

**St Dunstons
Review
June 1989**



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Cover Picture: In the midst of a snowstorm Ray Sheriff moves gingerly along the ridge from Crib Goch. (See Three Points of Contact on page 14).

From the Chairman

This month I have both bad news and good news to give you. I will give it in that order.

The bad news is that the Contractors will now still be working at Ian Fraser House until at least the end of this year, with all the restrictions and discomfort that this entails.

The good news is that we have decided to modify, update and improve the first, second and third floors of the **North Wing** at Ian Fraser House — and that is why the Contractors' inconvenience is being prolonged. I hope you will agree that it makes no sense to take down the scaffolding, get rid of the workmen and clear up the mess only to get it all back again in a year or two's time — which would also be much more expensive. So we are biting the bullet and doing it *now* and I am asking you to put up with this further disruption in the interests of the future and the longer term.

Existing facilities in the North Wing are outdated: lavatories and bathrooms are too few and too far away. On the three floors to be converted we plan to have about 30 rooms, double and single — each, on all floors, with its own bathroom and lavatory. Included in this arrangement will be its necessary pipework and power supplies to incorporate kitchenettes at some future date if desired, without major reconstruction. One will be installed complete now for training purposes.

When this work is finished (about the end of the year) training facilities will have been improved, our ability to absorb a massive influx of new St. Dunstaners will be unimpaired and flexibility of usage will be enhanced.

I realise that this is 'jam tomorrow.' But tomorrow is not far away, and it is exceedingly good jam. I ask you to accept it.

Henry Leach

Reunions

Ipswich, April 13th

One could say that the official beginning of Spring for St. Dunstan's is the advent of the first of a new season's reunions. Ipswich was the place this year for observers to spot the first of the seasonal gatherings of St. Dunstaners and widows with their escorts, guests and staff. In all 69 — 19 St. Dunstaners, 14 widows, 29 escorts and seven guests and staff — came to the Moat House at Copdock, just outside Ipswich on 13th April.

Mr. Peter Matthews, the Member of Council presiding, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Council. 'St. Dunstan's, in the shape of St. Dunstaners, continues to be, in my opinion, the greatest charity in the world. Apart from St. Dunstaners I want to thank our wives for all they do for us day by day in making life happy for us. I also want to welcome today some of our widows, I believe there are 14 here today and assure them, again on behalf of the Council, that they are part of our family.'

He had a special welcome for Mrs. Dorothy Blankes on her birthday before bringing up to date the figures on the size of St. Dunstan's family world-wide, 'It comprises 31 First War St. Dunstaners living in Great Britain, 10 overseas and, of the Second War and afterwards, in Great Britain 681, overseas 374. Making a total of 1,096, and there are 656 widows in Great Britain.'

Mr. Matthews turned to, 'Two subjects that concern us this year: housing benefit from the local authorities and the community charge. It is necessary to mention these two items at the moment because in this month, April, any of you who are already in receipt of housing benefit will have to fill up new forms and state the rent and the rates and other items. It is a changing scene in that this year because rates have changed and, for tenants in St. Dunstan's properties, the rent. That situation will apply until April 1990 when tenants



Mr. and Mrs. Peter Matthews greet Mrs. Dorothy Blankes at Ipswich.

of St. Dunstan's will only pay rent. Rates will no longer be charged on residential property and the community charge will be payable instead.'

Mr. Matthews wanted to reassure St. Dunstaners and widows that help and advice is available to tenants of St. Dunstan's and those in their own homes, who should turn to the Estate Department, and to those in other properties, who should apply to the Welfare Department. He explained that housing benefit is only available where the capital held by the tenant is less than £8,000.

'You will be receiving during the months of May or June a letter from the Community Charge Registration Officer for the area in which you live and you will need to fill up that form for yourself and your wife. You will get a demand for the payment of the community charge in January but you will not have to meet it until next April and then legislation has laid it down that you will be allowed to spread the charge over ten months during the succeeding twelve months. Please don't worry about these things now. I mention

them only to warn you that these problems exist and to assure you that St. Dunstan's will want to help you in every possible way to take the worry from your shoulders.'

Mr. Matthews spoke of the articles in *St. Dunstan's Review*, 'Showing what incredible things St. Dunstaners do.' It was due, he reflected, to the gift of imagination bequeathed by Sir Arthur Pearson and by Lord Fraser. 'It seems to be a burning and shining light in the world around us for everybody to appreciate and understand.' He concluded by thanking everyone once again for coming, '... and God bless you all.'

Over recent reunions Wilf Saxby has become the spokesman for the St. Dunstaners of East Anglia. He began in unexpected fashion: 'I have always had a desire to conduct a choir. I think I have my opportunity this afternoon because I have a choir 69 strong, I also have a lady who has a birthday. So, after two ...' His choir responded enthusiastically, if not quite musically, with a rendering of 'Happy Birthday'.

He welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Matthews to the reunion recalling all the help Mr. Matthews had given his fellow St. Dunstaners in the years he was Estate Manager. 'We know, too, that he has worked since he retired very hard in studying for a B.A. degree in the Open University and I think that is really something to be proud of.'

Wilf spoke of the importance of hands to a blind person and, speaking as someone totally blind, how much more could be learned about a person from the touch of their hand in a handshake than by merely hearing their voice. 'While I am thinking of hands I think of the helping hands that come to us from St. Dunstan's, the goodwill that comes, and we know that the people who convey those hands to us are the staff who do so much for us. In mentioning staff members present he made special reference to Miss Irene Newbold, '... in the words, slightly adapted, of the Chairman of the Old Time Music Hall, when he says, "Our own, our very own Irene Newbold."'

It was Irene Newbold who next made presentations to two ladies celebrating birthdays; Mrs. Dorothy Blankes and Miss



Stan Tutton and his partner enjoying dancing at Brighton.

Cynthia Mosley, Northern Area Welfare Superintendent. Mrs. Vera Gwyn presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Matthews and the formal part of the reunion came to an end. There was still time for individual reunions among the groups that gathered in the lounge area or for a chat while strolling in the hotel garden on a pleasant afternoon before tea.

Southampton, April 19th

A total of 22 St. Dunstaners and 15 widows gathered at the Polygon Hotel for their reunion on April 19th. The sun shining outside seemed to lend a warm atmosphere within.

The Chairman, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Henry Leach, and Lady Leach, were revisiting the reunion for the first time in three years. He especially welcomed Mr. Tom Morrison attending his first reunion. Sir Henry used a 'yuppie' phrase in describing St. Dunstan's as a 'dwindling asset'. 'And so it should be, for to will it otherwise is to want another world war. Thank goodness, there have been relatively few newcomers from Northern Ireland, but, in view of the bestialities going on there, there could be a massive influx tomorrow. Therefore, it is highly important to maintain full training staff and facilities against the unseen. And this we are doing'.

Sir Henry went on to give the current numbers of St. Dunstaners, which stood at 712 in the UK, and 384 overseas. St. Dunstan's was looking after 656 widows.

Commenting on the recent tragedies which seem to have befallen the country recently, Sir Henry considered that, in its simplest form, 'greed' was a central cause. He wondered if these disasters would have happened if more money had gone into safety, rather than in making a profit. However, he finished on a more cheerful note with a short anecdote, and wished everyone a happy year ahead.

Mr. Tommy Bice responded to the Chairman. He started by asking for a round of applause for Mr. Hammond who had accompanied the meal on the piano. He also thanked the manager and staff of the hotel, though was not able to fully applaud the meal!

Tommy recounted that having been told he was being sent to St. Dunstan's he imagined being locked up behind tall walls and iron gates. His views changed radically on arriving at Tiger Hall, meeting Matron Payne, and realising he was not the only one. 'Throughout my life with St. Dunstan's, not only have they given me the chance to work and be self sufficient, but they have helped in family matters. On retirement, I was taught all sorts of hobbies. Anything you want to do, St. Dunstan's will teach you. I think they have led the world in their endeavours to make us ordinary people who cannot see. We are well off thanks to the help, kindness and assistance we get from all the staff'. Tommy ended by proposing two toasts, to Sir Henry, Lady Leach and all staff, and to the wives. Tommy has been married nearly 50 years, and he would not have swapped a day of it!

A bouquet was presented to Lady Leach by Mrs. Bailey, and a pleasant reunion came to a close with a raffle and tea.

Brighton, April 25th

The sea was flat calm which was much in contrast with the lively chatter taking place in the Metropole Hotel. It was a large gathering, with 63 St. Dunstaners, 3 of whom were from the First World War, and 40 widows.

As no Member of Council was able to be present, Keith Martin, our Pensions and Admissions Officer spoke on their behalf. After expressing the greetings of the Chairman, Mr. Martin welcomed the

Mayor of Brighton, Councillor Ms. Patricia Hawkes; together with the mayoral secretary, Mr. John Piper. 'The Mayor's presence demonstrates the close affinity we have always had with the local town'; Mr. Martin said. He further welcomed Mrs. Dacre and several past and present members of staff. A warm round of applause was given to Penny Lord, who was not able to be present, and to her two welfare visitors responsible for the day, Helen Stewart and Vivian Jackson

Mr. Martin went on to give the statistics and added one which is seldom repeated, that since 1915 St. Dunstan's has cared for over 6500 people. He had attended an international War Blinded Congress in Germany at the end of last year, and was very aware of the esteem with which St. Dunstan's was regarded and how envious other countries were of our independence.

Mr. Martin reminded everyone that next year was St. Dunstan's 75th anniversary and that any suggestions as to how the event might be celebrated would be gladly received by Mr. Weisblatt at Headquarters.

Keith concluded by welcoming three St. Dunstaners attending their first reunion, Albert Stroud, Mike Oliver and George Young. He finally led the guests in a chorus of 'Happy Birthday' for Jim O'Donnell.

George 'Taffy' Cole gave the response. 'It is my very great privilege to stand up here in front of you all and say two things; praise to "those with whom we cannot do without", and I have to say, there is one organisation in the world for the war blind, and that is St. Dunstan's.' George went on to relate two instances which shrink the world into a tiny place; where you keep meeting people from years previously. George had encounters with people who had met him in Algiers and Italy at some time during the war. George concluded by proposing a toast to St. Dunstan's.

The afternoon continued with dancing and much cheering for Harry and Clara Preedy, who were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, a cheerful note on which to draw to a close the Brighton Reunion 1989.



Ernie and Gwen Obern.

As I Remember SHINING EXAMPLE

Gwen Obern talking to David Castleton

'I was married in Trecynon Chapel, Aberdare, on the 23rd of December, 1939. It was a beautiful day, very cold. There was just a sprinkling of snow and there was a long driveway to go up to the Chapel. It was very nice.

'We had a wonderful eleven months. We danced and we went everywhere together. We walked a lot, read a lot and listened to the wireless because there was no television. We didn't go on holiday because the wages in those days for a miner were only two pounds, ten shillings a week.'

Gwen Obern, talking about the first year of her marriage, remembers in photographic detail the day in December 1940 when her life almost came to an end and was totally changed. As a young woman of 22, Gwen was liable for call-up. Although her father and husband were both miners, her mother was at home to look after them so she had to register. Preferring not to join the women's services,

she began working at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Bridgend on the third of December, 1940.

'On the morning of the fifth I missed the coach that was taking the work people from Aberdare to Bridgend so I went on a service one. The driver begged me not to go into the factory that day because there had been a terrific accident the day before. I said, 'I've got to go, I've only been there two days and I may get into trouble.'

'I went to my work, it was the inspection of detonators. I was in training. I can visualise it as plain today as it was 48 years ago. This lady was sitting at the top end of the table and I was sitting to her right and the late Marian Elias was sitting next to me. There were fourteen at the table but I didn't know many of them then. This lady had a tray in front of her and there were nine boxes of detonators on the top and she had a machine which was like a gauge. She took one box of detonators, there

were 500 in each box. She put the detonators into the tray... the last thing I remember was a terrific flash.'

Of the fourteen women around that table five were killed. Gwen survived to face six months in hospital while they treated her badly burned body. For four months she was unable to wear any clothes so extensive were the burns. At midnight on that first night Gwen woke to find her husband and other members of her family at her bedside.

'I asked Ernie — at this time he had no idea of the extent of the injuries — to take the bedclothes back from my right hand as they were rather heavy. When he saw this hand it was like a big football with bandages and it had haemorrhaged in a big pool of blood and that's when he realised that my hand had gone and that my left hand was very badly maimed.'

Her family feared for Gwen's life when they discovered the full extent of her injuries. Protected by them and by the hospital, she only learned by playing one nurse against another. 'I knew something dreadful had happened but I didn't know what. I twigged there was something wrong here so when one nurse came in and said, "What chocolate have you had Gwen?" — during the war, of course, there was hardly any chocolate about but every one was very kind in Aberdare and Trecynon and there was always someone sending chocolate from their rations to me — so when she asked I said, "I'm not giving you any chocolate." She asked why. "Will you tell me I lost my thumb?" "Who told you?" "Never mind who told me. You never told me." So she said, "Well, look Gwen, don't worry about that you can do lots of things without a thumb."

'During the night four other nurses came in because I only had to just shout Nurse and they were there. One finger at a time and everyone told me a different finger had been amputated and I knew that I had no fingers.' Similar tactics with the Sister brought Gwen the knowledge that her whole hand was gone.

'I still had no clothes, my body was too burnt. So then they took my other arm out of the big sling and then there was nothing on it. I was frightened to touch it. I was lying there and I was bringing my arm up



Young Gwen in evening dress.

so far and I touched it with my lip there and I thought, 'Hell, there's no finger at the top, there's no nail,' and I screamed and I think I had more of a shock when I found out that for myself than when I found out about my hand.' During all this time Ernie, with some of Gwen's uncles, spent every night at the hospital after his day's work at the colliery while during the day her mother and aunts kept her company.

Gwen met Ernie at a dance when she was only seventeen: 'One night I had three dates. There was one meeting me up by the crossing and another was meeting me half way down by the boys' grammar school and then there was another one meeting me lower down. So the girls came to our house and they said, "Gwen, there's a very good dance tonight in the Aberaman Welfare. What about it?" In those days we always wore long dresses for the dances so I put my evening dress on and I tucked it all up in a belt I made with elastic



Above: At Church Stretton Vi Delaney and Sadie Stokes were among Gwen's friends.

Below: Beryl Sleigh and Gwen with June Sylvaime before a concert.



and got on my bike. I found the first chap and I said, "I'll be back now in five minutes, I've got a message to go to," and I said the same thing to the second one and to the third and I got down to the Aberaman Welfare. I parked my bicycle because I knew I would be walking home and I would collect it the next day. I was dancing around there merrily and having a lovely time and all of a sudden my friend said, "Gwen, look at the door," and there were the three chaps standing there looking. That's where I met Ernie at that dance and he took me home.'

In her hospital bed, with her arms free, Gwen was able to find out more by touch: 'I dabbed my hand up to this eye and I thought, "God, there's no eye there at all." I could feel my left eye, that there was something there. So I was pushing the bandages up and I couldn't see anything and with that I said to the nurse, "Nurse, tell me something, will you tell me I've lost my right eye?" Then she told me about my eye but she said, "You will be able to see with your left eye.'

The time came for her discharge from hospital: "The morning I was coming out of hospital every doctor in the hospital was outside and there was a balcony and all the nurses and everybody were outside because they never ever thought that I would be able to go out of hospital. One lady had even asked Ernie where he wanted the memorial service — whether it should be in Bridgend or in Aberdare!

"That accident happened 48 years ago on the 5th of December and believe it or not, in 48 years, the 5th of every December I can't move. I'm ill inwardly, yes.'

Gwen came home but she was opting out: 'I wouldn't dress at all. I was in my dressing gown and I wouldn't dress. I just didn't want to bother. So this gentleman came — he was a St. Dunstan, First World War man. I said, "There's no way I'm going to any St. Dunstan's. I don't know the place." Then a Miss Oliphant came to see me and I said, "Let me tell you one thing now, Miss Oliphant, it's very nice of you to come but there's no way I'm going from my home. I'm not going to go to any place and wear a grey dress, black stockings and no-one there to comb my hair.'

'Anyhow I had to go back to hospital to have this operation on my eye. But I had a haemorrhage in my eye. After that there was nothing they could do, so I went down to Bridgend out-patients to see Mr. Gluck, the specialist, and he kept putting his fingers up, "How many fingers can you see?" and, of course, I couldn't see any. He asked Ernie to take me outside and for him to go back and then Ernie was told I would never see but Ernie never told me.'

It was three years before Gwen finally agreed to go to St. Dunstan's. 'What brought me to St. Dunstan's was a letter from Vi Delaney telling me all about it. Of course she was Violet Formstone then. I said, "She's a silly woman sending me a letter." "Well," Ernie said, "It's typed, beautifully typed." In the letter she said, "Please come to St. Dunstan's. You haven't got to stay if you don't want to. You can come and go as you wish but come because I am sure it will help you an awful lot." So they said in the house, "You should go to see it, you know." "Well," I said, "What do you think, Dad?" "Yes, I think you should go." So then I decided to go.'



At the microphone.

Accompanied by Ernie, Gwen arrived at Church Stretton on September 8th 1943, nearly three years after the accident. With them were the late Marian Elias and her mother. Marian, like Gwen, had been reluctant to leave home. Apart from a school day trip to London and the Zoo, this was the first time Gwen had been outside Wales.

'I remember going up to Belmont — Miss Watson was the Matron there then. The girls were sitting in the lounge: Thelma, Barbara, Sadie, Vi, Emily, Elsie, Brenda. I think that was all. I remember Sir Ian Fraser, as he was then, was in the lounge with the girls. He welcomed us in and he said, "I hear you sing," and I got up and sang *Bless this House*. Apparently he took Ernie out after a little while and advised him not to stay on.

'Ernie came and he said, "Look, Gwen, I've been advised to go," and, of course, then I started crying but he went. I had to go and see Mr. Davenport the next day. He was a very nice eye specialist, he looked in my eyes. I didn't have a glass eye or anything fitted then and he said, "I'd like to fit a glass eye for you but you have a string in the back which I have got to cut." "Oh, I don't want to have it cut," I said, I still had hopes that some sight might come back. He said, "There's one thing now I've got to tell you. You can't go on any longer without knowing. I am afraid that you will never see again." I was so shaken.

The concluding part of this article will feature in the July Review.



With the Red Arrows.

St. Dunstan's Archers in Cyprus

by Norman Perry

Photos: Gwen Bradshaw

To leave England on a wet and windy evening, and wake up the next morning in Cyprus on a hot sunny day is one of the miracles of modern transport. Such miracles, however, do not occur by the wave of a wand, but by the hard work of St. Dunstan's H.Q. Staff, especially Miss Georgea Kent and Miss Frances Casey under the direction of Bill Weisblatt.

The first few hours of the first day were spent soaking up the sun, until at 11.00a.m. our old friend Major Chris Vitali arrived and took us to our archery venue, Happy Valley. The afternoon was spent by the six members of the St. Dunstan's Archery Club and their spotters in accustoming themselves to the surroundings and the heat. Ted Bradford did his best to coach us into a shooting mood, but I fear that most of us were waiting for our brains to catch us up.

The next morning we spent a short few hours visiting the ancient city of Curim with its restored Ampitheatre brought back into use for concerts and other activities. A funny thing happened on the way to the forum, when Eric Bradshaw decided to take a Roman bath with his clothes on, much to the amusement of all the passers by. Then back to Happy Valley and this time we all got down to some serious training.

Friday had been allocated a day off archery, which was just as well as we had been invited to meet the Red Arrows and watch one of their training displays. We were met by a charming W.R.A.F. who explained to us the routine that the Red Arrows went through, and described much of the flying patterns. On their landing and before they were de-briefed we had an opportunity to talk with some of the pilots and inspect the aircraft. Then,

much to the delight of our wives and escorts we spent the afternoon round the shops in Limassol. A beautiful place, palm trees along the sea front, a rocky seashore with a large number of ships offshore. An interesting shopping area, mostly small shops, far more appealing and attractive than supermarkets, although with narrow pavements and busy traffic a bit of a headache for the ladies.

Saturday was the first day of competition, so on to Happy Valley, and to meet more of the Joint Services Archery Club, Cyprus members, some of whom we met last year, and some who had just arrived on the island. The round which we shot was a Portsmouth, five dozen arrows at 20 yards using a 50cm target. Being a round that we were accustomed to, and being scored with handicap allowance it was not a surprise to S.D.A.C. that we won. The team Eric Bradshaw, Jerry Lynch, Sid Jones and George Hudson proudly took their medals, and better still Eric, Jerry and Sid also took the three highest handicap adjusted score medals, to use the phrase from the bowlers, 'well done chaps'.

That evening we joined the J.S.A.C.C. for a Dutch treat Guzomey (to the uninitiated, a party given to one who is going home after a tour of duty.) This was given in honour of Chris Vitali, who had been one of the main driving forces behind the J.S.A.C.C., and who will be greatly missed. Fortunately he intends to maintain his interest in archery, and is looking forward to meeting us all again at our shoot with the Army at L.F.H. in June.

Sunday was the hottest day of our visit, the temperature rising to the high of 80°f.

A shoot in progress in Happy Valley.



It was also the day of the big shoot, a Windsor round, three dozen each at distances of 60, 50 and 40 yards, and again a handicap adjusted score. Unfortunately, it is a round that had not been shot by many members of the S.D.A.C. before, and there was strong light against us. The light proved frustrating for the spotters, particularly at the longer distances, as it was difficult to see the hits, and due to the hard ground any misses skidded for a very great distance, which entailed a lot of walking to recover them.

Relief came in the form of a barbecue splendidly prepared by the J.S.A.C.C., a most excellent repast including fresh strawberries. We sweated it out for the rest of the shoot, becoming less frustrated on the shorter distances, and when it came to the final result only 25 points separated the two teams, and those points were in our favour. So with a line up of Eric Bradshaw, Jerry Lynch, Sid Jones, Bert Wood and Norman Perry we overcame our defeat of last year.

That evening we entertained members of the J.S.A.C.C. to a meal at one of the local tavernas as a token of our gratitude for all the work and effort they had put in to make our visit a most enjoyable one.

The last day was a free day, some chose to walk on the beach, others went for a swim in the hotel pool, and inspected the sights basking in the sun around it. Two went with Ted Bradford to Happy Valley for a little extra coaching, leaving their wives to do the packing. We all got together with the J.S.A.C.C. to meet Major-General Freidberger and his charming wife Johanna at their Residence, Air House. We were warmly

received and after tea on the lawn were conducted by them both on a tour of the garden. Any garden exhibiting orange, lemon, grape, figs, paper, palm gum and many other trees and shrubs must be classed as exotic, and all clearly described by both host and hostess made a most delightful and fitting end to a most enjoyable stay in Cyprus.

It is a great pity that those who do so much to help organise these trips are not on the whole able to take part in them. Our sincere thanks, however, do go to

them all. In Cyprus to the J.S.A.C.C., who provided drivers to ferry us around, in England to H.Q. and I.F.H. staff who made sure that we departed and were received on our return, to Ted Bradford for acting as coach and general dogsbody before, during and after the trip, and above all to our wives and escorts for their tolerance and hard work looking for what we had lost, and on a personal note I thank all the members of the team for the way they conducted themselves. St. Dunstan's can be proud of you all.

On this day . . .

by Sean Kelly

June 10th a hundred and eighty years ago saw the very first Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race take place, and was won by Oxford. In 1912 both teams suffered humiliation, when they sank. The race was completed when the boats had been refitted with inflatable 'water wings' to ensure that they were unsinkable. Perhaps the most embarrassing incident to take place at any of the races happened five years ago, when the Cambridge cox, Peter Hobson, failed to notice a barge (well, you would, wouldn't you?) and the resultant collision caused the Cambridge boat to break in two and sink. In the official programme for that year, Peter Hobson had stated that one of his hobbies was 'reshaping barges.' Well if you go around tempting fate like that, what d'you expect? The BBC, having spent umpteen thousands of pounds on coverage of the race, managed to miss the crash, by the way.

They were more successful, however, when they managed to find a public house in Wallsend, whose interior was exactly what they needed for a scene in a period drama set 75 years ago, in 1914. The landlord was also delighted, and 'phoned the brewery. The brewery were also delighted, and arranged for the pub to be redecorated . . .

In June of 1984, an animal lover swerved his car to avoid a hedgehog in the road in Devon. His Rover was a write off, but he didn't mind. After all, the hedgehog was still there, perfectly still, not flat or squashed or anything. Hang on . . . perfectly still? The driver went to examine the hedgehog, and discovered that it had been dead for at least two days.

June of 1984 seems to have been a rather good month for what might most politely be called 'mistakes.' Consider the example of the Nigerian businessmen who asked New York Immigration officials to find them a haulage and demolition company dealing in large jobs. Why? Because, they told the officials, they had been sold the Statue of Liberty for a hundred thousand dollars, and were looking to take it home.

Or, finally, the Spanish policemen of Vittoria, in Spain. Two groups of undercover policemen were on a stakeout, waiting for a group of terrorists to arrive. Only no one told the two groups that there were two groups, and so each group was shiftily hiding, peeking out occasionally, trying to spot another shiftily looking group, peeking around. Needless to say, the two groups discovered the 'terrorists,' and only two policemen were injured in the shoot out.

A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

It's nearly 50 years since my friend McLean decided upon a world tour, packed his rucksack and, as the first stage of his journey, got on the ferry which in those days plied between Dundee and Fife. This, he would say later, was the hardest thing to do, for it marked the end of the known, plunged him into an unknown which was to last getting on for nearly two years.

By the time he got to Boulogne, Bob had run out of money, and recalls a back street in that town where he was attacked by thieves. I had provided Bob with a shillelagh, however, and he beat off his attackers. In due course we find him in Yugoslavia, settling down to a meal with a family of peasants. He didn't get past the soup, for the local police came in, took him to the jail, and questioned him for 36 hours as to what he was up to in Yugoslavia. 'I didn't like that bright light in my eyes,' he said, 'nor those buckled belts, and besides, I don't understand a word of serbo-croat.' He gathered they thought he was a capitalist spy, and in the end they flung him out of Yugoslavia, telling him not to come back. This cured Bob of Communism, towards which he had leanings at the time.

He never explained the circumstances exactly, but a Greek lady paid his fare on a boat to Egypt, where he spent a night on the top of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, awed by the green flash which pervades the desert at the moment the sun goes down. He was told he would be murdered by the Fellaheen if he risked himself amongst them, but far from this, Bob fraternised with them, squatting and drinking tea, and this he put down to the fact that what with his red hair and beard, the Fellaheen took him for a reincarnation of Mohammed. There followed Uganda, Kenya, then Zanzibar, where Bob embarked on a pilgrim dhow bound for Bombay. He got the money for this trip by selling a poem of mine to a South African newspaper.

*'This is that impish genii the sun
And his the hand and his the
shimmering brain
And his the laughter when the wheel was
spun.
This is some other age, some other land,
And we by noonday's mirage pilgrims
twain
Upon the golden road to Samarkand.'*

Bob had a notion to see Kanchenjunga, joined a group of Tibetan traders, and jogging along on a shaggy pony accompanied them on their way home. Their only merchandise comprised bales of the airmail edition of the London *'Times'*, the best paper in the world, Bob was told by his Tibetan friends, for rolling cigarettes. He saw Kangchenjunga, rose-pink in the rising sun, returned to the plains of India, and we next find him in Singapore. 'I'm looking down on the harbour,' he wrote 'there are ships, and though I'm only left with a shilling, one of those ships is destined to take me to Australia.' This shilling Bob actually spent in a West Australian pub, fell in with an Aussie, and spent the next few months crocodile hunting in the creeks. 'When you see two things that look like rubies in your spotlight,' he said 'you press the trigger, and just hope to God the croc is dead when you get it into the boat.' He got 'slew'd' in the bush, and if his partner hadn't lit a fire and made a smoke Bob would have died of dehydration in a temperature of 120 degrees. There followed a period of digging latrines in the outback for a construction company, and when Bob had made enough money to get back to the U.K. the easy way, not sleeping in ditches and living on handouts, as he had from Boulogne to Port Darwin.

He eats sheeps eyes in the Khyber Pass, survives some unpleasantness in Iran, finds the Turks friendly and hospitable, and eventually falls in with a Londoner in Bari, Italy, where the two of them were tucking into ravioli. Bob got a lift back with this chap from Bari to Euston Station, London, reverted to the conventional way of life, and seldom if ever alludes to his adventures abroad.

THREE POINTS OF CONTACT

Story and pictures by David Castleton

Ray Sheriff likes a challenge and when, last year, the weather prevented him and his companions in a St. Dunstan's group attempting Crib Goch, a rather difficult climb in the Snowdon Group, he asked to try again. Barry Ellis, who leads St. Dunstan's annual expeditions, agreed to set up a small party to accompany Ray on what may well be the first time a blind person has made this particular climb.

The party consisted of Ray himself, Barry Ellis, Colin Jones, Wally Cook and myself, representing the *Review*. It was as well we were a small group as experience of this climb shows that a number of blind climbers on this terrain would take impossibly long. As it was we were on the mountain from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. and our original plan to finish with an ascent of the summit of Snowdon had to be abandoned. At 5 p.m. we stood on Bwlch Glas

Ray Sheriff with Barry Ellis on an early stage of the climb.



(3,258 feet) with an easy climb to the summit tantalisingly before us but not enough time to get up and back again for the tricky descent of the Zigzags, on our way down.

The Zigzags were tricky because of frozen snow and it was snow which slowed our progress earlier in the day. Crib Goch is aptly named, in English translation it is the red cockcomb — and, on the skyline, its outline in reddish rock does resemble the comb of a cockerel. A mixture of scrambling and a little rock climbing brought us to its summit (3,023 feet) and we were on schedule.

From the summit the ridge undulates away, its rocks weathered into a sharp, saw-toothed spine along which the climber must edge using hands and feet. To quote W.A. Poucher in *The Welsh Peaks*: 'Some 400 yards of knife-edge leads to the



Posing for pictures around the half-way mark: Wally Cook, Ray, Barry Ellis and Colin Jones.

Pinnacles, but those with a steady head will experience no difficulties in crossing it in calm weather. These obstacles may be traversed by means of ample hand- and foot-holds.'

For Ray Sheriff, unable to see the hand- and foot-holds, and moving carefully under the guidance of his sighted guides, that 400 yards seemed a long way. Beneath him the ridge fell away sharply to depths of 500 to 1,500 feet and he was well aware that he must not slip. 'Remember, three good points of contact with the rock before you make a move.' Barry Ellis had exhorted us before we set out.

The weather was good, sunshine and little wind, but halfway along the ridge a snow shower developed and with it an unusual experience for we non-mountaineers. A strange buzzing sound began around us, scalps prickled and hair stood on end. No, it was not fear but a form of St. Elmo's fire, an atmospheric electrical discharge.

We were relieved to learn that Barry did not expect us to climb over the Pinnacles. There was an easier way round which still, however, necessitated good three point contact with the rock to ensure survival!

Time for lunch on a sheltered ledge with fantastic views across the Snowdon Horseshoe, dominated by the snow-clad peak itself, Yr Wyddfa (3,560 feet) and looking down on Glaslyn and Llyn Llydaw.

Our next objective was the second highest peak, Crib y Ddysgl, (3,493 feet). We thought the toughest part was over but this next climb was equally demanding and made more so by the drifted snow that still lay over some of the footholds. Here Ray was roped between Colin and Wally, as a slip on the snow would have resulted in a dangerous fall down many hundreds of feet. There were some rocky scrambles, too, before we emerged on the summit which was under a carpet of frozen snow. We learned not to wriggle our boots down into the knee-deep coating. It is safer to tread down firmly to compact the snow under foot to prevent it slipping away and you with it.

It was a gentle descent over thin snow to Bwlch Glas, the blue gap, and there was the Snowdon summit, Yr Wyddfa, beckoning but we had been too long on the journey so far and Barry decided we must now go down. We were at the Zigzags but here was a snag. The first part of the steep



The rocky road to Crib y Ddysgl.

descent was more like a toboggan run than a path, with icy, compacted snow to begin with and slippery slush further down. The rope had already helped in dangerous places and now it came into use again belayed around a conveniently placed vertical rock.

With Colin's help Ray descended the length of the rope, hitched on for extra safety. We followed using it as a bannister, then Barry brought it down using his ice-axe as a brake. One more descent by rope and we were clear of the snow and marching the couple of miles back to the car-park, tired but triumphant that Crib Goch and Crib y Ddysgl had been scaled by a St. Dunstaner. It took nerve, guts and fitness, and Ray Sheriff has plenty of these.

Ray Sheriff adds his comments on the climb:

In retrospect, having had time to reflect, rightly or wrongly, I feel quite chuffed to have negotiated, with the help and patience of my three monitors, Crib Goch, which by repute is known for extra demands and extra difficulties. I admit quite frankly I found it very hard going, glad and thankful to reach base safely.

Since 1977 I have been a member of the St. Dunstan's Rock Climbers Group on annual visits to the Snowdon Area, and all the climbs have been very enjoyable,



Crossing snow on the summit.

never too difficult by design, I imagine. I think the best of the bunch was reaching the summit of Tryfan. This proved our second attempt, and pretty hard going. In my opinion Crib Goch was much more precarious as a result of a greater duration, covering a distance of approximately five miles. I don't, at the present moment, contemplate trying it again. NO! — Not again — well, maybe if I were challenged. Barry Ellis did say I could take crampons next time . . .

EX-PRISONERS OF WAR REUNION

Another POW weekend tucked under the belt, and what a great time was had by all. It began on Friday April 21st with a get together in the Annexe, with dancing to music provided by Ernie and his band, followed by a hot and cold running buffet, which was thoroughly enjoyable. Many stories were exchanged during the evening, and many old pals met once again.

Saturday began with the A.G.M. in the Winter Garden, and amongst those present were Mrs. Dacre, Bill Griffiths, Tom Hart and Pat Stone, who it was nice to see back again. Mrs. Dacre announced that eight P.O.W.s had passed away since our last reunion, and consequently members stood for a period of silence. Mrs. Stone read the Treasurer's report, owing to the Treasurer not being able to attend through ill-health, and we all wish him a speedy return to good health. Mr. Alf Lockhart suggested that the present subscription was too low to cover the expenses of the reunion, so it was proposed from the floor that the annual subscription be increased from £2 to £5.

Bill Griffiths greets Sir Laurens van der Post.



There was also a very popular proposal that Mr. John Denman be made an honorary member at the official dinner on the Saturday evening.

Before the evening dinner, many people took the opportunity to buy Bill Griffiths's book *'Blind to Misfortune,'* and every available copy was sold. Bill autographed every copy with assistance from his wife Alice.

The guests at the reunion dinner were Sir Laurens van der Post, Mrs. Odette Halloves, Mr. and Mrs. John Denman, Mr. and Mrs. Bradley — author of *'The Setting Sun,'* Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Henry and Lady Leach, and Mr. and Mrs. Martin. A total of 124 sat down to dinner, where our President Mrs. Dacre greeted the guests, the response was made by Sir Laurens van der Post, who was presented with a plaque from St. Dunstan's. Bill Griffiths later gave a vote of thanks, and then Odette, Mrs. Weisblatt and Mrs. Darby were presented with cuddly toys made by Sid Doy, all of which were absolutely marvellous. Mrs. Conway was also presented with one in her absence, and we all wish her well.

The repast, wine, flower arrangements and red roses for the ladies in honour of St. George exceeded all our expectations, and after the rendering by all of *'Auld Lang Syne'* and *'We'll meet again'* we all retired to the lounge for the rest of the evening where more stories were recalled.

Sunday, St. George's Day, began with Service in the Chapel, conducted by the Right Reverend Bishop Darby, formally the Bishop of Sherwood, and which was enjoyed by all. Tom Hart gave a faultless reading of the Lesson, and the Anthem was touchingly and wonderfully sung by Bill Griffiths. The reunion concluded on Sunday night with a concert by the Brighton Musical Comedy Co., which set our feet tapping, and was enjoyed by all.

All our thanks to Commander Conway, Major Neve, and all the staff at Ian Fraser House, not forgetting Paul James and all his staff for all the very hard work which went on behind the scenes. To each and every one of you, many many thanks, and if I have overlooked anyone, please accept my sincere apologies.

Bill Heffernan

SEVEN REDS, TWO BREAKS AND A SNOOKER

by Ray Hazan

Photos: by Denis Morel

The bus drew into the airport car park. Out stepped seven very red faced, sunburned and peeling St. Dunstaners. One man with a broken shoulder blade held in a harness. One youth with an arm in plaster, and a lady in a neck support. To give you a clue, from the coach were extracted four long and pointed planks. Have you guessed the activity? It is not the return of the St. Dunstan's snooker team, but the skiers. For the snooker, you must read on!

Maundy Thursday, 23rd March, will be a day to remember, yet better forgotten. For the first time in more than 11 years, we suffered three casualties in the space of an hour. But I pre-empt the 1989 St. Dunstan's skiing trip that nearly did not take place. A promising lead failed to materialise by the preceding October, by which time, many resorts are fully booked. However, Tracer Ltd. came up with just what was required; not too far from the airport, a high altitude resort thereby hopefully guaranteeing snow, slightly cheaper prices than others and 'en suite' facilities. But as 1989 started there were abysmal weather forecasts (would you believe, too

Bill Shea guided by his escort.



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much sun!). Although there were guarantees of bussing to slopes with sufficient snow, it would have meant thousands crowded onto limited runs. However, by the end of February, those 'little white flakes' had started falling! Six St. Dunstaners, their wives, families and escorts met, bleary eyed from a 5 a.m. start at a packed Gatwick Airport on the Saturday week before Easter. Jamie and Shauna Cuthbertson joined us the next day via Dublin, Paris and Grenoble. Five drove down from Dortmund in Northern Germany, two from Augsburg, in the south and two from Geneva. The threads of this 'international' party drew together at the hotel Genepi in Les Deux Alpes situated in the Haute Savoie region of France.

Les Deux Alpes is a large village containing hotels, some 30 ski shops, chalets, medical centres, 10 pin bowling, ice skating, swimming and health clinics. It is owned by one man, who is reputed to be the 7th richest man in France. I know why. When I asked him if, like all previous resorts, we could have free ski-lift passes for the St. Dunstaners and their guides,

the answer was 'no — but we can give you a special price — half price'. A saving of £30 per pass is not to be sniffed at, so we were grateful for that. The village sits in a valley and there are some nursery slopes to be found all around. A variety of cable cars take you to the start of the real runs some 2500 feet higher, or to the very top of the mountain at 3500 metres or 11,700 feet. There are 63 lifts in all with many kilometres of runs, with no trees to jump out at the unwary St. Dunstaners! But enough of the brochure.

The UK party were greeted on their arrival at the hotel Genepi by the soft, Scottish western island burr of Callam, the manager. One of the first stops after settling in, was the local super market for a stick of French bread, cheese and wine — a belated lunch, thus did the French atmosphere begin to soak in, both within and without. The ski hire shop turned out to be close by, so the party were soon struggling back to the hotel with boots that seemed more akin to deep sea diving, if their weight was anything to go by; skis which have the habit of delivering a firm and decisive crack on the back of the head when tossed over the shoulder, and pointed sticks, which possess a life of their own.

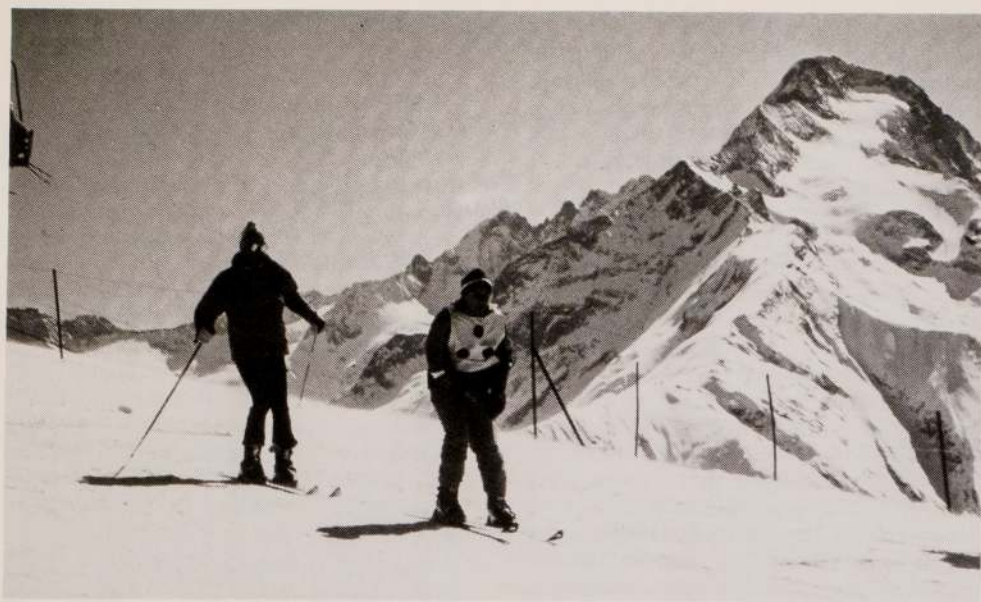
It is always a great moment when the road party from Germany arrives. This year, we were fortunate to have guides from 5 Heavy Regiment, The Royal Artillery, who had all been with us on previous occasions, except for Captain Mick Thorpe. S/Sgt. Joe Elwood is a veteran skier and administrator and organised the guide's party. As in 1988, he was to tie up with veteran Bill Shea. Similarly, I had been guided last year by Sgt. Martin Blank, and was looking forward very much to a repeat performance. L/Bdr. Mark Letherby was accompanied by his wife of one month, Michele. Don Planner is a keen and active skier, and so was 'given' to Mark to cool his ardour! L/Bdr. Eddie Edwards is a PT instructor and, after some changes, looked after Jamie Cuthbertson, who joined St. Dunstan's just over 2 years ago and was taking part in the trip for the first time. Maya Zamudio and Alan Wortley have skied together over several years and are renowned for the enormous dis-

tances the two cover. They were highly suspected this year of covering both the Italian and Swiss Alps as well as the French! Peter Zamudio's expertise with beginners was unleashed to start off with on Jamie and Shauna, Marian Jones, Roberta Johnston, Michele Letherby and Christian Koch, a young German lad. Peter then went on to ski with Gerry Jones. As previously mentioned, this was Mick's first trip and so, since paratroopers are renowned for their stamina and fortitude, he teamed up with Charles Daly. Skiing independently were Joan and Sian Wortley, Andrea Challis, a friend of the Wortleys, Jonathan and Giles Hazan, William Boocock, Dagmar, friend of Joe, and our UK escort, Captain Julian Pollard from the 7th Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, and his wife, Rachail.

The first evening is always one of ebullient reminiscences and 12 months of catching up. As on all subsequent evenings, it is crowned by the presentation of the 'Stavely' award. To remind readers, it is a glass of sickly Malibu, to be downed in one, and is awarded for the greatest feat of idiocy committed or spoken that day. Let me quote the first evening's contenders to give you an idea; Mark and Michele were seriously considered by the committee, for, who in their right mind, spends a second honeymoon in the company of St. Dunstaners?! The second contender was person or persons unknown, for he picked up a pair of boots which Martin had just unloaded from his own car, and, thinking they belonged to a departing guest, promptly ferried them off to Geneva Airport! Callam came within a whisker when on being asked by Mick where room 22 was located said, "go up 2 flights of stairs, and you will see room 21. Yes, well that is, in fact, room 22!" But the committee finally decided to confer the concoction upon the Chairman, Julian, for leaving a carefully typed list with complete details of the party on the plane. Julian went on to prove to be a most worthy and amusing Chairman, and delivered some very witty speeches.

Sunday dawned with hardly a cloud in the sky. Believe it or not, the sun can be quite a hazard for skiers, for, not only does

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Ray Hazan descending against a dramatic background.

it encourage wet slushy snow, but at the altitude, and with reflection off the snow it can induce severe sunburn. I know your hearts bleed for us! An additional and serious effect can be snow blindness for those who fail to don sun glasses or goggles. One nameless guide was 'blinded' for 3 days in this way. We all thought he was taking his job far too seriously, trying to see what it was like to be a St. Dunstaner! But that first morning, the pairs were raring to go. The initial task was to board the ever moving 4 man bubble lift — you have to place your skis in an outside rack, and yourselves inside, before it reaches the end of the platform. Neither experience nor temptation has ever proved the consequences of failure!

It was glorious to settle back into the routine. Higher up the mountain, the snow was crisp and crunchy under the skis. From behind or above, the reassuring voice of your guide, 'left — now, right — now'. The sun and sweat on your brow cooled by the breeze of your mostly forward movement. The satisfaction of a well executed turn. This all neatly camouflages your screaming leg muscles, the nerves in the pit of your stomach as you listen to the numerous 'grockles' on the slope around you, many of whom are out of control and

have no idea what the funny yellow warning bib which you are wearing means. I had several encounters with attractive young ladies on the slope, but should add that either I landed on my face or they did depending on who hit who! It tends to dent the male ego!

The 'apres-ski' is an integral part of any such trip and requires as much stamina as the avant-ski. Leg muscles scream as you stand for 3 hours at the bar following a full days exercise on the slopes; the feeling in the pit of your stomach is that of an overfull barrel thanks to the sumptuous food provided, being topped up with further quantities of liquid, and the heat on your face is from a crowded and unaired bar. The postures of those explaining the days' events are as grotesque as those on the slope following a successful 'white-out' (a fall, after which there is doubt as to whether you have to go as far the Himalayas to see the yeti!). These pantomime evenings were interspersed with a visit to the bowling alley, a pop quiz which left all but the younger element totally baffled and aurally bemused, and our usual trip out for a meal. In true French fashion, the food was an hour in arriving. Only the sturdy few were able to go on to coq au vin which followed a massive cold meat hors

d'oeuvre, a meal in itself. I personally finished up in a delightfully sounding bar called 'Crepe a go-go' in front of a warming log fire, and some lively 'tradjazz' as we consumed crepes, coffee and brandy. What a way to end that infamous Maundy Thursday.

Regular readers of these antics will know that the week culminates with 'the race' to claim the highly prized alpine cow bell and to laugh and admire the guides having a go blindfolded. Perhaps we should have not broken with tradition, this Maundy Thursday, by taking part in the official race organised for all the English tour companies in the resort. Instead of our usual 4 gates, there were 15 to be negotiated down a smooth but reasonably steep hill. All morning we practised and tried to cover our inevitable nerves. For a guide to bring you down a slope choosing the point of turn is hard enough, but to steer you through 15 gates is a supreme challenge.

Alan was the first to go, facing directly downhill, ski sticks in front of the time-start bar, and legs ready to start the clock as he went forward. He passed through all gates in a time of 59 seconds. I went next, and seemed to spend most of the race going backwards, as I missed 2 gates, and would have been disqualified had I not gone back through them. Nearing the finish I heard shouts of 'well done, Ray' and assumed that was it. But I was still short of the finish line, and ended by skiing into the finishing post itself arriving in a tangle of cables, flags and nets! I was lucky with a time of 2.02 minutes. Gerry followed with 2.35. Sadly, Don caught his ski tip on a gate (a series of 2 poles some 10 feet apart), and fell breaking his shoulder blade — his 31st break in all. Most of us were convinced that he was only trying to avoid the long lift queues to get down, for he was stretched to the nearest first aid post, and helicoptered down to the medical centre in the village. Don went into Grenoble hospital the next day, but was fit enough to travel back with us on the Saturday. Great tribute should be paid to his guide Mark, who stuck with him all the time, and was a great support, and to Julian, Callam and Martin who helped with all the inevitable paper work and telephoning.



Go, go, go Jamie Cuthbertson!

The race continued with Peter, Eddie and Martin winning 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in the men's race. Maya won the ladies race, Jonathan the junior advanced, William, 1st and Giles 2nd in the junior intermediate. Our tour company, Tracer, therefore, won the team prize. Full admiration went to those guides who came down blindfolded. Callam was guided down by his wife, but he did it so competently that either they had been practising or he skied in the partially sighted class! Do I detect a hint of jealousy there?

Towards the end of the race, the wind got up lowering the temperature considerably, thus freezing the sunny, wet snow. In these icy conditions, Rachail also decided that a helicopter lift down was preferable. She suffered badly ricked neck, shoulder and leg muscles, and there was much concern for her initially, she subsequently was fit enough to travel back with the party. At very much the same time, William Boocock, aged not quite 15, fell on his hand. His total lack of fuss or complaint was belied by the swelling that evening. An X-ray revealed a broken arm. Three accidents in a row was quite sufficient for one day, though there was a further contretemps on Friday when one of our party bumped into a French girl on a drag lift and cut her on the lips. The 'entente' was not so 'cordiale' in a discussion over an insurance claim! The 'Stavely'

was nearly awarded for some undiplomatic language used that afternoon.

Let me draw to a close on a more encouraging note. For the first time ever, the three younger lads went para-pentling. This meant being strapped to a double harness with an instructor, and then both skiing off the side of a mountain...! Perhaps I have omitted to mention that attached to the harness is a rectangular shaped free fall parachute, which is highly manoeuvrable. For several minutes the pairs floated from one side of the valley to the other, sometimes even gaining height in an up-current. All were thrilled with the experience, so much so, that ex-para Charley could not resist the temptation. Unfortunately he was snookered by a high wind on the last day and so his dreams will have to lie in cold storage until next year.

Following the final dinner together, speeches of thanks were made, during which our guides were presented with a St. Dunstan's T-shirt each. Then Mick, on behalf of the lads, presented the prizes to the racers, and Easter eggs to the juniors. He thanked everyone for the experiences gained and lessons learned during the week. They cannot have been that bad, as

he expressed the wish to return! This also despite the fact that he had won the 'Wally of the Week' award for absconding with the ski locker room key causing severe chaos on everyone's return one afternoon.

I have tried to indicate that skiing is not all fun. You will have read in Tiny Poin-ton's article the amount of preparation he puts in. There are dangers, there are thrills and spills. But these drawbacks are simply outweighed by the sense of fun and above all, the close knit friendship we have with our guides. Just occasionally, oh so occasionally, everything goes right, and it is like the sun shining forth from behind a cloud. But, inevitably, the storm clouds gather and the sun hides itself away again, to re-appear, for we are all optimists, in a short space of time.

Our thanks go to Lieutenant Colonel R.V. Kelly, Commanding Officer of 5 Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery, for allowing his men time off to accompany us. Our trip would not be possible without them. The guides themselves earn our eternal devotion and praise. To Julian, our thanks and congratulations, and, please, St. Dunstan's, despite it all, can we go again?

IMAGES OF WAR CASSETTES

In our March issue we reported on a series of audio cassettes produced in conjunction with *Images of War*, a part-work series published by Marshall Cavendish and the Imperial War Museum. Since then, through the kindness of Mr. Mike Carrington Wood, of Westwood Sound Productions, we have received the first three cassettes in the series for review.

The three are: Operation Dynamo — evacuation of Dunkirk, narrated by Richard Pasco; The Battle of Britain — war in the air, narrated by Sir Anthony Quayle; The Blitz — bombardment of Britain, narrated by Sir Michael Hordern. Although each features the voice of a famous narrator they are more than spoken word cassettes. They match the standards of the best of documentary programmes.

Eyewitness accounts are heard through the voices of men who were there recalling their experiences in their own words

and we hear the most memorable voice of all, that of the late Sir Winston Churchill in extracts from some of his most famous speeches that rallied the nation at the time. The events of those war-time days are brought vividly to life by reconstructed battle reports by 'commentators' speaking over the sounds of war.

To anyone interested in the history of the second world war these tapes provide a great deal of information in a vividly entertaining way. Each runs for approximately one hour and comes in an attractive library case. There will be twelve issues in all and forthcoming titles include: The War At Sea; Dieppe; North Africa Campaign; D-Day and Arnhem. The cassettes are available from: Enigma, P.O. Box 21, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 7QQ at £4.99 (inc. 50p p & p) or, as a special offer, £13.99 (inc. £1.50 p & p) for the three cassettes issued so far.

Balancing the Books

by Ted Bunting

Cat. No. 5367

74 Days

By John Smith

Read by John Westbrook

Reading time 9.75 hours

On the April 1st 1982, Argentina's military Junta sent a large force to invade the Falkland Islands. At the time, I shared our nation's outrage, and thought they must all have been fools to think they might get away with it. I've also often thought since, what it must have been like for the Falkland Islanders themselves; when their uninvited neighbours came ashore as if they owned the place.

Well now, thanks to John Smith and his diary, we may gain at least an inkling of what it is to have one's whole pattern of life upset by an occupying army, and to have a shooting war right on the doorstep.

Strangely, those of us here in Britain who followed the campaign through the news broadcasts actually knew more about what was going on all those miles away than the Islanders did, but of course we couldn't touch the 'Argies' or smell them, or sense their terror, or see them die, as John Smith did.

By reading *74 Days*, not only may we appreciate the inconvenience, the frustrations, and the shortages which the upheaval of invasion brought, but we may also detect the author's compassion, especially for those young conscript soldiers, who wet and filthy, scared out of their wits, and perpetually hungry, made up the expendable cannon fodder of the Argentine forces.

When the campaign eventually came to an end for those pathetic young boys, a British soldier responded to the news that 'A white flag is flying over Port Stanley' with: 'Bloody marvellous.' Well, that's not quite how I'd describe this book, but it's certainly well worth the time it takes to read it.

* * *

'Well worth the time it takes to read.'

Cat. No. 4050

Manchester 14 Miles

And **The Foolish Virgin**

by Margaret Penn

Read by Elizabeth Proud

Reading time 16.75 hours

Perhaps on the face of it a 'turn of the century' story of a fairly ordinary girl raised in a Lancashire village by labouring people doesn't sound very exciting or promising, but "Ee by gum, tha'll be missing a treat", if you ignore this book!

For one thing, the author re-captures the essence of village life with all its superstitions, ignorance, and petty snobbery with all remarkable accuracy, and for another, one would need to be an unfeeling moron I'm sure, not to share the sympathy which Margaret Penn has for her characters. Manchester was less than half an hour along the railway track, but for Hilda, the book's central character, it could have been half a century into the future.

But where Manchester was another age from the village, when Hilda, in *The Foolish Virgin*, goes to live in London, she enters a completely different world. There are so many things which are new to her like books, paintings, carpets on the floor, and theatres, fashionable clothing, cigarettes, and make-up; no wonder Hilda gets what the people back in the village would have called 'Daft ideas'.

And one more thing, whilst I'm talking about this book; I never recommend books unless I think the reader is competent, but in this one, Elizabeth Proud is outstanding; her Lancashire accent is pure 'Ena Sharples', but she gives the 'smart set' in London, all the sophistication and cultured tone they aspire to.

Without a doubt *Manchester 14 Miles* and *The Foolish Virgin* are well worth asking for.

* * *

'"Tha'll be missing a treat" if you ignore this book!'

Welcome to St. Dunstan's

On behalf of St. Dunstan's, we welcome St. Dunstaners recently admitted to membership and the Review hopes they will settle down happily as members of our family.

James Edward Levitt, of Gosport

Mr. Levitt joined St. Dunstan's on April 24th.

Our St. Dunstaner, who is 68, served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers until 1945, after mobilisation in 1939. He had previously joined the Territorial Army in 1936, when he was in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

During the Second World War, Mr. Levitt served in France, and was evacuated from Dunkirk. Subsequently he was wounded in Italy in 1944, and was discharged in 1945. Prior to retirement he was a resident school caretaker for 15 years.

Mr. Levitt and his wife Barbara have been married for 37 years, and have five sons.

George William Mason, of Woolwich

Mr. Mason joined St. Dunstan's on April 21st.

Our St. Dunstaner, who is 52, served as a junior technician on a regular engagement in the Royal Air Force from June 1954 until April 1959, when he was medically discharged. His service included six months at Christmas Island as an M.T. fitter in support of the 1958 nuclear tests.

Until he lost his sight, Mr. Mason was able to work as a car salesman, a storeman, and tractor driver/gardener. He has an adult son and daughter.

GARDENING NOTES

by D. F. Robinson

Now is the time for the garden to be showing plenty of colour, and the remainder of the half-hardies to be planted to give colour for a longer period. Give some fertiliser in powder, pellet or liquid form to the soil both in the flower beds and vegetables, which will give excellent results.

Use the fertiliser when the soil is moist and fork in the first few inches. Keep the weeds from growing by using the hoe regularly, which will also keep the soil open for any rain which is around. Pests of all kinds will be endeavouring to get a real hold now, so keep them down with sprays, powders and pellets.

Vegetables

All of the cabbage family will be growing well, so give a little extra feed and water if the weather gets hot and dry, and possibly a little extra lime to prevent club root. Lettuces don't take long to reach maturity, so sow seeds regularly to give plenty of greens for your salad bowls. Pick all peas as they mature, as if they are left too long they will be very hard even when cooked. It will also let the smaller ones which are starting to grow better. One can still sow seeds of the later types of garden peas to see you through the summer and early Autumn. Stake all the runner beans, and tie them in at first, as they will grow very rapidly.

Potatoes may still be earthed up to make the top ones increase in size. Plant out all outdoor tomatoes which have been forgotten, and any spare ones raised from seed, remembering to get some stakes in place as you plant. Give them regular food and water. Marrows recently planted out will have grown a good deal, so stop some of the shoots to make them bushy and reach flowering more quickly.

Lawns

Cut the grass regularly with the blades at the lowest level, keeping the box on the machine the whole time, and set the sprinkler on the lawn ensuring that the whole lawn gets a good dose of water. Keep the edges trimmed to ensure tidiness.

Fruit

On all fruits, cut away some of the extra growths, particularly the longer ones, to ensure a better crop. Pinch back all the young growths on currants and raspberries for the same results. Give all the fruit manure and plenty of water, especially after dry spells.

Flowers

In places where the soil gets plenty of sun, it might be a good idea to sow some quick flowering annuals for a late show. Some perennials may be cut down now to ensure some fresh flowers later in the year. Carnations may need disbudding to give better blooms, and will need staking as their stems are not very strong. Similarly, sweet peas will need their shoots staking, and should have plenty of liquid fertiliser about now. Dahlias will also need maintenance, and the taller variety will need staking.

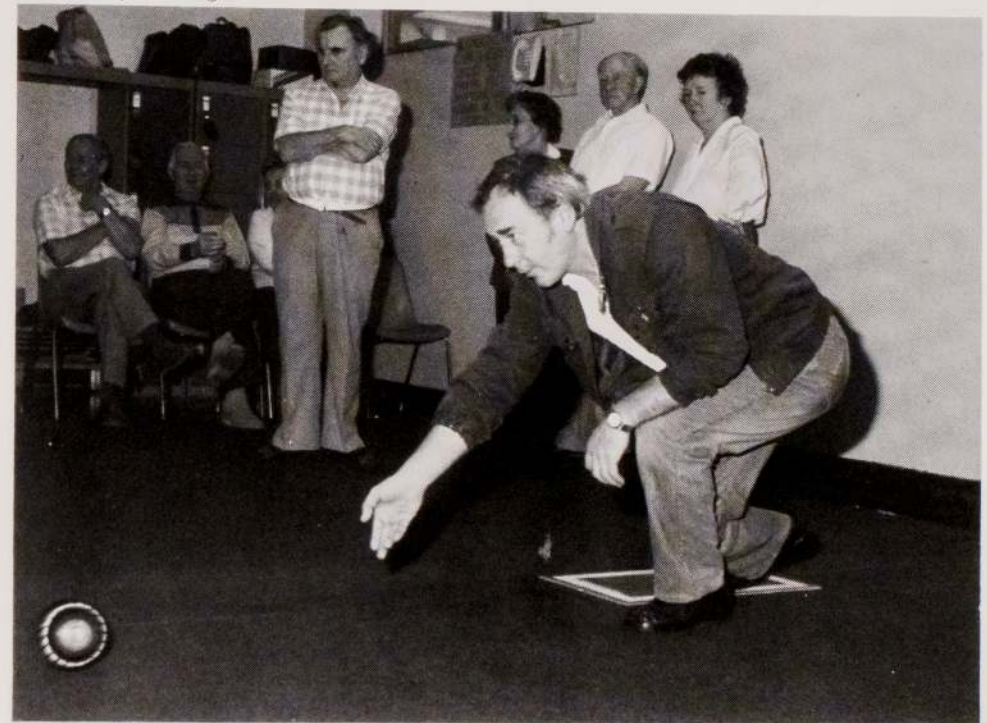
Greenhouse

The windows should be kept open most of the day and night, except when there are strong winds and heavy rain, when only the windows opposite the elements can be kept open. Now is a good time to clean everything with a little weak disinfectant in the water, and water may be sprinkled on the floor to provide a little moisture. Quite a number of plants for next year, such as primula, polyanthus and carnation should be sown now, and cuttings from other plants like regal pelargoniums can be taken now.

MARCH BOWLS HANDICAP

A total of 32 bowlers took part in the annual handicap tournament at Ian Fraser House, scheduled for Monday 13th until March 24th, but owing to the hard work and preparation of Joan Osborne and Jackie Pryor, we were able to start playing on Saturday March 11th, thus enabling us to finish the tournament on time.

Colwyn Lloyd bowling.



Mr. J. Boorman, Mr. Conway and our president, Mr. Neve. A very pleasant evening was had by all, and Mr. Weisblatt thanked us for inviting him and his wife, and assured us of the interest taken in bowling by all the staff of St. Dunstan's. Mr. Jack Boorman, one of the founder members, now well into his eighties, spoke of the many years of enjoyment he has had encouraging St. Dunstaners to take up bowls and thus to get many hours of enjoyment on and off the bowling green. We finished the tournament with the usual consolation triples, and the mixed fours, in which the wives and men took part.

Style and concentration from the wheelchair by Geoff Bunting.



RESULTS

Totally blind singles

Winner T. Renshaw
Runner up J. Pryor

Partially sighted

Winner M. Lewis
Runner up G. Bunting

Triples

Winners E. Brown, E. Hannant and T. Mugan

Mixed fours

Winners E. Brown, W. Vickery, Mrs. T. Mugan, S. Jones.

The special award was presented to Alan Moore for his interest and help at all times throughout the tournament.

Thanks are due of course, first of all to all the staff at Ian Fraser House, and also for all the interest shown at Headquarters throughout the fortnight. A special thank you to Jonathan, the care assistant who gave such wonderful help to Geoff Bunting, and even gave up some of his time when off duty to help Geoff on the green. Hope to see you all in June at our Annual Summer Tournament.

P. Stubbs

Saturday March 25th

Brighton Club entertained Southampton and District Bowls Club to an indoor match, and a social evening at Ian Fraser House. It proved to be a close game with the visitors winning by a few shots and at the dance in the annexe, the Chairman of Southampton and District Club presented the prizes to the winners of our Handicap Tournament.

BRIGHTON CLUB

On April 3rd eleven members of Brighton Club made their way to Hastings to play a tournament of 5's and 3's against Albert Hobson's team of visually handicapped. Joan Osborne was unable to be with us, and we wish her well. We lunched at White Rock Pavilion, and with the help of the Chairman of the Hastings team, John drove us to their meeting rooms.

Greetings over, we settled down to the game, which ended in a close result, St. Dunstan's 4, Hastings 3. Albert presented Bob Osborne with a trophy, which had been donated by Wilfred Miller, and promised to win it back at the next tournament, which we hope will be at Ian Fraser House. Bob presented Albert with a cup for winning a knockout tournament.

A lovely tea was prepared and served by the helpers, and the raffle was drawn by Theo, with prizes for both teams. After the

farewells, we travelled back to Ian Fraser House, and all agreed that it had been a good day.

We extend our thanks to Mr. Conway for the transport.

Phyllis O'Kelly

Sunday March 5th Pairs

1st	Bill Allen and Miss Stenning	60.7
2nd	Wally Lethbridge and Mr. Goodlad	58.3
3rd	Bill Phillips and Dr. Goodlad and Bob Evans and Mrs. Barker	52.4
5th	George Hudson and Mr. Douse	50.0
6th	Reg Goding and Miss Sturdy	42.9
7th	Mrs. Douse and Mrs. Hannant	33.3

Sunday April 9th Pairs

1st	Mr. and Mrs. R. Pacitti	63.5
2nd	W. Lethbridge and Mr. Goodlad	59.3
3rd	R. Goding and Mrs. Andrews	56.3
4th	Miss Stenning and Mr. Douse	44.8
5th	W. Phillips and Dr. J. Goodlad	41.7
6th	Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Douse	34.4

Saturday April 15th Individuals

1st	Mrs. A. Clements	66.6
2nd	Mrs. K. Pacitti	61.9
3rd	Bill Phillips	57.1
4th	Miss Stenning	47.6
5th	Ralph Pacitti, Reg Goding and Wally Lethbridge	42.9
8th	Bob Evans	38.1

We played the semi-final tie in the West Sussex Bridge League against Pulborough on Sunday April 23rd. It was a very pleasant match, and was closely contested in the first three rounds, before a decisive victory for Pulborough, who won by twelve victory points to four. Our team consisted of Bill Phillips, Bob Evans, Vi Delaney, Wally Lethbridge, Reg Goding, Ralph Pacitti, Bill Allen and Bob Fullard.

RETIREMENT

Mr. Douglas Patterson, better known as 'Pat', has now fully retired after a period of part-time employment visiting some of his St. Dunstaners involved in woodwork as a hobby activity. It has been suggested that a presentation fund be opened. Mr. W.C. Weisblatt has agreed to act as Treasurer and contributions, in the form of cheques or postal orders, may be sent to him at headquarters.

FAMILY NEWS

CORRECTION

Profound apologies to St. Dunstaner *R.H. Stevens*, as we stated in the May issue that he was the 'late' R.H. Stevens. This is not the case, and Mr. Stevens is alive and well. In the same piece, we also incorrectly spelled Mr. and Mrs. Steven's granddaughters surname, the correct spelling being Kay Freeman. Once again our apologies.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Mr. W. Morris, eldest son of *Mr. and Mrs. T. Morris*, of Wimborne, Dorset, who is Assistant Divisional Officer with Dorset Fire Brigade, and who recently received his 20-year Service Award.

Mr. C. Morgan, son of *Mr. and Mrs. A. Morgan*, of York, on his recent promotion to Flight Lieutenant.

GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Mrs. I. Biggs, widow of the late St. Dunstaner *Mr. H. Biggs*, of St. Leonards-on-Sea, on the birth of a great grandson, Curtis, on April 7th, to Mandy and Paul Brockington.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Corrigan, of Peacehaven, on the birth of a great-grandson, Samuel Ivan, both on January 10th born to Mark and Tracy Leman.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Fisher, of Ower, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Lynsey Cheryl, both on February 8th to their daughter Gillian Bushell and her husband Kevin.

Mr. A. Scott, of Belfast, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, Laura Rachel, born in March to his grand-daughter Susan and her husband Michael Acey.

Mr. and Mrs. Surrige, of Reedham, Norfolk, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Lian, both on February 27th to their son Kenneth and daughter-in-law Margaret.

Mr. B. Tomporowski, of Wolverhampton, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Jemma, born to his daughter Anna and her husband Bryan Reynolds on Easter Monday.

RUBY WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. J. Fraser, of Seaton, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on April 16th.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Morgan, of York, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on April 23rd.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Parsons, of Southwick, West Sussex, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, celebrated on April 16th.

DEATHS

We offer condolences to:

Mr. J. Boorman, of Faversham, on the sudden death of his brother, who passed away on December 27th.

Mrs. L. Philby, widow of the late *Mr. Philby*, of Streatham, and to Keith and Barbara Filby, on the death of their son Graham, who died on April 21st, aged four months.

Mrs. R. Franklin, wife of St. Dunstaner *A. Franklin*, of Hoddesdon, on the death of her sister, who passed away recently.

Mrs. D. Martin, of Emsworth, Hants., on the death of her husband's brother, who passed away recently.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Shallcross, of Chester, on the death of Mrs. Shallcross' brother, who passed away in December last.

The family and friends of Mrs. E. Whitaker, widow of the late *Mr. G. Whittaker*, of Bradford, Yorkshire, who passed away on April 10th, aged 75.

In Memory

It is with great regret we have to record the deaths of the following St. Dunstaners and we offer our deepest sympathy to their widows, families and friends.

A.S. Fletcher, Royal Field Artillery

Mr. Alfred Stobart Fletcher, of Newton Abbot, passed away on April 24th, aged 93. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 25 years.

Mr. Fletcher served in the Royal Field Artillery throughout World War One, and was gassed in September 1918, two months before the end of hostilities. After the war, he kept his father's grocer shop in Teeside for almost twenty years when his sight became too poor to continue. Subsequently, he worked for the council until his retirement in 1960, and four years later he became a St. Dunstaner.

He and his wife were keen walkers, and he also loved gardening which he continued to do when they moved south to live with their daughter in Devon. Sadly, his wife died in 1981, but he remained an important member of a close and loving family. He was a staunch Methodist, and found fellowship and friends at his local church which he attended regularly.

We offer our deep sympathy to his daughter and son-in-law, his grandchildren, and all members of the family.

W. H. Wainman, East Yorkshire Regiment

We are very sorry to record the death of Wil-

liam Wainman, on April 7th, aged 93. He was a St. Dunstaner for nearly 50 years.

Mr. Wainman joined up with the 6th/11th East Yorkshire Regiment at the beginning of the Second World War, and unfortunately was wounded very early, when he came under machine gun fire, and lost his sight and one arm.

Mr. Wainman undertook some training with St. Dunstan's towards the end of the war, studying braille and handicrafts, and from this time until he was in his nineties, he always enjoyed visiting St. Dunstan's homes for holidays.

After his training, Mr. and Mrs. Wainman ran a general shop which flourished for many years. When they gave this up to retire, they moved to Hull to be near their family, and Mr. Wainman worked hard in the garden and greenhouse. Sadly Mrs. Wainman died in 1978, and Mr. Wainman moved to Sheffield to share a home with his daughter, Joyce, and her husband. They looked after him devotedly, and his grandchildren visited often. Mr. Wainman was especially proud of his great-grandson, Martin.

We offer sympathy to Mrs. Joyce Moody, and all members of the family.