



OLD RENDCOMBIAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

2020

Centenary 46th Edition

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Digital Edition 2020

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OLD RENDCOMBIAN NEWSLETTER

Society Officers

At the Annual General Meeting on 30th June 2019 the following officers were elected:

- President: Bill White (Staff 1961-97)
**3 Jessop Drive, Northleach
(Cheltenham), Glos GL54 3JG**
Telephone: 01451 860943
- Chairman: Richard Tudor (1973-80)
Vice-Chairman: Jessica Weston (1998-2005)
- Secretary: Jane Gunner (1975-77)
**Whiteway Farmhouse, The Whiteway
Cirencester GL7 7BA**
Telephone: 01285 658627
E-mail: *jane@r2g2.co.uk*
- Treasurer: Claire Germaine (1990-93)
School Representative: Alex Brealy (1980-87, Staff 1994-)
- Committee Members: Nigel Powell (1967-74)
Neil Lumby (1968-73)
Edward Thomason (2005-10, Staff 2011-)
Harley Phelps (2002-09)
Iain Whittaker (1980-87)
Hamish Wilson (1971-78)
- Hon Auditor: David Williams (1966-71)
- Newsletter Editor: Richard Tudor (1973-80)
**Keynes House, Water Lane
Somerford Keynes
Cirencester GL7 6DS**
E-mail: *rictudor706@yahoo.co.uk*

**The Minutes of the 86th Annual General Meeting
of the Old Rendcombian Society held at Rendcomb College
in Room E1 on Sunday 30th June 2019**

Old Rendcombians present:

Jane Gunner *née* **Watson** (1975-77), **Claire Germaine** (1990-93), **Des Knox** (1970-75), **David Williams** (1966-71), **David Marshall** (1972-79), **Nigel Hall** (1972-79), **Keith Winmill** (1972-79), **Simon Elliott** (1972-79), **Brian Smith** (1965-72), **Mike Cannon** (1974-79), **Gareth Thomas** (1979-84), **Nigel Burgess** (1974-77), **Phill Lampehe** (1968-75), **Bill White** (Staff 1961-97), **Colin Burden** (Staff 1963-97), **Jonathon Fletcher** (1968-75), **Mark Naylor** (Staff 1995-2017), **Julian Comrie** (1946-54), **Bob Edy** (1959-67, Staff 2015-), **Nigel Powell** (1967-74), **Jon Scawin** (1967-74), **Chris Wood** (1965-71, Staff 1976-2009).

1. Apologies: **Jess Weston** (1998-2005), **Harley Phelps** (2002-09), **Hamish Wilson** (1971-78), **Rob Jones** (Head of College 2015-).
2. The Minutes of the 85th Annual General Meeting held on 1st July 2018, which had been circulated in the 2018 Newsletter were accepted as a correct record.
3. Centenary celebrations (now postponed)
Brian Smith, **Julian Comrie**, and **Bob Edy** are organising a lunch in May 2020 for ORs who attended the College in the first 50 years. To date they had 58 attendees, 36 ORs and 22 partners. **Bill White** reminded the meeting that prior to 1973, joining the Society had not been available to everyone. It had previously been by invitation. Jane undertook to let Julian have the school lists from his era so that they could be sure no one had been overlooked. A flyer had gone out with the newsletter for 4th July 2020, which would now be an open day/musical event with food to allow it to be more inclusive as costs of holding a ball had become prohibitive. There would also be a series of lectures and two history tours of the site at other times.

4. Matters arising

The astrotrurf had now been renewed and the College was looking to upgrade the cricket pitches by providing covers, as too many matches had had to be cancelled this season because of the wet. An approach had been made to the Friends of Rendcomb Trust and **Colin Burden** reported that he already had pledges of £250 towards them.

It was proposed by **Michael Miles** and seconded by **David Williams** that the OR Society should contribute £500 towards them. This was agreed unanimously.

5. To receive Honorary Treasurer's report

Claire Germaine reported that the final balance at year-end was £15,622.20 of which £1,900 was ring-fenced for the Travel Bursary. £350 had been spent on two mail drops as a result of the sad deaths of past staff, **David White** and **Mary Price**.

Claire thanked **Chris Wood** for all his support over the last 2½ years while she was trying to get access to Lloyds Bank's internet banking. She went on to thank **David Williams** who had audited the accounts.

The committee had reviewed the level of life subscriptions, which had not been put up since 2017. It was agreed to put it up by 50p to £8/term. This was proposed by **Claire Germaine**, seconded by **Chris Wood** and agreed unanimously.

David Williams reminded the meeting that there was still £1,250 remaining of the late **Colin Hitchcock** fund. **Nigel Powell** agreed to see how this might be spent appropriately.

The meeting thanked Claire, Chris and David.

6. Travel Bursary

Jane reported that after a lull in applications, there have now been awards made to:

College pupils: Lily Whitehead and Ella Higgins-Anderson £400 each towards the Córdoba, Spain trip with the College.

2018 Leaver: **Eleanor Brealy** £500 field trip to Borneo.

College pupil: Jamie Southall £500 Think Pacific trip to Fiji.

2018 Leaver: **Madeleine Morgan** £500 to Namibia.

It was proposed by **Bill White**, seconded by **Simon Elliot** and agreed unanimously that the Travel Bursary should be set at £1,500 for 2020.

Richard Tudor reported that he had spoken to the 6th Form at Easter and explained the benefits of being members of the Society including the Travel Bursary.

7. Any other business

Richard Tudor read out the Head of College's report in his absence.

Jane reported that there were now about 50 people who requested notification by e-mail when the Newsletter was available to download. She thanked **Nigel Powell** and **Neil Lumby** for all they did to facilitate it – 1,500 had been printed this time and she was grateful for all the fascinating material people sent in.

Nigel reminded the meeting of the origin of the website which **Colin Hitchcock** had so cleverly devised with aspects redolent of Facebook even before it was created.

Bill White thanked the committee for all it continued to do and thanked **Ed Thomason** in his absence for having worked so hard to make a very successful Hockey Reunion.

8. The meeting closed at 1.10pm with a vote of thanks to the College.

SPORTS CONTACTS

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

College: Alex Brealy | BrealyA@rendcombcollge.org.uk

Edward Thomason | thomasonE@rendcombcollge.org.uk

Rugby & Hockey: Harley Phelps | harley.phelps@googlemail.com

Girls' sports: Jess Weston | jess_weston@hotmail.com

Cricket: Edward Thomason | thomasonE@rendcombcollge.org.uk

CLASS of 1978

The Class of 78 is hoping to arrange another get together weekend sometime in June/July. I have e-mailed all those for whom I have contact details. If you haven't heard from me, please do get in touch. We managed a fantastic turn out in 2018 and it would be great to have at least as many, if not more! E-mail **Pen Jones** at penjones134@gmail.com for more information.

The First 50 Years: Celebration Lunch

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Celebration Lunch that was due to be held in May 2020 has had to be postponed. A total of 89 ORs with partners and guests were due to attend the Celebration. The committee organising the event are hoping to arrange a new date for the Celebration to be held post Coronavirus. The new date will be **2nd June 2021** as shown on the Old Rendcombian website – oldrendcombian.org.uk

Any pupils who attended Rendcomb in the first 50 years (up to and including 1970) who would like to be added to the existing attendance list should contact **Brian Smith** (1965-72). Please send an e-mail to Brian at rendcomb2020@gmail.com by **30th June 2020** to obtain further details of the Celebration.

THE NEWSLETTER

Jane Gunner writes: As can be seen from the picture, last year there was a huge team putting the Newsletters in their envelopes, this included flyers about the **Centenary Celebrations**, which have sadly



all had to be **postponed** or **cancelled**. You will also find that some of the usual features are missing as a result of the extraordinary world we find ourselves in. I hope you enjoy what we have been able to provide. Again, I would like to thank everyone for their contributions with special mention to **Des Knox** and **Amanda Brealy**.

REUNION – 30th June 2019



Top row *left to right*: Revd. **Bob Edy** (1959-67, Staff 2015-), **Dave Marshall** (1972-79), **Jerry Archer** (1972-79), **Bill White** (Staff 1961-97), **Simon Howell** (1972-79), **Chris Wood** (1965-71, Staff 1976-2009), **Colin Burden** (Staff 1963-97) Middle row: **Nigel Burgess** (1972-79), **Dave Bealand** (1972-79), **Mike Cannon** (1972-79), **Nigel Hall** (1972-79), **OR Dave Williams** (1966-71), **Phil Smith** (1968-74), **Nigel Powell** (1967-74) Front row: **Des Knox** (1970-75), **Brian Smith** (1965-72), **Keith Winnill** (1972-79), **Simon Elliott** 19(72-79), **Jane Gunner** *née Watson* (1975-77), **Jonathan Fletcher** (1968-75), **Phil Lamphree** (1968-75), **Jon Seawin** (1967-74), **OR**

40 YEARS ON



All 1972-79 – Back row *left to right*: **Dave Marshall, Jerry Archer**
Third row: **Nigel Burgess, Mike Cannon, Nigel Hall, Simon Howell**
Second row: **Dave Beanland, Simon Elliot**
Front row: **Keith Winmill**

CONGRATULATIONS

Olivia Knapp (2008-13) graduated with 1st Class Honours in Chemistry (MChem) from Wadham College, University of Oxford in July 2019.

BIRTHS

To **Ashley Madden** *née Groombridge* (2004-06) and Nick **Madden** a daughter, Flora born February 2020, and a sister for Felix.

MARRIAGES

Joe Scott (2001-08) married Lauren Tranter in Bournemouth, in June 2019.



Chris Scott (2001-06), **James Bladen** (2001-06), **Georgie Bladen**, **Mark Gunner** (2001-08), **Jenny Scott**, **Laurie Wilcox** (2001-08), **Katie Wilcox**, **Joe Scott**, **Emily Apps** (2004-08), **Lauren Scott**, **Aimée Schofield** (2001-08), **Charlie Stutchbury** (2001-08), **Yasmin Stevens**, **Sinead Brennan** (2001-09), **Richard Collins** (2001-08), **Ollie Richards** (2001-08), **Claire Michaud**, **Rebecca Richards** *née Hutchison* (2000-06)



Ollie Richards, Mark Gunner, Richard Collins and John Newton reprised their roles as class of 2008 music makers and reformed their band, The Bord. We hear they were still rather good!



Luke Gunner (1998-2005) married Louise O’Beirne at St John the Baptist Church, Cirencester in September 2019. Afterwards, guests walked through the Harebushes Woods to a marquee in the paddock behind Whiteway Farmhouse.





ORs joining them to celebrate were *left to right*: **Mark Naylor** (Staff 1998-2017), **Sam Gunner** (1996-2003), **Jenny Lane-Birkenstock née Lane** (1980-81), **Jenny Phelps née Watson** (1978-80), **Holly Phelps** (2001-12), **Mark Gunner** (2001-08), **Adam Phelps** (1980-82), **Jane Gunner née Watson** (1975-77), **Joe Watson** (1971-78), **Fiona Walpole-Trumper** (2002-09), **Harley Phelps** (2002-09). **Jess Weston** (1998-2005) joined them later.

Mark Gunner played the piano as they walked up the aisle and sang during the service. **Joe Watson** had spent the summer growing the pumpkins for decorations!





Chris Wood (1965-71, Staff 1976-2009) married Jill Leney in November 2019 at Chiseldon House, Wiltshire. Among those who helped them celebrate the happy day were **Bill White** (1961-97), best man **David Williams** (1966-71), **Andy Stafford** (1966-71), **Julian Gray** (1964-71) and **Jane Gunner** *née Watson* (1975-77). **Hartley Moore** (1964-71) joined them briefly via Skype. They met 50 years ago when Chris was in the 5th Form and have been friends ever since. So, when they both lost their partners, they decided to get back together and now live happily in Swindon.





Above: Julian Gray (1964), Jill and Chris Wood (1965-71, Staff 1976-2009), David Williams (1966-71)





Ed and Gary Stark-Hughes

Ed Slark (2001-11) married Gary Hughes at Rendcomb in December 2019. Among those with them to celebrate the happy day were **Mike and Anne Slark** (Staff 1994-2011) **Emily Slark** (2006-08), **Charlie Clements** (2005-11), **Yasmin Lester-Powell** (2004-11), **Natasha Heffron** (2005-10), **Paul and Diana Dodd** (Staff 1997-2016) and **Sarah Bell** (Current staff).



OBITUARIES

It is with great sadness that the Society has learnt of the deaths of the following people. Our deepest sympathy goes to their families and friends.

Michael Beaumont Shephard (1944-47)

Born 25th April 1929 in Croydon, Surrey. Died 8th May 2019 (2 weeks after his 90th birthday) in Vancouver, BC, Canada.



Michael's sister Carolyn Jury wrote: I wanted to let you know of the death of my brother, Michael Shephard, who with our brother, Kenneth Maxwell Shephard, attended Rendcomb College from some time in 1944 for about 5 years each. Sadly, Kenneth died in 1985. As a family, we had returned in a large convoy from New York to Avonmouth after three years in California and then travelling around

Canada and on to New York waiting for transport back to UK. Our father, Red Shephard, was a naval architect with Lloyd's Register of Shipping, sent out to help with the shipbuilding programme under Henry J. Kaiser in Richmond, California. We joined him later in 1941 travelling out in a little ship unescorted.

We rejoined our father in London in 1944 but with the war at a critical state, we had to start afresh with finding a home and schools for the three of us. (I was born in 1937 in Hamburg where my father had been posted to learn about welding of ships at Blohm & Voss shipyard – where the Bismarck was built at the time! Our family got out of Germany just before the war started in 1939.)

Luckily my father had a schoolfriend who was the Headmaster of Rendcomb College, Denis Lee-Browne, and, at very short notice, he found places for Michael and Kenneth, who were by then 15 and 13. Not easy ages to go to a new school. But they both thrived with the

support of the James and other supportive and dedicated teachers and soon settled into the British way of life and all the school had to offer. They both made good friends. Michael kept up with **Ted Jones** all his life. (I also had one term sharing a tutor with Hermione Lee Brown, the daughter of Denis and Frieda before I was found a place at a lovely farm school in Wendover, Bucks, before St Felix, Southwold, Suffolk.)

Michael always loved travelling and his career showed that. He spent two years National Service in the Royal Navy. He then worked for Shaw Savill, the New Zealand shipping line and then decided to return to Canada and settled in 1956 in Vancouver, BC, working for Canadian Pacific Airlines where he stayed the rest of his working life and really enjoyed it and much travel.

He married Joanna Baker, an English nurse. They met when I was also in Vancouver working at CPA in 1958/59. Mutual friends introduced two sets of brothers and sisters over dinner and the rest, as they say, is history! Michael and Joanna spent the rest of their lives in Vancouver very happily but often came home to visit family and kept in close touch. They have a son, Keith, and a daughter Linda who is married to Robert Castagna and have three grown up sons, Andrew, Trevor and Stephen. Michael and Joanna were devoted to their family and very happy sharing so much together. They made a wonderful life for themselves and many friends but were always close to us. Joanna died just six months ago after a battle with cancer and Michael was in a wonderful care home for the last 16 months. We did manage a visit to Vancouver in November (where our family also lived from 1968 to 1980), which was bittersweet but wonderful to be united for a short while and visit favourite beautiful places there.

Michael was so loyal and kind, and could be stubborn(!) but enjoyed life and appreciated so much in his life and friendships.

Chelsea was his lifelong team and his favourite tippie was a whisky. We will all miss him in our lives but are reassured that he is now reunited with his beloved Joanna and free of the dementia that gradually ended his life.

Carolyn went on to say: I just wanted to let you know that he always remembered Rendcomb fondly and visited a couple of times over the

years. There were a couple of names I remember that the boys knew at school – **Peter Sumsion, John Sumsion** and **P.D. Quick**.

Carolyn also wished her brother Kenneth to be remembered. Kenneth went on to study History at Trinity, Oxford and then joined the BBC where he became known as a fine historical documentary producer of a series called ‘Chronicle’ with John Julius Norwich as the historian and presenter. They did many fascinating programmes in the 1970s mostly. Apparently, they can be seen in some form nowadays, our daughter told us. **Kenneth Shephard** (1943-47) died in 1985. He loved his time at Rendcomb although it was a difficult time around 1944 when he returned from the States in a huge convoy from New York to Avonmouth with US troops on their way to D-Day and the landings.

Kenneth was really encouraged by Mr and Mrs James who inspired his love of history (and English and Drama too). He went up to Trinity, Oxford, after a time at Mill Hill School.

He had two years National

Service with the RAF – in Radar Control and became an officer.

This is when he then joined the BBC training courses and progressed to being a very respected historical documentary producer on BBC2.

I can’t believe how long ago he died now. He is sorely missed but referred to so often in the family. He could make us all laugh and thrived mostly on recounting ‘disasters.’

Because of him I learnt to appreciate the visual arts, theatre, ballet and great films and occasions and music.

Such good company – kind and thoughtful, and brave and fun.



David William Brown (1950-58) died 23rd November 2018.

John Gooding (1951-58) writes: My friend David Brown, who died on the 23rd of November 2018 at the age of 79, was rescued by winning a scholarship to Rendcomb from an unhappy home life, and he was to be a lifelong devotee of the school. Rendcomb would in many ways be the making of him. When Noel Wills founded the school it was surely a boy like David that he had in mind: the talented child of humble parents who would flourish in his humanised remake of Winchester on a Cotswold hilltop and would go on to help build the new and more meritocratic society emerging from the First World War. And flourish David did, academically, socially, and musically. Not, it must be said, on the sports field: David and I were the no-hopers in our year, and he would ruefully recount how his one appearance in the cricket side ended with him being 'retired hurt nought.' Music, though, was a different matter: the director of music, John Tooze, soon spotted his talent, sat him down at the organ and before long David had become his deputy in church on Sundays. So began a career that led David to be for many years the organist of St Mary's, Rickmansworth and an occasional organist at St Margaret's, Westminster. Abilities that would make a Whitehall mandarin of him were soon shown as well, and he carried out various tasks then devolved to the General Meeting with an effortless efficiency. Academically, his strength lay on the arts side and he shone at History and English, which were taught by John and Kathleen James, a marvellous couple who were in many ways the backbone of the school.

David went on to Oxford, reading PPE at Worcester College, and then began a long career in various Whitehall departments, which pitched him into the heart of the nation's affairs and frequently took him into the House of Commons. Michael Portillo, Shirley Williams and Roy Hattersley were among the ministers he worked with, and, most memorably, he served for several years as private secretary to Michael Foot. He spoke often, and always with affection, of his relationship with the Labour leader. There was much to bond them: both were shy and essentially private people, and both were short-sighted, not at all practical and very bookish. Both in fact were

bibliophiles, and I have always suspected that at times they discussed books when more pressing matters required attention.

Oxford paved David's way into the civil service, but it also did something even more crucial for him: it gave him Gertrud. A shy girl from a remote village in Austria, Gertrud was living as an au pair with a Don's family who treated her very much as their own daughter. But an even greater stroke of luck was her coming together with David. The summer term was nearing its end, finals were over, soon he would leave Oxford forever. But at the last gasp they met, and he happened to have in his pocket a ticket for the Worcester College end-of-year ball. Which was very nice except that he had no one to go with. Would she come? She would. They danced the night away, and a year later they were married.

So began a happy and long-lasting marriage which would be David's sheet anchor. Two sons and a daughter were soon born to them. The children would flourish in a home so different from the one David had known, and in due course would give their parents half a dozen grandchildren. Retirement in David's late fifties then began a golden era in which he and Gertrud travelled all over the world. But in these years, he also travelled a great deal back into his own past. He reminisced about his early years in Bristol, which was always the place of his heart. The ordeals, dramas and personalities in Whitehall and Parliament were revisited, joyously or otherwise. But time and time again he returned to Rendcomb, without which there would probably have been no Whitehall. Over all these returns there loomed the figure of Denis Lee-Browne ("DWLB" to us), whose awesome personality David could never quite escape from. Though for relief we would turn to John James ("JCJ" to us), the second master, who while being loyal was subtly subversive and in some ways the antithesis of the headmaster. And yet for all these travels in the mind, David never went back to Rendcomb, preferring to remember the school as it had been, for him a refuge and an oasis, and its imprint on him was indelible.



In 2013 David and Gertrud celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, surrounded by children and grandchildren. But these final years were clouded by ill health, leukaemia in Gertrud's case and Parkinson's in David's. They supported one another through it all, much helped by their children. They died within a few days of one another, close together in death as for so many years they had been in life.

John Falconer (1969-76) died in May 2019. He had studied accountancy at Birmingham University and went on to work for IBM in Hampshire. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his wife, Julie, and their three grown up children.



Suzanne 4th from left, at the 30 years reunion in 2005

Suzanne Marston (1973-75) died in November 2019

Henrietta Bud *née Hooper* writes:

I met **Suzanne** in 1973 when we arrived at Rendcomb. It was a boarding school for boys in those days and 1973 was only the second year of admitting girls to the 6th Form. We moved into Park House which was then brand new and had been built especially. All the 6th Form girls fitted into the far wing, with the common room and Mr. Price, the housemaster's accommodation in the middle. The upper 6th Form boys lived in the wing nearest the school.

It was a lovely time to be at Rendcomb because everything was very fluid and informal. Mr. Price confided in us that our arrival was a learning curve for the staff as well as the pupils. When they got cross with a boy, that boy might or might not take heed of what was said, but if they got cross with a girl, he complained that she promptly burst into tears! I don't remember bursting into tears myself but this was obviously a winning strategy. We enjoyed much more freedom than in our previous schools and I look back on those years with pleasure because everyone was so kind and so accommodating. Suzanne was only 14 years old at the time but she was tall and seemed just as mature as the rest of us so we all soon forgot how

young she was. She and I quickly became firm friends even though our timetables didn't coincide. Sue took humanities subjects – English, History and Economics – while I did sciences. She was quite politically engaged and I remember her staying up all night at school to catch the results of a general election. This continued and there were other elections where we waited anxiously and noisily for the results. One in a pop-up bar under the arches somewhere in London, I remember very clearly because I got food poisoning there and spent the following day being desperately sick.

Sue was very proud of her Armenian ancestry and looked like a Madonna who had just stepped down from an icon. She was also very bright and she became the most marvellous conversationalist with whom one could talk about anything and everything.

She went to Oxford to read English at Lady Margaret Hall and then to the Courtauld Institute in London to study History of Art. She had a marriage that didn't work out, following which she put a lot of energy and enthusiasm into her work. She worked in various art galleries and for the British Council which involved quite a lot of travelling and which she enjoyed enormously. Latterly, she ran her own gallery in Sherborne in Dorset. She had a marvellous eye, which stood her in good stead while choosing artists to exhibit at her gallery and in amassing a really lovely collection of artworks. She took a lot of pleasure in beautiful things – chiefly paintings, ceramics and sculpture but she also loved beautiful clothes and she dressed in a flowing, colourful, Bohemian style which was very distinctive and all her own. In this, and in other ways she stood out. She was a huge personality, a loyal friend and a powerful, feisty character. She thought a good deal about life and her opinions were always worth listening to. They were often surprising, always astute and underpinned by a great deal of human warmth and a strong moral code. She was also immensely compassionate.

Sue loved travelling and was very independent. I know that she visited India, several countries in the Middle East, Croatia, Spain, Italy and Iceland and probably many other places besides.

Throughout her life, she coped with episodic mental health problems and for the past eight years, with cancer, in a characteristically stoical, brave and good-humoured way. She dealt with these things with an incredible toughness and a resilience that her Armenian grandmother would have been proud of. She was an exceptional person, clever and indomitable as well as kind, generous and unique. I miss her enormously.

Denis Price (Staff 1969-90) writes:



“Suzanne’s gentle and self-effacing manner belied her awesome (to me) intelligence and her devotion and her profound knowledge of the Art world. A gentle and loving lady whom we were proud to call our friend and one who enhanced people’s lives.”

Bill White (Staff 1961-97) recalls that while he was on a holiday with the Ramblers in 1994, he and

the group were having an evening meal in a restaurant in Verona before going to the opera to see Othello. The party leader asked Bill to go into the conservatory to collect the rest of the group when an apparition in white appeared and said: “Ah, Mr White, I thought I recognised your voice...” much to the amazement of the rest of the group. It was of course Suzanne on a holiday with her father.

John Joseph North (1937-46) died in February 2019

Alexander (John) Dainty (1951-55) died in February 2019

Mary Price (Staff 1969-90) died in April 2019.

Bill White (Staff 1961-97)

writes: By 1972, the Governors had agreed for girls to be admitted to the Sixth Form at Rendcomb and Park House was under construction. (The design met with some local disapproval). The far wing was for the girls, while the boys in the second year Sixth Form occupied the nearer wing. This decision had been made largely because of the determination



of Major David Wills who had seen the success of a similar scheme at Atlantic College, where he was also a Governor. It meant that Rendcomb became co-educational considerably ahead of many independent schools.

For their first year, the girls boarded with members of staff until Park House was officially opened in 1973. **Roger Medill**, the new Headmaster, was responsible for the selection of the new entrants from an encouraging number of applicants. Rendcomb was particularly fortunate that **Denis Price**, head of History, and his wife, **Mary**, were keen to take on the responsibility of running the new boarding house. The success of their time in Park House can be seen in the following tributes to Mary who has sadly died.

Dr Alice Parshall (1974-76) PhD, FRcPsych writes:

I met Mary in 1974 when I came to Rendcomb as part of the third cohort of twelve girls joining at 6th Form. Denis and Mary were in charge of Park House. Looking back (certainly I did not appreciate it at the time) that must have been a challenge. Rendcomb had been a boys' school and remained so below the 6th Form. Secondly none –

or few of the girls knew each other, some had not boarded before and had pretty little in common with each other or Gloucestershire.

To now I do not know how Rendcomb was identified for me. My mother had died when I was two and my father re-married. I had taken to my bed for the better part of a year and then been at a variety of boarding schools, most recently an Anglican convent, where 6th Form study was not really available – even less so in science. The Mother Superior had suggested finishing school, and then flower arranging. I had said I thought I would do medicine – I knew my mother had been a Doctor. And I could see I was going to need to do something with myself if I was to gain any sort of sense of safety. There was not much support for that from home however, near opposition actually. I was 15 having somehow jumped a year and pretty highly strung and, when I was at home, heavily reliant on a pony, Bracken who I had had since I was 11.



Mary, and Denis, quietly, and frankly magically, changed all of that for me. They absolutely tolerated us all, giving what seemed to be infinite latitude. Without undermining them, Mary was quite clear that my father's and stepmother's views could be respected, yet set aside. Delighting my children to this day, was Mary's "poke" that our family crest, actually a wolf holding a pear branch in its mouth, looked just like a Scottie who had been pulling up the weeds. Mary steered me through studies and made sure UCCA forms were completed (I know mine had to be corrected because I was applying to study MedEcine.) I contracted glandular fever over A-levels and Mary firmly nursed me through it, once and I think only once, showing how exasperating I could (can) be when I went off for a bicycle ride when I was supposed to be resting. *"Just jolly well do what you're told..."* – I can hear it now. Although not (as far as I knew) particularly religious both Denis and Mary fostered my Anglicanism and fondness for Churches – at the

end of A-levels, with my then, and enduring close friend Jane Lyons “mapped out” in HB pencil the Churchyard. Perhaps as a most extraordinary act of pragmatic affection Mary bought Bracken so, not only did I have him at Rendcomb for my last year, but he was then looked after by Kate and Mary, in conditions of maximum luxury, for the next twenty years.

The picture of him “cooling his heels” in Mill Stream was taken by Mary and sent to me: it sits on the turn of my stairs and reminds me of her every single day. The Bracken intervention allowed me to negotiate getting away from home and setting off to London: without it I would have been stuck at so many levels. Throughout my long training, a PhD, the Natural History Museum, then internal medicine and then psychiatry, Mary and Denis remained calm anchorage for me: trips back to Rendcomb, to Mill house and Mary’s wonderful cooking – and again, looking back, a unique experience for me, her generous, if unspoken pride in how things were turning out alright after all. While unfailing in support to help me contend with family complexities, Mary never once stepped over the boundary of making me feel mothered. While never unkind she could be splendidly direct. I can clearly remember another telephone call when she rang to tell me that Bracken had come to the end – and she had had him fed to the local hounds as he had so enjoyed hunting!

Some years later when Denis and Mary had moved to France, I had married and had my first two children, Mary was visiting us in London when Denis, rather excitedly (*“I say”*), rang to say he had, with a friend, who was looking to buy a house in France, seen (the remains of) a property that he would very much like himself “for the gates alone”. That we bought, spending a great deal of time with Denis and Mary while my husband Terence made it habitable. We have remained in that village since, it being amongst another things a platform for the children to go through the Lycée in London, oblivious to the advantage of bilingualism.

So, I have too many reasons to be grateful to Mary – and all of her family. I hope I was able to let her know that, and if I did not, sufficiently, I would like to do it again – to Denis and all of the family.

Mary with **Sally Ede** *née Hall* (1975-77) at a 6th Form party, Spring 1977 in Park House organised by **Sally, Jane Gunner** *née Watson* (1975-77) and **Diane Martin** *née Crew* (1975-77)



Gardening with **Clive Mathias** (1968-75) and **Norman Crowe** (1968-75). The picture is taken looking across the lawn towards the Dulverton Hall.

In April 2019 we'd just landed in Japan for a holiday, **Greg Dorey** (1967-73) writes, and when we reached our hotel, the first e-mail we received was from Denis – telling us of Mary's death. We hadn't known how ill she was and it was like a punch in the stomach. She had been part of our life for so long, and we couldn't even get back for the funeral.

Denis and Mary's arrival at Rendcomb was a revelation for me, because he made me realise for the first time how enjoyable and important History could be – I wouldn't otherwise have chosen it as an A' Level topic and a degree course and then found it so relevant to my subsequent career. (It still is.) So, from a very early stage I associated Mary with a sea-change in the way I saw things. And both of them were anchors for me when Park House opened and they together made such a profound impact on my life there, in the 6th

Form. I know this is supposed to be about Mary, but I can't in my mind separate her from Denis. The details are a bit hazy, several decades on, but she was such a reassuring presence at that time. Her practical common sense, sound advice and kindness were a critical part of the human glue that kept Park House together and functioning properly.

After Rendcomb, I met up with Denis and Mary for an enjoyable drink and chat from time to time. But who knows how things might have developed had they not gone on to be chatelain and chatelaine at Lamazère, by which time I'd become a diplomat, been posted to Budapest and started a family? When we drove all the way from Hungary down to Gascony that first time, with two small children in the back of the car, I couldn't help wondering if our planned holiday was going to be a disaster. I needn't have worried. Minutes after we drove up to the chateau, Mary had bonded with the children, swept them up and introduced them to that season's combination of dogs. It was all uphill from there.

We went back to Lamazère many times after that, by now with three children. We all loved it. In contrast to diplomatic life, it was always a welcome dose of relaxing torpor that sorted us out and set us up again for future challenges. Denis and Mary created a warm and loving environment in the rambling building, often suffused with appetising aromas from her latest casserole or other hearty farmhouse dishes, which were later washed down with large quantities of a suitable local vintage. Conversation, often in the gardens where Mary's creative touch had made an obvious impact, would range far and wide – she read widely and was only persistently cross about the latest antics of whatever British government was in power. Her body slowed down a bit over the years but her brain never did. Nor did her sense of humour, in all the time we knew her.

We had been talking of popping down to Crantock to visit Denis and Mary just before the news of her death – we were so sad to have left it too late. When we did then visit Denis, Mary's spirit and influence

was still very clear in their home. It was almost as if she was still there with us. We miss her very much.

Andy Stafford

(1966-71) writes:
Denis Price has been a major influence in my life. He is the reason I tried for Oxford University and, from there began a 32 year career in the diplomatic Service. As well as being my history teacher and mentor Denis became my firm friend. But it was not just Denis, Mary



2010 Château Lamazère

was always there, more in the background during my days at Rendcomb but as life moved on after college, she also became a friend and ally and a constant source of eminently sensible, grounded but always sympathetic and understanding advice. Her no nonsense approach to dealing with life's problems, always delivered with warm good humour and empathy, was of immense value to me when things got a bit tough.

Mary had boundless enthusiasm for life, something which shone through to the very end. She loved the countryside and her horses in Gloucestershire but was, I think, happy to return to her native Cornwall when she and Denis moved back from France. Mary also had a deep interest in people and I'm sure it was this that made Denis and Mary such supremely successful and well-loved keepers of Park House and ensured that the introduction of girls to Rendcomb went smoothly and added so much to the College. I can imagine that the girls leant heavily on Mary as a substitute mother figure.

My family benefited greatly from Mary's friendship. She and Denis visited us in Prague in the dying days of the cold war while I was posted to our Embassy there. They not only enjoyed the beauty of one of Europe's finest cities but were fascinated by the politics and culture and the whole experience of being 'behind the curtain'. They recently described it as one of the most absorbing and enjoyable holidays of their lives. For us it was a great comfort to have the company of old friends in what was a fairly hostile environment.

We subsequently spent two memorable holidays at their home in chateau at Lamazère, South-West France, in 1997 and 2010, holidays full of good food, fine wine and great company. On the first visit our children had a fun time exploring that wonderful old house and grounds, something they will never forget. I imagine some of the locals in the small village regarded Denis and Mary as slightly eccentric English couple but it was lovely to see how well they had integrated and been befriended by their neighbours – despite a certain reluctance to speak French!

I last saw Mary in 2017 at Penny Wood's funeral. Although she was finding walking an increasing struggle, she was very much her old self and we revived longstanding plans for Denis and Mary to come and stay with us in East Sussex. Arrangements for dog-sitting and transport were made but sadly never came to fruition as Mary became increasingly frail. It's hard to believe that she is no longer with us but her dependable, funny and wise voice lives on in all our minds.

Jason Gillham (1967-71) died of cancer in November 2003, aged 48. He had lived in the West Country for some years and done various jobs, including running a printing business and then later in life taught rock climbing, abseiling and other outdoor pursuits. He was married and had two sons and a daughter. His father **E.R.S. Gillham** (1931-38) also attended Rendcomb.

Emma Drew (Staff 2001-19)

Emma very sadly passed away after a very short battle with illness in January 2020. Emma was only 45 years old and had been employed at Rendcomb College as a member of the Housekeeping Team working in the Junior School from 2001 until shortly before her sad passing.

Emma could often be found with her son James quietly working in

the early mornings and late evenings making sure that the Junior School was ready for the upcoming day, in a post from a grateful parent “Thank you Emma for looking after my child when I was late for collection time, you were a star.”

Emma was one of the first to volunteer her services for any functions and events at The College bringing her smile and can-do attitude with her as always, she will be greatly missed but not forgotten and our thoughts are with her son and family. **Mark Naylor**



Ian Campbell (1953-58) died in August 2016, six months after celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary with his wife Pamela. They had lived in Rotorua, New Zealand for 12 years.

FRIENDS OF RENDCOMB COLLEGE

Registered Charity No. 290373

Chairman: Richard Wills – Governor

and Rendcomb College Trustee appointed 2004

Executive Trustee: Mark Naylor (Staff 1998-2017) appointed 2017

Jane Gunner *née Watson* – OR (1975-77)

Honorary Secretary OR Society, former parent 1994

Colin Burden (Staff 1963-97)

Rob Jones – Headmaster (2015-) Ex Officio 2015

Keith Winmill – OR (1972-79)

Richard Law – OR (1964-70) 2009

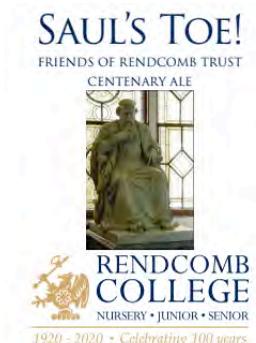
Dr Tessa Hicks *née Wolferstan* – OR (1974-76), former parent 2010

Jessica Weston – OR (1998-2005), OR Society Vice-Chairman

The Friends of Rendcomb College Trust has continued to support both the college and students of the college throughout 2019-20. Donations have been as diverse as helping to support two students where family circumstances would have prevented them from continuing an education at Rendcomb to a donation, in tandem with the OR Society and some individual kind gifts, to purchase cricket wicket covers. Hopefully this will help prevent the loss of too many matches due to a wet wicket, as Cricket continues to be a major sport enjoyed by many at the college. With thanks to two very kind and generous benefactors of the charity, the Friends have been able to give financial support to a student to join the 6th Form to further their studies which would not have been possible without the kind and generous support of these two people. To mark the centenary celebrations, The Friends of Rendcomb College has donated a 50% of fees scholarship for the Headmaster to award to a student for their studies through the 6th Form. This student will come from the state sector and be both a keen sports person and would benefit academically from all that Rendcomb has to offer, very much in line with the founder's ethos.

If you would like to donate on either a regular or just a one off basis to The Friends of Rendcomb, please contact **Mark Naylor** either by letter at: 7 Hampton Grove, Meysey Hampton, Cirencester, Glos GL7 5JN or e-mail: naylorm20@hotmail.com or should anyone wish

to join The Friends of Rendcomb College Charity as a Trustee please feel free to put yourself forward. We can only survive with the generosity of supporters.



The Friends of Rendcomb College has had produced by Corinium Ales of Cirencester a special ale brew to celebrate the centenary of Rendcomb College. A light, refreshing pale summer ale that, served lightly chilled, will make a perfect accompaniment to a Summer's evening.

The Friends of Rendcomb College had planned to sell it throughout the College Centenary events. However, circumstances have overtaken us and we are now able to offer the ale to you by the case.

Orders may be collected from Jane Gunner's house on the Whiteway in Cirencester by appointment or you can contact **Mark Naylor** naylorm20@hotmail.com and collect from the college reception. He will arrange for your order to be available but please await confirmation that it is ready for collection.

Payment may be made by cheque, cash or by bank transfer. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of Rendcomb Trust Fund' or e-mail Mark Naylor for the bank details.

There are limited stocks as this is a one-off bespoke brew. Cost is £35 per 12 bottle case or £3.50 per bottle.

RENDCOMBIANA

With the College's Centenary this year, this picture takes us back to almost exactly 50 years ago (© Glos Life 1971).

Left to right we have **Bill White** (1961-97) Latin & French, **John Holt** (1968-96) English, **John Willson** (1967-82) Music, **Colin Burden** (1963-97) Geography & Woodwork, **David de G Sells** (1955-83) French & German, **Keith Thorne** (1970-84) Art, **Jack Fell** (1934-72) Physics, **Roy Dennis** (1959-82) Maths.



Morning break in the masters' common room

A Taste of the Med: *Meta bourneti*

It was in the middle of May 2019 when I first noticed a spider in the compost bin situated in the garden; a semi-rural area of Churchdown. It was of a reasonable size and the colour a lovely glossy light brown, like a mild chocolate glaze. I was curious as to what species of spider it was. I worked along the lines that it might be a *Steatoda* species like the Noble False Widow spider that caused alarm and despondency a few years ago. I looked in a few books and Googled, and although pictures are a useful guide, they are just that. Only a few spiders can be identified to species in the field and the rest require microscopic examination of the female epigyne or male palps.



I checked the compost bin every now and then, the spider was still there, but also three more. I took several pictures of them, which included trying to get a picture of the female epigyne. The picture was not wonderful but I compared it with drawings of epgyne of *Steatoda sp.* and it didn't match. Having lost our county spider recorder 2 years ago with no replacement, I decided to contact Peter Harvey and send him two pictures with my queries, as this spider was more like the cave spider *Meta menardi* and that couldn't be right, not in a compost bin! An almost instant email return came back with a request for the spider, as it was a *Meta*!! What I had only

recently discovered was that there is a very similar *Meta*, *Meta bourneti*, a Mediterranean species which is rare, nationally scarce, with a wide, but scattered distribution in Southern England.

I caught the spider and sent it off to Essex and within 24 hours Peter sent an email to say that the spider had arrived safely and it was a mature female *Meta bourneti*! It was the third post-1992 record for Gloucestershire, with a previous record, pre-1980.

The mystery is, where have these rare spiders come from? The compost bin is situated in the corner of the garden which is shaded and gets no direct sunlight. The bin is two thirds full and the content material quite dry. The requirements for such cave spiders are humidity, darkness and a stable temperature. The fact that the bin hasn't been used recently also means that the humidity is lower than it might otherwise be. Their usual habitats are tunnels, culverts and drainage inspection shafts, though they have also been found in the hollow trunks of ancient trees. The cavernous void under a

neighbour's garden room would be worth investigating, but some cautious communication would be required first!

Meta bourneti was described by the French arachnologist Eugène Simon (1848-1924) in 1922. *Meta* was originally placed in the Araneidae, but the structure of the male palp and the female epigyne as well as the structure of the orb web placed *Meta* closer to the Tetragnathidae family.

An old site for *Meta bourneti* was **Rendcomb College**. The spider was found in a conduit carrying water pipes and also found in a neighbouring air-raid shelter. R.S.George mentions this Mediterranean spider found at Rendcomb, its second British locality, in his @Brief list of the spiders (Araneae) recorded from Gloucestershire in 1957.

With this information and using the internet, I found the publication, Rendcomb College Magazine Vol 8 No 10 December 1947 which had some Biological Notes: **I.S.Menzies** (1940-47) wrote:

“The most noteworthy addition to Rendcomb fauna is that of the large black and reddish Cave spider, *Meta bourneti*. Previously this spider was known to live in caves in the South of France and Spain and had only been found in England at one place in Suffolk. Several of these spiders were found a few years ago in a small inspection pit accessory to the College water supply situated on one of the lawns. The specimens were kept but not identified until February 1947, when an enthusiastic letter relating to the discovery was received from the British Natural History Museum. The spider has now been found also in the covered air-raid trenches, and the opinion of several celebrated arachnologists who subsequently haunted the district was that it probably occurred in other suitable places; possibly they may be found in cavities beneath the stone steps and the balustrades and hollow trees.”

A further publication of Rendcomb, the Rendcomb College Chronicle Vol. 12, No. 5 March 1962 had some Natural History Notes:-

“Recent changes in the heating system at the College had rendered the cellars in general, and “Little Hell” in particular, unsuitable for the roosting bats: and the construction of the new swimming pool has destroyed the cavity on the terraces in which the Spanish Cave Spider (*Meta bourneti*) was originally found in its second known British station. Fortunately, a few are still to be seen in another spot nearby.” **C.M.Swaine** (Staff 1952-79)

With the above information, I made contact with Rendcomb College, but there was no indication that this spider is still present. I was informed that the College has 230 acres and numerous buildings and the old building has listed status so the steps, a likely habitat, are therefore rarely touched.

This now leaves a big dilemma on how to create a suitable habitat for a sustainable population of *Meta bourneti* in my garden. My first step has been to invert a moulded ridged pond liner and place it next to the garden composter with the possibility of it being adopted by a wandering or ballooning spiderling.

An interesting paper published in 2018 on the ecology and life history of *Meta bourneti* present in caves in Sardinia, gives a very detailed study of this spider, but this type of habitat and that of a compost bin are vastly different. Nevertheless, the basic requirements are the same: temperature, humidity and illuminance. So, I need to manage the microclimate requirements. *Meta* spiders have a complex life history. During their early stages the spiders are phototactic and disperse into the outdoor environs, while the adult phase become photophobic. They are apex predators in cave systems and presumably are the same for the compost bin, but the construction of an orb web will require more space for a sustainable population. The presence of an egg-sac would complete the cycle! **Colin Twissell**

First published in the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society December 2019 issue Photo courtesy of:

srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Picture/s/Met+bourneti

ERRATA

Michael Dawson (1960-67) sent in the correction for page 49 of the 2019 newsletter.

Front Row *left to right*: **Michael McKeowen, David Maberley, Jeffrey Harris**

Second Row: not visible, **Robert Edy, Fraser Glennie**

Back Row: **John Dow** on the left.

Judy White wrote saying how nice to read the fulsome descriptions of her late husband, **David White** (Staff 1989-2004) but wished to correct to errors in her account.

The first paragraph should read: 'His parents were missionaries, his mother a teacher, his father Methodist minister.'

About her illness: '...rare auto immune response to the cancer, which has permanently damaged the cerebellum.'

(*Online Newsletter 2019 updated to include the above errata*).

ST PETER'S CHURCH UPDATE

What a beautiful Spring morning – as I sit at my computer the sun is slanting through the window! In these times of such uncertainty it is important to be grateful of the small things and the large ones too – the flowers bursting into life after such a wet winter, the fresh air that is so clean in this part of the country, family and friends keeping in touch and all the offers of help that are so appreciated.

At the heart of our village is our Church – standing there for centuries through wind, rain, heatwaves, Black Death and now Coronavirus. The doors are never locked and it is welcoming in its own cool, calm way.

It is good to feel that it remains at the heart of the life of the College too. The majority of students and staff, in the junior and senior schools, appreciate their weekly ‘chapel service’ and other opportunities for reflection and enjoyment of the building. Bell ringing is flourishing with student and village groups developing good skill levels while the visit of the Bishop of Tewkesbury for a Confirmation Service in April was a memorable occasion.





Over the past year the church community has been very active trying to involve as many people as possible. We held a very successful bring and buy coffee morning and a not so successful pancake evening! The Friends of Rendcomb Church wine and cheese party in May was a lively affair with enough cheese to sink a ship, to say thank you to the people who support the church on a year on year basis. True to form it rained for the Pets' Service, which had to be moved to the Village Hall – as the Chedworth Silver Band tuned up, the noise of the dogs barking reached a crescendo! The College and Church signed up to the Gloucestershire Heritage Open weekend in

September and we were amazed by the number of people who came to appreciate our wonderful ancient church and consumed great quantities of tea and homemade cake. The annual bridge afternoon continues to be well supported and more homemade teas disappeared amid appreciative murmurs.

However, the culminative event was *An Evening with Thomasina Miers* held in November in the Performing Arts Centre. It was the brainchild of the late Julia Fisher who had known the Miers family for many years. She saw her idea through to fruition, but sadly died a week later. We are extremely grateful to Thomasina, the Mexican cook and co-owner of Wahaca, who kindly gave her time and friendliness so that all proceeds could go to the church roof. Mexican canapés and drinks were served prior to a captivating interview and Q&A. The evening was a resounding success and £3,500 was raised.

I am not sure how many of you may have sat in the Church recently when it is raining – the drip, drip of rain drops landing in the buckets and bowls scattered around the church! After a successful effort to improve the heating, all thoughts have now turned to the roof. It seems that it is a much bigger job than first envisaged – when is it not?! The lead has to be stripped back to see what joists are sodden, permission needs to be sought from the powers that be and grants have to be applied for. A small band of committed people have taken on the challenge, under the leadership of Revd. **Bob Edy** (1959-67, Staff 2015-), in order to leave the fabric of the church sound for future generations. Needless to say, the figure keeps increasing but if you were able to give anything towards our goal, we would be extremely grateful.

Do come and visit – when this horrible virus is at bay and not on a rainy day! I think you will be amazed by the peace and serenity these strong walls will give you.

If you feel like contributing to the roof please send cheques to Annabel Purcell, Treasurer, The Old House, Rendcomb GL7 7EY or contact her for the bank details annabelpurcell@hotmail.co.uk



OLD RENDCOMBIAN NEWS



Steve Jones (1988-95) wrote:
As part of my denial about getting old I attended trials and was selected in the Welsh Touch Rugby team (men's over 40s) to play in the Touch Rugby World Cup in Malaysia in May this year. After 5 months of travelling to Cardiff to train each week, two warm up victories against the USA and South Africa, I took my position on the field to win my first cap in our opening match against Belgium. It couldn't have gone much better as I marked my debut with four tries and we ran out 9-4 winners with the game streamed live and my family watching before heading to school.



Over 2,500 players covering men's, women's and mixed teams from around the world were in Kuala Lumpur for the tournament where the traditional battle between Australia and New Zealand for each title took place. Conditions were tough, playing in temperatures over 40 degrees and 80% humidity took it out of you, with a peak at 51.5 degrees when play was actually temporarily suspended. But the experience of being part of the Welsh squad, training each day, choir practice for when supporting other Welsh teams and relaxing in the pool with the New Zealand squad who shared our hotel was very special and something I'll remember for a long time.

I won't go into details of the rest of our World Cup games... but an amazing experience and one where I think I can finally put to rest **Mike Slark's** (Staff 1998-2011) refusal to accept me as a full back and play me as a prop. Maybe.



Laurie Wilcox (2001-08), **Mark Gunner** (2001-08), **Nigel Burgess** (1972-79), **Dave Marshall** (1972-79) joined forces in July 2019 to win a charity treasure hunt around Sherston in Gloucestershire in aid of Cirencester Housing for Young People, charity number 299821.

Will Witchell (1994-2000) writes: I am working as a Land Agent for the Raby Estates in Co. Durham and moved here in June 2018. My wife, Nicky, also works for the Estate managing the marketing and events at Raby Castle. We have a two-year-old daughter called Georgina.

Stephen Lea (1988-97) writes: I have recently started working at Kitebrook Prep School near Moreton in Marsh and am pleased to say I have now been appointed Director of Music there. This has been after a few years of some short-term contract work and it is great to be settled in a permanent contract in such a lovely school. Still living in Gloucester, and also, I am organist at St Paul's Church in Gloucester, and in charge of the choir at Richmond Retirement Village in Painswick to keep me busy outside school hours!

Diane Martin *née Crew* (1975-77) joined the judiciary as a surveyor member of the Upper Tribunal Lands Chamber in February 2020.



Holly Phelps (2001-12), as **IORA** sang at the Round House in front of 1,700 people in January 2020 as one of the support acts for Badly Drawn Boy. She has also run a number of marathons including the Lisbon one and the Manchester one in aid of Brighter Sound, a charity she works for.

Charity number:
1154803



Martin Graham (Staff 1985-2017) writes: Just before I retired from Rendcomb in 2017, one of my singing colleagues asked if I would be interested in helping to catalogue the books of printed music in Gloucester Cathedral Library. When I said ‘yes’, little did I realise that this would lead me into a whole new world of historical and musical research, which has been a source of fascination and enjoyment ever since.

The Cathedral Library is the original medieval one, tucked in between the north transept and the Chapter House, and accessed via a spiral staircase. Its valuable collection of manuscript music was catalogued a few years ago, but no detailed description of the printed music books had ever been made. Most of these books date from the 19th century and were used by the choir in services from Victorian times until the 1930s/40s. Some are standard publishers’ works, but others were assembled and bound by the cathedral itself. Many of them are still in their original bindings, but some have been dismantled over the years, leaving only individual pieces or pages remaining. These were the most difficult items to catalogue, as we needed to establish which volume they originally belonged to (and sometimes which pieces they actually were). Fortunately, the Library possesses a handwritten index compiled in 1865 by the organist Samuel Sebastian Wesley and updated regularly thereafter, listing all the volumes of choral music kept in the organ loft at the time. This proved invaluable in the cataloguing process, allowing us to ‘reconstruct’ the dismantled volumes from the pieces that remain.

However, it soon became apparent that cataloguing would turn out to be only one aspect of work in the Library. As we worked through the books new material came to light: lithographed copies of Wesley’s own music which he brought with him when he came to Gloucester in 1865, for example, and, above all, three registers of service lists compiled by the Precentor, giving details of the music sung in Cathedral services between 1839 and 1859. These are probably the earliest service lists in existence anywhere in the country, and are of great historical significance. This has led to a new project: creating a database of those lists and the other, later, ones in the Library.

Sometimes this involves identifying the precise pieces sung. (This is not as easy as it sounds: in the 19th Century many choral pieces attributed to Handel, Haydn or Mozart were actually *adaptations* of their music by English composers, rather than the genuine article.) I also became involved in researching illustrative material for a small exhibition at the 2019 Three Choirs Festival. This involved delving into the Three Choirs archive, which is also stored in the Library. Handling original letters by Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Howells, amongst others, was a real delight.

As the work continued, it became evident that the volumes we were cataloguing were not just books but also mirrors, reflecting the history of the cathedral choir in the 19th Century. They preserve the repertoire, for example, and that tells us a lot about the theological and musical tastes of the period. Moreover, many of them also contain handwritten annotations. Some of these additions reflect the performance practice of the period, but others were puzzling and needed further research in order to make sense of them. My favourite one came in a book of psalm chants: ‘Plunkett 209 majority 1874’ had been added in pencil above a chant by William Boyce. Why it was there defeated us at first: there was no chant 209 or 1874 in the book, no composer called Plunkett, and the word ‘majority’ didn’t seem to make sense. Should it be ‘major *key*’? Then the penny dropped. 1874 was an election year, and a little bit of research soon revealed that a Mr. Randall Plunkett had won the parliamentary seat for West Gloucestershire in that year, on behalf of Disraeli’s Conservatives, with a majority of 209. I have visions of the lay clerks passing the book (and the result) down the choirstalls during a service – the Victorian equivalent of text-messaging...

IN MEMORIAM

For **Jack Vernon Hemming**, 1950-2018 (OR 1961-67)

It was his idea.

Wimbledon Jam

By Wednesday Jack and I were fed up with the Master's crowing. He'd been harping on all week.

"While you're all in bed at 8pm Friday" Here he rubbed his hands in glee, "I shall be watching Wimbledon Men's Final on the television... he... he... he... You won't... he... he... he..."

As we were leaving the classroom at the end of the lesson Jack cornered me and said,

"Can't you do something about that? "

"I can't do anything" I replied.

"Yes, you can. You're the chair of the Radio Club, can't you jam his TV so he misses Wimbledon? "

By chance the week before I had been searching in the library for simple radio circuits and had found a small booklet published by the Ministry of Defence. It was an instruction book as to how to make yourself annoying to the enemy when behind their lines. In it was a diagram of a very simple radio signal jammer. It explained how to build this apparatus with pieces pirated from radio receivers.

"Yes, I can do that, but you'll have to help me".

The Radio Club was a new invention. I had been given a drawer and a cupboard in the Physics Laboratory. As the Chair person I had also been given a key to the lab. Donations of old radios flooded in as Masters cleared out their old valve receivers. I had everything I needed to build the jammer.

It helped that the subject of our jam session lived above the Physics Laboratory. Nice and close.

It didn't take long to construct. We were concerned that our subject would guess what was happening. So, to counter the risk of him finding our apparatus we went to extremes to hide everything. By removing the drawer the jammer itself was taped to the back side of the drawer and the drawer replaced. The power leads ran down the back of the cupboard and hidden behind the heating pipes. From there the power cable continued to the Accumulator store next to the

Lab. Roughly 10 metres. The Accumulator that we used was buried under about 20 others. The earth was connected to a water pipe in the cupboard. For our convenience the Radio Club had been given a place in the lab right by the connection to The Antenna so it was easy to hide the wire.

The Antenna played a very important part in what happened at 7.55 pm on Friday 5 minutes before Wimbledon was aired on BBC. It was roughly 30 metres long rising and spanned the stable courtyard from a height of 2 metres up to about 4.5 metres. It was bare copper and properly protected with insulators. A real Science Lab Antenna.

The problem of switching ON the apparatus was solved with the use of an Alarm clock. Removing the bells from the top, the striker would vibrate and move a switch to the ON position. The alarm was set to 7.55pm. This is where there was a design fault. Being around 12 years old we only thought about switching it ON, not OFF. This was an error as can be seen later.

As predicted at 8pm Friday we were in bed in separate dormitories so Jack missed out on the next part of the action.

At 10.30pm, I was woken by a Master shining a torch in my eyes, shaking me firmly.

“Get up Boy! Slippers and dressing gown” I was frog-marched down to the front door, into a car and driven to the stable block where there was a waiting circus.

Two Army Green Bedford 10 ton trucks with 2 metre, rotating dish antennas on their roofs, and a staff car with lights blazing with many khaki clad men milling around looking very serious. Nobody wore any insignia but it was clear who was in charge. There was an air of expectation at my arrival. The Physics Master was there but strangely not the Wimbledon loving subject of our actions. The Chief approached me and said gruffly,

“We’ve cut the Antenna so you’re not broadcasting anymore but we can’t find the signal generator. You will show us where it is.”

In the lab I pulled the drawer out to reveal the transmitter. The Chief spluttered covered his face and hurriedly left the Lab. In groups the rest of the men came to view the hiding place. It caused much laughter and the atmosphere that had been so tense when I arrived faded to one of general amusement.

“...so where is the power supply?” Open laughter when it was revealed.

What I hadn't realised was that the length of the Antenna governed the radius of the signal. From the stable block at Rendcomb we had covered roughly a 7-mile radius black out of all TV and Radio signals. Including of course our subject a mere 5 metres from the Antenna.

“How did you discover the jammer circuit?”

When I told them that I found it in the school library there was more laughter.

The affected population had rung the BBC to complain about a very noisy white buzzing screen that was blocking them from watching the highlights of the Men's final at Wimbledon. When the size and nature of this black out became apparent to the BBC, they had phoned GCHQ to ask them to investigate the source since it was so close to them. The Cold War was in full swing and I think the fears were that there was some form of attack being generated in our area. GCHQ leapt into action and quite soon traced it to Rendcomb. The Physics Master seemed quite proud of our ingenuity and said quietly as I got back in the car, “The keys to the lab are confiscated for three weeks bring them to me after breakfast” I'd expected much worse. Jack missed the night time fun because he was in a different dormitory, he was also not in the Radio Club, but it was his idea... and it worked better than we ever thought it could.

The next day when searching again in the radio section of the library, I found that the booklet had been removed. Sensible really as there were many other interesting hints as to how to disrupt a society.

P. Vyvyan Rayner (1961-64)

COLLEGE NEWS



After fifteen years, **Alex** (1982-87, Staff 1994-) and **Amanda Brealy** (Staff 1994-) had to bring to an end being House parents to the Old Rectory at the end of the summer term 2019 after it was decided it would be converted in to a 6th form house. They had a wonderful party with pupils and parents attending.

STAFF LEAVERS

Louise Gregory

For more than a dozen years, Louise Gregory has been a mainstay of the maths department. In the words of one of her pupils, in 2008 she organised, transported and motivated the first IV form maths team to take part in the UK Mathematics Challenge. They reached the regional finals, coming third and narrowly missing a place in the national final. In 2011 they had a record year of awards with the year ending on a high note with Maths department winning the 2011 Good Schools Guide GCSE Award. Louise arranged Maths visits which included a trip the Bristol Hippodrome, where many schools from the surrounding area listened to talks ranging from 'From Google to Graphics' to The Science behind rollercoasters. More recently when David Baker left, Louise took over responsibility for the A levels with great success. We wish her well in her future endeavours.



SAUL: The Wayward King

Geoff Bye (1940-148) writes:

Visiting Saul in Raleigh, N. Carolina November 2019:

Travel has always inspired excitement. This trip – no exception since I was to re-acquaint myself with King Saul in his new quarters. But excitement soon turned to frustration. Seconds after I had cleared the intrusive airport security (empty all jacket pockets, belt off, shoes off, “Oh you’re over 75? Keep your shoes on”, it is assumed I suppose that those of us over 75 are unable to tie our shoelaces without a nurses aid) a text message hit my phone to advise that my flight was delayed an hour. The travel Gods were not with me. The connection in Washington to Raleigh was now impossible. Hours waiting in an airport is not so unusual now – erupting volcanoes, hurricanes, snow storms, staff strikes etc. can happen randomly and do. So, there I was but at least with a tablet loaded with books. Got to Raleigh at about 11.15pm. Over 12 hours door to door, of which less than 2 hours were actually in flight. Is this why God invented trains? Next morning – taxi to the Raleigh Art Museum. Raleigh by the way is like any other metropolitan area at 9 in the



morning – traffic. Greeted warmly by the staff and almost immediately ‘miked’ by Henry of the TV crew that was there as part of the making of a video about the statue by a local TV company. I got my instructions. I was to walk into Saul’s space and express immense surprise at what I saw. No rehearsal proposed, just do it. The PR person suggested I close my eyes and walk in with her and open my eyes when told. This I did. I was certainly surprised but not at first by Saul, but by the glare of the lamps set up to illuminate my surprise. I then oohed and aahed over the amazingly clean and revitalized statue and had a discussion with John Coffey, Asst. Director of Research. Then I was interviewed. I will not dwell on this. My impression after the event was that it was a mess. I forgot most things I had planned to say and do not look forward to seeing the final cut. By the way, I told the well-known story of the Greek-style statue that stood by Saul for a short while. I used ‘male organ’ euphemistically instead of penis but I suspect even so this story will not be in the final version. I apologize in advance to Rendcomb for my shortcomings here!

After my interview John gave me a tour of the building. Most impressive space, built 10 years ago. Not a flashy architect’s version of a museum, either inside or out, but a lovely practical building, spacious well-lit galleries, monochrome hanging areas and no distractions from the artwork. The art is uncluttered as a result, plenty of space to see each piece. Ever been to the Louvre? Some nice touches in the displays with old and modern figures in juxtaposition making life more fun. Saul himself sits in splendid isolation in a large gallery, the walls of which are hung with classical paintings. It’s a lovely home for him.



After lunch, I was invited to visit the conservator's workshop. Corey Riley had been in charge of Saul's restoration and gave me her story. The statue had obviously not been cared for. No surprise. I for one knew nothing about it after 8 years spent in its presence. It was not respected as a work of art. Restoration involved an overall clean, replacement of a missing toe, removal of paint, glitter and blue chalk



which was later determined to be snooker cue chalk. Cory has a small plastic bag of this as a memento. The **missing toe** was replaced by a local artist, using the intact toe as a model. You would not know, as a layman, that a repair had taken place. Great job. Net result of course is a wonderful statue of Saul looking very depressed as the “evil spirit of the Lord” is on

him. His change of scenery has not improved his mood. I pleaded not guilty to any of the depredations inflicted on him with a clear conscience. I never sat on his lap, dressed him up or painted any part of him. I may have played snooker in the hall.

While in the workshop I had the pleasure of an introduction to the restoration of old oil paintings. The conservator was working on a Reubens, a large full-side portrait which I was allowed to touch! What a fascinating career to have. We don't give enough thought to those who's abilities enable us to view art in its original (or close to) form, but hats off to them. Credit where credit due etc. By the way, what about the artisans who actually carved Saul? William Story had the inspiration and the talent to produce the clay model but a team of unnamed and unsung stone carvers had the skill to translate the clay model into the finished marble. Amazing work.



Geoff Bye, Saul and John Coffey at North Carolina Museum of Art
Geoff celebrates his 90th birthday in May 2020
<https://player.pbs.org/viralplayer/3040126721/>
Further information on OR website

TRAVEL BURSARY

Borneo bound for **Eleanor Brealy**, thanks to the OR Travel Bursary oldrendcombian.org.uk/travelbursary

Myself and 24 other students from Swansea University arrived at Heathrow early, bright eyed and bushy tailed on April 23rd where we were greeted by our lecturers. We were handed out equipment and given an information handbook. My head could not stop thinking about the incredible trip and experience I had in store and it was actually happening. I had wanted to go on this field trip even prior to starting at Swansea! From Heathrow, we flew to Singapore Changi Airport. We had a lay-over of 14 hours, we got to have a tour of the beautiful city; it is known as a garden city due to its vibrant and consistent vegetation.

Our next flight was to Kota Kinabalu, 24th April, the capital of Malaysia's Sabah state in the northern part of the island of Borneo. We explored Kota Kinabalu's hustle and bustle at night. The next morning, we had a Rainforest Health and Safety course meeting with Dr Glen Reynolds, you may have seen him in the Judy Dench programme! Dr Reynolds introduced us to the conditions of the rainforest and an insight to the paradigm of palm oil. We then flew to Lahu Datu, flying over the majestic and impressive Mount Kinabalu. On this two-propeller plane we got to witness the natural phenomenon - mass flowering of the rainforest, which looks like cauliflower in a forest of broccoli! Once landed we drove to Mount Silam and saw a pitcher plant and went up a watch tower for a breath-taking panoramic view over the canopy of the rainforest.

Later that evening we began our eventful drive to Danum Valley. Not only did three out of the four transfer vans get a burst tyre meaning we had to stop in the darkness with just the noises of the rainforest surrounding us – nothing like full immersion into something to make you get comfortable! We stopped at a palm oil plantation and got to see the impact on land erosion and hold a palm

oil berry. Along the drive we got to see a python, frog-faced owl, moon rat, deer and centipedes.



Our group at Singapore, I am on the back row fourth from the left.



A pitcher plant



Walking through a palm oil plantation.

On the 26th was my first morning in the jungle; as soon as I stepped outside the humidity hit me like a wave and I was certainly 'glowing'. We went for a rainforest walk where we were shown buttress roots, aerial roots, seeds and tiger leeches!



On my first morning, I was informed that an orangutan mother and child had been spotted next to the bridge that crosses the Segama river which flows through Danum Valley Field Centre. We made our way swiftly over the bridge and I saw my first ever orangutan; a truly breath-taking experience that I am so grateful to have witnessed. Throughout my time at Danum I spotted orangutans up the same tree three times.

In Danum Valley there is a phenomenon that only occurs every 10 years called mass flowering, which I mentioned earlier – 'cauliflowers'. This natural event creates the iconic landscape that is green with splashes of cream due to the flowering of cream flowers. This flowering event occurs in the Dipterocarp species and it is what can maintain the constant growth of the rainforest.

On the 27th we walked through the Baru catchment where we saw selective logging and locations of landslides and soil pipes. We started the One Day project where we identified an area where logging had occurred and an untouched area. We measured a 10m transect and measured tree diameter 5m on each side. The next day we focused on Science and Communications and my group made a video about mass flowering. On the 29th we were blessed with a majestic sunrise which was greeted by the calls of gibbons and the hum of cicadas. After that sensory wake-up we saw the Malaysian meteorological centre. That afternoon, after a typical Danum Valley breakfast of chicken nuggets and noodles, we travelled to various

examples of different styles of logging. As you can imagine it was oppressively hot and humid – hence we swam in a river to cool off! However, we had to get out as pygmy elephants were coming downstream. As dusk drew in we went to Borneo Lodge, which is where Prince William and Catherine have previously stayed. That evening it rained like I have never seen rain before – definitely in a rain forest! When we got back to Danum Valley myself and seven others went on a night drive to experience the rain forest’s nocturnal life.

The next day we began the Two-Day Project at Baru Catchment. There were various topic options for the Two-Day Projects such as: diurnal variations in microclimates, mapping changes in pipe systems, land sliding and soil erosion in logged forests and many more. I chose to assess whether logging has an impact on macroinvertebrate ecosystems in rivers.

On the second day of the Two-Day Project we saw Red Leaf monkeys and a family of gibbons on the way to our Two-Day project site. That afternoon we presented to the group our hypotheses, methodology, main findings and predicted analysis.

Our Two-Day Project group, I am on the back left, at the Tambun River.

Our time at Danum Valley came to an end on May 3rd and we travelled back



to Lahu Datu. It was interesting to see the scenery on the drive as on the way to Danum Valley it was dark. We caught a plane to Kota Kinabalu. It was strange stepping back into air conditioning and not showering with my rainforest friends – Cicadas.

The next morning, 4th May, we discussed the urbanisation impacts on Kota Kinabalu on our way to local mangroves where we saw the incredible aerial roots. We went to a beach resort for some well-deserved relaxation in the afternoon where we were indulged in exquisite food and wonderful sandy beaches with bath temperature sea!

We presented to our lecturers a presentation on our One Day project findings and methodology.

On our final day we were all very reluctant to leave and close the chapter on this incredible trip where we had all created and experienced such wonderful things.

During my two weeks, I got to see first-hand the vast abundance of wildlife in Borneo. I saw a green pit viper, orangutans, Red Leaf Monkeys, moon rat, monitor lizard, python, bearded pig, frog faced owl, pigmy squirrel, Rhinoceros hornbill, banded civet, long tail macaque, giant flying squirrel and many more.

Thank you so much to the Old Rendcombian Society for contributing to my fantastic, once in a lifetime experience – I will never forget it!



Flowering dipterocarp



Green pit viper

Córdoba Spanish Language Trip 2-6 April 2019

Travel Diary and Report

I would like to thank the Old Rendcombian Society for awarding me a Travel Bursary enabling me to go on this trip to Córdoba and Sevilla in Spain. Being immersed in a whole new culture is a challenging yet extremely valuable thing, as it presents the opportunity to live and communicate in a high intensity environment that cannot be replicated in a classroom. I successfully absorbed vast amounts of information each jam-packed day that I spent in Spain with my peers. It was a priceless experience that has reinforced my love of languages, Spanish culture and my confidence before my first Spanish oral exam on the 13 May.



*Typical inner patio
in a Spanish house*

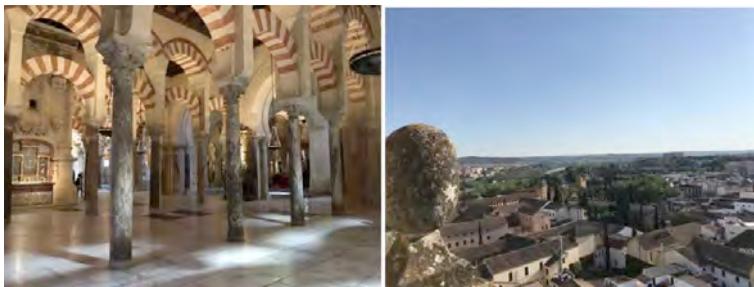
Martes (Tuesday)

After an extremely early start and a long bus journey, we arrived at Birmingham Airport to catch a flight to Málaga in southern Spain. As soon as we got on the coach to Córdoba, I started tuning my brain to Spanish mode whilst listening to Senor Toms and the coach driver having a conversation about the local gastronomy in Spanish! When we arrived, we dropped our bags at the language centre, and then headed out to walk around the city a little before we met our host families. Córdoba is a gorgeous city filled with white infrastructure and covered in flowers and boasting a hot climate, immediately contrasting to the wet Cotswolds! It was lovely to get a feel for what we were going to explore in more detail for the next two days and it really sparked my excitement to visit some of its attractions. My host Luisa picked Ella, Anna and myself up and took us back to her apartment next to the University of Córdoba, where we met her family and spoke lots of Spanish with them while getting a feel for typical life in a big city in Spain.

Miércoles (Wednesday)

My day started with a three-hour Spanish lesson in the target language discussing immigration and racism in Spain, a topic that actually features in our A-Level course, so was extremely valuable speaking practice. After this first lesson my confidence and accuracy of speaking spontaneously increased massively, and I felt sure that this skill would only develop further over the remaining duration of the trip. After our language lesson we had some cultural lessons, learning about the city on a walking tour of the 'Judaria' old town near the Mezquita-Catedral. In the past Córdoba was occupied by three contrasting cultures - the Muslims, the Jews and the

Christians. This cohabitation is evident all over the city and remains to be an excellent example to follow for modern tolerance between cultures. Visiting the Mosque-Cathedral itself reinforced this as one can really see the mix of different influences in the architecture. That evening Luisa our host brought her neighbour's puppies down to see us after cooking us a delicious meal!



Inside Mezquita-Catedral and view from the Christian Tower

Jueves (Thursday)

At the Language School we had another lesson in Spanish, but this time practicing our listening skills rather than speaking. The teacher informed us about the local patrimony of Córdoba, including its gastronomy, culture, architecture and history. Some specialities include Flamenquín (a pork dish), Salmorejo (a cold soup) and Berenjena con miel (fried aubergine and honey). We then hopped on a bus tour of the city, taking us further afield and we were able to explore the concealed residential areas away from the main stream of tourists. During some free time, we were able to converse with a few locals in the restaurants and cafes, growing our confidence when speaking and proving how fast we were developing outside of the classroom. Later on, we visited the Al-Andalus museum on the other side of the River Guadalquivir that runs through Córdoba. This presented in depth detail about life during the period of the three cultures, and how each culture complemented the other during the time of cohabitation. The roof terrace provided excellent views of the city and a great photo opportunity! For our evening meal we were lucky enough to get the chance to try the local special dishes in tapas versions – they were all delicious and I'm extremely glad that I tried them.



Tapas Evening and Bus Tour



View from Al-Andalus museum and getting "stuck" into the culture!

Viernes (Friday)

Early in the morning we took a coach journey to the closest big city Sevilla, famous for its Cathedral and the Maestranza bullring. We visited the bullfighting ring first in the pouring rain. With a long-standing history of La Tauromaquia and Sevilla being the Capital of bullfighting in Andalusia, it was both fascinating but also extremely distressing for me to visit the bullring. It is structured like a football stadium, big enough to fit thousands of people inside, not to watch a friendly match, but to watch a fight to the death. During the tour I could appreciate the long history and tradition of bullfighting that makes up a large part of the heritage in Spain, but my longstanding beliefs against unnecessary animal cruelty underpin my conclusion that it is a very controversial and out-dated 'sport'. We then visited the Cathedral in central Sevilla where the tomb of Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus) lies. This was extremely impressive, especially the Giralda Tower that we climbed, boasting 35 floors and extraordinary views across the city. Climbing up felt like walking on a treadmill on high incline as it was built to be a slope instead of steps, so that horses could climb to the bell tower as well. We stopped off at the Plaza de España, just before we

got back on the coach to Córdoba and to watch a Flamenco performance. I was fascinated by this passionate, fiery, expressive dance performed by talented dancers and musicians, something that was a once in a lifetime experience for me. Our kind host Luisa picked us up and we returned to pack and bid our goodbyes before the flight early the next morning.



La Maestranza bullring, traditional torero outfit and La Plaza de España



La Catedral in Sevilla

View from La Giralda

Flamenco dancers

This trip has fulfilled all of my expectations and more, as I have learnt so much about the culture, language and people of Spain, all of which will be extraordinarily useful for my exams this summer. I have exceeded my personal development goals that I set for myself at the start of this trip, as I have built my accuracy and confidence when speaking spontaneously to a level that I would not have been able to reach by just studying Spanish in the classroom at Rendcomb. The homestay played a large role in this, as staying with a local family enabled me to both actively and passively learn, absorbing foreign mannerisms and routines of life to further enrich my understanding of life in Spain. I am so grateful to my host family for not only letting me stay, but also playing a huge role in my learning and development on the trip; to Mr. Toms for organising this amazing trip and for supporting me so far with my studies; and the Old Rendcombian Society for partly funding me. This trip has inspired me to delve further into Hispanic culture in the future, and fuelled my ambition to study Modern Foreign Languages at University. **Lily Whitehead**

Fiji Report: by Jamie Southall

In September 2019, with the help of a bursary from The Old Rendcombian Society I ventured across the world for an experience like no other; I joined a team created by a volunteering organisation, Think Pacific on an expedition to the



island of Gau, one of the 330 islands that make up the Fiji archipelago. The journey from the UK to the island was an adventure in itself! It took two 10 hour flights to reach the Nadi International Airport and then after a short break and orientation my group took a choppy fibreglass boat ride for 5 hours from Suva to the island.

We were tasked with building a Community Hall for the local village called Yadua, the smallest community on the 52.5 square mile island. We each lived with members of the village, sharing small cramped spaces in their hand built tin shelters for the two month expedition. We were all fortunate enough to be provided with mattresses whilst the families themselves still slept traditionally on hand woven mats. Luxuries and privileges that we thought were the norm were proven to be difficult to come by in our new home; toilets and cold showers were





found outside along with community taps used for drinking water, which had to be used with purification tablets as the water contained bacteria that could cause illness. Medicine for infections was hard to come by, some of my team had to be shipped back to Suva for medical treatment due to infected mosquito bites. Food was repetitive and basic for the two months we inhabited the island as most of the food was fried and locally sourced, caught and killed by the me, and cooked by the women. Food ranged from fish and local vegetation to the odd hunted pigs and rice, anything

commercially made was shipped onto the island but shipment was once a month weather dependent and shared across the villages on the island.



The local foreman taught us Fijian carpentry skills that we applied to build a simple wooden structure supported off the floor by beams, with windows and a tin roof. The build took us 7 weeks of hard work with an array of injuries from bleeding thumbs to raging headaches as simple skills were learnt! The community centre was

an amazing addition to the village, and enthusiastically received by the locals - allowing the community to gather to sing and feast. When the hall was revealed to the community, the elders of the village, some of whom had not left their homes for years were carried in to celebrate the opening in which everyone from each village of the island attended. Along with building skills we learnt other amazing new skills such as spear and line fishing and boat building out of bamboo and rope. The village people taught us their language throughout the two month expedition which my friend Harry and I took particular pride in learning, we played volleyball and touch rugby – which we regularly got beaten at by the locals and were taught traditional ceremonies of the Fijian culture that were amazing to be a part of.

It was difficult in places but throughout the challenges we all faced there was an over helming sense of community, happiness and joy of living a simple life without the westernised wealth and privilege that we live our lives by. My father in the village taught me a valuable lesson about stopping and looking around me and enjoying time without a set agenda, which is hard to come by in our fast pace Westernised world.

A common phrase used in Fiji was ‘Sega nalega’ which translates into no worries, they believed that things would happen in their own time and there was

no point worrying about things that were beyond their control. Fiji taught me to enjoy the small things in life such as spending time with family and taking time for myself to relax. It’s amazing how many of the westernised gadgets and must have items you can actually live without!



This was an amazing experience and the generous bursary gifted to



me by the Old Rendcombian Society helped me make some fantastic memories and some close new friends for which I am very grateful. Vinaka vaka levu! (Thank you very much!).



Córdoba 2019

It was the April 2nd – a rather cold, bleak English morning – exactly 5 weeks, 6 days and a handful of hours until my Spanish speaking A' level examination, which signified two things: the first was that this exam would officially mark the beginning of my A' levels, and the second that I had exactly 5 weeks, 6 days and a handful of hours to become fluent. It would not be easy; it was a big ask for my relatively average sized brain to compute, but nevertheless the stakes were high. It is at this time that I began to place my future in the hands of a miracle worker rather than trust myself and my revision notes, and this time around the miracle presented itself in the form of The Friends of Rendcomb College, who had worked their magic in helping me to secure a place on this year's Spanish trip to Córdoba – where there was promise of intensive Spanish speaking, a home stay, and 4 days of pure Miss Mott and Mr. Toms banter. So, on the morning of the 2nd of April 2019, I boarded a plane to Córdoba with my peers with the simple aim of become completely fluent in 4 days... and here's how it went.

Upon landing we had a couple hours of coach time, trekking from Málaga to Córdoba, which we used to revise some useful irregular verbs that we could use to inform our family of my friends' dietary requirements (in case you were curious the word, to our relief, for gluten is exactly the same) and to absorb our country of residence for the next 4 days by observing the roadside: hilly arid terrain, with a sprinkling of rust-coloured dust, sparse plant life highlighting a sunny rather than rainy climate – yes, this definitely wasn't the Cotswolds. And as we pulled up in Córdoba, we had a chance to have a look around before meeting our host family and was instantly starstruck by the architecture, but before I had a chance to explore further, it was time to go 'home'. Our host mother made us feel very welcome, although it was very difficult to understand what she was saying through her heavy Andalusian accent. As soon as she spoke, I felt a tiny moment of despair as I, for the 100,000th time that hour, recalled the imminence of my exam, but then it turns out none of my friends could understand her either, so that made me feel slightly better. I hoped that my comprehension might improve over the next few days, but I will be completely honest when I say I failed to understand a single word uttered from Señora's mouth; nevertheless my faith in my Spanish was restored when we woke up fresh and early the next morning for our lesson. The subject for today's lesson was immigration, a subject that we were familiar with as A' level students. As soon as it was raised, our anxious demeanours melded into a quiet confidence as we discussed the topic with ease and knowledge. My target of

fluency seemed to rise ever closer. Then finally it was time to get to grips with the city itself, as we ventured out of the language school and into the narrow streets. We went into the La Mezquita, witnessed first-hand the world-famous architecture which put Córdoba on the map as historical evidence of the harmonious coexistence of Christians, Jews and Muslims in the past under the commentary of a tour guide, who ably aided Mr. Toms and his tourist book.

The following morning held for us another lesson, this time about the culture of Córdoba. I could feel my heartstrings tighten as I learned more and more, as the man endlessly talked more and more about Córdoba, and to be honest, I was completely sold. I could feel myself falling in love with this place and its history and suddenly the choking pressure of my looming exam began to dissipate, and re-shape itself into a mellow and casual enjoyment.

I can pinpoint the exact moment where my fate was sealed, as I sat myself down in this tiny courtyard with a Fanta Limón that evening and witnessed the purest form of Andalusian culture: flamenco. I personally cannot dance but I'm afraid that I have decided that I am no longer going to university but training to be a professional flamenco dancer... I have yet to tell my parents...

But on a more serious note, having fallen head over the heels for the culture, the city and the people I started to become more confident in my language ability as I realised that my heart is completely in it. And I think that is the most valuable lesson of all, even though I would take a re-cap on el pluscuamperfecto del subjuntivo as well. Thank you to all the people that helped make this happen, my words cannot express how much fun I had and the memories that will stay with my while I try and coerce myself to pick up my revision book instead of watching Netflix as I go on to study English Literature, Spanish and Portuguese at Nottingham University. I made a short Vlog which unfortunately doesn't quite convey the trip as the most studious, but definitely articulates the fun. Please feel free to watch it and enjoy.

My YouTube is **Ella Higgins Anderson** and the video is titled 'Cordoba 2019 – baby sitting sixth form'.

HOCKEY – 27th October 2019



Back Row: Mich Cobb (honorary OR!), **Jess Weston** (1998-2005), **Megan Hardie** (2004-18), **Rachel Barnes** (2006-11), **Ellie Jones** (2010-17)

Front Row: **Alice Tredwell** *née Barefoot* (1997-2004), **Delia Rich** (2001-11), **Charlie Clements** (2005-11), **Cerys Davies** (2008-14)

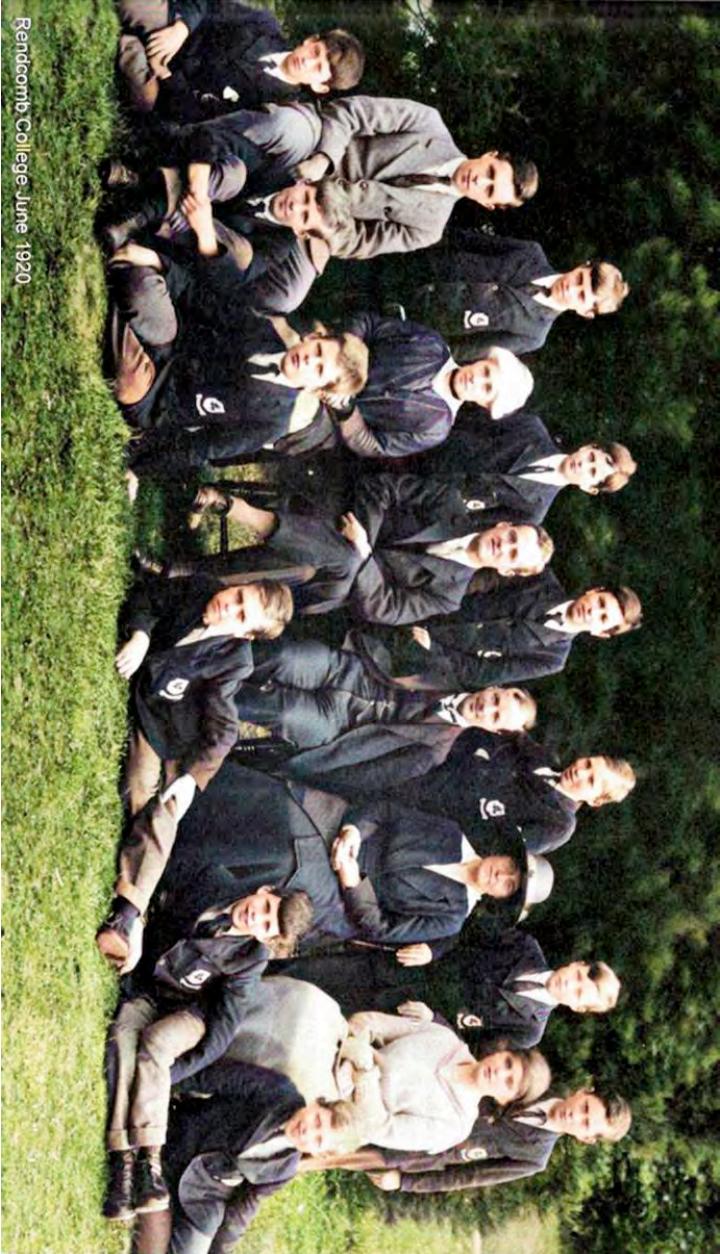




In the bright sunshine the Rendcomb team played with enthusiasm in some very tight shirts supplied by the College, (this year we will have our own strip!). Much enjoyment was had including the excellent lunch but the lack of opportunities for pre-match practice meant Rendcomb struggled against the likes of Sedbergh who had travelled all the way down from North Yorkshire to take part. Despite drawing against Malvern College, Rendcomb was not able to get off the bottom of the table and the event was ultimately won by Cheltenham College.

A big thanks to **Jess Weston** for once again organising Rendcomb's participation and as spectator-in-chief, I can certainly recommend it as a fun day.

Jane Gunner (1975-77)



Randcomb College June 1920

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name:

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Address:

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Postcode:

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E-mail:

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Telephone:

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Years at Rendcomb

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Junior School:

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Senior School:

.....

Please send your completed form to:

Jane Gunner

Whiteway Farmhouse, The Whiteway
Cirencester, Glos GL7 7BA

Or e-mail secretary@oldrendcombian.org.uk

indicating whether you are happy for this information to be shared with
the College and/or the Friends of Rendcomb.

Alternatively, we have updated the Contact Form on the OR website.

The link can be found here oldrendcombian.org.uk/contacts-and-links/

*If you would like to keep your Newsletter intact, simply photocopy
this form to complete and send – thank you*

Left page: Rendcomb College 100 years ago (*colourized original*).



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