

# RENDCOMB COLLEGE CHRONICLE

**Vol. 10 No. 8**

**March, 1955**

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# Rendcomb College Chronicle

Vol. 10. No. 8.

March, 1955

## SCHOOL NOTES.

Term began on Friday the 17th of September and ended on Friday the 17th of December, 1954. There were several expeditions during term: to Cheltenham Town Hall during the Literary Festival when several members of the Senior School heard a lecture by M. André Maurois on "The Philosophy of Reading"; to Bristol for the Old Vic's production of "Much Ado About Nothing"; and after half-term to Cheltenham to see "Richard II".

Forms I, II and III were taken to the Town Hall in Cheltenham on the 25th of November to hear a concert, designed for schools, given by the City of Birmingham Orchestra under their assistant conductor, Mr. Harold Gray. Of the four items played, three were by twentieth century musicians: "Legend" by the Scandinavian composer Svendsen, da Falla's ballet music "Love the Magician" in which a violinist from one of the back desks played the extremely difficult piano part with great skill, and finally the "Enigma Variations" by Elgar. The classics were represented by Handel's "Water Music" in the modern orchestral arrangement by Sir Hamilton Harty.

It was decided that the extra half-holiday that the Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University had asked for on Founder's Day should be added to the half-term "exeat", therefore we left College immediately after breakfast on November the 5th and returned at the usual time on Monday the 8th.

A distinguished member of the Magicians' Club, Mr. Herbert Milton, gave a very enjoyable performance of conjuring in Big School on the 16th of November. A notice can be found on page 12.

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Once again we had an invitation to repeat the Carol Service elsewhere, and having given it in Rendcomb Church on the morning of the 12th of December, the choir and readers, with some hand-bell ringers, went to Bourton-on-the-Water at the invitation of the Minister (The Rev. Norman Harrison) of the Baptist Church where the service was held.

Our own service here at Rendcomb was of special significance, for the dedication of the new organ by the Reverend L. G. Allum preceded it. Before reading the prayers of blessing and dedication

Mr. Allum expressed the gratitude of both the Village and the College for Lord Dulverton's magnificent gift, and he also drew attention to the excellent work done by the boys of the College in preparing the site for the new organ, and the re-erection, after adaptation, of the seating from the Manor Pew in new positions. The organ itself stands against the window just inside the Screen; the Console is detached and stands at right angles to the choir with the organist facing the East end of the church.

A Confirmation Service was held by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester on Monday the 22nd of November, when eighteen College boys, prepared by the Reverend L. G. Allum, were presented.

The Reverend L. G. Allum, who has been priest-in-charge since the death of the late Rector, left on sick leave early in November and we are sorry to hear that he will not be returning to his cottage in the village. He has gone to his old parish at Sheepscombe where he is living in retirement. While many of our older readers will remember him with affection he has added many new friends during his two years with us. Since his departure the services have been taken by the Reverend R. E. Walker, who comes each Sunday from Cirencester.

Towards the end of the term it became known that the parishes of Rendcomb and Colesbourne had been amalgamated, and shortly after the Christmas holidays it was announced that a new Rector

had been appointed. He is the Reverend V. S. M. Wheeler, at present priest-in-charge of Broadwell, in North Gloucestershire. He is expected to be inducted in the late Spring. Meanwhile the Rectory is undergoing extensive repairs and redecoration.

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We welcome Mr. D. de G. Sells who joined the staff in January in the place of Mr. A. C. Austin. He was educated at St. Lawrence College, Ramsgate, and Trinity College, Cambridge.

Mrs. Bassnett, known to most of our readers at "Aunty B. " left the College during term after 24 years service. Although she had not been in really good health for some little time, she had hoped to stay with us until her quarter century was up, but various factors decided her to retire to Scotland and to make her home there. We remember with particular gratitude Mrs. Bassnett's work during the war when at times she ran the kitchen almost single-handed, and we couple our good wishes for her future happiness with the hope that she will speedily be returned to complete health.

\* \* \*

The extension to the Dining Hall which we have been hoping for is now a fact. The work was carried out during the Christmas holidays, but the furniture for it is not yet ready. It is hoped to

have it in use next term. It has been built out into the gym from the double doors in hall and extends from them to the entrance of the gym. A store cupboard has also been built in the gym. It is of similar proportions to the Dining Hall annexe and will be used for games equipment of all kinds.

And, we have a new clock—in Clock Hall—for we are now the proud owners of an XVIIIth Century Inn Clock which has been restored and presented to the College by Mr. John Callaghan of Cirencester, to whom we are most grateful.

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We are also grateful to Mr. C. H. C. Osborne for his valuable gift to the Library of an almost complete set of “History”—the magazine of the Historical Association; and to J. K. Comrie for a copy of “Ascent of Everest”.

## **COLLEGE OFFICERS.**

### **Easter Term, 1955.**

Prefects—R. N. Horne, B. Glastonbury, R. A. Powell,  
T. D. A. Semple, M. V. Harley.

§P. W. Man —J. Gough.

College Workman—J. Bolton King.

Music Warden —T. W. Rowley.

Senior Music Librarian! —R. W. Alder.

Choir Librarians—N. R. Wake, M. J. N. Bryant.

Church Collections and Deck Chairs—M. G. Cooper.

Librarians—R. A. Powell, M. V. Harley, J. R. Ellis,  
S. R. Merrett.

Manual Foremen—J. Gough, M. G. Richards, D. J. B. Forster, J. R. Ellis,  
D. A. Godfrey.

§Furniture Committee—M. G. Richards, R. D. Comley,  
I. A. N. Campbell.

Poultrymen—G. H. G. Herbert, C. H. Thomason, D. T. Hart,  
A. T. Brooks, M. D. Naish, J. M. Webb.

Pictureman—A. Harrison.

Stagemen—R. O. G. Hay ter, G. H. Richards, M. A. B. Forster, P. G. Auden,  
D. T. Hart, G. H. G. Herbert, I. A. N. Campbell.

Lamp Men—J. A. Richards, J. K. Walter.

§Billiards Committee—M. G. Cooper, D. W. Brown, J. R. Alder.

§ General Meeting Elections.

**MEETING OFFICERS.**  
**Spring Term, 1955.**

**Chairman**—B. Glastonbury.  
**Secretary**—J. R. Ellis.  
**Games Captain**—R. N. Horne.  
**Games Committee**—B. Glastonbury, D. A. Godfrey.  
**Field Secretary**—J. M. Astill.  
**Boys' Banker**—G. E. Page.  
**Meeting Banker**—J. K. Walter.  
**Senior Shopman**—J. A. Richards.  
**Games Committee Treasurer**—R. W. Alder.  
**House Committee Treasurer**—R. F. Stimson.  
**Finance Committee Treasurer**—J. E. Gooding.  
**Auditors**—J. R. Ellis, T. W. Rowley.  
**Finance Committee**—P. Mew, R. Bolton King.  
**P. W. Man;** —J. Gough.  
**Shopmen**—I. A. N. Campbell, J. G. A. Dainty.  
**Breakages Man**—D. T. Hart.  
**Entertainments Committee**—R. A. Powell, A. G. B. Wallace,  
G. H. Richards, C. H. Thomason, A. K. Bowley.  
**Magazine Committee**—D. W. Brown, C. Handoll,  
I. A. N. Campbell.  
**Record Committee**—M. G. Richards, J. M. Astill,  
A. G. B. Wallace, G. H. Richards, D. W. Brown.  
**Cycle Committee**—J. B. R. Browne, J. F. W. Beard,  
J. A. Richards.  
**Furniture Committee**—M. G. Richards, R. D. Comley,  
I. A. N. Campbell.  
**Amplifier Technicians**—M. V. Harley, T. W. Rowley.  
**Paperman**—R. D. Comley.  
**Drying Room Committee**—R. W. Taylor, J. D. R. Paine,  
D. T. Hart.  
**Rugby Games Warden**—R. D. White.  
**Hockey Games Wardens**—C. Handoll, S. R. Merrett.  
**Hockey Groundsmen**—R. J. Lawson, J. B. R. Browne.  
**Junior Hockey Groundsman**—R. Bolton King.  
**Rugby Secretary, 1955**—H. A. Gough.  
**Record Committee Treasurer**—G. H. G. Herbert.

## OLD BOYS' NOTES.

R. K. G. Bick is Secretary of the Exeter College, Oxford, Hockey Club.

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T. R. Morris has been appointed Lecturer in Poultry Husbandry in the Agricultural Department of the University of Reading.

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### **The Old Rendcombian Society.**

The London Dinner was held on Saturday the 16th of October, 1954, at Chez Auguste, 47 Frith Street, in a large and pleasant room which added considerably to the occasion—the first of its kind.

On several occasions in the past it has been suggested that members should be free to bring wives and fiancées, but it was not until the Annual General Meeting in 1954 that a decision was made to carry the suggestion into practice. The London Dinner, 1954, was the first Old Rendcombian Mixed Party, and what a delightful party it was! Some fears had been expressed that attendance at the dinner might fall but the reverse proved to be true and with a slightly greater number of Old Boys than usual, the addition of wives and fiancées enabled us to sit down to dinner nearly 50 strong. Speeches were kept few in number and short in length with the result that there was plenty of time for people to meet and talk. A most enjoyable and happy occasion.

Douglas Dakin was in the Presidential Chair, Brian Plenderleith proposed The College and the Headmaster replied, and Dan Terrett proposed the Society. Joe Maslin and David Vaughan are greatly to be congratulated on the successful evening for which they were responsible.

The following were present: J. F. Alder and Mrs. Alder, M. J. Bedwell and Mrs. Bedwell, B. J. Brooks and Mrs. Brooks, A. P. Browning and Mrs. Browning, G. H. Bye and Mrs. Bye, D. Dakin and Mrs. Dakin, C. J. Gough and Mrs. Gough, W. T. Greenway and Mrs. Greenway, P. S. Jackson and Mrs. Jackson, D. W. Lee-Browne and Mrs. Lee-Browne, J. C. Maslin and Mrs. Maslin, I. S. Menzies and his fiancée, E. J. Miller, G. T. Morgan, F. Nevel and Mrs. Nevel, J. D. Painter, N. A. Perkins and Mrs. Perkins, B. W. Plenderleith and Mrs. Plenderleith, F. C. Raggatt, M. B. Shepherd, J. H. Simpson and Miss J. Simpson, A. R. Tenty and Mrs. Tenty, D. C. Terrett and Mrs. Terrett, D. C. Vaughan and Mrs. Vaughan, E. Webster.

The West of England Dinner was held at Hорт's Restaurant, Bristol, on the evening of Saturday, November 20th. The normal

business of the Annual General Meeting was transacted with speed and aplomb by J. C. Maslin in the Chair, and D. C. Vaughan, the retiring Secretary, at his side. A very warm vote of thanks was given to the latter for his period as Secretary. Perhaps the chief point of general interest was the unanimous decision of those present that wives and fiancées shall be invited to the Gloucester dinner in 1955, when it is hoped to continue the resounding success that attended the mixed party in London this year. The following were present at this enjoyable gathering: P. Alder, J. E. Allen, F. J. Batten, R. H. Bettison, G. H. W. Bodman, R. F. Boyland, A. E. A. Brain, C. J. Brisley, J. R. Davies, J. Eyles, P. Field, K. J. Hanney, M. C. Harries, R. H. Jones, R. J. Kendal, D. W. Lee-Browne, A. C. Magor, J. C. Maslin, A. W. Morris, T. Price, P. D. Quick, A. E. Shield, J. R. Smith, R. W. Smith, W. M. Tugwell, D. C. Vaughan.

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The following Old Boys visited College during term: R. H. Jones, K. A. Statham, J. D. Painter, M. E. Knight, P. S. Rose, L. V. Crawford, T. W. Greenway, S. Trayhurn, R. H. Bettison.

### **THE CHRISTMAS PARTY.**

The Theme of this year's party was The Dwarfs, impersonated by the End of Term Entertainments Committee, but without their mistress, Snow White. Saul's Hall was transformed into the Forest in which they lived and worked, and the Statue himself hid behind the facade of their cottage, while the indoor-games cupboard became the mine, from which they emerged (in a red spotlight) from time to time. Their make-up and costume were excellent, in fact a match for their singing: they used "Whistle while you work" from Walt Disney's film, as their signature tune.

Once again there were the usual Parlour Games and, of course, the Feast. The tables were decorated with swans carrying Christmas crackers on their crested wings. These were made by Miss Babington, and we hope she is aware of our appreciation of the extra work she gives herself over the table decorations in addition to the not inconsiderable task of organising "provisions" for such a large number. There was no indication of any of the difficulties, such as shortage of staff, which some of us knew she had to contend with.

The main brunt of the party, of course, always falls on the End-of-Term Entertainments Committee. The enthusiasm, their energy, and the Emmett Engine "The Brass Monkey", combined to give us a happy and enjoyable evening.

## THE NEW ORGAN.

(continued).

Once the Faculty had been received from the Chancellor of the Diocese, work could begin in earnest. The old instrument was dismantled and taken to Taunton, and a start was made on clearing the Manor Pew of seats. These were of comparatively recent construction and had concrete bases over which were laid wood blocks. Then came the rather tricky job of levelling the floor in preparation for the removal of the platform on which the old instrument stood; the plan being to enlarge it before re-erection on the new site. But it proved unusable due to dry rot and woodworm. It was also found that the stone slabs under the seats in the Manor Pew had been removed, and so it became necessary to fill up the gaps in the floor with rubble and to cement them over; this proved a tedious and exacting job. Space for one of the pews has been found behind the door where the old chest used to stand, and the other, shortened, stands East of the console between it and the next pillar.

These tasks occupied many boys for several successive Tuesday afternoons, and when the space had been finally cleared and levelled, Mr. J. B. Miller (early College ringers will remember Jack Miller), a retired carpenter who lives in the village, undertook the construction of the new platform; somewhat larger than the old one.

Towards the middle of November, Messrs. Osmond's representatives arrived, and for some time the Church resembled a workshop: everywhere there were planks of wood, electrical equipment, and of course, pipes. The actual erection took about a fortnight. Then came the highly skilled voicing and tuning of the instrument. Every pipe had to be adjusted until it not only harmonised with its neighbour of the same quality, but also made a specific contribution to the tonal quality of the whole instrument.

For a variety of reasons over which neither the builders nor Rendcomb had any control, the organ was not finally completed until three or four days before the Carol Service, when it was dedicated by the Rev. L. G. Allum, who had done so much for the smooth running of Lord Dulverton's generous plan. Having had very little time to practice, therefore, Mr. Tooze faced the task of playing with some misgiving, but apart from one or two slight misfortunes, the service went off without a hitch.

In a short speech before the dedication on December the 19th, Mr. Allum spoke warmly of Lord Dulverton's generosity, and also of the work the boys had done, under Mr. G. F. Graty's direction, on Tuesday afternoons during Public Work.

At a recent meeting of the Church Council a minute was passed unanimously recording the appreciation of the Church of the excellent work done by the boys.

And now the new organ, infinitely larger in tonal possibilities but taking advantage of modern building technique, not occupying very much more space, stands facing North in the South aisle. The console is detached and stands at right angles to the choir stalls just behind the back pew on the Decani side, i.e. on the right facing the altar, the player having his back to the congregation. The console itself is a fine piece of workmanship; it is made of oak, with a roll top, and matches the main body of pews. It has two keyboards and the pedals are not only radiating (and so matching the angle of the player's feet) but concave.

A number of mechanical aids have been incorporated to increase the versatility and flexibility of the instrument. Double Touch Cancelling has been incorporated throughout. By this method the organist presses a stop slightly harder than usual when he wishes to play a "solo", and all the other unwanted stops switch themselves off automatically. This is only possible where electric action is used. We now have a Balanced Swell pedal controlling the shutters of the box in which some pipes (about a third) are housed: a great improvement on the old "pump-handle". There are four pistons to each keyboard and they are duplicated by toe switches. These pistons when pressed bring on a pre-determined selection of stops, and with the duplication can be worked either by hand or foot. When a fresh piston is pressed the previous selection is automatically cancelled.

There are twenty-six stops altogether, controlled by keys that are pressed down. Of these twenty-six stops, seventeen are actual speaking stops and the remainder are couplers.

But the criterion is not 'how many gadgets?' but 'how does it sound?' And the answer to that is 'magnificent'. It has some particularly beautiful quiet work: for instance the Salicional and Dulciana, and having not only a reed stop but also a Mixture on the Swell gives that extra brilliance and reserve of power which are necessary incentives to good congregational singing.

## PUPPETS.

We are glad to record the arrival of “the Puppeteers”. They signalled their advent last term with an announcement of “The Caterpillar Detective” to be given in the New Classroom on the 10th of December.

And it proved to be excellent entertainment. The Caterpillar taking his evening walk in the Park comes across a betrothed couple, a sailor home on leave and his girl friend. He discovers she has not been altogether lonely during his absence and a murder (witnessed by the Caterpillar) ensues. There was a dunder-headed policeman who refused to believe the obvious, and a character strange to modern thrillers, the Witch. It was a good decision to have this witch for she provided the reason for the two best scenes: the journey through the forest in search of her cave, and the cave itself. And it was an excellent Witch's Cave, with thunder and lightning and quite eerie effects.

This production was one of the best we have seen at Rendcomb, particularly since it was almost entirely due to the boys' own efforts. Although the plot was (obviously) agreed, the actual lines were not written down, and this gave the show a spontaneity which was both delightful and refreshing.

Mr. C. M. Swaine modestly disclaims credit for the success of the show, but we are sure the Puppeteers would be the first to acknowledge his ready willingness to advise and assist.

Parts were played as follows: —

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Caterpillar              | N. J. Price                      |
| P. C. 67                 | S. D. Hicks                      |
| Cynthia                  | J. B. Gooch                      |
| Robert                   | F. A. G. Ferguson                |
| Witch                    | J. Shaw                          |
| Jack Tar                 | D. R. Poole                      |
| Lights and Sound effects | T. L. H. Benbow and M. J. Bryant |

### “MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.”

We went to Bristol full of misgivings, for we had been told that this was the “second string” of the Bristol Old Vic, but our fears were soon dispelled. The cosy interior of the very small theatre was a pleasant change from the uncomfortably long bus ride and the wet weather.

The set consisted of several arches formed by a coarse netting and two highly inconsequent “arbours” at the front sides of the stage, made by Beatrice and Benedick opening a window-like frame strung with vertical cords—startling but quite effective.

By far the best of the actors were, happily enough, Beatrice and Benedick. Whenever they were on the stage the play seemed to bound forward merrily. Rosemary Harris as Beatrice combined a shrew-like beauty with an obvious enjoyment of her part and her verbal duels with Benedick were the highlights of the evening, and contrasted well with her fidelity to Hero. It would have been interesting to see her in the grim tragedy of "The Crucible", which is the company's next production. As Benedick, Edgar Wreford displayed a handsome "professed tyrant" to the sex of women, and combined it with a sly wit, and when necessary a noble seriousness which shows he is not just a profligate gallant.

Don Pedro and Claudio were both disappointing. They both seemed rather effeminate young men who liked dressing in bright clothes, singing and joking, but who lacked strength of will and had a rash credulity, which was all right for the humorous parts but which showed itself when they were taxed. It must be admitted however, that their parts did not help them.

Perlita Neilson's Hero paled into insignificance beside the effervescent Beatrice. She seemed just a pretty girl in comparison with the vivacity and charm of her companion and she reminded one of Zena Walker's "Juliet" at Stratford, without much of her maturity and acting skill. She did provide however, a good foil for Beatrice.

Leonato and Antonio, the two noble brothers, played their parts well, but like a great many of the cast they seemed to lack the experience to put over convincingly the apparent tragedy of Hero's infidelity and "death". The villains too, Don John, Conrade, and Borachio did not give one the idea that they were carrying out their evil task for any feeling of wrong. There was little passion, or indeed real villainy in their performances.

The deficiencies in these characters, never serious, were entirely made up for by a brilliant performance of Dogberry and Verges. The mere sight of them marching on to the stage to a doleful musical accompaniment was enough to make the audience laugh. Dogberry was a huge man in an impressive purple cassock, who seemed to fill the stage and blundered on in a broad Gloucestershire accent with blissful ignorance of the grammatical errors he made. Verges was wonderfully contrasted to Dogberry. He was a tiny wizened man with a sleepy expression, who was continually being knocked about and pushed and pulled by Dogberry.

The dresses were very light and appropriate and the whole performance was one which was thoroughly enjoyable. If this is the reserve cast of the Bristol Old Vic one can say that it must have a happy future

J. R. E.

**ELIZABETHAN THEATRE COMPANY THE  
OPERA HOUSE, CHELTENHAM.  
“Richard II.”**

After a succession of visits to Stratford-on-Avon it was something of an anti-climax to see Shakespeare acted by a relatively minor company; but those who took a firm line and refused to much of the acting, and at the same time realised that with a little condemn it by comparing it with a Stratford production enjoyed more care, or financial aid, this in some ways unsatisfactory performance could have been very satisfactory indeed.

The stage was dominated by that “contemplative self-pitying failure” Richard, played by Toby Robertson, an actor whom a party saw and admired last year in “Henry V”. Physically a large man, he towered over his scoundrel supporters Bushy, Bagot and Green and his rival Bolingbroke. He gave emphasis to his speeches through facial expressions which were ideally suited to the intimacy of the Cheltenham Opera House. Furthermore he spoke with precision, feeling and clarity, a pleasant contrast to those who still remembered with regret Laurence Harvey’s Romeo.

Bolingbroke was majestic and spoke clearly, which is all that can be done with a part suffering from a lack of individuality. Northumberland was not quite unpleasant enough: a limp and a slightly hunched back was not sufficient to convince the audience that he really was the devil his cunning schemes seemed to indicate. His son Henry Percy also warrants comment, for although he is only briefly introduced in this play he lacked the verve, courage and ferociousness which is seen in the older Hotspur.

When reading “Richard II” there seems to be remarkably little comic relief, so it was a pleasant surprise to see the doddering York interpreted as a comic character, although it might be thought that the part was over-acted. The traditional funny scene with the gardeners lacked vitality, and since discussion centres round the deposition of Richard it never quite escapes from the seriousness of royal intrigue and civil war.

The scenery and sound effects did not do justice to the quality of the acting. It is unfortunate that this young company should have been influenced by one of the more peculiar of Stratford’s new ideas. There one expects the bare heath to be furnished by one large rock and the wood to be full of fantastic trees, but to adorn the set of “Richard II” with a string of assorted objects which seemed to consist mainly of seaweed and imaginative spearheads was unnecessary and unwelcome. The music also cannot but call forth a scathing criticism, for the amount of surface noise on the recordings was reminiscent of those often played, but quite indistinguishable, wax cylinders of Tennyson’s voice.

A play of extremes is the best description of this production, not only because of the gap in quality between the acting and the scenery, but because several new ideas were tried, and whereas one of them—the Stratfordian type decoration—failed dismally, the others—the scene from “Woodstock” explaining Gloster’s death as a prologue, and the characterisation of York—were a great success.

B. G.

### **“MAGIC COMES TO RENDCOMB.”**

Yes, and what magic it was! Magic in the name of Mr. Herbert Milton, a distinguished member of the Magicians’ Club. In Big School, on the evening of November the 16th, 1954, he thrilled his audience with 80 minutes of original and mystifying tricks. For many of these tricks he used members of the audience, which only added to his smoothness and incredible dexterity.

His acts, however, were of great variety, ranging from an extremely clever egg-balancing act to mind-reading from a current edition of a London telephone directory. On one occasion, he tried to show his audience how to do a particular rope trick (as these conjurors always do!) with the help of a volunteer from the audience. One can only wonder what his reaction would have been had he seen the majority of the school sitting on their beds that night, frantically tying knots in their dressing-gown cords!

In fact, a very enjoyable evening.

R. D. C.

### **RUGBY FOOTBALL.**

This was our most successful season to date, not so much because of the results, but because first game was much more even than ever before. It could fairly be said that everybody who played regularly in this game and was not picked for the first fifteen might well have been. For the first time it was possible to have an effective scrum to oppose the first fifteen scrum in games. We are still rather weak in three-quarters: those who run well pass badly, and those who can pass seem to lack any penetration. In defence, however, the three-quarters came into their own. In fact we had only one try scored against us the whole season.

The weather spoilt the end of the season as far as games were concerned, though we did manage to get in two matches. However, the first match against Cheltenham College 3rd XV was played in ideal conditions. This was a very even game, with the defences on both sides having the best of it. Our try came from a good run on the wing by G. H. Richards. Semple converted.

The next match was against Marlborough College 3rd XV. The forwards were outweighed by a considerable margin, but somewhat surprisingly succeeded in holding their opponents. It was, however, only some very resolute tackling by both forwards and backs which saved us on several occasions when a score seemed likely. Paine, playing on the wing, was outstanding in this respect. Richards scored a similar try to the one at Cheltenham, and Marlborough scored as a result of a quick passing movement after a loose-scrum. Neither try was converted, but two penalty goals were kicked by Marlborough which decided the issue. This was undoubtedly the team's best performance of the season.

Against Dean Close 2nd XV we had a much less formidable task. We were superior in every department, and with the three-quarters seeing a great deal of the ball the gaps in the opposing defence were soon found and exploited. Tries were scored by Godfrey (2), G. H. Richards (2), Glastonbury and Semple. Two of these were converted by Semple.

The last match we played before the weather took a hand against us was against Kingham Hill. This was a disappointing match compared with the exciting one of the previous season; though it must be said that the gale that was blowing made good rugby almost impossible, tries were scored by J. D. R. Paine, D. A. Godfrey, G. H. Richards and R. N. Horne.

A junior XV match was played against the Cheltenham College Yearlings. We were rather too heavy for them as it turned out, but it was a most enjoyable game.

The 2nd XV in their only match defeated Kingham Hill very easily. We were much heavier than they were; our scrum weighing considerably more than the First XV scrum.

First XV. —H. Gough; G. H. Richards, R. N. Horne, J. D. R. Paine, M. V. Harley; D. A. Godfrey, C. H. Thomason; T. D. A. Semple, B. Glastonbury, R. F. Stimson, R. D. White, M. G. Cooper, J. M. Astill, R. J. Lawson, R. A. Powell (captain). Also played: G. E. Page.

**Junior XV.** —T. W. Rowley; R. Bolton King, R. A. Pilkington, P. Mew, A. K. Bowley; D. T. Hart, B. R. Paish; R. O. G. Hayter, R. F. Stebbing, I. A. N. Campbell, R. W. Taylor, A. T. Brooks, S. R. Merrett, D. W. Brown, M. A. B. Forster.

**Second XV.** —J. A. Richards; J. F. W. Beard, A. P. Hayes, J. Bolton King, D. R. Griffiths; J. R. Ellis, B. R. Paish; M. G. Richards, A. G. B. Wallace, J. B. R. Browne, G. E. Page, T. W. Rowley, I. A. N. Campbell, R. O. G. Hayter, R. W. Taylor.

### **RESULTS:**

#### **1st XV.**

Oct. 23rd v. Cheltenham College 3rd XV. Away. Won 5—0.

Oct. 30th v. Marlborough College 3rd XV. Away. Lost 3—9.

Nov. 30th v. Dean Close 2nd XV. Home. Won 22—0.

Dec. 4th v. Kingham Hill 1st XV. Home. Won 14—0.

#### **2nd XV.**

Dec. 4th. v. Kingham Hill. Home. Won 30—6.

#### **Junior XV.**

Oct. 23rd v. Cheltenham College Yearlings. Away. Won 14—9.

## NATURAL HISTORY SUPPLEMENT.

March, 1955.

### Miscellaneous Notes, August to December, 1954.

Most observations worthy of note during this period have concerned mammals and birds. Several records of invertebrate animals will be published when more complete information is available.

#### Mammals:

A Bank-Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) was caught and brought in alive by a cat in lower Rendcomb on October 7th. The remains of six others were found in Barn Owl pellets collected near Rendcomb lake in December. (See below). These are the first definite records of a species which would be expected to be quite common round here.

Yellow-necked mice (*Apodemus flavicollis*) have been captured and recorded at Rendcomb before. (See Dec., 1954 issue). Two more were taken in lower Rendcomb, and three in the College laboratory block, in November.

A Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*) was found at the Mill House on December 6th., and had a live weight of 3.03 gm. It was not fully grown.

Perhaps the most interesting mammal recorded in this period was a Basbastelle Bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*) found by Mr. Swaine in a College outhouse on November 17th. This is the second Rendcomb record of this locally-distributed species. (See July, 1954, issue). After being photographed it was released. Birds:

Of the two best known autumn arrivals, the Fieldfare began to appear round Rendcomb about October 7th, and was plentiful by the 13th. The Redwing, on the other hand, was later than usual. The first was seen on the village hill on October 30th, and the species was scarce until about November 16th. No Bramblings were seen before the end of the year, but a party of fifteen Siskins were identified at Marsden on December 7th.

A diseased Barn Owl, possibly suffering from avian tuberculosis, was brought to the College laboratories on November 25th by Mr. Ben Legg from Cliffleridine. It would not feed, became weaker, and had to be destroyed. Buzzards were seen several times over the College; a Hawfinch near the Church in November, and well over a hundred Mallard on the flooded river towards Marsden, also in November. M. Morton and P. Airey caught a Little Grebe by hand in the floods below the College. A dead Goldcrest, found on the Headmaster's window-ledge, weighed 5.0 gm. a few hours after death,

J. Bolton King.

### Analysis of food-remains in Barn Owl pellets.

Fifty pellets were brought to the College on December 4th, 1954, by J. G. Scudamore and A. K. Bowley from a Barn Owl roost in a hollow oak-tree near Rendcomb lake. These pellets were dissected by members of Forms II, III, IV and VI and the food remains were analysed:

| Species        | Total no. of Individuals per species. | No. of pellets with remains of x individuals (with or without other species in same pellet). |      |      |      |      |      |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|
|                |                                       | x= 1   | x= 2 | x= 3 | x= 4 | x= 5 | x= 6 |
| Field Vole     | 75                                    | 13   | 13   | 9    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| Wood Mouse     | 50                                    | 16   | 8    | 6    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Common Shrew   | 37                                    | 17   | 5    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    |
| Brown Rat      | 18                                    | 12   | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Bank Vole      | 6                                     | 6  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Small birds    | 6                                     | 6  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| House Mouse    | 3                                     | 3  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Pygmy Shrew    | 1                                     | 1  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Carabid beetle | 1                                     | 1  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

Total, all individuals    197

In considering the above Table, the numbers of Field Vole, Wood Mouse and Common Shrew only were considered because the other numbers are too low to be significant.

The numbers of pellets containing the remains of two only of these three species were as follows:

| Species                      | Number of pellets |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Field Vole with Wood Mouse   | 18                |
| Field Vole with Common Shrew | 18                |
| Wood Mouse with Common Shrew | 16                |

It will be noticed that these numbers are almost the same. This may appear at first sight to be unexpected in view of the total numbers of individuals shown in the first Table. This may doubtless be explained by the fact that the probability of the bird catching the Field Vole and Wood Mouse close together is reduced because the habitat of the Vole is in the open while the Wood Mouse prefers cover. The habitat of the Common Shrew is similar to that of the Wood Mouse, but extends also into the more open places. Thus the probability of catching Wood Mouse and Common Shrew near each other would seem to be relatively higher than that of taking Wood Mouse and Field Vole. This tends to

bring the pellet-totals closer together. Although the number of Common Shrews captured is lower than that of Wood Mice, the probability of catching Common Shrew and Field Vole near together is still approximately the same as for the other two combinations, because of the Shrew's tendency to adopt the more open habitat. It is, however, realised that the numbers involved are rather too low for drawing sound conclusions.

T. D. A. Semple.

## **Birds. Part II: Nightjar to Robin.**

(Continued from Vol. 10, No. 7.)

### **Caprimulgiformes.**

Nightjar. Reported to occur most years near Marsden. Probably also in other places at least occasionally.

### **Apodiformes.**

Swift. Breeds at Rendcomb College laboratory block. Relatively few are seen passing on migration.

### **Coraciiformes.**

Kingfisher. An irregular, but fairly frequent visitor to the Churn between Perrot's Brook and Colesbourne. Probably bred in 1952.

Hoopoe. One was watched for about two hours at Cowley by Mr. Swaine on 10. 5. 54.

### **Piciformes.**

Green Woodpecker. Fairly plentiful as a breeding species over most of the district.

Greater Spotted Woodpecker. Breeds regularly in rather small numbers and is frequently seen outside the breeding season.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. This bird is more often heard than seen. It is fairly frequently recorded, especially in spring, and undoubtedly breeds in small numbers.

### **Passeriformes.**

Wood-Lark. Breeds very occasionally in the upper part of the Bagendon valley. Occurs, and probably breeds at least occasionally, near Chedworth.

Skylark. Breeds in the upland fields, but less commonly than may be expected. Considerable numbers are seen in fields or flying over in autumn and winter.

Swallow. A plentiful breeding species, mainly round farms.

House-Martin. There are small, scattered colonies in the district, but this bird is a good deal less plentiful than the Swallow.

Sand-Martin. At present only recorded as a rather scarce species passing on migration through the district, although it breeds in numbers in the Thames and Severn valleys.

Golden Oriole. A male was seen by Mrs. Lane at Northmoor 'about 1938'. The description seems to leave no doubt that the bird was of this species.

Carrion Crow. A common breeding species.

Rook. Very common as a breeding bird. The rookeries nearest to the College are in the 'Wilderness', at the Rendcomb bus-stop, in Cotswold Park, Marsden, Monkham Wood, etc.

Jackdaw. A common species, breeding in hollow trees, old buildings, etc. Several pairs nest under the Fosse Way railway bridge beyond Calmsden.

Magpie. A rather common breeding species.

Jay. Breeds in moderate or rather small numbers in the wooded parts.

Great Tit. A common breeding species, present all through the year.

Blue Tit. A common resident species.

Coal-Tit. A fairly common species which may be seen at all seasons and which breeds in small or moderate numbers.

Marsh-Tit. A rather common breeding bird, numerous also at other seasons.

Long-tailed Tit. A fairly plentiful breeding species. Numbers appear to be less in winter, probably due to local movements out of the Cotswolds.

Nuthatch. Rather common as a breeding species; present at all seasons.

Tree-Creeper. A rather uncommon resident, breeding in small numbers.

Wren. A common resident bird.

Dipper. This species is present throughout the year on the Churn. There are, in most years, from two to four breeding pairs between Perrot's Brook and Seven Springs.

Mistle-Thrush. A rather common breeding species.

Fieldfare. Migrants arrive in most years about the third week in October, and are usually numerous. Fewer are seen in the latter part of the winter.

Song-Thrush. A common or fairly common breeding species, also present in winter.

Redwing. Migrants, often numerous, usually arrive in the second or third week of October. The bird is usually much scarcer after the end of December.

Blackbird. An abundant breeding species.

Wheatear. Regular but not plentiful as a migrant chiefly in spring on the high, open ground.

Redstart. A rather common breeding summer visitor in parkland and woods.

Nightingale. One was singing at Northmoor on 3. 5. 37. (Mr. Lane).

Robin. A common breeding species.

C. M. Swaine, B. Sc.

### **Myxomatosis in the Rendcomb Area.**

The rabbit disease known as "Myxomatosis cuniculi" is apparently endemic to South America. How it reached Britain is in doubt. The first outbreak in Gloucestershire was detected at Calmsden Manor on May 11th, 1954.

The disease spread into the environs of Rendcomb village from two directions. It reached us directly from Calmsden, crossing the Whiteway and arriving on Greenmeadow Farm in July, where it was rampant by the 20th. From here it spread down Kennel Bottom (August 8th) and into Conigre Wood, eventually crossing the Churn into the Old Park about August 20th. Two hundred and eighteen rabbits were buried on Kennel Bottom warren alone during August.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of August, an isolated outbreak was noted at Northmoor and the disease spread from there to Rapsgate (September 4th), Eycot (August 30th), and Clifferdine. It crossed the Churn into this wood about August 10th, and killed all the rabbits there in approximately three weeks. The second invasion of Rendcomb itself came as a result of this outbreak in Clifferdine, for the disease then attacked the animals on both sides of the river between Rendcomb and Clifferdine, the full force being felt by mid-September. There are two possible ways in which the Northmoor outbreak could have started. Mosquitoes could have been responsible or a dog or fox might have carried an infected rabbit from elsewhere. Human agency can be ruled out in this case.

Before and during the Northmoor attack the disease spread in a 'pincer-movement' round us. It travelled from Calmsden to North Cerney (August 6th) and Perrot's Brook, where it crossed the main road about August 8th. It also spread northwards from Calmsden along the Whiteway and Fosse Way infecting Woodlands Farm (July 24th), and so into the Gulf Scrubs (August 7th) and down to Marsden (August 24th). From here it entered Pen Hill woods (September 12th) and also Clifferdine where it met the infection from Northmoor.

Meanwhile another isolated outbreak occurred at Moorwood Farm near the main Gloucester road about mid-July. From this it travelled downstream to Bagendon (Aug. 20th) and north through Cotswold Park (September 4th) and Shewell Wood (September 10th), and so up to Rapsgate where it completed the encirclement of our district by meeting the up-hill spread from Northmoor.

The manner in which the disease spread in this region, coupled with the bad weather we experienced during the summer, favours the assumption that the disease was spread mainly by rabbit fleas and not much by mosquitoes. A number of rabbits somehow got inside an anti-rabbit fence near Eycot and escaped the disease, presumably because of the absence of mosquito vectors. We have also received a number of reports of isolated healthy rabbits in and around the Rendcomb district. The future of these and their offspring may prove of considerable interest.

J. Gough.

### **Squirrels.**

Up to about 1933 the British Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris leucourus*) was common round Rendcomb. About that year, or a little before, the Grey Squirrel (*S. carolinensis*), having been introduced into Britain from America, spread into the district and became steadily more plentiful. From about the same time the native Red Squirrel decreased rapidly and later disappeared altogether.

Information on the subject was gathered from several sources as indicated below.

#### **The Grey Squirrel.**

Mr. Finch of Woodlands Farm recalls seeing the first Grey Squirrels in Withington Woods about 1930 to 1932. Mr. W. Telling remembers seeing the first few close to Rendcomb village between 1933 to 1935. Mr. S. Lane saw the forerunner of many at Northmoor in 1934. He also records that the number shot on his land in 1942 was between thirty and forty, and that by 1952 this number had risen to somewhere between one hundred and one hundred and fifty per annum.

#### **The Red Squirrel.**

Dr. F. Gladstone, Mr. Telling and Mr. W. Smith all agree that the Red Squirrel was quite common up to about 1934, and that decrease was then rapid. Mr. Telling says it was still to be seen occasionally up to 1940 and Mr. B. Legg saw his last one in that year. Red squirrels still survive in some parts of Britain and we hope they may yet be seen again at Rendcomb.

A. G. B. Wallace.