

St Dunstan's Review

April 1997



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Cover picture:
*Could Winged Victory,
Ovingdean's figurehead
statue really be
St George in disguise?
Find out on page eight.*

From the Chairman



Spring approaches - oh what a welcome change that will be after a rather long winter.

The Reunion season is upon us and I very much hope that the build-up of numbers attending which showed a marked pick-up last year will continue.

Karen Morane, Care Manager at Ovingdean, has moved on. We are grateful for her early work in the difficult times of two years ago and wish her well in the future. At the time of going to press a permanent replacement has not yet been selected.

It is with gratitude and sadness that at the end of this month we say goodbye to Cynthia Mosley who is retiring after nearly 46 years of superb and devoted service. She will be greatly missed and we wish her every happiness in retirement.

We are pleased to report that the Chairman is back in harness after a short absence following an operation.

**Gerard Frost,
Secretary to the Council**



NOTICE BOARD



CALLING ALL GARDENERS

St Dunstan's Gardening Club is sowing the seeds for this year's forage into horticulture.

Arrangements are being made for a series of garden visits, based around the Chester area, from September 1st to September 8th. We will be using St Dunstan's coach.

We need to know very quickly how many people would be interested in these activities. New members, old members and widows, please contact me without delay to enable us to go ahead with our plans.

For details, write to Bob Alty, 3 Victoria Grove, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7TL.
Tel: 0151 424 5085.

BRIC-A-BRAC WANTED

St Dunstan's Ovingdean have a bric-a-brac stall on Madeira Drive at the Brighton Festival on May 3rd (10am-5pm). They will be only too grateful to accept any unwanted items or gifts. All funds received on the day go to St Dunstan's.

Contact Care Assistants Trevor Parker or Nikki Budinger on 01273 307811 ext 3266 or David Hapgood on ext 3516.

TALKING DOG SCALES

Guide Dog Owners can easily weigh their dogs with the K9 Talking Dog Scale - a basket containing a fitted cushion and talking mechanism. Operated by a push button switch connected by a length of cable, it speaks in stones/pounds or kilograms. Please note that the basket is not suitable as a bed for sleeping. The price is £54.95 including delivery. Orders can be placed by telephone or in writing to: Colbolt Systems Ltd, The Old Mill House, Mill Road, Reedham, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3TL. Telephone 01493 700172, or fax on 01493 701037.

ILLEGAL USE OF SOFTWARE

May I take this opportunity to remind readers of the legal position with regard to software. It is illegal either to copy software, other than shareware or freeware, or to provide/receive such a copy of software. As a criminal offence it can carry a prison sentence of up to five years, although no prison sentence has yet been imposed. However, the courts are now taking a much harder view of software crimes and penalties imposed are increasing as the issue is being addressed by judges. Shareware can be downloaded via the Internet, or from friends, but remember that there is a licence fee to pay, if you make continued use of the programme.

The technical arguments, against illegal software copies, are:

- a) Viruses can be passed on via bootleg software and can cause real problems with lost data, corrupted programmes and inevitable time wasting.
- b) You also never know if you have the complete programme or if any significant parts are missing.
- c) If you use licensed copies, which can be registered with the software supplier, you benefit from peace of mind with regard to the quality of the product. Any problems with the software, or operation, can be dealt with through their helpline.
- d) Any new releases of software will be offered to you as an existing customer first and usually at favourable prices.

I hope this advice will ensure you get the best from both your computer and software, for many happy years, while keeping you out of prison!

**Andy Harris,
Systems Administrator,
St Dunstan's Headquarters**

LOG ON TO A LEXICON

The Concise Oxford Dictionary and *The Oxford Thesaurus* are now both available as electronic editions. They come on 3.5" disks for installation on the hard disk of an IBM compatible computer running DOS.

Both titles allow casual browsing and rapid searches (using wildcards if necessary) and can be keyed into word processors. Material can also be exported into other documents.

The Dictionary (Ref: DE17), which features 120,000 entries and 190,000 definitions, has minimum system requirements of 4.5 megabytes of available hard disk space and 100 kilobytes of available RAM (memory). The Thesaurus (Ref: DE18), sports 270,000 synonyms and a supplement of dialectical, idiomatic, literary and technical expressions. It requires 3.5 megabytes of hard disk space and 150 kilobytes of available RAM.

Each item is available at the subsidised price of £23.00. To order, contact RNIB Customer Services on 0345 023153.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

Some tickets have been issued for Trooping the Colour on Saturday, June 14th and we may be allocated some tickets for the Royal Tournament in July.

Any St Dunstaner who would like to apply should contact Carole Woodgate, Welfare Department at Headquarters by May 16th. Final allocations will be drawn from a hat.

Any St Dunstaner wishing to attend these events must pay their own travelling and accommodation expenses.

BOOK UP AT SULTAN

Those wishing to come to camp at HMS *Sultan* should contact Elspeth Grant on 01799 522874 or by writing to her at High Acre, Catmere End, Saffron Walden CB11 4XG, as soon as possible. The deadline for reserving a place is May 9th. The camp will be held August 1st-9th.

LAST CHANCE FOR STORY CONTEST

There is still time to enter this year's story contest, taking up the challenge to craft a horsey-yarn summoning up the excitement of the Sport of Kings - or Catford Dogs for the proletariat. First prize is £60, second prize is £25 and there are three runners-up prizes of £5 each. The first and second prize winners will have their tales published in the *Review*. Full rules appeared last issue.

Entries should reach the Editor, by the closing date, April 28th 1996, at Story Writing Competition 1997, St Dunstan's *Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB. You cannot say neigh!

GARDENING HELPLINE

The Henry Doubleday Research Association offers concessionary membership to visually impaired people. For £11 per annum they provide a quarterly newsletter on tape and members are given access to a gardening helpline. The association promotes environmentally sustainable horticultural growing techniques and has demonstration gardens in Coventry and Kent. For further details call 01203 303517.

SWEEPSTAKE OPEN

St Dunstaners and widows can still apply for tickets in this year's *Review* Derby Sweepstake. Tickets are 30p each and issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Applications should be made as soon as possible. Closing date is Friday, May 30th.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to The Editor, DSS Department, St Dunstan's *Review*, PO Box 4XB, 12/14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB. Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. Full rules appeared in the February *Review*. The draw will take place in London on June 2nd. The race is being run on June 7th.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are always welcome.

Drop us a line, tape or disk at 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB.

From: Verna (Johnny) Johnson Ritchie, Islington, Ontario, Canada

The Canadian Red Cross girls who knew Monica Sey Robinson were saddened to hear of her death in an accident just before Christmas. Monica was at Longmynd when Diana Pease Stratford and Virginia Pearson Pincombe and I arrived in Church Stretton in early July 1944. We were later joined by Morna Barclay Petrie, a good friend of Monica (both girls came from Hamilton, Ontario).

It seems strange that after so many years, those Red Cross girls who served with St D's still keep in touch and are always glad to get news of members of the St D's family.

Just last week I was talking to Bunty Clarke Tafts (a driver at Stoke) and she was asking about Diana Stratford (braille teacher at Stoke) who we did not hear from at Christmas. Thora Morrison (typing teacher at Stoke) was also asking about her, so I got in touch with Diana. She and John are living in Brantford for the winter. They live outside the town and winter driving can be difficult. Glad to say they are all fine.

Margaret Blackmore Maclure is still living in Ottawa and as busy as ever with family, grandchildren and working with the Maclure Centre - a centre for handicapped young people - started by her late husband, Ken.

Virginia Pincombe is fine and does a lot of travelling - her last trip was to Ireland. Eleanor Shaw Johnson is busy as Joe is now in Sunnybrook Hospital - built as a veterans hospital after the war. Sorry to report that Mary McKay - she worked at Belmont with the lady St D's people in Church Stretton - died last year.

Herb and I have had a bad year. Herb had a second fall and fractured his bad hip, so it was a summer of physio, doctors, etc. Glad

to say he is home again, but now is a distinguished gentleman and walks along with a cane.

I'm back to school again - back in Grade One with the six and seven year olds. Don't think I'll ever graduate! I have been doing volunteer work at a local school for quite a few years now. With a lot of cut-backs in funding for education, teachers don't get a lot of help. This being the computer age - there are five computers in the classroom - the children need a lot of help and so I go along to do what I can to help.

The *Review* is still sent to me and I pass it on to Virginia, so we can keep up to date on the changes. I often think of staff members with whom I worked in Church Stretton, Moira Murray Sherriff, Rhona Bayer, Betty McGregor, and the two Strachan sisters.

Good wishes to all at St Dunstan's - especially for a healthy and peaceful 1997.

OLD FRIENDS FROM DAEDALUS CAMP

Two long-time helpers at *Daedalus*, Maisie Streets and Diana Hoare, who are now both in homes, would greatly appreciate letters or cards from old campers.

Diana has now lost both legs but is very chirpy and both send their love and greetings to all their old friends.

Diana's address is: West Acre Nursing Home, Sleeper's Hill, Winchester, while Maisie's is The Rosemary Lodge, 154 Alcester Road South, King's Heath, Birmingham. Maisie can be brought to the telephone in her wheelchair, her number is 0121 443 1166.

Elspeth Grant

NORMAN TAKES UP CARDIFF CHAIR

Readers may recall that in 1994, there was a joint appointment of St Dunstaners at the Cardiff Institute for the Blind. At that time, Trevor Tatchell was appointed Chairman and Norman Hopkins Vice-Chairman.

It is pleasing, therefore, to report that when Trevor completed his three year stint, Norman was appointed Chairman on January 25th.

Norman is not only Chairman, he and Trevor are also directors and trustees of the

board and members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cardiff Institute for the Blind is the largest voluntary organisation for the blind in Wales and the majority of the board of directors are blind people. In this way they are able to influence and direct policy towards the blind people that they serve.

Norman's Vice-Chairman, Wynne Lloyd, is also blind and is a former Director of Music for BBC Wales.

Message from the Head of Fund Raising



St Dunstan's goes to the country

On April 7th, St Dunstan's starts a countrywide campaign which will involve the distribution of 10 million fund raising packs. It is hoped that the distribution, which will continue until the end of the year, will not only raise funds for the Charity, but will also raise its profile.

During the course of this campaign, we are also hoping to arouse press interest with stories about St Dunstan's and St Dunstaners. Typically, we are looking for St Dunstaners or widows who would be happy to have their picture published alongside a story about St Dunstan's which is personal to them. If you have such a story, which may be published in the local or even the National Press, we would like to hear from you.

One area that we address with our fund raising pack, is that of Legacies. It is vital that those who support St Dunstan's, and its reason for being, should be reminded that leaving a legacy to St Dunstan's will

help to ensure that we can continue taking care of men and women blinded in the service of their country. To this end, there is a tick box on our leaflets for people to request legacy information. Our legacy packs, which are sent out on request, are aimed at those who have never written a Will, as well as those who wish to modify their Will with a codicil leaving a gift to St Dunstan's. We hope that those who are in a position to do so, will consider leaving St Dunstan's a legacy in their Will.

Our fund raising packs are being sent out by the Royal Mail's door to door delivery service, so if you should, inadvertently, receive one and you have any comments to make, do please get in touch with me.

All the members of the Fund Raising department wish all the members of St Dunstan's family and friends a very happy Easter.

Neil Swan

Cynthia Mosley retires after more than four decades of service

A lifetime at St Dunstan's

On April 30th Cynthia Mosley, Northern Area Welfare Superintendent retires just two months short of 46 years service with St Dunstan's.

"In July, 1951 I started working as a junior shorthand typist for Marie Wilson in St Dunstan's Northern Area office, at 191 Old Marylebone Road. MKW was quite a hard taskmaster who did not suffer fools gladly and she certainly taught one how to do the job her way. Nevertheless, she had a great sense of humour and while she was knocking the rough edges off us, myself and other youngsters in Welfare still found time for a lot of fun and laughter together.

"MKW's training stood me in good stead and in 1955 I became secretary to Douglas Wills, Welfare Superintendent at the time, and stayed with him for the next 17 years. Here again I learned such a lot, not least I hope some of his patience and understanding of people and their problems. It was while with Douglas Wills that I came to know more St Dunstaners personally.

"Then in 1972, upon the retirement of Margot Midgley, I took over the Northern Area office. Even though so many St Dunstaners were no longer just names to me, and I was still lucky enough to be working with others who had been with St Dunstan's for quite some time, I never thought I would survive the first six months! However, it all began to fall into place and although there were ups and downs, and times when I could never see a solution to a particularly worrying problem, I really have nothing but the happiest of memories of my time with St Dunstan's and just wonder where the last 46 years have flown.

"I shall never forget the kindness shown to me by St Dunstaners and their families whose friendship has meant a great deal and always will.



Cynthia Mosley listening to Wilf Saxby during a St Dunstan's Reunion.

"No plans made for my retirement. I just want to sink into it, gracefully I hope, but I am certainly looking forward to a more leisurely way of life - taking each day at my own pace and having time to indulge in whatever takes my fancy."

On behalf of those members of the St Dunstan's family who have benefited from Cynthia's counsel and for many members of staff to whom she has supplied wisdom and wide knowledge, we wish her a long and happy retirement.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We congratulate Mrs Ethel Crombet-Beolens of North Auckland, New Zealand who celebrated her 100th birthday on March 2nd. Mrs Crombet-Beolens is the widow of Peter Crombet-Beolens of Lewes, Sussex who served in the RASC during the First World War. He died in 1962, aged 72.

In 1969, Mrs Crombet-Beolens went to live with family in New Zealand and now shares a home with her son and daughter-in-law. Our best wishes go to her and her family on this very special birthday.

Angel of the Knight

by Simon Rogers

Winged Victory is a Britannic figure, a reconstituted concrete statue, holding St Dunstan's badge high above the chapel at Ovingdean, a symbol of hope. However that symbol may have been drawn through a bizarre metamorphosis from the trauma of the trenches. A semi-cubist totem, this lass could be another incarnation of St George.

The Angel of Mons was a popular legend of the Great War - a giant spectre that forbade the advancing German Army to progress any further. A ghostly saviour intervening in what was then our darkest hour. The image was adopted by St Dunstan's as a promotional aid, a caring fluorescent matron holding our badge while leading a blinded soldier from the trenches. Not once did her feet touch the ground.

It was a popular image, comforting, inspiring, lifting spirits in a dank and dismal situation, something many people were willing to believe in. Further sightings were reported. A clergyman who dared to place it in rational perspective found himself pilloried in public for lacking faith.

In years since, the manifestation has joined the countless tales of UFO's and ghosts that provide fodder for students of the unknown. Viewed with modern cynicism and hindsight, the Angel of Mons has more akin with Chinese Whispers than any metaphysics.

Having said that, like all Deep Magic, it started with the spilling of blood. The Battle of Mons, which occupied several days in August 1914, may not have met the sheer scale of the savagery that was to follow, but it was a significant taste of things to come.

Just under 36,000 soldiers were rallied at Mons, a similar number to the British Force deployed at Waterloo, but this time the boot was truly on the other foot. Around 1,600 men were killed or wounded on August 23rd, for a significant number their admission to St Dunstan's was cruelly

affirmed. The battle forced our army to march back across the Flemish fields and enemy positions were secured for the next four years.

Within days, it was acknowledged that a serious error had been made allowing the enemy to fortify its positions. They just opened fire with a perpetual barrage that hammered our men in an unprecedented manner. For the first time the Army started to take note of shaking, hysterical laughter and "exaggerated reactions to minor wounds". Over 100 officers were sent back to England for recuperation but many more men were dealt with in less sympathetic fashion. This condition would in later years be recognised as shell-shock.

The Sunday Times soberly acknowledged the retreat but quoted a wounded gunner's enthusiastic desire to get back to the front. "We shall soon be at them again, matey." This was after 73 hours of solid mayhem. Thus, an uneasy balance between reporting the situation and maintaining morale was struck. However, in many respects, Britain's confidence had been disturbed.

Enter *The Evening News*. This now defunct London paper was considered rather risqué in its day. On its staff was a fellow called Arthur Machen, a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn who believed a new age of reason, based on pre-Christian beliefs, would soon transform the world. A yoga-based cult, they attracted such prominent thinkers as the poet Yeats, but would soon fall into disrepute under the hedonistically destructive leadership of self-proclaimed anti-Christ Alistair Crowley.

With an evangelical fervour, Machen submitted a story called *The Bowmen*. It appeared on September 29th 1914 alongside appeals by Kitchener and Lady Clanwilliam.

He started his tale with: "On the most awful day of that awful time, on the day when ruin and disaster came so near that their shadow

fell over London far away; and without any certain news, the hearts of men failed within them and grew faint; as if the agony of their brothers in the battlefield had entered into their souls."

In similar fashion, he described the onslaught to which British forces had been subjected, a prosaic equivalent of the constant shelling and bloodlust. "The shells came on and burst and tore good Englishmen limb from limb, and tore brother from brother, and as the heat of the day increased, so did the fury of that terrible cannonade. There was no help, it seemed. The English artillery was good, but there was not nearly enough of it; it was being steadily battered into scrap iron."

Machen continued to build up the odds. "There was no hope at all." He added futility to the story. "Everybody knew it was of no use. The dead grey bodies lay in companies and battalions; but others came on and on, and they swarmed and stirred and advanced from beyond and beyond."

At this point, Machen entered the twilight zone. He told of a soldier who had eaten mock steaks at a vegetarian restaurant. The plates had a "figure of St George in blue, with the motto, *Adsit Anglis Sanctus Georgius* - may Saint George be a present help to the English." Shades of the once and future king!

The act of reciting this motto is the trigger for divine intervention, the return of St George!

"He saw before him, beyond the trench, a long line of shapes with a shining about them. They were like men who drew the bow and with another shout, their cloud of arrows flew singing and tingling through the air towards the German host."

Machen described how the enemy spontaneously died under this mystic attack. He concluded that 10,000 died with no discernible wounds on their person much to the surprise of the rational Germans. "But the man what knew what nuts tasted like when they called themselves steak, knew that St George had brought his Agincourt bowmen to help the English."

Kind of cute, in a penny-dreadful fashion, and



Was this angelic spectre really St George with drag on? The original St Dunstan's version of how the Angel of Mons appeared.

like Spring-heeled Jack it would go bouncing on into popular folklore. Soldiers started telling people that they knew someone who knew someone who had seen an Angel in conflict at Mons. St George and his bowmen were quickly replaced by a winged woman pointing disdainfully at the enemy. It's great to know that the deity is on your side.

The symbolic image of an angel leading a stricken soldier from the trenches was all too appropriate for St Dunstan's and quickly joined such pictures as the Three Happy Men. Ultimately, it became the figurehead at Ovingdean.

Novelist Margaret Birkinshaw, mother of writer Fay Weldon, recently recalled a meeting with Machen when she was a child. She remembered his fascination with the occult. Of the Angel of Mons, she said: "He seemed amazed how it had spread, but because it improved army morale no-one tried to stop his stories. He tried to distance himself from it, but by that time it was too late."

St Dunstan's helps Norman find his philosophical niche

Examinations of morality

by Simon Rogers

St Dunstaner Norman Walton has found a new challenge in the form of a Masters degree in Philosophy. This may seem an esoteric ambition, but after discussions with nursing staff at Ovingdean he was inspired to target his investigations on the very practical and everyday concerns of ethics in healthcare.

Originally, Norman was a draughtsman and his activities centred on architecture and engineering. "I followed it up in the Royal Engineers. It satisfied my artistic and mechanical interests." However, this opportunity was cut short when Norman was blinded. He joined St Dunstan's in 1983.

Back in civvy street he pursued several jobs, including qualifying as a braille shorthand typist, but eventually decided to study part-time for a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. This led to a lecturing position at Hammersmith College. "I also took a BA in History at the Open University and a professional qualification, Associate Building Engineer, during this time."

Now his target is a Master of Arts in Philosophy for which he is studying at the University of London. "I'm specialising in the ethics of healthcare - whether the medical profession is giving the patient freedom of choice, providing the doctor gives enough information of course," explained Norman. "I'm interested in dilemmas such as surgeons who will not treat smokers." It is an endeavour which will occupy the next three years.

His interest in this area was sparked by discussions with Nursing Care Staff during a spell of convalescence at Ovingdean. He subsequently gave a talk on his chosen subject. "The Nursing Staff are interested, quite rightly, in this approach. A lot of them have got wonderful experience and can see the relevance of these ideas."

Tape recordings play a large role in

Norman's study methods. "The main thing is to get material on tape, I record lectures, some books are already on tape or I have to persuade the RNIB to put them on tape. I also have personal readers, volunteers to read to me." His next step is make a précis of his text on computer. "I aim for half the original length and then get it put into braille. I try to discipline myself into writing to a timetable."

Norman's usual port of call for braille transcriptions is Wakefield Prison, but on one occasion they were less than happy about his choice of material.

"I was studying karate and sent them my notes on self-defence, the Warden returned them saying 'I don't think this is something we want the prisoners to learn'."

The Philosophy course demands that Norman write a series of dissertations drawing on the thoughts of Greek, medieval or contemporary thinkers to support his own argument. So far, he has found kindred ideas in the writings of Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher (1724-1804) who wrote extensively on moral behaviour and laid the groundwork for modern transcendental and Gestalt theories.

Another line of study for Norman is the piano, reading the notes by braille. "When I sat my Grade Two exam, a girl, about 11 or 12, came up and asked what grade I was. I said 'Grade Two'. She pulled herself up to her full height and proudly said 'I'm Grade Five'." Norman is now on Grade Four and has had to show some ingenuity along the way. He has improvised a tactile gauge for setting his metronome to the desired time period. "I'm thinking of patenting it."

In conclusion, Norman's real philosophy is 'have a go'. "People don't recognise their own potential until they do," he adds.

News from Ovingdean

St Valentine's Day at Ovingdean



Fun was had by one and all on St Valentine's Day. Events started with a Tea Dance. The dancers included our guests, many of which were St Dunstaner's wives, volunteers and the Brighton Society for the Blind.

A raffle proved popular with the top prize of a weekend for two at The Brighton Butlins Hotel. It was won by St Dunstaner Peter Surrudge. The second prize, a dinner for two at a Brighton hotel, went to Joyce Horrex. Smaller prizes were won by St Dunstaners Len Radwell, Les Copeland, Lyn Edwards, Sid Doy and Jim O'Donnell.

The most popular event of the day was the helium balloons which were purchased for £1. Each one has a personalised label attached. Released at 4pm, they went flying high. The top prize of a Day Trip to France goes to the person whose label is returned from the furthest distance away. We wait to hear in anticipation.

The afternoon rounded off with a final dance and a lovely afternoon tea made by some of the Care Assistants. Our thanks go to all the Care Staff involved and our organist for the afternoon, Mr Ernie Took. We would also like to thank everybody for their support. It made the day very enjoyable and a great success.

Nikki Budinger,
Care Assistant

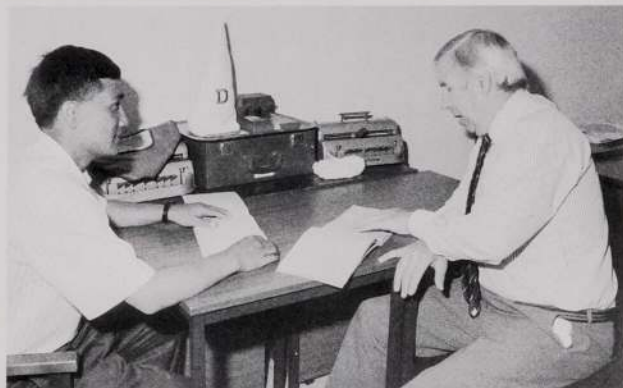
REFLECTIONS by Terry Walker

Packing up to leave is never a happy thing. Oh I know we have all done it many times, but for me it was not easy. If for no other reason than I am a habitual collector. Sorting through cassette tapes I came across a recording which someone made of a Christmas concert in 1986. I reached for the recorder and switched on. Familiar voices came flooding out in a burst of singing. It was great fun to recognise old friends, some of whom unfortunately, are no longer with us.

Most prominent in the singing department was old Harry. One often heard his voice booming down wing one, accompanied soon after by Jim requesting in his own inimitable manner, "A little silence if you please!"

Sketches came thick and fast, Marnie, Alwyn, Gladys, Ron Bowles, (what ever happened to him?) and many others. There was a man called Arthur, who delivered a long monologue all about some chap called Ballezar, if I can manage to spell his name correctly! During the whole epic performance there was this Scot who kept interrupting and shouting abuse.

At first one had a feeling of condemnation, until it became clear that this was all part of the sketch. Abuse poured forth like the porridge from the boiling dixie. On and on it came. Arthur kept doggedly on, finished the monologue without any indication that he was aware of Dave Bamber at all. A wonderful performance and well applauded. This made me think of all the people who have been in concerts over the years. The possibility of an old recording lying dormant in drawers and cupboards. Do you have one? If so I would love to hear from you. Perhaps we may be able to put together a compilation of the old Christmas concerts. I feel sure the *Chatterbox* team would love to have a go at this kind of project.



Terry Walker during a braille lesson.

Not wishing to sit about, I recently paid a visit to The Royal Navy Submarine Museum at Gosport. They have asked me to make up a guide paying specific attention to the requirements of those people with a sight problem. Prior to the visit they sent me a braille guide. Well, they told me it was. In a plain brown cover, it had no print on it at all. In fact it turned out to be a short history of submarines, and very interesting too. I translated it back to print and took it along with me when I met Julie Nesbitt, the Museum's Information Officer. We spoke at length, after which I was taken on a tour.

Together we intend to make up a recording which will enable anyone to gain an insight from the tape to the many interesting items on display in the main exhibition hall. A few useful hints to the six guides and I feel we will be almost complete.

There is one more item. Speaking with the guides, I soon realised that there are a few stories well worth a visit from *Chatterbox*. So I intend to pursue this one, who knows, if one is able to catch them at the right time, we may secure a good recording 'tales from the deep'. I have no doubt at all that our very own Grant Cooper will be able to provide one or two, as he served in the deep for five years. Following a visit to his Gymnasium during the residents exercise periods, I came away with the distinct impression that there are those who were wishing he was still there! Only joking!

Retirement may afford me a little spare time. If there are any people who find themselves in a similar position I would

appreciate a letter. One remembers the weeks of special events, time spent chatting in the Lounge and the Dances.

Yes, Ernie Took and his group played for us for years and years. Stan Grimsey always enjoyed his dancing, today he is resident here at Ovingdean and continues the great tradition whenever he has the opportunity.

This will, I feel, be my final report from Ovingdean. It has been very enjoyable writing and one can only express thanks and my warmest regards to everyone.

GET ON YOUR BIKE

A St Dunstan's Tandem Club has now been introduced at Ovingdean. The following cycling events will take place this year.

Tulip Tandem Marathon **April 26th**

An annual event held in Lincolnshire, covering a distance of 26 miles, 385 yards.

London to Brighton Bike Ride **June 15th**

An extremely popular annual event where 27,000 cyclists will ride 58 miles through English villages and countryside.

Accommodation, at holiday rates, will be available at St Dunstan's Ovingdean before and after the event. Any bookings should be made through Clare Woods.

Coventry Tandem Marathon for Visually Impaired **July 6th**

The marathon will start and finish within the ruins of Coventry's cathedral and will consist of 12 laps of the town's inner ring road. The emphasis is on fun and fancy dress is optional. This event is becoming very popular, attracting international visually impaired riders.

South Downs Way **September 13th-14th**

This should be an enjoyable but arduous event. We aim to cover 100 miles from Eastbourne to Winchester in two days with an overnight stop midway.

Anyone interested in forming part of a team - we especially need more sighted guides for these events - should contact Wendy Longworth on 01273 307811.

Balancing the Books

by Ted Bunting

The Best Years of Their Lives

Author: Trevor Royle

Reader: Crawford Logan

Duration: 12.75 hours

Catalogue No: 6920

The National Serviceman had few equals as a moaner; they should all have been making a fortune in civvy street to hear them talk. Everything was "rotten" no matter where they were; no wonder the regulars thought they'd be better off without them...

But how very wrong they were, for although the volunteer was the backbone of the services, it was the conscript who put the muscle on the bone.

It's quite true; without him, Britain would have been utterly incapable of meeting its military commitments; the proof is provided in this informative and entertaining book.

As it takes its reader around all the trouble spots and war zones which involved British forces between 1945 to 1962, it shows what an invaluable contribution the National Serviceman made.

And what a lot of these hot spots there were: - Palestine, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaya, Cyprus, Aden, Kenya, Suez and Borneo...

It's all in the past now of course, but there's no doubt we'd be looking at a different history today had the National Serviceman not "done his bit". Many Service Chiefs, I learn from the book, believed that Great Britain would never survive as a world power once National Service was discontinued. Perhaps the question to be asked today is "Could Britain become great again if it was reintroduced?"

Welcome to St Dunstan's

We welcome the following new St Dunstaner and hope he will settle down happily as a member of our family.

John Whysall of Derby was admitted on February 28th. Now aged 89, he worked in the textile industry before joining his local regiment the Sherwood Foresters in March 1939. After the Declaration of War, they formed part of the BEF in France. Returning to the UK after the Fall of France, his regiment was posted to the Far East where he was captured by the Japanese in 1942. He spent the rest of the war as a PoW. He was discharged from the Army in 1946 and became an employee of British Rail until his retirement at the age of 65. Mr Whysall married in 1948 and his wife died after a long illness in 1992. They have no children.

CLUB NEWS

ARCHERY

The Joy of Spring

How quickly a new year becomes the past Slipping swiftly through time to a space so vast, Memories of winter start to fade As spring begins her hit parade, Yellow sun, daffodils, and forsythia too A heavenly blaze, a gold so new, Smiling faces free from winter's stress, and so I guess, Yellow is the colour of happiness.

Our first club meeting of the new year took place in the Longhill School gym, this indoor winter venue is always a 'lorra' laughs and chit-chat, plus lots of practice to get the old joints working again after such a long lay off.

The first afternoon saw us all in the club room attending the AGM. Club President John Glazier opened the proceedings, all last year's officials were re-elected - Chairman John Lilley because he is generous with his gin and tonics, secretary-cashier-coach Ernie Elliot he holds the key to the cash, committee members retained are Tom Hart and Eric Bradshaw, they can keep an eye on the other two.

Quiet snores came from one or two of the assembled company as the minutes, which usually take about an hour, were read. Winding up the minutes, subs were paid and the gang scuttled down to the lounge for tea and a wad.

Three competitions were decided in the next five days, first the Laurie Austin trophy, a Portsmouth round with six dozen arrows, many of which were accompanied with a curse or an oh dear! At the end of the day, the best handicap score and the trophy went to Tom Hart, runner up, Ron Freer.

Next on the list was the Longhill Metric 18, a new shoot in honour of the school. Tom Hart again came up trumps, or should I say Harts were trumps, he was dope tested. The runner up was Ron Freer.

Our last shoot of the week was once again with our old friendly rivals, Cuckfield and Greenways archers. This time it was our turn to win this time and this we did handsomely!

The buffet and drinks party was thoroughly enjoyed. Ron Cattell's friend Jill, a former big band singer, voice still good, sang a couple of tunes. One was called *The Cucumber Song*. She was told to sing this song with the band, as an innocent teenager she was surprised by the amount of applause. The reason came to her when she married. Good day cobbers.

Bert Wood

International Tournament

Two St Dunstaners, John Lilley and Norman Perry, were invited by British Blind Sport to join a team of four archers to take part in a international tournament against a French team.

The event was held in Rouen on February 8th in conjunction with the French National Championships. There were 47 archers representing 14 different clubs from all parts of France. We were met at Dieppe and taken by coach to our hotel. There was excellent accommodation and a warm welcome waiting for us.

We arrived in sufficient time to spend the afternoon exploring Rouen, where many of the old timbered buildings remain. We also

saw the Cathedral and the spot where Joan of Arc was burnt.

The following day we were transported by coach to the impressive sports centre for the tournament. This was an indoor round at 20 yards on a 60cm face. Under French rules our archers had to have a French spotter. This made life a bit difficult for our archers with language problems. The team did extremely well under the circumstances. The final result was France beat us by 47 points. John Lilley came second overall to the French champion and received the silver medal award of Championat de France.

Following the awards was a champagne and caviar buffet. In the evening all the participants of the tournament were taken to a restaurant for a five course meal. We returned to Newhaven on Sunday, February 9th.

There will be a BBS tournament at Nottingham on May 24th-25th when we will shoot for the National titles on the Saturday. On the Sunday, we will be shooting against the French team. We have also been invited to shoot in Paris in two years time.

John Lilley

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Jordon Fearn on July 15th. She is the great granddaughter of *George and Cynthia Fearn* of Derby.

Rebecca Skellett on August 26th. She is the great granddaughter of Mrs Sybil Parker of Stamford, Lincolnshire, widow of St Dunstaner *Bernard Parker*.

Eleanor Naris on October 15th. She is the first great grandchild of Mrs Betty Newton of Smallfield, Horley, Surrey, widow of *Reginald Newton*.

Sydney Prescott on New Year's Day. She is the great granddaughter of Mrs Doris Miller of Croydon, Surrey, widow of *Ted Miller*.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Ernest and Betty Ford of Middlesbrough, Cleveland on March 8th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Joe and Nellie Bane of Morden, Surrey who celebrated 62 years of marriage on February 5th.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Michael Flynn, aged 51, who has been made Managing Director of Celcon, Sevenoaks, Kent, which produces aircrete blocks. He is the son of Mrs May Flynn of Horley, Surrey and the late *Ernest Flynn*.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Mrs Elsie Hanson of Gawber, Barnsley on January 13th, four months after her 100th birthday. She was the widow of *Charles W. Hanson*.

Mrs Isabella Nicholson of Durham on January 14th. She was the widow of *Albert Nicholson*.

Mrs Amy Eden of Sheffield on January 15th. She was the widow of *Thomas Eden*.

Mrs Muriel Millen of Birchington, Kent on January 15th. She was the widow of *George Millen*.

Mrs May Hague of Bootle, Merseyside on January 30th. She was the widow of *Charlie Hague*.

Mrs Edith Bennett of Scarning, Dereham on January 31st. She was the widow of *Henry Bennett*.

Mrs Vera Saunderson of Withernsea, North Humberside on February 15th. She was the widow of *C.R. (Roy) Saunderson*.

Mrs Louisa Curnow of Liskeard, Cornwall on February 18th. She was the widow of *Arthur Curnow*.

Mrs Lily Holden of Irlam, nr Manchester, on February 23rd. She was the widow of *John Holden*.

Mrs Kathleen Haralambous of Basildon, Essex on February 28th. She was the widow of *Antimus Haralambous*.

Bill Gibb at the end of October. He was the son-in-law of *Danny and Anne Watkins* of Picton, New Zealand.

Mrs Vera Gillman of Plymouth, Devon on January 28th, a day before her 92nd birthday. She was the daughter of *John Gard*, a First World War St Dunstaner.

Reverend Robert Harris on February 10th. He was the brother of *Stewart Harris* of Andover Down, Hampshire.

Mrs Norah Williams on February 16th. She was the daughter of Mrs Bridget Salters of Walton, Liverpool and the late *George J. Salters*.

Our sympathy goes to their families and friends.

IN MEMORY

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

James Cooper,

Royal Regiment of Artillery

James Edward Cooper of Southsea, Hampshire died on February 1st, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1947. Having enlisted in April 1923, Mr Cooper attained the rank of WOII and served with the Royal Regiment of Artillery during the Second World War. Whilst serving in Hong Kong, Mr Cooper was taken prisoner by the Japanese and held in Kowloon Camp from 1941 to 1945. He returned to the UK, via Sydney in January 1946. His wife, Bertha, whom he married in 1936, was in Hong Kong with him when the colony fell but she was evacuated to Manila and then to Australia. Following rehabilitation at St Dunstan's, Mr Cooper was employed as head of our Men's Supplies Department in London. He gave up this post and with the help of St Dunstan's became a shopkeeper in 1953. He ran a very successful business but had to retire in 1969 because of health problems. His wife predeceased him in March 1994 but he remained fiercely independent, still busy cooking and doing his own gardening. Our sympathy goes to his son, Brett, his daughter-in-law and all members of the family.

Mabel Simpson,

Torpedo Research & Development

Mabel Mary Simpson of Ovingdean died on February 8th, aged 92. She had been a St Dunstaner since 1990. Known as 'Simmy' to her friends, Mrs Simpson was an Admiralty Scientist working in Torpedo Research & Development at Greenwich with her husband, Charles. She was injured in the same air raid in which he was killed in September 1940. Her injuries included total blindness and permanent damage to her left wrist. Following training at Church Stretton, she went to work for the Civil Service as a telephonist and remained in that post until retirement age. Our sympathy goes to her brother, Mr Holley, and all members of the family.

James Forbes-Stewart,

Royal Marines

James George Forbes-Stewart of Sprowston, Norwich died on February 9th, aged 76. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1977. Known as "Jock", he joined the Royal Marines in May 1937, serving in the Mediterranean. His Commando joined HMS *Penelope* in 1939 and sailed to the Dardanelles from Malta in September that year. In February 1940, they were sent to patrol off the Norwegian coast, north of Narvick. After returning to the UK for further training, he joined HMS *Abercrombie* during which period he was at the now famous Salerno landing in September 1943, where he was subsequently wounded. Discharge from the service came in February 1948. There followed 23 years employment by the Eastern Electricity Board as deputy foreman at the Meter Testing Station. He also served on the EEB's welfare and other committees until retirement. His interests included toy-making, picture framing and playing bowls. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Betty, daughter, Teresa, and all of the family.

Robert Green,

Royal Air Force

Robert Henry Green of Wakefield, West Yorkshire died on February 11th, aged 81. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1947. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in April

1940 and served as corporal until being discharged in June 1946 following an accident sustained whilst on duty. Following training, Mr Green became a telephonist. He was also an active member of his local ratepayers' association and served on the committee of Wakefield Society for the Blind and one or two of its subsidiary committees. In 1991, he suffered a stroke and his health gradually deteriorated. His wife, Elsie, predeceased him in March 1995. Our sympathy goes to his daughter, Susan, and all the family.

Edward Stebbing,

Royal Artillery

Edward Walter Wheatley Stebbing of Long Melford, Suffolk died on February 13th, aged 86. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1985. Mr Stebbing served as a Gunner with the Royal Artillery, having enlisted in October 1940. He was taken prisoner by the Japanese and put to work on the Burma-Siam Railway. Following repatriation, he was discharged in 1946. After the war, he worked as a hotelier until retiring in 1960. He was an auctioneers clerk. His wife, Gladys, predeceased him in May 1986. Our sympathy goes to his daughters, Margaret and Janet, son, John, and all other members of the family.

Cecil Barker,

Royal Air Force

Cecil Owen Hay Barker of Westward Ho!, North Devon died on February 19th, aged 80. Known as John, he had been a St Dunstaner since 1979. Having joined the Royal Air Force in 1935, he had attained the rank of Flight Sergeant when captured by the Japanese on Java in 1942. He was moved with fellow prisoners to Sumatra and then to a succession of East Indian islands.

Within a year of his capture, Mr Barker's sight began to fail. There was no improvement after his repatriation in 1946 and he was discharged that year. He subsequently worked as a furniture salesman.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Patricia, daughter, Diana, sons, Benjamin, Nicholas and Jonathan, and all of the family.