recruitment process by this time but many of my university friends had forsaken the charms, and cold wind, of Edinburgh and had headed south to London to take up graduate recruitment places in either accountancy or banking.

Given my less than perfect relationship with the aforementioned Bank of Scotland (the story of the bank manager from my branch of Bank of Scotland chasing me across the Bristo Square in Edinburgh, having spotted me from his window after I had ignored repeated polite requests to "call into the bank for a chat" has taken on a legendary status!) I determined that banking was not the way forward and without any knowledge at all of what it meant I applied, late, to Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse for their graduate recruitment accountancy qualification programmes. Both firms clearly had a relative shortfall in recruits that year and offered me interviews. I turned up in an ill-fitting suit and proceeded to demonstrate my total lack of knowledge of my supposed chosen career to such an extent that

both firms rejected me.

Chastened, I went away and considered my various options and after 6 months of working on building sites and in pubs, and joining a very small accounting practice I determined that I should rejoin my efforts to enter the exhilarating world of “big firm” accountancy. Through the offices of a recruitment agency I somewhat surprisingly got offered another interview with Coopers & Lybrand for a position in the tax department that would still enable me to qualify as a chartered accountant. Having learnt a little from my earlier experiences I prepared more diligently for this interview and was offered the job.

I started at Coopers & Lybrand in March 1988 and qualified as a chartered accountant in 1991. Through various placements, including a stint in our New York office, and surviving the merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand in 1998 I became a partner in Price Waterhouse Coopers in 1999. I still get a kick out of telling new recruits to the firm that I may well be the only partner in Price Waterhouse Coopers who was rejected by both predecessor firms!

From 2002 to 2005 I went back to our New York office and have now returned to our London office where I specialise in international corporate tax (advising multinationals how to structure their affairs in a tax efficient manner). The role involves a fair amount of international travel which, given I still have a fear of flying and don't sleep well in hotel rooms, does make one question the sagacity of my career choice!

On the non-work front I met my wife, Jane, in 1988 and we married in 1990. We have two wonderful daughters, Mary, who is 9, and Isobel, who is 8. Unfortunately we achieved zero gene pooling and Mary takes after her mother whilst Isobel, unfortunately, does not. Isobel's school reports with such comments as “I am sure she could do better if she just applied herself” and “Isobel does exactly as much as Isobel thinks she needs to” struck a vague chord. My position as the diligent parent handing out discipline with regard to these school reports was completely undermined by my father producing, from nowhere, my school reports from my time at Rendcomb and sharing these with not only my wife, but most damagingly, my daughters! I don't know how often you tried to argue from the “do as I say not as I do” position but it does lack a certain credibility level!

We have settled back to life in the UK after our sojourn in the US and thoroughly enjoy living in the village of Ightham, which is near Sevenoaks in Kent. The daily commute to London is less than a thrill but that is the price of wanting your children to experience life in the country as opposed to life in the city. I must admit I look back at the freedom to roam we had at Rendcomb with envy - albeit in my latter Rendcomb years my roaming was often accompanied by a packet of Marlboro cigarettes and others of like mind (the names **Simon Beales** (1981-83), **Simon Powell**, **Richard Akers** (1976-83), **Russell Copley** (1976-83), spring to mind) often closely followed by a £5 fine payable to Cancer Research. Such freedom is very hard to recreate in today's environment, even in a village in Kent. I enjoy reading the O.R. magazine - it brings back distant but, on the whole, happy memories. I am not really in touch with any O.R.s any more. **Matt Archer** (1977-83) diligently sends me a Christmas card every year, despite my repeated annual inability to match this effort, and we exchange e-mails infrequently. I went to Matt's wedding in, I think, 2001. The only other O.R. from my year there was “**Al**” **Hedderwick** (1978-83), who, at the time, was awaiting a kidney transplant. It was with great pleasure that I read of his exploits, having received the said kidney transplant, in the recent O.R. magazine. Al and I did exchange some e-mails back in 2004 re. a potential 21 year reunion but as far as I know nothing came of it - or if it did I was not invited!

On a personal note I would like to relate the fact that when visiting historical sites, which seem too often, to have Latin inscriptions, my daughters ask their parents what these strange words mean. My wife, who never had the joy and opportunity of Latin lessons at her school, turns to our children and says the words I dread to hear - “ask your Daddy, he did Latin!” Surprisingly, although at the time there was plenty of evidence to the contrary - as exposed in the school reports my father so shamefully unearthed - some of your efforts to teach me the mysteries of the language must have rubbed off as occasionally I can string a translation together. I would love to hear of any O.R.s from my era.”

Robert Comley (1951-59) wrote to Bill White last May: “Thank-you for continuing to send me the O.R. society newsletter. Having recently received my 2006 copy, imagine how surprised I was to find photographs of myself included not just once but twice! I am the left-hand one of the card players on page 45. I have the very-same print in my photo album. The one in the middle is **Robert Stimson**, known to us as “The Baron” (because he used to buy our ration book coupons from us in order to get more sweets that he could then sell back to us at a profit etc, etc.) He was an entrepreneur before the word was even invented.

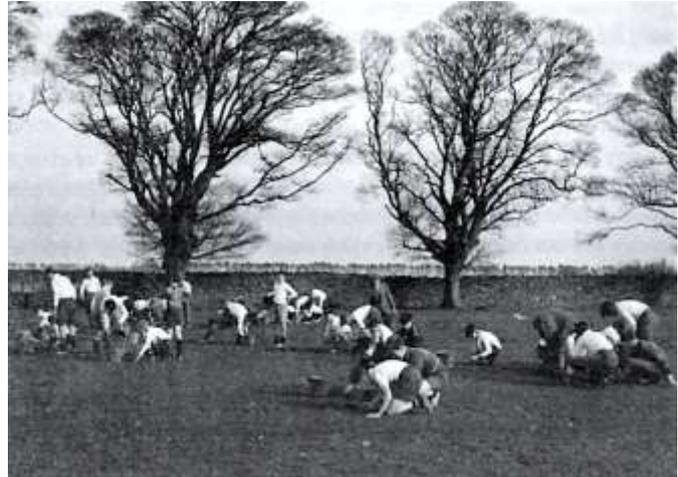
The boy on the right I truly cannot remember: if I was forced to have a guess I would say Shenstone...

I also appear second left as a lady in *Charley's Aunt*. I enjoyed acting in that play very much - and it was all to do with **Timothy Gay**, who played the main role. He was such a comedian in everyday life that it was a pleasure to be in the play with him. My wife has asked me whether I felt strange playing a woman: I said, “No, not at all... times were different then. We didn't have any gender hang-ups in those days, and it was quite straightforward that we were an all-boys school and therefore one or two of us would have to take the women's parts.” I am enclosing a few copies of some of the prints from my photo album, to give you a flavour of that era. Perhaps the stone-picking ones are most typically Rendcombian, showing the diminutive Walter Telling by the tractor on the left-hand shot, with Mr Austin driving it in the middle one.

You and I have shaken hands, Bill, when I came last to Rendcomb a few years ago - though neither of us will remember the other (and there's no shame in that!) We did not overlap at Rendcomb either, because I left in 1959

before you arrived in 1961.

I won a county scholarship from Barnwood School in Gloucester and arrived at Rendcomb aged 11 in 1951. My dad was a machinist in an engineering factory, and we never had much money. I jokingly tell people that other boys' parents used to come for speech day in their Rovers and Bentleys, but mine came on the bus... I believe the Rendcomb mix (of sometimes not-so-bright boys whose parents could afford to pay, with brighter boys whose parents couldn't) has stood me in good stead all through my life. I was able to "hold my own" at Rendcomb because I was academically bright (although with hindsight I think I peaked at around 11 years old!) I think I am the antithesis of your average Old Rendcombian. I am not a brain surgeon who has just returned from Malawi, but a retired planning engineer living in crummy old Crewe! Having done my apprenticeship and worked at Smiths Industries (Bishops Cleeve), I moved my family in 1978 to work at Rolls-Royce Motors here in Crewe. I am now aged 66: I have a couple of completely different part-time jobs and am perfectly happy in "God's waiting room"!



To say that my life at Rendcomb was so different

from now is to compare Stephenson's Rocket with the modern Pendolino trains. When I see today's youngsters with their iPods and mobile phones, I put on my rose-tinted specs and think back to collecting (and eating!) watercress from the River Churn, and to making wonderful toast (using contraband bread from Colesbourne!) over the fires in our huts up in the back woods.

Looking back, I regret not having had a natural relationship with the opposite sex during my formative years. I tell people that I used to spend my spare time in the woodwork shop, which gave me an appreciation of working with wood that stays with me to this day. I am proud to have been one of the makers of the altar table in St. Peter's Church, and I hope it will still be in there long after I've gone!"

(**Robert Comley** also joined the staff for the summer term of 1963 when **Roy Dennis** was ill. Ed.).

Eric Blencowe (1976-83) says that 2006 has seen yet another series of foreign trips, the most distant being to New Zealand to represent the government at an albatross conference; just before this he was invited to Clarence House to meet Prince Charles who is very interested in albatross conservation. He may be off to the Seychelles in January for a meeting on shark conservation.

Michael Cox (1963-67) wrote to Bill White last May. "The passing of the years tends to have a dulling effect on many memories. They seem to coalesce into one amorphous whole, such that it becomes increasingly difficult to isolate specific moments or events. However, the most abiding memory I have of Rendcomb is of my first day, sitting with great trepidation in the Latin room, awaiting the arrival of the teacher. This memory is etched so indelibly, I remember it with greater clarity than this morning's breakfast!

As you may understand, what started out in that classroom as mere trepidation, turned into almost abject terror as you approached. We could hear you from afar - striding over the wooden floor on the far side of the main staircase. With each stride, the footsteps became louder and our fear greater. But that wasn't the whole of it. At the same time, you were reciting, repeatedly, "Ego, me, mei, mihi, me" and "Tu, te, tui, tibi, te". What awful incantation was this? What was to become of us little, 11-year old boys?

Of course, our fear was hugely exaggerated, as I suspect may have been the intention! In the end, we all learnt an amazing panoply of skills - by no means just the purely academic. Also, at least one of us took away a lasting love of Latin; the language, the culture, the analytical skills required, and even a structured approach to thinking. For many years now, I have been extolling the virtue of learning Latin to all those who would care to listen, and even to some of those who would not. All this is down to one man - Bill White! I am so pleased that, at last, I have the opportunity to thank you for turning one little ignoramus into a partly civilised human being!

Much water has flowed under many bridges since I sat petrified in your classroom in 1963. You probably feel the same way! Nevertheless, I hope you remember me from over 40 years ago, and not just for being somewhat disruptive and only just scraping through my Latin 'O' level. With your guidance, I think I made quite a good breakages man!"

Peter Sumsion (1942-49) writes, after replying to Joel Baillie Lane's request for news about his father (see elsewhere in the newsletter): "We shared some really wonderful days in the 7 years that our lives evolved from the age of 11 to 19, and, looking back on it, I have a sense of deep gratitude for the way in which we were educated - sadly no longer the case to-day! Freedom to roam the countryside, responsibility for organising so much within the school lifestyle: "duties" organised - such as cleaning, dining room duties, running the chickens, plus all the games organisations, fixtures, coaching and practice, drama, 'entertainments committee' and so on."

Nick Hall (1994-2000) writes: "After finishing a degree in oceanography at university in Southampton, I spent a year working as an industrial abseiler - basically dangling off buildings, on a rope, carrying out construction work. Perhaps you have heard of the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth - that is where I was working. A slightly obscure short-term career move, I did it because it pays exceedingly well and I needed the funds to fund my master's degree at Oxford University, which I started in October 2005 and finished in September this past year. I was a member of St. Edmund Hall and read for an MSc in biodiversity, conservation and management. It was undoubtedly the best year of my life. Currently I am preparing to move to New York where I will be starting a new job for an ocean conservation organisation called the Blue Ocean Institute. One of their major programmes involves addressing over-fishing and the challenges of making fishing more sustainable. The focus of the programme is to combat these issues by empowering the public. By providing consumers with the knowledge and choices necessary to make an environmentally sound decision, we hope to create a market-led solution to over fishing. I will be taking over as the manager of this programme with a focus on developing our relationships with fish markets, restaurants and culinary schools in New York.

I also work as a part-time freelance environmental photojournalist and have travelled to Northern India, Mongolia and Indonesia on assignments. Photography is my life's passion and I hope in a few years to make the transition to a full-time photojournalist. I have recently returned from Indonesia (Java and Bali) where I was photographing for an Oxford University tropical bird conservation initiative out there. Bird keeping is a hobby as common to the Javanese as keeping a dog is to the Brits. So I was sent there to explore the socio-cultural traditions and changes associated with Javanese bird keeping through photography. It was a fascinating trip."

Peter Trier (1958-65) entertained Bill White to lunch at the Bathurst in March. On a gloriously sunny day, they then spent the afternoon going round the college. Peter was amazed by the changes that have taken place and impressed by the happy ambiance.

Re: **Christopher Baillie Lane** (1940-49):

Joel Baillie Lane, Christopher's son, is trying to get all Christopher's friends to write something about him - stories about him at school or at work, tales of trips with him or of some of the (sometimes daft) things he did. All contributions will be gratefully received as they will add "colour" to his father's character.

If you would like to add to Joel's collection, please send your contribution to: Stud Cottage, Gorhambury, St. Albans, Herts, AL3 6AW.

From The Old Rendcombian Web Site

From **James Quick** (1975-80), 14.2.2007. Location: Holt, Norfolk. I would love to hear from anyone who was at Rendcomb with me between 1975-80. I have been terrible at keeping in touch, but I have seen Richard Pitt and Jon Ratcliffe in the last six years! I am in exile from the west country in north Norfolk! Rich and his family came to see us while they were on holiday up here. I saw Jon and his family while we were living near Melbourne, Australia. I have only recently found the Rendcombian website. Those photos certainly bring back some memories.

From **Chris Horton** (1967-73), 14.2.2007. Location: Winchester, Hampshire. **Jack Fell** (staff 1934-73) enthused me with an interest in electronics, which carried me through a varied career in defence, agriculture, medical, automotive and mobile phone industries. I started a research company in 2006 to patent and develop an improvement in the quality of internet services. Hockey has always been my sport. I was never much of a player, but did a fair bit of organising, and stopped in 2005 to umpire full time. I'm on the Hampshire umpiring circuit and aim to progress to the south lit in a few years.

From **Ronald Pilkington** (1951-57), 25.11.2006. Location: Torremolinos, Malaga, Spain. Have just encountered this site and would be most interested to contact anyone who remembers me, particularly Peter Hayes, Alec Richards, Howard Gough, David Semple and Alistair Wallace.

From **Michael Barnes** (1961-69), 18.6.2006. Location: Swindon. For many years until privatisation in 1994 I worked as a solicitor for the British Railways Board. Subsequently I have been in semi-retirement and currently serve as a non-executive director of Swindon Primary Care Trust and as a Swindon borough councillor (since first having been elected in 1996). This year I am the deputy mayor of Swindon and all being well should be mayor for the year beginning May 2007.

From **David Ashby** (1993-99), 31.5.2006. Location: Swindon. Hi all... I'm living back in Swindon now, pondering on what to do with my life, thinking something in I.T. so will be back at college in September to do some courses to start a proper job other than what I do at the moment and that is working in pubs. Will see you all at the cricket if you're going.

From **Jeremy Walter** (1950-56), 27.4.2006. Location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Physics grad. London, CSIRO Australia, 2 years in Antarctica as ionospheric physicist, now teaching physics in Cambodia, heading for Afghanistan/Iraq (no money in Cambodia). Would like to hear from Boats Forster, Filthy Luker. Regards to all, Jeremy.

From **Rose Kennaway** (1994-99), 7.2.2006. Location: Travelling in India. Hi just a short note to say I have been

desperate to get hold of Jeni Crook, the old e-mail address I have for her has not been receiving my e-mails. Jeni if you see this I would love to get hold of you. How's Lillian and the new house? Lots of love Rose (used to be Thrower).

Anyone else out there who fancies getting in touch, I would love to hear from old friends.

From **Treve Evans** (1971-78), 8.1.2006. Location: United Arab Emirates. Have been back in Dubai now for nearly a year having spent five years in Cairo, which was great. Now in a job with extensive travel in a region that includes the Maldives. Went to three of the 2,000 islands on my first trip - only another 1,997 to go. On the flip side I also cover Nigeria: the best thing about Nigeria is the direct flight back to Dubai. Been out of the UK for the last 11.5 years and loving it. Did my O levels 30 years ago in the hot, hot summer of 76. My daughter (we also have two sons 14 and 11) is doing her GCSEs this year. Bloody hell...! My brother, **Richard** (1971-75) is happily single and works doing something with computers and young ladies at a travel company in London. Not sure we'll ever know the truth...

From **Roger Hayter** (1947-55), 5.1.2006 Location: Budleigh Salterton, Devon. Only just found this site and impressed. I helped **Richard Sumsion** (1947-54) make the London taxi for the seven dwarfs in the Christmas 1953 photo. The photo was taken the day after the party and includes **R Sumsion, Tim Gay, M Richards, Hywel Richards** and **Alistair Wallace**. My memories of Rendcomb are pretty positive.

From **Thomas Paton** (1974-81), 21.12.2005. Location: Fairford. It's 25 years next year, any appetite for a gathering?

From **Matt Collier** (1994-99), 13.11.2005. Location: Chicago, Illinois. Wow...so many names I haven't seen in years. Just thought I should post a little note to say hello to those that I know. As for me...Finishing up my university courses in December and from there...who knows?

Common Room News

The academic year started with another good set of public examination results; GCSE 94% A*-C and A level 100% pass rate and 59% A-B grade. By Christmas two students had offers at Cambridge, subject to all As of course!

The roll of the senior school has hit 280 during the year and this represents an all time high. The sixth form has expanded into the annexe (formerly the new study area in School House) and the sixth form "flat" in which pupils spend a week fending for themselves as they would at university now happens in a cottage in the village.

Deputy Headmaster, Bobby Morgan retires this summer and, not for the first time, both he and biologist, James Stutchbury are running in this year's London marathon. Tributes to Bobby appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Bobby's successor, David Baker, comes to Rendcomb from Sutton Vallence with his wife Penny and his two daughters.

Chris Wood has become director of studies and has handed over head of chemistry to Joy Gibson and head of science to Carlo Vuolo. With John Williams's retirement the maths department continues to be run very efficiently by Cath Forshaw.

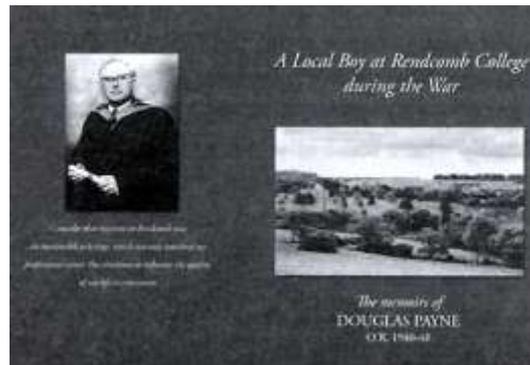
Last summer the music department was given a facelift, thereby completing the refurbishment of the Arts Block which was first opened in 1967. The formal teaching of design and technology to forms 1 to 3 began in September in a fully equipped area which was formally the woodwork and metalwork rooms.

The junior school's woodland classroom, opened by Jonathan Porritt on founder's day, at which he heavily criticised Jeremy Clarkson, much to the delight of the press, is situated at the base of the Wilderness above the swimming pool (probably where some of you used to smoke!) and it is well worth a visit.



Derek Coombes' 65th birthday. From left to right: Chris Wood (director of studies), Diana Baker (receptionist), Christine Johnson (headmaster's p.a.), Derek Coombes, Carol Endesby (bursar's secretary), Gerry Holden (headmaster)

A Local Boy at Rendcomb



The society is publishing this fascinating account of Douglas Payne's time at Rendcomb, in memory of his long service to the O.R. society. Copies will cost £5 + p&p and can be obtained from Jane Gunner.

Travel Bursary



A Silicon mine in Tanjung Putting National Park, Kalmantan, Indonesia by Kate Wilson (1999-2001). More information about Kate is on www.pic.uk.net under the student awards section.

News Of Recent Leavers

University Destinations 2006

Hannah Bullock	Cardiff	Journalism
Rebecca Bullock	Sheffield	Journalism
Jamie Burley	Oxford Brookes	Sport and coaching studies
Alexandra Collins	Oxford Brookes	Teacher training
Emma Couch	Bath	Business admin
Sam Daly	York	Biology
Lena Elspermann	Exeter	Business and management
Hannas Gasteiger	Leeds	Broadcasting
Naomi Giles	Bangor	Sport, health & PE
Sebastien Goffe	Lancaster	History
James Groombridge	Reading	Building surveying
Fiona Hicks	York	English
Rupert Hooper	Southampton	Economics
Edward Hutchison	Southampton	Biomedical sciences
Samantha Kolb	Exeter	Mathematics with finance
Hana Lawrence	Warwick	History
Rebecca Maxted	Exeter	English
Emma Medus	Central Lancs	Sports therapy
Momo Murahashi	Birmingham or Hull	Psychology
Tom Ruddy	Kingston	Drama with English
Steffen Schofer	Oxford Brookes	Media technology
Chris Scott	Reading	Geography
James Tarleton	West of England	Drama
Simon Wong	Exeter	Geography
Tiger Zhu	Imperial College	Electronic engineering

Hockey Reunion 18th March 2007



**Old Rendcombians
and 1st & 2nd XI
turned out in force
this weekend
to pay tribute to
Mr Morgan
at the O.R Reunion
Hockey Matches**

Do you recognise any familiar faces?



1st Men
Start 14:45
Umpires: ASB & DHM
Lost 2-8

Richard Demczak
David Roper
John Morgan
Ian Thompson
Tristan Sharman
Will Brittain-Jones
Duncan Bond
Steffen Schoffer (GK)
Pat Morgan
Simon Wong
James Groombridge
Charles Yardley
Charles Hutton-Potts

2nd Men
Start 13:30
Umpires: JHS & NF
Won 5-3

Craig Marcham
Charles Hutton-Potts
Armen Topalian
Charles Yardley
Steffen Schoffer (GK)
Will Thwaites
Will Brittain-Jones
Simon Wong
Chris Barefoot
John Morgan
Pat Morgan
Ian Thompson

Ladies
Start 12:00
Umpires: ASB & DHM
Drew 7-7

Emma Couch
Charlotte Ellis
Harrie Kingsford
Sarah Colson
Heather Roper
Jess Weston
Eddie Wickham
Hannah Bishop
Ashley Groombridge
Becca Demczak

College:
Franziska Philippi
Katie Ruddy
Maria Odintsova
Julia Birkmeier
Claire Robertson
Kate Robertshaw
Nadine Stritzl
Rudi McKay

ORs & college combined

Clearly it is in the best interests of the college 1st XI to play the ORs on mothers' day as the OR team that took on the 2nd XI so well (5-3) was largely unchanged for the 1sts (those legs aren't getting any younger!). That said there were some notable 'injured' players on the sideline: Jamie Burley and Matt Hutchins amongst them. The fact that the ORs created many opportunities (but only converted 2) was a testament to their latent skill levels and determination. David Roper was, as usual, everywhere and the midfield of Ian T, the Morgan boys and Tristan held things together very well. Up front saw the quick-shooters of Charles Yardley and James Groombridge but they were not alone in poor setting of the 'radar' as the fencing was peppered just wide of the goal (when they were on target they certainly brought the best out of the college keeper, Luke Lester-Powell). The defence of Will B-J, Duncan Bond, Charles Hutton-Potts and Simon Wong were stretched by the skill and pace of the college team (one of the strongest in recent years) led so ably by Alex Holden (an impressive drag-flick at last!). Steffen gave his all and did well to keep the score line from hitting double figures.