



OLD RENDCOMBIAN SOCIETY

.....

NEWSLETTER

2023

49th Edition

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Change of Address & Contact Preferences

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Post: *form inside back cover*

Digital Edition 2023

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OR SOCIETY OFFICERS

At the Annual General Meeting on Monday 27th June 2022
the following officers were elected:

President:	Chris Wood (1965-71; Staff 1976-2009)
Chairman:	Richard Tudor (1973-80)
Vice-chairman:	Jessica Weston (1998-2005)
Honorary Secretary:	Jane Gunner (1975-77) Whiteway Farmhouse The Whiteway, Cirencester Gloucestershire 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-) Delia Rich (2001-2011) Iain Whittaker (1980-87) Hamish Wilson (1971-78) Bill White (Staff 1961-97)
Honorary Auditor:	David Williams (1966-71)
Newsletter Editor:	Richard Tudor (1973-80) E-mail: rictudor706@yahoo.co.uk

..... *Cover photo © Lynne Keddie*

..... *Many thanks to Lynn for allowing us to use her photograph on this year's the front cover.*
..... *Lynn is an accomplished photographer and contemporary artist based in Frome, Somerset.*
..... *You can see more of her work by visiting lynnkeddie.com*

OR SOCIETY MINUTES / AGM 2022

The Minutes of the virtual **89th Annual General Meeting** of the Old Rendcombian Society held on **Monday 27th June 2022**, hosted on Zoom by **Jane Gunner**.

Present:

Richard Tudor (1973-80), **Chris Wood** (1965-71; Staff 1976-2009), **David Williams** (1966-71), **Brian Smith** (1965-72), **Bob Edy** (1959-67; Staff 2015-), **Robin Bowen** (1963-70), **Mark Naylor** (Staff 1998-2017), **Jane Gunner** (1975-77), **Peter Callaghan** (1956-61), **Hamish Wilson** (1971-78), **Michael Naish** (1952-60), **Geffrey Bye** (1940-48), **Rob Jones** (Head of College 2015-), **Nigel Powell** (1967-74), **Geoffrey Taylor** (1952-60), **Richard Wills** (Governor, Chair of the Trustees of the Friends of Rendcomb College).

1. *Apologies:* **Iain Whittaker** (1980-87), **Richard Law** (1964-70), **Claire Germaine** (1990-93), **David Mabberley** (1959-66), **Neil Lumby** (1968-73), **Delia Rich** (2001-11), **Jess Weston** (1998-2005), **Bill White** (Staff 1961-97), **Julian Comrie** (1946-54).
2. *Minutes:* of the **88th AGM** held on **28th June 2021** were accepted as a correct record.
3. *Matters arising out of the Minutes:*
Head of College, **Rob Jones**, reported that at the end of May it had finally been possible to hold the Centenary celebration which had had to be postponed for 2 years because of the pandemic. Over 300 people including ORs, parents and staff attended an evening of music and food, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was hoped that similar events would be held in the future. He went on to report that the College was in good shape with day pupil numbers on the rise. Overseas pupil numbers continued to be affected by the virus situation in different countries. The holistic

approach to education was receiving much plaudit and it was hoped that more could be done with a move to improve the service side in line with the Public Works (PW) of the past. **Rob Jones** then left the meeting.

In his absence, **Richard Wills** praised Rob's handling of the situation throughout the pandemic demonstrating exemplary and outstanding leadership through the very difficult period.

4. *To receive the Honorary Treasurer's Report:*

In the absence of the treasurer, **David Williams** gave the report. Current balances gave a total of £19,584.46 of which £260 remained of the **Colin Hitchcock** fund. The £2,175 ticket money which was being held for the postponed First 50 Years luncheon would now be paid out as the event went ahead on 1st June. This left a balance of £17,149.04 in the general funds.

The cost of the newsletter was significantly down on last year because its size had been restricted to under the 100grams second class postage rate.

There were a small number of shop sales which was the result of book sales.

David Williams thanked **Claire Germaine** in her absence and **Jane Gunner** passed on Claire's thanks to David for his help and support. The Chairman thanked the Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Auditor.

Jane Gunner proposed and **Robin Bowen** seconded that the accounts be adopted. This was agreed unanimously.

5. *Travel Bursary:*

David Williams reported that £1,000 of the 2022 £1,500 had been awarded so far. It was proposed by **Geoff Bye** and seconded by **David Williams** that the Travel Bursary fund should be £1500 for 2023. This was agreed unanimously.

6. *Any other business:*

Rob Jones returned to the meeting.

Brian Smith and **Bob Edy** were congratulated on the very successful 50 years lunch which sadly neither **Jane Gunner** nor **Bill White** had been able to attend.

Jane Gunner reported that the Newsletter had been sent out by post to 1,100 members. Only 99 people currently request it by e-mail notification only.

Peter Callaghan asked whether there would be future 70, 60, or 50 year reunions at Rendcomb. Jane explained that the Committee encouraged year groups to come back to the Summer Reunion to celebrate their notable anniversaries. Indeed, she had already had a request from those who left 25 years ago. **Rob Jones** undertook to find out when the 2023 reunion would be so that Jane could circulate the date.

Mark Naylor had taken along the old register and this had prompted much interest and discussion.

Richard Wills thanked ORs for inviting him to the meeting and for all the support that had been given to the Friends of Rendcomb Trust over the years. This made it possible for students to attend the college who might not have been able to afford it and others to remain when their family encountered financial hardship.

Mark Naylor reported that the Friends of Rendcomb had continued to support 3 students in 2022 and had just undertaken to support another young person for 3 years. At the moment 2 students would be supported in 2023.

Chris Wood thanked the Committee for their ongoing work and thanks were to be passed on to **Bill White** for all he had done over the years to keep ORs in touch. The newsletter would be 50-years-old in 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm



OR SOCIETY AGENDA / AGM 2023

You are invited to the **90th Annual General Meeting** of the Old Rendcombian Society to be held at **12.15pm Sunday 25th June 2023** in **E1 at Rendcomb College**:

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive the minutes of the **89th AGM** held on **27th June 2022**
3. To deal with matters arising from the minutes
4. To receive the Honorary Treasurer's report
5. To elect a new Chairman for the OR Society
6. Travel Bursary
7. Any other business + vote of thanks to the College

OR SPORTS CONTACTS

Please make contact well in advance if you wish to play, referee or umpire in any of the fixtures. Also via ORs Facebook page facebook.com/groups/2217271449 or via the OR website below...
oldrendcombians.co.uk

COLLEGE: **Alex Brealy** BrealyA@rendcombcollege.org.uk

Edward Thomason thomasonE@rendcombcollege.org.uk

GIRLS' SPORTS: **Jess Weston** jess_weston@hotmail.com

Delia Rich via ORs Facebook page above

RENDCOMB COLLEGE

It's a pleasure to write and not have to mention the effects of a certain disease in my yearly article to Old Rendcombians. The last 12 months have been far from normal but it has certainly been interesting!

Last year we enjoyed considerable success in sport and particularly on the girls' side where they were unbeaten in Hockey, won the Small Schools Lacrosse Tournament and mixed it with the best at the National Competition. Boys' hockey also fared well, coming third at the West of England Tournament. Looking down the year groups we have some talent coming through and with the introduction of more sports, a greater number of pupils are able to compete for the College.

Music and drama continue to be a great strength with some fantastic productions and concerts across various parts of the College.

Shakespeare in the Park was a summer highlight, as are the main concerts where we decant from the Reading Room into Clock Hall to hear the orchestra, bands and ensembles. We are enjoying breadth like never before.

ORs will also be pleased to know that academic standards continue to rise alongside our holistic ambitions. Last summer saw the College gain record GCSE results, we regularly have pupils among the top scientists and mathematicians and it is a great pleasure to receive high numbers of messages about 1st Class Degrees for our boards in Clock Hall.

Last summer also saw us welcome the Inspectors for 4 days. For the first time, the College achieved 'excellent' in all areas, this included pupil progress and pupil development. While it is satisfying to receive such a ringing endorsement of what we do, it was extremely pleasing to receive the results of the Inspectors' parent survey which saw 97% of families saying that they were happy with every area of College life. You'll not be surprised when I tell you that we're seeing unprecedented interest in the College and I have had to expand our Year 7 entry to 3 forms for the first time in College history!

Of course, there have been moments of sadness throughout the year. After losing **Colin Burden** during the pandemic, it was with great

sadness that I learned of the passing of **Bill White**. ORs might be surprised to know that Bill still maintained a presence in the College as it was not uncommon for me to call him to discuss previous pupils or staff. I think he would be pleased to know that he rests right next to my house and will continue to keep an eye on the current and future Rendcomb Heads.

I finish by asking for your support. The Friends of Rendcomb does fantastic work providing emergency bursaries to families who need a little extra help. Both **Bill White** and **Colin Burden** were great advocates for the Friends, giving generously in terms of time and donations. If you would like to join the 1920s Club to help or learn more please contact **Mark Naylor** (see page 51).

~ **Rob Jones** (Head of College 2015-)

OR SUMMER RE-UNION 2023

10.30am - Coffee in Clock Hall

11am - Parish service at St. Peter's, Rendcomb

11.15am - Cricket match starts on Top

12 noon - Pay bar opens

12.15pm - AGM in Room E1 - *please see agenda on p.5*

1pm - Hot lunch with vegetarian option for cricketers and all visitors

No charge - but donations to OR Society gratefully received

2.30pm - Cricket Match resumes / tours of the buildings begin

4.30pm - Tea on Top in the Pavilion

COLLEGE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

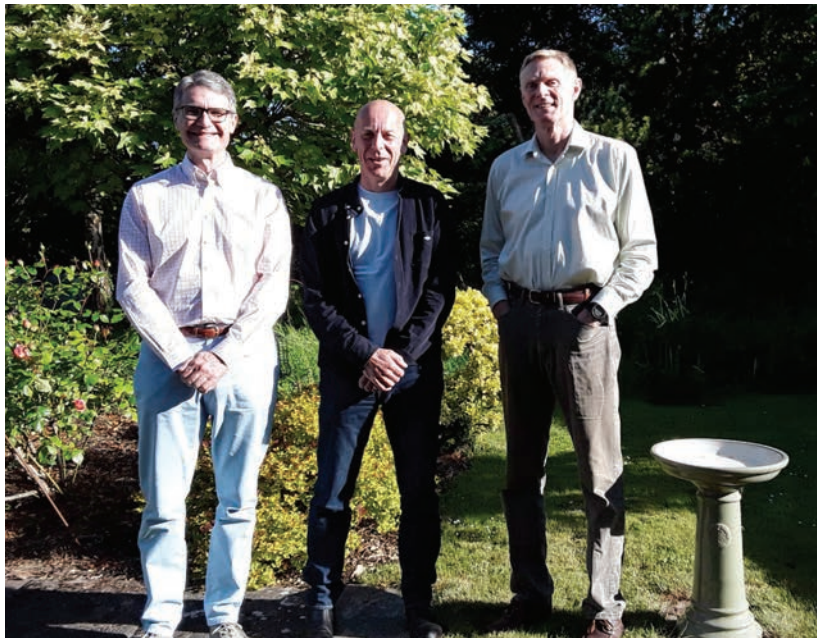
After two years of postponement, the College's belated centenary party was finally held on Friday 27th May 2022. Over 300 people with representation from the entire Rendcomb family enjoyed a wonderful evening of balmy weather, street food, live music and a silent disco.

A large number of ORs of all ages joined in the fun...



Romilly Ringstrom *née Evans* (1997-2004), **Sarah Bennett** *née Rudderham* (1997-2004), **Jess Weston** (1998-2005), **Alice Tredwell** *née Barefoot* (1997-2004)

CALLING LEAVERS OF 1979



Nick Miles, Richard Pitt and Richard Tudor (all 1973-80)

Calling anyone who left in 1979 and/or were part of that year group.

A number of us attended recent memorial service for **Bill White**, which was a lovely and wonderful tribute to such a great man who will be greatly missed.



Following that we have formed a WhatsApp group and after nearly 44 years it would great to reconnect. The group is growing by the week and full of great memories; the link is:

Rendcomb‘79

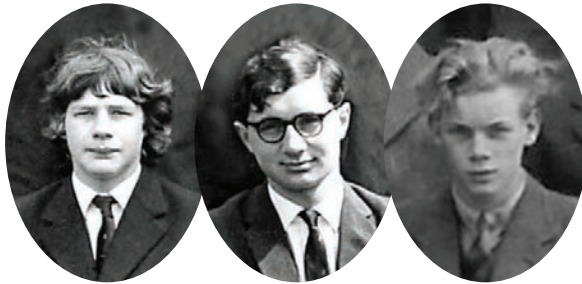
FIRST 50 YEARS REUNION



Old Rendcombians 1920-70 at Rendcomb College Celebration Lunch – 1st June 2022

William Griffiths (1960-67), Michael Edwards (1948-54), Brian Fisher (1966-73)
Theo Willford (1965-68), Chris Pulford (1970-77), Robert Goodsell (1962-68)
Nicholas Smith (1971-75), Paul Harrison (1954-61), Ted Taylor (1957-64)
Tim Nicholas (1969-76), Steve Hicks (1969-76), Jon Hiscox (1960-67), Steve Hewitt
(1971-77), Noel Willford (1965-70), Ian Read (1969-76), Geoff James Taylor (1953-61)
Richard Sumsion (1947-54), Simon Wormleighton (1968-75), Julian Comrie (1946-54)
Hamish Wilson (1971-78), Desmond Knox (1970-75), Robert Sherratt (1969-76)
Alan Lamb (1964-71), Neil Johnson (1964-70), Robin Bowen (1963-70)
Richard Law (1964-70), Jonathan Fletcher (1968-75), Christopher Brisley (1941-50)
Nicholas Hillier (1965-70), Anthony Hillier (1963-68), Jonathan Tyler (1965-72)
John Murray Webb (1954-63), Martin Lee-Browne, Mark Whittering (1956-61)
Robert Barnard-Weston (1968-75), Richard Roberts (1967-72), Ian Niel (1964-71)
David Mackonochie (1967-72), Michael Barnes (1961-69), Dick Millard (1964-70)
Derek Wiggall (1966-74), Rev. Julian Wilson (1974-80), Michael Miles (1943-50)
John Ellis (1948-57), Peter Callaghan (1956-61), Stuart Shellswell (1958-66)
John Mitchison (1957-63), David Tyler (1965-70), David Griffiths (1956-64)
Andrew Stafford (1966-71), Fraser Glennie (1959-67), Julian Gray (1965-71)
Nigel Powell (1967-74), David Williams (1966-71), Chris Wood (1965-71)
Brian Smith (1965-72), Rev. Bob Edy (1959-67), Paul Curtis Hayward (1970-77)
Peter Lace (1970-75), Philip Smith (1968-74), Andrew Medhurst (1968-75).

After two postponements because of the pandemic, the First 50 Years celebration organised by **Brian Smith** (1965-72), **Rev. Bob Edy** (1959-67; Staff 2015-23) and **Julian Comrie** (1946-54) was finally able to take place on 1st June 2022.



At last! Finally, in June 2022 it was possible to hold the long-planned Centenary celebration. The original date for the event had been set for June 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that the celebration had to be postponed on two occasions.

It was in the 2018 edition of the OR Newsletter that **Rev. Bob Edy** (1959-67) wrote: *'And then there is the College centenary in 2020! It has been suggested that we might arrange an event for those who were educated here in the first half of its existence that is more than 50 years ago. If you are interested, do let me know...'*

In a moment of madness, I sent an e-mail to Bob to say that I would be happy to join him in organising such an event – and so the planning process started. It was a much longer journey than any of us anticipated.

We wanted to target as many ORs as possible who had attended the College between 1940 and 1970. It was felt that about 40 OR's was a realistic number – but obviously we hoped for more. The College kindly confirmed that they were willing to provide the catering facilities to hold such an event. Bob and I quickly agreed to invite **Julian Comrie** (1946-54) to participate on the committee. We felt that Julian's contacts from the late 1940s and early 1950s would help to increase attendance and widen the appeal.

The spreadsheet combined with e-mail became our main weapons of choice. Details of the planned event were first published in the 2019 Newsletter. Keeping tabs on who was interested in attending and their individual circumstances was quite a task. Needless to say, most ORs were brilliant at communicating. Responses were invariably prompt and no one let us down. Possibly these were traits learnt through the experience of attending Rendcomb? It was certainly pleasing that so many expressed interest in the event.

After so many months of planning and many meetings the day of celebration finally arrived. Fortunately, the weather was reasonable – not too hot and not too cold. The COVID-19 pandemic was still clear in everyone's mind but at least everyone could now mingle without too much fear of infection.

Just under 100 people attended including 62 ORs together with their partners and guests. It was pleasing that all the decades from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were well represented. There was great sadness that the COVID delays meant that two stalwarts of the OR Society were unable to attend. **Colin Burden** had sadly passed away and **Bill White** was forced to make a late decision not to attend due to poor health.

The day started at 11am with registration and coffee in Clock Hall. **Nigel Powell** (1967-74) had kindly volunteered to organise photography for the day. Nigel was immediately pressed into action as ORs arrived. The hubbub of chatter and conversation was immediately apparent and became increasingly loud. ORs of many years standing quickly reacquainted themselves with fellow ORs – many having

not seen each other for 50 years or more. Memories of years gone by quickly caught up with everyone. Smiles and happiness abounded. Most ORs seemed to easily recognise each other – their essential characteristics having not changed with the passing of the years. It was definitely a very happy occasion with so many memories being sparked alive.

ORs had been asked to bring along pictures, memorabilia and anything that had been relevant to their years at Rendcomb for display. There was such an interesting collection of School lists, pictures, items of clothing – and of course a copy of the pink School Rule Book that ORs were so familiar with. So many ‘prohibiteds’, ‘must not’, ‘not permitted’, ‘balustraded’ – such was life at the time!

Prior to lunch being served **Chris Wood** (1965-71) made a speech on behalf of the OR Society welcoming everyone to the event and recalling the main personalities of Rendcomb who had contributed so much to the College over the years. The Head of College was unfortunately unable to attend the celebration but **Bob Edy** (1959-67) made a speech on his behalf in which he was able to update ORs on developments and current issues affecting the college. I then made a speech to update ORs on the plans and timings of events that were planned for the day. All the speeches were kindly recorded by **Des Knox** (1970-75) and are available to view and listen to on the OR website at oldrendcombian.org.uk

As lunch approached, ORs experienced a ‘memory jerker’ as the School bell was rung out loud. A sound that had been a big part of our lives for so many years! It had a warm and familiar note to it as ORs proceeded to their tables for lunch.

Lunch is a very different experience at Rendcomb today than it was 50 years ago. Gone are the ‘left overs pie’ the cold soggy toast, the solid hard-boiled eggs – the delights that many ORs experienced when they attended College. The standard of catering is now first class. Every dietary requirement is attended to. The catering staff did a superb job in providing ORs with a most enjoyable lunch.

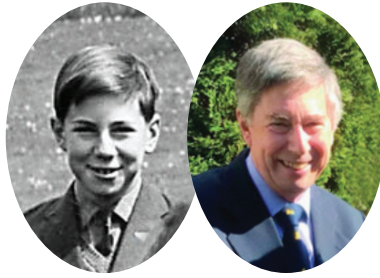
Four further speeches were given at the end of lunch by **Julian Comrie** (1946-54), **Stuart Shellswell** (1958-66), **David Tyler** (1965-70) and **Hamish Wilson** (1971-78). Each speaker had been asked to speak about 'the positive experiences that they had at Rendcomb that helped to shape their future life and career'. The speeches were both interesting and entertaining, reflecting the different characteristics and personalities of the individuals. Once again, **Des Knox** (1970-75) kindly recorded the speeches and they can be viewed on the OR website *oldrendcombian.org.uk*

Following lunch, **Nigel Powell** (1967-74) achieved an incredible result of organising a group photograph. The objective was to replicate the photograph of Rendcomb students that had been taken in June 1924. ORs were capably directed by Nigel to stand in a predetermined layout on the lawns in front of the College (close to the site of the cricket nets) so that a wide-angle photograph could be taken. This exercise was a resounding success. A group photograph (complete with a stuffed dog!) gives a wonderful record of the ORs attending the event. ORs were then given an opportunity to take a tour of the new buildings and sporting facilities that have been created in recent years. Some ORs also elected to take a pleasant walk through the Wilderness to look at the playing fields on Top – reminding themselves of their past sporting achievements (and the many hours spent stone picking!)

As ORs returned to the main building at the end of the afternoon there was a final piece of entertainment that brought additional smiles to faces. **Bill Griffiths** (1960-67) gave an impromptu performance on the piano in which he sang a song based on Alice Blue Gown (1919). The words of the song had been altered by **David Sells** for entertainment at a Christmas Party sketch in 1961. Bill had originally sung the song as a boy treble. The words to the song and Bill's most entertaining performance are also available to view on the OR website.

The end of a most memorable and enjoyable day with so many friendships rekindled. It had been a resounding success and will undoubtedly be fondly remembered by everyone who attended.

~ **Brian Smith** (1965-72)



Chris Wood (1965-71; Staff 1976-2009) spoke as follows:

What I am going to say is about the important people in the development of Rendcomb College in its first 50 years and it has been formed largely by the thoughts of **Bill White** who has been associated with the College for 61 years.

Bill taught at Rendcomb from 1961-97 and he has actively supported the OR Society in so many ways: for example, in 1974 he started the ever-popular newsletter which has grown over the years and, thanks to **Jane Gunner**, is still thriving; he was President of the Society from 2006 until last year. Also, Bill compiled the *History of the College in Photographs* with me in 2011 and there are a few copies of this publication and other items available for perusal and sale today. That's our plug done. Sadly, Bill and Jane cannot be here today for health reasons so please feel free to contact them and share with them any photos taken today.

The Founder, **Noel Wills** served in the First World War and he was very affected by the death of so many young men as well as the plight of the bereaved families. As a result, he made a huge philanthropic gesture by setting up this school, not on traditional lines but as a family society with fees paid by the school. Of course, that was 1920 and the first roll was just 12 pupils.

Soon applications came in from people who did not fit the entrance criteria so the school expanded with these new fee payers in 1923.

Within seven years, **Noel Wills** died and his brother, **Lord Dulverton**, kept up the educational momentum. Noel Wills and Lord Dulverton gave strong leadership to the school and appointed **J.H. Simpson...**

as the first headmaster who had taught at Clifton, Charterhouse, Gresham's and Rugby and who had strong ideas about self-government as well as the importance of enterprise and character rather than just knowledge. Hence the formation of the General Meeting which played a significant role in many of our lives.

Canon Henry Sewell took over as Chairman of Governors on the death of the Founder and served the College well for 16 years. He was always most dedicated to the Founder's intentions and there is a John James apocryphal story that this white-haired and bearded gentleman would cycle all the way from Gloucester to Rendcomb for meetings. Thinking of the ascents of Crickley Hill and Rendcomb Hill, Canon Sewell was indeed a man of considerable strength!

Colonel John Godman took over as Chairman of Governors in 1943 and the school was again lucky to have a strong leader at the helm, particularly as finances were alarming during and after the war and the number of entrants became concerning in the 40s.

Major Peter Birchall was secured as a Governor in 1947 and his connection with the Gloucestershire Education Committee (of which he was to become Chairman) was to prove invaluable.

In conjunction with Gloucestershire Education Committee, Gloucestershire Foundation Scholarships were established of which some of you are and I am fortunate to be one.

Initially candidates had to take exams in Shire Hall in Gloucester but this was changed to sitting papers and being interviewed at Rendcomb. As a result, each year seven candidates were supported by the local authority on the basis of a means test of parental income. If we understand correctly this more or less rescued Rendcomb College from its financial crisis.

Colonel Godman continued to be Chairman of Governors and to take on board a number of people like **David Wills**, the Founder's son. It was David Wills who was instrumental in introducing the idea of Rendcomb going co-educational in the 6th Form which happened in 1972 – definitely pioneering stuff!

Even in old age Colonel Godman demonstrated a strong presence on the Governing Body. Bill recalls that in the 70s the Governors wanted to go back to a system of paying staff every 3 months. Bill and **Kaye Knapp** attended a meeting of the Governors and the then secretary Ian Mitchell about this issue. Colonel Godman who had seemed to be asleep suddenly became animated and said that when he was a subaltern in the army, he should not have wanted to be paid every 3 months and so the staff were paid monthly thanks to him.

Rendcomb's longest serving headmaster, **Denis Lee-Browne** had joined the teaching staff in 1926 as a science teacher and was appointed as Simpson's replacement in 1932. Of course, he had to deal with the war years but he presided over a period in which the reputation of the College increased significantly. He was a suitable choice to continue the Founder's ideals of producing rounded individuals and he encouraged extra-curricular activities: for example, sailing, making canoes which some of you will remember, bell-ringing and acting. However, the Governors could not persuade Lee-Browne to increase numbers above 90 pupils.

When Lee-Browne became very ill in 1959, **Jack Fell** got in touch with the Governors about the need to replace the ailing Lee-Browne. As a result of that the Governors appointed **John James** as acting Headmaster for a year while they found a suitable replacement. One of John James's many important tasks was to appoint a new classics teacher and he offered the job to **Bill White**. Now John James and Bill's father were on the same History examining panel in Cambridge so John James got on the phone to Bill's father and asked him to persuade Bill to accept the post. Thank goodness he did because so many Rendcombians have benefitted from Bill's excellent teaching.

Anthony Quick came from Charterhouse to become Headmaster in 1961. The Governors wanted to increase the number of pupils in the school and were prepared to provide financial backing for this. Under Anthony Quick's headmastership the numbers increased from 89 to approximately 160 and during this period he spent a lot of energy supervising this development which included the building of the...

swimming pool, the Study Block, the new Headmaster's house, the Art Block, a Chemistry laboratory and the conversion of the Rectory into a Junior House. Much of this was supported by the Dulverton Trust and **David Wills**.

Anthony Quick also realised that it was important to make more contact with local people which he successfully did with the help of his wife Jean. The school took some time to adjust to the change from Lee-Browne to Quick, particularly as Anthony Quick could be somewhat eccentric at times. For instance, at the end of a Sunday Evening Prayers in Big School he announced that he was banning the singing of *Onward Christian Soldiers* because of the foot stamping and in a similar manner he publicly banned semolina from the lunch menu. I have to say that I missed *Onward Christian Soldiers* but not the semolina!

The school gradually settled down under this new headmaster and Anthony Quick moved on just after the first 50 years of Rendcomb. The next 50 years has seen considerable development in terms of buildings, reputation, co-education, day pupils and the addition of a Junior School, resulting in the Rendcomb College of 2022.

We are grateful to these key figures who made this school what it is today and we look forward to the next 50 years.

CONGRATULATIONS

Samuel Tushingham (2009-16) MBChB (Hons.)
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, MMedSci (Distinction)
Master's in Medical Science: Anatomical Sciences
from Keele University.

Grace Knapp (2011-16) First Class (Hons.) in LLB Law
from the University of Exeter.

Eve Harker (2014-19) First Class BA (Hons.) in Fine Art
from Bath Spa University.

Emily Sharman (2012-19) BSc in Medicinal Chemistry
& Neuroscience, 1st Class Honours from Keele University.

BIRTHS

To Katy and **Richard Whittles** (2002-07), twin sons, Jack and Harry
born April 2021.

To **Alice** *née Barefoot* (1997-2004) and Christopher **Tredwell**
a daughter, Emmy born October 2021, a sister for Harrison.

To **Sarah Tarleton** (2001-11) and Jim Chapman a daughter, Margot
born September 2021.

To Claire and **Richard Collins** (2001-08) a son, Rory George
born January 2023.

To Louise and **Luke Gunner** (1998-2005) a son, Scott Heath Farrell
born April 2023.

MARRIAGES



Evangeline Bevans (2007-11) married James Berryman in June 2022 at The Mill Barns in Shropshire. They will be known as Mr & Mrs Berryman-Bevans.

Evi was escorted up the aisle by her father, **Paul Bevans** (Staff 2007-), who is a Physics teacher and Houseparent and has been at Rendcomb for the past 15 years.

ORs present were: **Lucy Payne** *née Barnett* (2007-11), **Rachel Jennings-Smith** *née Jennings* (2002-11) and **Bryony Smith** (2009-11)



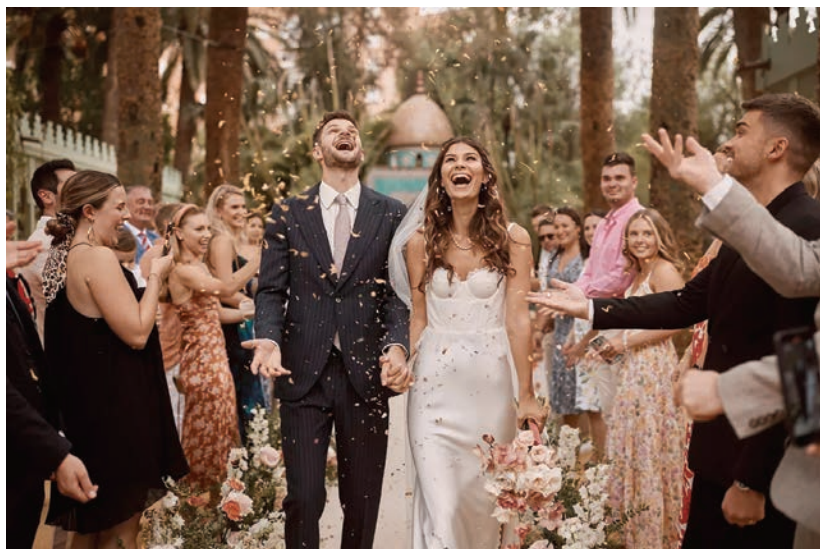
Ellie Whittles (2002-07) married William Steele-Moore in August 2022 in Guernsey. Pictured with her family including brother **Richard Whittles** (2002-07) and sister **Abigail Whittles** (2004-09).





Sarah Tarleton (2001-11) married Jim Chapman in Seville in September 2022. ORs at the wedding were her brothers **James Tarleton** (2001-06) and **Patrick Tarleton** (2001-06), and **Hannah Taylor** (2006-11).





Photos by Benjamin Wheeler & Ben Higgins

Edd Kiggins (2002-04) married Leanne Pitcher in August 2022.





OBITUARIES

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

Cdr. Edward Theodore Thring (Bursar 1981-94) died peacefully on Sunday 6th February 2022 aged 91. He was a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and friend. A Thanksgiving Service was held at All Saints Church, Alford, Somerset, on 24th February with donations going to MNDA.

Anthony Nelson Hill (1955-60) died in December 2022. His wife, Marilyn wrote to Jane: I gather he and Hugh Gough formed one of the jazz trios. On leaving Rendcomb, he joined the family business,



the Hills Group and was still a director until his death. We were married for 53 years and have two children. For the first 4 years we lived at South Cerney as he was in charge of the gravel pits there.



Peter Rundle (1975-76) died in January 2022.

Tim Ingles (1969-74) died in April 2023.

The tribute to the late **R.N.D. Wilson** (Staff 1934-44) written by Virginia Macnaughton was published in the Coleraine Historical Society Bann Disc Volume 28 in November 2022. An earlier version can be found in the OR Newsletter 2018.



Mary Medill wife of **Roger Medill** (Headmaster 1971-87) died in August 2022. Her funeral service was conducted by **Rev. Bob Edy** (1959-67; Staff 2015-) and held at St. Peter's Church, Rendcomb. Amongst the ORs who attended were **Richard Tudor** (1973-80) representing **Nick Miles** (1973-80), **Rob Jones** (Head of College 2015-), **Eric Blencowe** (1976-83), **Joanna Mills** *née Brain* (1979-81), **Claire Germaine** (1990-93), **Charlie Hussey** (1974-76), **Ben Freeman** (1976-83) and **Jane Gunner** (1975-77) representing **Bill White** (Staff 1961-97), **Hamish Wilson** (1971-78), **Neil Lumby** (1968-73), **Tessa Hicks** (1974-76), **Russell Copley** (1976-83), **Penny Green** *née Hooley* (1977-79), **Barnabus Branston** (1982-87), **Ed Webb** (1981-88), **Stella Joel** (1974-76), **Chris Wood** (1965-71; Staff 1976-2009), **Dr. Henrietta Bud** *née Hooper* (1973-75), **Des Knox** (1970-75), **Richard Deacon** (1976-83), Friends of Rendcomb College and the Old Rendcombian Society.

For those who had the privilege to attend Mary's funeral, I will at the outset say that my remarks cannot possibly match the eloquence of those of her children, who spoke so richly about her life and legacy on that occasion.

What I can do is to reflect on my own experience of Mary. First, she was warmly hospitable to anyone and everyone. In company with that, she was an exceptional chef whose culinary creativity was legendary. Dinners at the Medill house were always informal, engaging affairs with serious discussion and fun in equal measure. Mary was a vivid and magnetic raconteuse, whose stories could leave dinner guests both aghast and in pain with laughter; it mattered not a jot whether the stories might at times have been just very slightly embellished... She could also be bluntly honest when she came across any hint of hypocrisy or snobbery; she was a very grounded person.

After years of reflection, I became aware that I was always drawn to their house not just because of my friendship with her son Oliver, but also because of the warmth that existed in the house, and in their family. I found the atmosphere quite addictive, and wanted to return as frequently as I might be invited!

Mary was also a woman of exceptional kindness, unstinting love, and a degree of compassion that I think is very rare. At a time, long after I had left school, when I urgently required assistance with an old friend who needed a place in a nursing home, I approached her, as I had no one else to whom I felt sufficiently comfortable to turn. Mary told me to leave the matter with her, and managed to find a home for my old friend within the space of some two hours or so, no questions. I never found out how she did it, and she never raised it again, but she saved my friend's life.

That was only one thing she did, and for me. If one were to try to enumerate or elaborate on all the things she did, unquestioningly, uncompainingly, for practically anyone who expressed the need, one would be penning a rather long book! And she was such fun too! One could laugh with her and talk about anything at all. I felt accepted for whom I was, without question.

Her passing left me and many others very sad, although I know she had been suffering from ill-health for many years and had endured her illnesses with humour and exceptional fortitude. I think the wonderfully positive legacy she will leave for me, as with many others, will be lasting.

~ **Eric Blencowe** (1976-83)

Michael van den Driessche (1955-60) died in August 2022.

Frank Ferguson (1953-60) wrote: Mike and I exchanged Christmas cards for about 59-60 years and he was the OR with whom I had most contact. He was a great rugby fly half, a good hockey forward and a good gymnast. He joined Rendcomb in the 3rd form (common entrance time) in 1953 or 54.

Peter de Longh (1946-52) died in July 2022, a much-loved husband, father and grandfather.

Anne Waddington (1986-88) died April 2022.

Bill White (1936-2023)

(Staff 1961-97) died on Friday 10th February three days before his 87th birthday. A service of Thanksgiving for his life was held on 11th March at the church of St. Peter & St. Paul, Northleach.

Among those who attended were:

Chris Wood (1965-71; Staff 1976-

2009), **Jane Gunner** *née Watson*

(1975-77), **Hamish Wilson** (1971-78),

Bobby Morgan (Deputy Head 1990-

2007), **Martin & Aileen Graham**

(Staff 1985-2017), **Alastair Wilson**

(1969-76), **Chris Pulford** (1970-77) also representing **Owen Davies**

(1970-77), **James Terry** (1970-77) and **Paul Maguire** (1972-78),

Nigel Hall (1972-79), **Jonathan Fletcher** (1968-76), **Bob & Ruth Edy**

(1959-67; Staff 2015-23) also representing **Rob Jones** (Head of...



College 2015-), **Sophie Blackwell** (Staff 1990-99) also representing **Rufus Blackwell** (1988-93) and **Oliver Blackwell** (1991-96), **Anne Vickery** (1988-2006)) also representing **Dominic O'Connor** (1986-93), **Paul Sykes** (Staff 1982-2003), **Richard Sumsion** (1947-54), **John + Patta Tolputt** (Headmaster 1987-99), **Phil Smith** (1968-74), **Richard Burden** (1997-2004), **Frances Burden** (1995-2002), **Graham Checksfield** also representing **Graham Smith** (Staff 1974-99), **Dominic Ind** (1973-80), **Jonathan Allen** (1973-80), **Fred Wilcox** (1973-80), **Richard Pitt** (1973-80), **Tim Etherington** (1973-80), **Richard Tudor** (1973-80), **Anne Holt** (Staff 1968-96), **Theo Ramsden-Hare** (1986-93), **David Williams** (1966-71), **David Beanland** (1974-79), **Ben Almond** (1978-85), **Charlie Webb** (1990-97), **Carol Endersby** (2000-22), **Julian Comrie** (1946-54) representing **Claire Foster née Comrie** (1978-80) and **Fiona Welford née Comrie** (1980-82), **Mike + Joan Newby** (Staff 1978-96), **Ann + Michael Slark** (Staff 1996-2013), **Keith Winmill** (1972-79), representing **Matthew Cragoe** (1972-77), **David Marshall** (1972-79), **Ben Knapp** (1977-84), **Carlo Vuolo** (1996-2013), **Kim + Chryssa Taplin** (1997-2001), **Tim Nicholas** (1969-76) **Charlotte Bonardi** (1976-78), **Amanda + Alex Brealy** (1982-87; Staff 1994-), **Rachel Fielding** (Staff 1993-), **Nicola Gill** (Staff 1994-2006), **Ian Taylor** (1968-75), **Jacqui née Crowhurst** (1974-76) + **Pete Sayers** (1968-75), **Rob Weston** (1968-75), **Peter Croft** (1986-93), **Steven Croft** (1987-95), **Michael Craddock**, **Roland Martin** (1982-89, Headmaster 2011-15), **Bridget Goldsmith** (1988-93), **Graham Lawton** (1987-94), **John Webb** also representing **Rupert Webb** (1991-98), **Mary + Pete Cairns** (Staff 1996-2017), **Chris Hart** (1970-77), **Des Knox** (1970-75), **Mike James** (1968-75), **Ian Read** (1969-76), **Steve Hewitt** (1971-77) also representing **Nick Smith** (1971-75), **Tessa Hicks** (1974-76), **Nigel Powell** (1967-74), **Julian Gray** (1964-71), **Robert Sherratt** (1969-76), **Fraser Glennie** (1959-67), **Brian Smith** (1965-72) also representing **Richard Law** (1964-70), **Robert Barrett** (1969-76), **Chris Moody** (1980-87), **Michael Moody** (1984-91), **Patrick Boydell** (1988-95), **Chris Jarrett** (1988-95), **Brian Fisher** (1966-73), **Tim Lausch** (1970-77), **Paul Curtis-Hayward** (1970-77). Those represented by the OR Society included: **Stephen Lea** (Staff

1989-97), **David Mabberley** ((1959-66), **Russell Copley** (1976-83), **Simon Reichwald** (1982-87), **Clare Chappell** (1991-93), **Greg & Alison Dorey** (1967-73), **Adam King** (1990-97), **Esther McNeile-Jones** (1986-88), **Kathryn Russell-Duff** (1987-89), **Paul Spackman** (1979-86), **Andrew Martin** (1987-94), **Chris Dendy** (1969-76), **John Morgan** (1988-95), **Mary FitzGerald**, **Richard Bendy** (1979-84), **Barnabus Branston** (1982-87), **Andrea Gellan** *née Don* (1973-75) **Charlie Hussey** (1974-78) and **Martin Griffiths** (Staff 1982-2003).

Chris Wood writes: **Bill White** (1936-2023). Bill's health had been in decline for a couple of years and, as a keen walker, he was frustrated by his reduced mobility. Jill and I had not seen him for two months due to us being ill although we managed to hand over Christmas presents at a safe distance and of course spoke to him on the phone. So, it was a great shock when he was struck down by a massive stroke on 6th February. By chance, he was found by his goddaughter Liz, who is a doctor, and Bill received excellent treatment from the NHS despite an ambulance strike. Bill died peacefully in hospital four days



later and we were pleased to have been able to see him and read to him from *Winnie Ille Pu* and, although seemingly unconscious, he squeezed my hand as I read.

Bill was laid to rest at Rendcomb church next to his friend **Colin Burden** on 24th February and a Memorial Service held at Northleach church on 11th March, all according to Bill's specific instructions.

Many people have said that this is the end of era and I certainly feel this. I personally have lost a special Latin teacher, a rugger (as he would always say) coach, a hockey coach, a caring housemaster, a supportive teaching colleague, an excellent walking partner (I will always remember walking the Cotswold Way with him) and a true friend.

Bill specifically asked me to thank everyone who attended the services and to thank the choir (in which he sang), Nick Fisher (the retired Reverend who knew Bill well, conducted the service in Northleach) and **Bob Edy** who conducted the funeral at St. Peter's, Rendcomb.

This was my heartfelt tribute to Bill at the Memorial Service:

Benedictus benedicat...

All Rendcombians will remember Bill booming out this grace at the beginning of meals in the same way that he delivered assemblies and addresses – no sound system needed!

Bill was the only child of loving and generous parents who were determined to give him the best possible education. He went to Aldenham School in Hertfordshire and from there he gained a place



to read classics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Both establishments and his father being headmaster of Beckenham & Penge Grammar School gave Bill experiences of education which were to inspire him to become a teacher himself. But before teaching he had to do National Service. His university friends persuaded him to apply for the Royal Artillery and it was here that he learned the value of discipline...

However, his understanding of mathematics was really put to the test and the gunnery tutors had their work cut out with this Classicist! One thing that he did perfectly though, while practising gunnery in Troon, was his Scottish accent and his ability to mimic others which he used amusingly in staff common rooms and elsewhere.

Bill then did his teacher training in Kent and spent a year in a French Lycée in Limoges as an English teacher. It was there that he became a very competent French speaker and this would prove to be useful later in his teaching and many visits to France.

In 1961 Bill applied for the position of Latin and English teacher at Rendcomb College. When offered the job he was unsure. However, his father was a history-examining friend of **John James** who was the acting headmaster at Rendcomb at the time and the story goes that John James contacted Bill's father to persuade Bill to accept the offer... *and the rest is history!*

Thank goodness that Bill did accept the job because he proved to be, not only an outstanding teacher of Latin and French, but also an excellent all-round schoolmaster. His preparation of lessons in his immaculate handwriting was exemplary and always a great support for pupils, particularly when they studied Latin set books for 'O' and 'AS' levels.

His proactive approach to teaching kept pupils engaged. Verbs were conjugated in unison whilst Bill paced around the classroom and he brought much humour to his lessons. One of Bill's friends, who cannot be here today, remembers Bill taking her on a tour of the school and entered his classroom to see on the blackboard: "Translate into French – My socks are smelly".

Also, many Old Rendcombians will remember this: "Ecce Eduardus Ursus scalis nunc tump tump tump post Christophorus Robinum descendens". Bill reading *Winnie Ille Pu* and of course it was *Winnie the Pooh* that was responsible for one of Bill's many throwaway comments: Tiddley Pom.

Bill was an outstanding tutor and housemaster, always keeping his ear to the ground and never overreacting to tricky situations. Despite being single he comfortably assumed the role of a father figure and was able to empathise with teenagers perhaps better than their own parents on occasions. I clearly remember how he dealt with us so calmly when we arrived back from Cheltenham on a Saturday night slightly inebriated.

Mike James who joined the College as an 11-year-old emphasised this in a moving obituary on his radio programme. He stated with emotion that Bill was a 'very significant part of his life at Rendcomb, not because Bill taught him rudimentary Latin, but because he was the person...

who brought stability and counsel, wit and wisdom. He went on to say that Bill was a wonderfully relaxed person outside the classroom – some would say a strict disciplinarian – but he was always a voice of reason and fairness, a fantastic man of style, often seen with his beloved aromatic pipe...’

Bill may not have had children of his own but in effect, he had so many children when you count all the pupils he looked after and the three godchildren he cared for. Bill was equally supportive of his teaching colleagues and made strong friendships with the Knapp and Burden families. One Rendcomb teacher I spoke to recently summed up Bill well when he said that Bill was a well-respected schoolmaster who was regarded as the role model for young teachers.



Of course, it wasn't just Latin and French that Bill taught because, as well as inspiring pupils to enjoy activities like gardening, he coached his own sport, hockey, often taking part in staff v pupil hockey matches with his old long-headed English stick and robbing 6th formers of the ball.

He also reluctantly coached rugby but was often seen on the touchline supporting rugby matches. It was on one such occasion that his pipe took a direct hit from the ball. Unfortunately, he was puffing on it at the time and this resulted in the loss of some teeth.

Bill taught at Rendcomb from 1961 to 1997, a career which he found both rewarding and enjoyable. During this time, there were three headmasters but even after he retired, headmasters continued to value his counsel on matters Rendcombian.

He was Second Master, that is Deputy Head, from 1973-85 and following that, the post of Senior Master was created specifically for Bill to ensure that his wisdom and experience would continue to filter into the decision-making within the College. There is even a room named after him!

Now one of the many pastimes of pupils was guessing Bill's age because he looked mature but acted much younger. We all struggled with this and I suspect few got it right but now at last you can work it out.

Bill was also very interested in pupils' progress after they had left Rendcomb and his influence on the Old Rendcombian Society has been far reaching. In 1975 he founded the Society's Newsletter which began as a small foolscap document printed at the school and which is now a popular 70-page full-colour booklet. He regularly attended meetings and reunions and took part in the organisation of big events such as the College anniversary balls.

Old Rendcombians loved to keep in touch with him by regularly writing, phoning or visiting him. So, it was fitting that more recently he was President of the Society.

If you were fortunate enough to have tea with Bill at Rendcomb or Northleach you will know that he loved to have the full afternoon tea.



Well, we hope that you will join us for such a tea after this service at the Cotswold Hall (with something a little stronger if you wish).

...benedicto benedicatur

I don't think Bill quite realised that he could be daunting when you first met him: his erect carriage, his clarity of speech, his general stateliness **John Tolpuitt** (Headmaster 1987-99) writes: You wouldn't want to mess him about.

On arrival in 1987, I knew he had been second master for many years, though **Kaye Knapp** was the current incumbent with the job of seeing in a new Headmaster. Kaye did this brilliantly, with great kindness and care. But Bill shared with Kaye an understanding of Rendcomb and a profound knowledge of its history. He cherished the qualities that made the school special, while never standing in the way of change. He almost forgave me for reducing the role of Latin in the timetable.

So, I soon realised that Bill was someone who was going to help Patta and me settle in and learn how to do the job. He had worked with three headmasters before, and had a kindly, almost fatherly, tolerance of what they get up to. He said what he thought in private and then in public firmly supported whatever was decided. Early on we had a Royal Visit and in our rehearsal he (of course) played the part of the royal person. We walked the whole route together and when we reached the newly built Lawn House, he (royally) wondered why the new housemaster needed a double garage. I told him that no royal person was interested in garages, so he was delighted when on the day the Duke of Gloucester wanted to know why we had built a double garage outside Lawn House.

There was an element of performance in Bill, but he was always thoroughly himself. His integrity and kindness shone through him, and I think that was why pupils loved being taught by him. His help could often be unobtrusive. When a much-loved chaplain, **Peter Sudbury**, died on Founder's Day, we were in some disarray.

The news of Peter's death came just before the speeches, I was entertaining a General, and Bill slipped a piece of paper into my hand. It was a prayer he had written on the spot which I could use at the end of the speeches when I had to tell pupils and parents what had happened. In the year following before we could find a new chaplain, he

took services and sustained the life of our church. He was a remarkable and witty speaker in and out of the pulpit.

Bill's love for Rendcomb expressed itself in the care he took of its gardens. Continuing well after his retirement, working with **Tony Partridge**; he put countless hours into making the place look cared for. Sometimes I would pass him on the way to the swimming pool. 'Good morning William'. 'Good morning Headmaster' (in broad Gloucestershire accent).

You never quite knew how seriously Bill was taking you, or indeed himself. He loved laughter; his sense of humour gave him the balance that was so uniquely his. He was loved and respected by so many generations of pupils and colleagues, as was shown by the memorial service in Northleach Church, packed to the rafters.

~ **John Tolputt** (Headmaster 1987-99)

September 1961 was a landmark month in the History of Rendcomb College, **Bob Edy** (1959-67, Staff 2015-23) writes, it was the time when it became apparent that the College was moving on from the Lee-Browne era as **Anthony Quick** took over the reins after a year of John James' 'acting' headship.

The most obvious immediate impact was on the number of pupils. My year had begun life in 1959 as a class of five: **Dow, Edy, Glennie, Harris, Mabberley** – an entire year group! Suddenly, in September 1961, we found ourselves swamped as the class more than doubled in size. The first-year intake in 1961 was larger than usual too. The capacity of the changing room was expanded from its comfortable 91 pegs to a number well in excess of 100 – and there was a notable addition to the teaching staff, WJDW!

Bill made an immediate impact – he seemed to be everywhere. Looking back, in retirement, he would say that the established members of staff treated him very much as the junior and he felt intimidated by them (difficult to imagine!). Bill was fobbed off with all the jobs which the others were looking to shed. One such job was taking...

the 'third game' rugby. Many years later, he admitted that he had hated this but any observer would have been mightily impressed with the energy which he put into it.

His teaching in the early years was relatively formal: he taught us for both English and Latin – an awful lot of grammar! I found myself doing several shifts in his gardening PW squad where, of course, Bill was in his element – whatever the weather. He cheerfully led, while we pupils froze!

I cannot say that I particularly enjoyed the English grammar, the Latin or the gardening, but I left Rendcomb knowing that Bill was a teacher with whom I wished to remain in touch. The time when I came to really appreciate his care and his wisdom was during two terms when I slept in the attic of the Old Rectory – a bizarre arrangement whereby a prefect and an older pupil were based, notionally as helpers, in a building otherwise occupied by second year boys.

Bill was the house tutor, to whom I had to report each evening. Bill was a great listener and understood teenage boys. As a school manager for nearly 20 years, I have always believed that, in addition to their parents, every child benefits considerably from having an adult, often a teacher, to mentor them through the turbulence of the teenage years. As he puffed away on his pipe, and occasionally treated me to one of his trademark expressions of incredulity if he thought I was exaggerating or hiding something, wise and gentle mentoring was what Bill gave to me – and continued to give to so many others during his 36 years at the College.

The response to his death reflects how grateful we all are.

Radio obituary presented on 15/2/2023 on Swindon 105.5FM by **Mike James** (1968-75):

For any Old Rendcombian listening to this programme, this next song is in memory of the late **Bill White** who passed away last Friday.

Bill was a very significant part of my young life at Rendcomb College – not because he managed to teach me rudimentary Latin. He was the person who brought stability and counsel, wit and wisdom, while a lot of the structure in my teenage world was crumbling

Bill was 32 years of age when I arrived at Rendcomb in 1968 – and to an 11-year-old small boy he seemed like the sort of teacher you would not wish to mess with. The kind of ‘funny uncle’ with a sharp wit, and a fearsome reputation for the maintenance of decorum. He was a gifted teacher, communicating with consummate ease with boys of all ages, shapes and sizes. A wonderfully relaxed persona outside the classroom – some would say strict disciplinarian – I would say voice of reason and fairness. A fantastic man of style, often seen with his beloved aromatic pipe, and a man with a great choral voice too – a man who devoted nearly 60 years of his 86 years to association with the school in one form or another.

More than anyone else at Rendcomb he was kindness and inspiration personified – a man of great humour who I was privileged to know, and to remain in contact with, long after school days.

A true gentleman and friend (and a mean good shot with the black-board rubber)

Mike James (1968-75) trained and took up radio presentation on Swindon 105.5 Community Radio, whilst recovering from surgery in 2022. His popular music hour called ‘Melody Maker’ on Swindon 105.5 is now a weekly fixture within Wednesday evening programming, and airs between 7-8pm.

Mike broadcast this obituary to Bill on 15th February, with the ballad ‘Moon River’ accompanying it. If you’d like to listen to it in context, please be in touch with Mike at mike.james@swindon1055.com and he will send you an mp3 copy.

Written by **Richard Bendy** (1979-84): There's often one teacher in a person's life who is inspirational and for me that was **Bill White**; he had the impressive ability of being able to convey information in a humorous and memorable way and as a result it lodged in one's brain permanently. More than this though, it was simply great fun to be in his company and is perhaps why I gravitated to gardening, librarianship and church ushering, three activities many would perhaps not immediately have associated me with. An unwelcome experience of an activity I was perhaps more closely associated with was however forced upon Mr White when a radio-controlled aeroplane I was 'piloting' crashed onto his roof in a vertical dive and with such force that the splintering balsa-wood dislodged several tiles. In his usual unflustered manner, he came out of his front door and remarked that it was possibly good that I couldn't pursue my first choice of career due to my short-sightedness.

Sadly, all the extra time spent in the library didn't enhance my academic abilities and in his role as careers adviser he very gently suggested that a university education might not be the most appropriate; he instead pointed me in the direction of what have now become modern apprenticeships. Knowing the enthusiastic but somewhat scatterbrain material he was dealing with, he kindly insisted on giving me interview practice for the supermarket trainee manager schemes I was applying for and without this I would definitely have been floundering. Perhaps belying his witty exterior, his questions were significantly tougher than those in the actual interviews and so he was undoubtedly instrumental in my being offered a position with Sainsbury's. The training I received there has been incredibly useful throughout my working life and so although he may have sadly left us, Bill White's early influence and associated witticisms certainly live on with me and I'm sure do with many others.

Esther and I have known Bill for a long time, writes **Bobby Morgan** (Deputy Head 1990-2007), stretching back to when in 1990 I was appointed as Deputy Headmaster at Rendcomb College following the retirement of **Kaye Knapp**. Bill had previously held the position of Senior Master and it was with some trepidation that I took on responsibilities which he had exercised so effectively. Might he not resent the new man coming in and taking over? I need not have worried. Right from the start he gave me full support and wise advice and he never interfered unless he was asked. You knew you had got it badly wrong when he said, “perhaps I wouldn’t do that”. The years flashed by and suddenly we were talking about Bill’s retirement and his teaching career coming to an end. However, he stayed on to look after Rendcomb’s wonderful gardens, especially the climbing roses on the terraces. He spent many happy hours there, often in the company of **Tony Partridge** (Staff 1973-89), a long-time servant of the College just like Bill. I was able to view their efforts from the window of my study on the first floor of the Main Building, overlooking the terraces, and I am sure that Bill must have thought I was checking up on him. By this time, he was well established in Northleach, having moved from No.9 Rendcomb. Retirement simply meant the opportunity to pursue all sorts of activities, some in the service of the community and some purely for his own enjoyment.

It was Bill’s good fortune to be blessed with 25 years of retirement in which to do this. He was already familiar with Northleach Church and became a much-loved member of the Church choir and the longest-serving singer of its current team. He sang bass and knew all the hymns and anthems, often helping the rest of the choir with the harmonies and dynamics. Very occasionally, he grumbled if the choir sang a piece of which he was not so fond but always he expressed that with a wry smile. Bill was on the PCC for a number of years, serving as Deputy Church Warden, and he contributed much to the discussions of its Committees on topics such as worship. He also played a part in the team of welcomers who guided visitors around the church. Perhaps he will be remembered most by the many participants at Evensong who heard his sermons - or quiet talks as he preferred...

to call them. These were fascinating and full of amazing knowledge, often based on the history and meaning of hymns. He would end the talk with a funny story to make sure his listeners were entertained but you went away with something memorable. However, it was possible as the listener to miss some of Bill's gems. When announcing the hymn For the Beauty of the Earth, Bill used to say "And now Hymn 429, also known as the Fosseway".

I have already mentioned Bill's care of Rendcomb's gardens but there was just as much evidence in Northleach of his prowess as a gardener. He planted and cared for a range of plants and bushes at the top entrance to the churchyard and he supervised the planting of several trees here in the churchyard and elsewhere in memory of loved ones. He also acted as tree warden for the local council but his own garden was the source of the greatest pleasure. At its peak the garden was... full of plants, especially dahlias and roses which he grew from his own cuttings. It won him the award for best local garden in 1998. Such experience enabled him to take over the U3A Garden Group and he ran the group for the next 15 years. He organised a wide range of visits to gardens both well-known and more obscure. Some were very local, such as Cerney House and Eastleach House, and others further afield such as Stourhead and Waterperry. The variety of his choices was particularly memorable, even stretching to a visit to the garden at Rendcomb which he had helped to create, and the members of the group derived great pleasure from these visits. However, he thought that the group's members ought to be learning from each other about gardening skills and the plethora of plant information that they could share; so was born the concept of In My Garden where back in the Westwood Centre all of us contributed to the discussion under his leadership.

Bill was a keen Rambler, participating in the U3A's programme of walks but also venturing further afield on the longer walks run by the Cirencester Ramblers' Association. When he was leading a walk it would be meticulously organised and full of interest. He made many friends on the ramblers' holidays for whom he organised mini breaks in the Cotswolds based in Broadway. He was also on the Footpaths

Committee for the Cirencester Ramblers, which monitored rights of ways issues and liaised with Gloucestershire County Council. Bill was also a skilful bridge player and at Rendcomb he had been able to pass on those skills to generations of pupils who signed up for the bridge club he ran. Now in retirement he happily played in a regular four in Northleach and developed his own conventions and mannerisms. When he opened his hand at bridge, he often said 'Let me survey the lilies of the field'. Esther and I were privileged to play occasionally with Bill and Carole Buckley, both expert at the game way beyond our capabilities. However, we were surprised to discover that Bill never seemed to get decent hands. After the deal of his usual dross, he would announce to the rest of us "No bid" and this went on for the entire evening, hand after hand. But what was most impressive was the stoicism with which he endured this bad luck and he never grumbled or moaned. It was yet another demonstration of Bill's patient and enduring friendship.

So, a man of considerable abilities, who was always prepared to put them at the disposal of others. His friendship was highly valued by a wide range of people who appreciated the help that he gave so freely. He was someone you could depend on, who was staunch in his support both for church and state. I am proud to have known him and we as a family mourn his loss.

I was shocked and saddened to hear Bill had died, **Richard Burden** (1997-2004) writes: Bill and my father **Colin Burden** (Staff 1963-97) were colleagues and friends, both spending a lifetime teaching at Rendcomb. Bill joined Rendcomb in 1961 and Colin arrived a couple of years later in 1963. They both retired in 1997 and it was unfortunate that their joint retirement party was cancelled because it was due to take place on the day of the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. Bill was my Godfather and took a keen interest in my and my sister **Frances's** (1995-2002) progress through school at Rendcomb, further education and employment.

He was a regular visitor to our family home and often came at Christmas, always generous with his time and gifts. He had a commanding...

presence and authoritative voice yet was very kind and always had a number of funny anecdotes to share about his travels or former pupils.

He gave a great deal to the community, leading country walks, and singing in the choir and taking Evensong at his local church in Northleach. He was a keen gardener and successfully encouraged me to develop my own garden.

Bill was a great support to me when my father died in 2020 during I miss Bill very much and will think of him often.

Ben Knapp (1977-84) writes: Bill was my Latin Master at school, and whilst I was never a great Classics scholar, I thoroughly enjoyed his lessons and I still appreciate the insights into the English vocabulary gained by his classes. His lessons were informative and focused on... ensuring we knew the syllabus but still offered the possibility of some drama. It also helped that Bill had one of the nicest classrooms in the College by the main entrance.

What my classmates did not know was that Bill was my Godfather so I knew Bill from a very early age. Bill was an exemplary Godfather. He always showed a keen interest in whatever myself or my family were doing and this continued right up to a month or two before he passed away. He always remembered me at birthdays and Christmases. He was often interested in hearing updates regarding any news from ORs that I had come across and seemed to have an exceptionally good memory.

As many have commented it was very difficult to discern Bill's age. In fact, his appearance hardly seemed to change over 50 years. Bill had a distinctive voice, always clear and never more powerful than saying grace in the Dining Hall. Bill had an instantly recognisable voice. As soon as you heard it in the distance you knew it was Bill. I also remember his singing raising the standard in Church and assemblies.

Bill always enjoyed gardening and I remember him in the large greenhouse (between the Old Rectory and Estate Gardens – no longer there) cultivating flowers for the College. He also had an infectious



pleasure for hiking whether it be involved in College walks or in retirement.

Bill contributed massively to Rendcomb life in so many different ways for over 60 years and it was fitting to see the number of ORs attending his 80th birthday celebration at the College. He will be remembered very fondly by a great many people.



Sophy Layzell *née Denny* (1990-92) 8th March 1974 - 2nd October 2022

For those of you who remember Sophy from Rendcomb, it is almost inconceivable to think that she is no longer with us. Her character was so unique that I know she will stay in our memories forever: she was one of the first people I had ever met to truly walk her own path. Other people's opinions somehow seemed to matter little to her and she had an amazing belief that people would accept her for who she was, which they did. She would always stand up for what she believed in and was vocal in her defence of anything or anyone that she felt needed her support.

Her tastes were eclectic, even eccentric and yet totally part of her – I always remember her wearing her purple or orange jumpers, while the rest of us stuck to 'safer' colours, and this was typical of her attitude to everything in life – if she liked it then no further discussion would change her mind. Her many friends were from all walks of life and she paid little attention to someone's popularity, preferring to base her view of them on how she felt about them. I remember her sense of humour, how giggly she was at times and how horrified

she was when she didn't understand a joke. Suddenly, she would give everyone a hard stare that Paddington Brown would have been proud of, and demand to know why it was funny! She loved to shock people in different ways, particularly by saying or doing something totally unexpected, and I will always remember the Fashion Show that she and others organised, which was certainly out of the ordinary.

Her relatively young marriage to Harvey not long after we left Rendcomb was a shock to everyone but Sophy was determined to do it. Once she set her mind to something, then it was always going to happen! Much of her married life was spent working as a commercial artist and running drama workshops (Make Performing Arts), which are still running. She and Harvey had two gorgeous daughters, both thoroughly adored, and it was a cruel blow to them all when their elder daughter, Jemima died suddenly in 2012, aged 13. Never one to sit idly, Sophy used her grief as the driving force to promote organ donation and Jemima is the UK record holder for most organ transplant recipients.

Sophy and Harvey worked together to have Jemima's diary published, to ensure that Jemima's dream of becoming an author could come true. It was agreed that the money raised would go to the Jemima Layzell Trust, a charity that they set up in her memory to help children with brain injuries. Michael Morpurgo agreed to be Patron of the charity and Sophy organised national writing competitions to raise money for the charity. Eventually Sophy turned her creativity to writing her own books, which were launched in 2020 and their success was a source of great pride for her.

It came as a shock to all of us to hear of the death of her husband, Harvey, from an unexpected heart attack on the 13th April 2022, swiftly followed by her own diagnosis of cancer. As always, she girded her loins and focused on living life to the fullest. Even at the end, when she knew it was terminal, she was trying on new wigs, making arrangements to see friends, promoting her book as well as (most importantly) making sure that her younger daughter had her time with her mother.

More than anything else, I feel proud to have known Sophy and called her my friend. At a time when so many of us had no idea what we wanted from life, she knew what she wanted and why and I admired that immensely. That strength helped her cope with so much in life and to give back more than she ever took. If I believed in reincarnation, I would suspect that Sophy had been here before and knew that life was for living to the utmost. She was the wisest and silliest of us and I will miss her more than she could ever have known.

~ **Petra Glover** *née Watt* (1990-92)



The Junior School creates crowns to celebrate the Coronation.

FRIENDS OF RENDCOMB COLLEGE

Registered Charity No.290373

Chairman: **Richard Wills** - Governor,

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

Rob Jones - Headmaster (2015-), Ex Officio 2015

Keith Winmill - OR (1972-79)

Richard Law - OR (1964-70) *appointed 2009*

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

Jessica Weston - OR (1998-2005), Vice-chairman OR Society

David Marshall - OR (1972-79), Vice-chairman OR Society

The Friends of Rendcomb have continued to support both the College and students of the College throughout 2022-23 with donations helping two students where family circumstances would have prevented them from continuing their education at Rendcomb. The Head of College reported that one of the students who has been supported has become a mainstay of the sports teams and that this student is also achieving top grades in their studies. The other student having had a difficult time in their own family has produced some impressive and outstanding work in some areas and is displaying a wonderful entrepreneurial flair.

The Friends continue to support, where requested, both learning aids along with support for sport within the College.

It is only with the kind and generous donations that the Friends receive that they can achieve their aims and objectives in supporting Rendcomb College and students in a time of need. The charity has over the last four years made support available to the College of over £60,000. It has only been able to do this thanks to very kind and generous donors.

If you would like to donate on either a regular or just a one-off donation to the assist the work of the Friends of Rendcomb, please contact...

Mark Naylor either by letter at 7 Hampton Grove, Meysey Hampton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5JN or naylorm20@hotmail.com or should anyone wish to join The Friends of Rendcomb charity as a Trustee please feel free to do so, we can only survive with the generosity of supporters.

~ **Mark Naylor** (Staff 1998-2017)

ST. PETER'S CHURCH UPDATE

Work has continued at apace on the fabric of church, resulting in a much-improved quinquennial report but this does mean that a lot of money has been spent and the church will need to start fundraising again in earnest.



The PCC are sad to be losing **Bob & Ruth Edy** who are retiring this summer. Their contribution both to College and Community has been immense.

If you'd like to give a donation or become a regular giver, please contact our Treasurer, **Annabel Purcell** annabelpurcell@hotmail.co.uk

Request for information...

We've received a request for information about Old Rendcombian **David Haes** (1926-29) and the Betula Ltd. an avant-garde London furniture workshop.



In 1931 Francis Nevel (born Franz Knefel) (1911-93), **David Haes** (1912-2002) and the artist and lecturer, Gladys Mayer (1888-1980), established The Betula Ltd. at Sharpleshall Street, Primrose Hill, London. Both Francis and David studied at Rendcomb College between 1926 and 1929.

They founded a company which manufactured radical, anthropophical furniture, inspired by the ideas of the Austrian philosopher, spiritualist, architect, and occultist Rudolf Steiner. An academic paper recording the story of this undocumented enterprise is currently being researched by senior lecturer at The University of Cumbria, Tony Peart.

Through articles in previous issues of The Old Rendcombian, Tony has managed to trace and contact the son of Francis Nevel who does hold much information on The Betula Ltd. which he is happy to share.

The Nevel and Haes families lost contact in the 70s and unfortunately it has proved much more difficult to find information about **David Haes** and his involvement with The Betula Ltd. It is believed he had three daughters: Millicent, Madeline and Jennifer and went on to establish his own furniture workshop at Guildford, Surrey in the 70s.

Tony is hoping that one of our readers may be in contact with a member of the Haes family and may be able to put him in contact with them. He can be contacted by e-mail at tony.peart@cumbria.ac.uk





A forthcoming academic article by the current author celebrating the life and achievement of **James Herbert** ('J.H.') **Simpson**, the first headmaster of Rendcomb College, is to be published in the leading History of Education journal. The paper will focus on his dozen years as headmaster at Rendcomb (1920-32), as well as his earlier teaching experiences at Gresham's and Rugby schools, to show his importance in developing the tradition of progressive

education in the United Kingdom. This is the first piece of scholarship in over fifty years to focus exclusively on Simpson and aims to re-instate him as a figure of national importance.

Simpson was born in Rugby and educated at Rugby School and Pembroke College, Cambridge where he read both Classics and History. Following brief stints teaching at Clifton College and Charterhouse his first substantial job was at Gresham's School (1908-10) where he worked under another great headmaster, G.W.S. Howson, before he moved across to Whitehall to work as a Junior Inspector for the Board of Education. During these years Simpson also visited Homer Lane's community for juvenile delinquents, The Little Commonwealth. These experiences, especially his observations of poverty whilst inspecting schools in Lancashire, were especially important as they served to convince him of the need to not only foster and develop the innately good nature of the child but as well the need to build communities of learning founded on democratic principles.

Simpson was to bring these convictions to Rugby School where he returned as a housemaster in 1913. Working with willing pupils, and sometimes against school authority, he turned his form class into an experimental laboratory in which decisions around rules, regulations, and which subjects should be studied in the day were made by a process of pupil democracy which included a system of debates and

voting. In this, his voice counted for no more than his pupils. For its time this was highly novel and Simpson's work caught the attention of other reformers, one of whom was **Noel Wills** ('the Founder') who was so impressed by Simpson's account of his experiment that he invited him to become the first Headmaster of Rendcomb in 1920.

This was the opportunity Simpson had been waiting for, a chance to move beyond the single classroom and apply his progressive methods to an entire school. During his Headship, he established many of the key principles which were to define Rendcomb and make it, even down to the present day, wholly distinct from other experimental schools. Not only did Simpson set it up along democratic lines – and pupils now made decisions about school finance and governance – but the curriculum was broad, and the boys who attended came from a range of different social backgrounds, often assisted by bursaries. That the school's early alumni went into a range of varied and successful careers is testament to Simpson's vision and strong personality.

After leaving Rendcomb the rest of Simpson's working life was spent in more administrative roles; he became the Principal of St. Mark's and St John's teacher training college in Chelsea between 1932-45 and was Dean of the College of Preceptors from 1942-57. The innovations he made here not merely contributed to the post-war renaissance of the teacher training college sector but also raised the standard of the profession more generally. His continuing interest in the quality of state education was shown too in his active contributions to various government committees.

Overall, it is only right that we remember today Simpson as a pioneering headmaster but also as a deep and innovative thinker about the point and purpose of education. His lively autobiography *Schoolmaster's Harvest* (1945) still merits a read and whilst his name has been largely forgotten it is hoped that this forthcoming article will contribute a much-needed re-assessment.

Dr John Howlett PhD (Cam), FHEA, FRHistS *is a lecturer in Education at Keele where he teaches and writes mainly about the history of education. He also recently completed a new entry for Simpson in the Dictionary of National Biography.*



End of Summer term 1950 – *the Cleaning Gang*

Top row: Cresswell, Howard Hayter, Michael Miles

Second row: Roger Kendal, Michael Braid, Ian Reed, Sam Shield,
Gerard Chagrin (Benson), Bill Dutton

Bottom row: C.D. Whittle, J. Kitto, Athel Paish, L. Crawford, K. Statham



The 1983 year group meeting up 10-years ago for their 30-year reunion
...and they're planning a 40th at this year's Summer Reunion!

OLD RENDCOMBIAN NEWS

Brian Fisher (1966-73) writes:

50 years on and still playing a vicar... Despite not being part of the official curriculum, theatre was still a key part of the broad base of the Rendcomb College education in the 60s and 70s. Not only was I part



of that merry band of 'Stagemen' helping to build stage sets and props but I also appeared in a number of plays. It began with *Androcles* in the 1970 Junior Play, Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* and finished with Archbishop Cranmer in Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* in 1972.

I suppose it was only natural that I joined an amateur theatre group soon after leaving Rendcomb and have, over the years played everything from the eponymous 'Alfie' to 'Oberon' and much more in between. Just before Christmas 2022, exactly 50 years to the day after playing Cranmer, I played the Rev. Lionel

Espy in David Hare's *Racing Demon*. Spookily, in the audience for both was **Nigel Powell** (1967-74). We'd bumped into each other at the Old Boys' Centenary Luncheon back in the Summer when we were also given a tour around the Griffin Theatre, Rendcomb's stunning theatre facility. I know that nowadays Theatre Studies has become a staple in most schools' curriculum, but in our day that was far from the case. Amateur theatre has enabled me to have a rewarding hobby as well as a successful career in Sales & Marketing where my stagecraft and voice training have proved to be extremely transferrable skills. I hope the beneficiaries of the current facilities recognise the opportunities.

In 2019, I was fortunate enough to play Magwitch in a production...

of *Great Expectations* at The Minack Theatre in Cornwall – if you don't know it, Google this fabulous open-air, clifftop theatre and pay it a visit. I'll be there again this August in a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* – please come and say 'hello!'

The Mission Theatre, Bath – missiontheatre.co.uk

The Minack Theatre – minack.com

Photograph by kind permission: Michael Stevens Pharos Photography
pharosphotography.com

Ronald Pilkington (1951-57) writes:

I emigrated to Spain in 1965 and have lived and worked here ever since. I have often wondered how it was that my parents sent me to Rendcomb. My father went to Clifton College in Bristol, but I have the impression that he was somewhat critical of his school's traditions and culture during his time there and was looking for something different for me. The explanation as to why my father chose Rendcomb is most likely due to the fact that he and **D.W. Lee-Browne** were fellow students at Emmanuel College, Cambridge where my father studied medicine. And no doubt, later on, when it came to selecting the right school for me, my father, by now a consultant psychiatrist, would have approved of Lee-Browne's innovative approach to education, his progressive policies and his interest in psychology.

Whatever the reason, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my parents for sending me to such a unique school set in the beautiful natural surroundings of the Cotswolds. At the same time, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been educated by such dedicated and generous teachers. **J.C. James** not only gave me a lifelong love of history but also encouraged my passion for cricket, and to **Kathleen James**, his wife, I owe my love of English literature. **A.C. Austin** was passionate about cricket and I remember the many happy hours I spent practising in the nets under his and J.C. James' tuition, not to mention my two marvellous years playing in the first eleven. Learning to write and speak French with A.C. Austin and his successor **David Sells**, opened up an entirely new world for me and sparked a broader fascination with other languages and cultures. And how many hundreds of hours have I spent

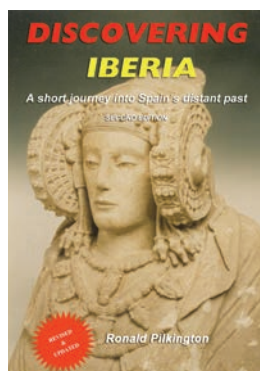
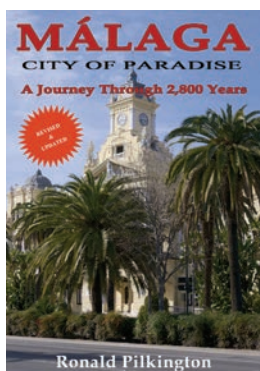
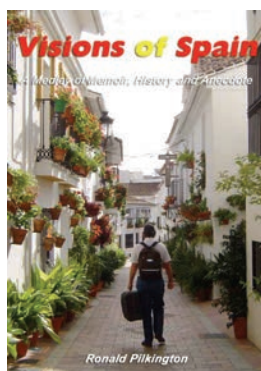
listening to classical music and what immense pleasure this has given me, thanks to **John Tooze**. And, of course, there was the Manual where I used to spend many happy hours under the supervision of **Gilbert Graty**, the manual master. Making things with your hands is one of the most rewarding experiences and the skills I learnt in this department have stood me in good stead throughout my life.

But what of the man who dedicated his whole working life to Rendcomb? The headmaster that I encountered when I entered Rendcomb in September 1951 was certainly strict and sometimes authoritarian but, at the same time, he was essentially a kind and generous person who always had the best interest of us boys at heart. Thankfully, unlike most of his contemporaries, **D.W. Lee-Browne** was against corporal punishment and preferred other more humane and practical methods of discipline such as Public Work or PW (cutting, splitting and stacking logs for firewood) – surely the forerunner of today's community service! He also believed in the power of words to motivate and inspire – as recipients of his famous 'psychos' (philosophical lectures) will no doubt recall. In many ways D.W. Lee-Browne was a man ahead of his time, practising a holistic approach to education several years before this became an educational movement in the 1980s. I remember him with affection and gratitude and can say without a doubt that Rendcomb brought out the best in me, provided me with a broad-ranging education and, indeed, helped me become a more well-rounded person.

I left Rendcomb in the autumn of 1957 and went to Trinity College Dublin where I received a BA degree in English Literature, Modern History, French and Education and later obtained an MA. After leaving university I joined Ford Motor Company in Dagenham as a buyer. I met my Spanish (Basque) wife, Ana, in London, where she was studying English. When Ana was offered a job by an English Travel Agency to run their branch office in Torremolinos, I decided to join her and we got married in the local church in September 1965. Shortly after, I found a job with an Estate Agency in Torremolinos, selling properties to the growing number of expatriates in search of a place in the sun. In 1974, I opened my own office in Fuengirola and branched out into the construction and sale of luxury villas on the Costa del Sol.

After 30 years in the real estate business, I decided to call it a day, sell up and retire. I felt it was time to do all the things I never had time to do – spending more time with my family, my three adult children and my two grandsons, playing golf and tennis, sailing, travelling and learning hundreds of things on the computer. These days, having recently celebrated my 84th birthday and our 57th wedding anniversary, I lead a less strenuous life and now spend my time walking in winter, swimming in summer, gardening, reading and listening to music and playing bridge.

I also decided to give writing a try and have published three books about Spain on Amazon/Kindle: *Visions of Spain, A Medley of Memoir, History and Anecdote*; *Málaga City of Paradise, A Journey Through 2,800 Years* (also in Spanish, translated by my daughter Natalie); *Discovering Iberia: A Short Journey into Spain's Distant Past*.



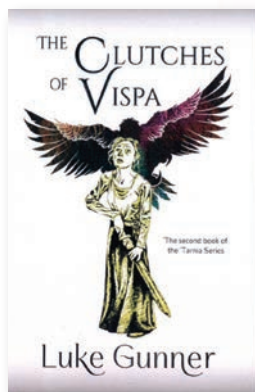
Since leaving Rendcomb, I have been in touch with several ORs (mostly by e-mail) – **David Semple**, **Mike Cooper**, **John Gosden**, **Keith Statham** – but I had the great pleasure of meeting **Peter Hayes** and his wife Sue and **John Gooding** and his wife Katharine when their respective Mediterranean cruise ships docked in Málaga and we arranged to have lunch together and a long chat. It also gave me great pleasure to meet up with **David Brown** and his wife Gertrud in London during a visit to the UK, when we had an excellent pub lunch and caught up with each other's news.

I last visited Rendcomb in May 1962, when I spent a most enjoyable day looking around and revisiting old, familiar places and meeting up again with **Mr & Mrs James, John Tooze** and **David Sells**. I also met the new headmaster, **Anthony Quick**, who kindly invited me to have lunch with him. I have read with great interest about the spectacular changes that have taken place in Rendcomb over the years, not least the large increase in the number of pupils, the admission of girls, and the abolition of the original Rendcomb uniform – the grey short trousers and lumber jackets that we were obliged to wear. At the same time, I am pleased to note that despite the big changes the school's founding values, the unique ethos of Rendcomb and the educational ideals established by Rendcomb's first two headmasters, still remain the same.

Chris Terrill (Staff 1978-83) featured on the BBC for the Christmas special for University Challenge. Jeremy Paxman introduced him as an anthropologist, author and EMI award winning documentary maker and credited him with launching the career of Jane MacDonald as a result of his program on the cruise ship, Galaxy. His latest work required him to be embedded on the warship, Queen Elizabeth on its first operational deployment.

His team answered questions on electrical circuit symbols and stadium architecture but were beaten by York.

Luke Gunner (1998-2005) currently has the first two novels in his Tarnia series out on Amazon.



Dr Theda Napp *née Schuh* wrote to Jane: It's been 30 years now since my twin brother **Enno** and I spent the most wonderful year – the lower 6th form – at Rendcomb (1992-93). (In the Rendcombian Magazine September 1993 you will find an article about The Schuh Twins).



What's happened since then? After the German Abitur in 1995 I went to Heidelberg University Medical School. I graduated in 2001 and moved to Munich University to specialise in Dermatology. In 2007, I followed my husband to my home town Hannover, where we both started to work at Hannover Medical School. My husband Christian is now a senior attending interventional cardiologist.

In 2010, 2011 and 2016 our three boys added to our family. They are now 5, 10 and 12 years old. I work part-time as a senior Dermatologist at the Hospital. My twin brother **Enno Napp** has settled in Hamburg with his wife Johanna. They have three daughters at nearly the same age as our sons (6, 10 and 12 years) funnily enough!

In a couple of years our kids will have that age when my brother and I went to Rendcomb College. And so, we consider to enable them also to spend one year abroad at an English boarding school, maybe in the Cotswolds in a couple of years?! That would be a great experience.

I am looking forward to keeping in touch in the future and hearing about recent news about Rendcomb College.



Holly Phelps (2001-12) starred in *Deep Blue* at The Paperwork Theatre in Liverpool in October 2022.

paperworktheatre.co.uk/programme-deep-blue

Bryan Glastonbury (1947-56) wrote to Jane in response to last year's newsletter: One item that makes me grin is the piece by **Geoff Bye** about **D.W. Lee-Browne's** action to stop smoking. I was there, albeit very junior, and recall the episode. DWLB was at his most impressive. Over the years I've jotted down bits of autobiography, and one of them tells of my first encounter with DWLB in spring 1947, shortly after I'd taken the 11-plus exam. Here it is:

"My first indication that something was up came with the news that I was to go to Gloucester, in my best clothes, with my mother, to be interviewed for a place at Rendcomb College. My memories of the day are still clear, set to a backdrop of wood panelled rooms in County Hall. There were quite a lot of boys and their mothers at the interview, and there must have been some waiting about, because I can remember little groups of mothers talking quietly. At some point a small group of boys were called in to meet DWLB. He asked us to draw a 10ft ladder leaning against an 8ft wall, and estimate the distance between the bottom of the wall and the bottom of the ladder. Pythagoras did it exactly, but I had been involved with enough ladders against walls to make a sound practical guess. Next the artistic bit – make a drawing of someone going up in a balloon and spitting over the side...



Wow! No-one had ever asked such a thing, and spitting was rude! Finally, he asked me to stand upright, hands to my side, and on his word to fall backwards without bending my body. There was no thought that it might hurt falling back onto a hard floor, but of course he caught me just in time.”

Sad to read about **David Godfrey**. I mainly remember him as a good fast bowler in the cricket team, tall enough to give the ball a bit of a bounce. The attached photo (*previous page*) shows one of the evening entertainments on Big School stage. I think, but am not certain, that the boy miming jazz double bass is David, with **R.O.G. Hayter**, leg on chair, **Hywel Griffiths** left side, and **D. Semple’s** back towards us.

STAFF RETIREMENTS

Eleanor Sharman (Bursar 2010-22) joined the school in April 2010 (just as the Icelandic volcano was causing chaos!) and broke with tradition as Rendcomb College’s first appointed female Bursar.

From the very beginning she was always ‘hands on’ and able to assist in any department where additional support was required. It was not unusual to see her helping the Estates Team, Admissions, Main Reception or Housekeeping.



A Bursar’s life is never dull and not just a matter of overseeing routine financial and governance matters! In her 12 years at Rendcomb, Eleanor dealt with many logistical and operational issues, from fallen trees to collapsed ceilings and flooded classrooms.

On one occasion when Rendcomb was completely snowed in with around 100 boarders left on site, she happily led other Rendcomb village staff members into the College kitchens to create meals with whatever ingredients could be mustered in the College store room and freezers; daunting to most but Eleanor simply took it in her stride!

The other huge hurdle Eleanor faced in March 2020 was the unforeseen burden of managing the COVID epidemic, responding to the rapidly developing situation whilst working tirelessly behind the scenes with the Senior Management Team to develop a strategy to launch online learning for pupils, organise staff furlough whilst maintaining a skeleton staff presence on site and adhering to detailed government guidelines for educational establishments.

She joined the ISBA (Independent Schools Bursars Association) which supports and advises bursars on ever-changing legislation. She was later appointed to the Board, eventually becoming Chair.

One of her personal triumphs at Rendcomb was the driving force in planning and executing the Griffin Theatre, a huge capital project. Previously all drama productions were housed in either the Dulverton Hall or Reading Room where neither the acoustics nor audience capacity were ideal for the school's many lavish productions and concerts. From the outset Eleanor gave strict instructions that she was the Project Manager, liaising directly with the Architects and Site Manager and despite numerous construction complications, the theatre opened in 2016 and is fully appreciated and utilised by so many.

In 2022 Eleanor and her husband Peter decided to relocate to Dorset where they are very happy, no doubt pursuing many other projects but hopefully finding some quality time to enjoy her two favourite things, gardening and chocolate!

~ **Carol Endersby** (Staff 2000-21)

OR TRAVEL BURSARIES

James Sinfield (2009-16) writes:

Back in July 2022, I volunteered for two months as an expedition leader to a group of 24 students travelling to Fiji with the charity Think Pacific. After sourcing the cheapest flights money could buy, I subsequently arrived in Suva (capital of Fiji) after 52 hours of travelling. Here I picked up my group and took them up to Togovere, a small and remote village in the North-East region of Ra – accurately nicknamed the ‘Burning East’.



Working in partnership with National Rugby League Fiji and local NGOs, we organised a Sports Camp for 60 Fijian youths (18-35). In this camp, we taught first aid, introduced the youths to new sports and helped further grassroots holistic health. In return, the youths taught us their culture and way of living. One of the aims of the Fijian NGOs is to promote the longevity of their traditional culture through involvement with the youths to teach and demonstrate it.



Of the many incredible aspects of Fijian culture, my particular favourite was the ancient ceremony of grinding down the root of a Kava plant and drinking it as Grog. Unlike our sparkling cava, this Kava is a sun-dried root (Yagona) and shares many properties with that of a bitter ale. This makes sense considering the Fijian word for bitter is Kava and it makes you incredibly groggy in the morning. Another special highlight was when we were taken out to sea to go fishing. The youths

caught fish with spears with better success than I do with a cocktail stick and olives. One day they caught a barracuda which they barbecued for us on an uninhabited island just off the coast. It was definitely a gap year cliché 'found myself moment'.



In terms of living arrangements, each person was assigned parents and a home in the small village. It is fair to say that we all grew very attached to our families which made it all the worse when it was time...



to say goodbye. Enough cannot be said for the kindness and openness of the Fijian people. Fijians take 'open door policy' to a whole new level, you can't walk past a house without being called in for dinner. Even after two months I was still constantly surprised by their friendliness, a stark contrast to my neighbours in London.

Now that I am deep into business life in London, one thing that I will always appreciate is the concept of 'Fiji Time'. It is the notion of things getting done eventually, or not at all, without the stress of time. Fijians generally don't use clocks and things get done at their own pace. Initially, it was incredibly stressful not knowing if the bus I booked was going to turn up in 30 minutes or 3 hours. As Brits we swear by good timekeeping and frown upon tardiness, but after a while, there was something very peaceful about living without using a clock. It was an incredible trip and I would strongly encourage anyone to take some time out there. Finally, a massive thank you to the ORs for making this possible.

OR SPORTS

Dean Close Hockey Tournament – April 2023

On Sunday 2nd April 2023, the ORs Ladies entered a team again for the Dean Close Hockey Sixes tournament. After a few years' break due to the pandemic it was great to be back. Unbelievably we managed to field a squad of 11 so we had substitutes! This meant we could use rolling subs which was great as the 15-minute matches were quite intense! We played some lovely hockey and had some great wins...



Back row: Tilly Boyle (2018-22), Jess Weston (1998-2005), Ellie Jones (2010-17), Holly Phelps (2001-12), Cerys Davies (2008-14), Delia Rich (2001-11), Alice Tredwell née Barefoot (1997-2004), Sarah Bell (Staff 2000-), Jane Gunner (1975-77) Front row: Amy Chambers (2007-09), Charlie Clements-Barnes née Clements, Katie Boyle (2018-22), Megan Hardie (2004-18), Alana Carpenter (2001-11).

and draws against King Henry VIII, Malvern St James and Bristol Grammar School. We narrowly lost our play-off match vs Malvern St. James 0-1 leaving us finishing a respectable 4th in the tournament.

The tournament was really enjoyable and huge thanks to the players for taking time out on a Sunday to come and play. We had a whole...

range of players from recent leavers from last year (the brilliant Boyle twins) to more mature leavers (superwoman **Alice Tredwell** who left nearly 20 years ago!) – the great thing is that we all get on so well; something about being an OR seems to bond you. Special mention to **Megan Hardie** our goalkeeper who made some brilliant saves and who we voted as our player of the day.

ORs that played - **Alice Tredwell** *née Barefoot* (1997-2004), **Jess Weston** (1998-2005), **Ellie Jones** (2010-17), **Amy Chambers** (2007-09), **Cerys Davies** (2008-14), **Charlie Clements-Barnes** *née Clements* (2005-11), **Delia Rich** (2001-11), **Holly Phelps** (2001-12), **Tilly Boyle** (2018-22), **Katie Boyle** (2018-22), **Megan Hardie** (2004-18). Special thanks also to our supporters **Jane Gunner** (1975-77), **Alana Carpenter** (2002-11), **Victoria Clark** (2004-13), **Jonny Peake** (2010-20) and **Sarah Bell** (Rendcomb hockey coach for almost 25 years – she taught us everything we know!) and other friends and family who came to watch. Also, thanks to the Old Rendcombian Society for funding our very smart new OR Hockey shirts.





Please get in touch with **Jess Weston** (jess_weston@hotmail.com) if you would like to be involved in next year's tournament – perhaps we can have enough for two teams...

Photos by Shaun Schofield, Owl Photography

OR Men's Hockey – March 2023

Ed Thomason (2005-10; Staff 2011-) and **Robert Sharman** (2010-18) worked very hard to pull together a team for OR Hockey Day on 25th March 2023. Sadly, only five of those who had registered to play turned up but the College lent them players and the match went ahead. The College won 2-1.



ORs who played: Maroon top dark hair: **Oliver Jones** (2012-19)
Blue top blonde hair: **Henry Holloway** (2012-19), Maroon Rendcomb Rugby top:
Alex Pugh (2007-15), Black top: **Robert Sharman** (2010-18), Yellow top:
Charlie Pugh (2012-19), White top: **Ed Thomason** (2005-10; Staff 2011-)

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: Junior / / Senior / /

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☐ YES, I am happy for my information to be shared with the College and Friends of Rendcomb - *please tick as appropriate*

Please send your completed form to:

Jane Gunner

Whiteway Farmhouse

The Whiteway

Cirencester GL7 7BA

Or e-mail a scan of your completed form to:

secretary@oldrendcombian.org.uk

Please make sure to tick the box if you are happy for this information to be shared with the College and Friends of Rendcomb.

You can also use the Contact Form on the OR Society website via the link on the Home page and Main Menu to update any of your contact information/communication preferences.

Direct link: *oldrendcombian.org.uk/contacts-and-links/*



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