

St Dunstan's Review

June 1997



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Cover picture:
Gwen Oborn receives
the Freedom of the City
of London. Full details
on page five.

From the Chairman



After 22 years of highly professional and devoted service to St Dunstan's, most of them as Treasurer, Sir Richard Pease has reached the age of 75 and retired. As a token of our gratitude and of the high esteem in which he is held the Council has unanimously appointed him a Vice-President. We shall miss him greatly and wish him well.

Those of you who have met her will be pleased and not surprised to hear that Susan Harrison has been selected from a number of candidates for the top post of General Manager (formerly Care Manager and before that Matron) at Ovingdean. She has already proved her worth in a temporary capacity and now her long term appointment is confirmed. (The posts and titles of Personnel Manager and Facilities Manager remain unchanged).

Mr Gerard Frost has had his title (formerly Secretary of St Dunstan's) changed to Chief Executive - which more accurately reflects his responsibilities.

Work on refurbishing the fourth floor fuselage and extending the Workshop at Ovingdean is forging ahead on schedule. It is hoped to complete the former in September and the latter in November. Delivery of the new bus is expected at the end of May.

This issue of the *Review* coincides with the 75th Anniversary of The Sir Arthur Pearson Association (SAPA - Canada's St Dunstan's). We send our warm greetings to all our Canadian colleagues and wish them many happy returns.

Henry Leach



NOTICE BOARD



THE ROYAL TOURNAMENT ITEMS FOR SALE URGENTLY REQUIRED

This year The Royal Tournament takes place from July 15th-27th when St Dunstan's hopes to repeat its previous success with the sale of items made by St Dunstaners, wives, widows and families.

If you have any new items such as wooden or knitted toys, baby wear, children's clothes or any other handicraft items which you would like to donate they would be very much appreciated. We would need to receive them by June 30th. Please contact Ray Hazan at HQ.

CHRISTMAS CARD 1997

We would appreciate some help in designing a Christmas card for St Dunstan's. The subject is open traditional, humorous, military, or dealing with blindness.

If you are suggesting an existing design which you have already produced, then you should own the copyright.

Submissions in any format, black and white, colour, pen and ink or water colour, measuring a minimum of 10x8 inches but no more than 16x16 inches, should please be sent to the PR department by the end of July. We thank you in anticipation.

GREEN FINGERED THERAPY

A new book for VIPs who want to take up or carry on gardening has been produced by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and Horticultural Therapy. *Getting on with Gardening* has general information and practical hints.

Available in large print, braille and on tape from the RNIB, the book costs £3 and can be ordered on 0345 023153.



*Susan Harrison, General Manager at
St Dunstan's Ovingdean.*

AREAS OF INFORMATION

Useful contacts, services and information are listed in *The Disability Directory*. Each regional edition provides a comprehensive resource and can be obtained, free of charge, by calling the Disability Hotline on 01772 631823.

ST DUNSTAN'S LADIES BROOCH CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

If the brooch becomes tarnished we are advised that the best way to clean it is to dip the brooch in a liquid silver dip solution, but do not leave it in the solution for any length of time or it makes matters worse. Following dipping rinse the brooch well in warm soapy water and dab gently dry with a kitchen paper towel or similar.

Do not brush the stones at all as they are likely to become loose. Because the stones have flat bottoms they are not deeply embedded in the setting.

VIDEO DESCRIPTIONS FOR WALLACE AND DOLL HIT

The RNIB's range of audio described videos, films with an additional soundtrack to describe facial expressions, body language and actions, continues to expand. No special equipment is required to use one of these adapted tapes.

Scotland's national hero, Sir William Wallace, gains an Australian accent in *Braveheart*. Despite anachronisms aplenty, Mel Gibson managed to act, direct and produce his way to five Oscars with this highland Robin Hood. (AV036, Cert 15, £14.99). The RNIB point out that this film has some violent scenes and strong language.

In a case of art influencing life, Disney's charming *Toy Story* produced the 'must-have' doll for last Christmas. Tom Hanks and Tim Allen provide voices for the computer generated toys that come to life in this award winning animation. (AV033, Cert PG, £16.99).

Wacky Robin Williams launches a campaign to regain custody of his children by dressing up as a woman in *Mrs Doubtfire*. For some reason, social services have no objection to this state of affairs. (AV035, Cert PG, £13.99).

Disney dogs pit wits with bitchy witch in *101 Dalmatians*. This classic animation is coated with more character than the recent live-action remake. (AV034, Cert U, £16.99).

Britain's stand against the Nazi war machine is the subject of *The Battle of Britain*, a documentary that has extended narration. (AV037, £4.99).

Secrets of the early space race are revealed in *Russia - The Missing Years* which documents the triumphs of pioneers such as Yuri Gagarin and Valentina Tereshkova. (AV038, £4.99).

The Joseph Locke inspired *Hear my Song*, (AV001, Cert 15) the first audio described video, has been withdrawn from sale, but remains available as a rental item.

Rental enquiries should be made on 0345 023153, while purchases may be made on 0345 456457.

NEW TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE

A new transcription centre, copying documents to braille, tape or computer disk, has been established by the RNIB at Tarporley, Cheshire. Their services are free to visually impaired people, but for others the following prices apply:

AUDIO

1) *Internal Working Documents* (e.g. agendas / minutes)
Approx. £1.75 per A4 print page (equals £35 per recorded hour).
Each additional copy:
£1.10 per labelled cassette.
£0.30 packing charge per address.

2) *Promotional Documents* (e.g. brochures, annual reports for which music, jingles etc. may be required).
Contact RNIB's Multimedia Publications Unit on 01733 370777.

BRILLE LARGE PRINT

1) *Internal Working Documents* Master production: £3.00 per A4 print page.
Copies: £0.15 each A4 print page.

2) *Promotional Documents*
Contact RNIB's Multimedia Publications Unit on 01733 370777.

PRODUCTION FROM DISK

To open a DOS based file and translate to braille or large print, with no editing: £5.00
Copies: £0.15 per A4 print page.

TACTILE DIAGRAMS

Costed at £20 per staff hour.
Minimum charge: £15.00.

For further information please contact:
RNIB Transcription Centre Northwest, 67 High Street, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 ODP.
Tel: 01829 732115 Fax: 01829 732408

UK HOSTS SAILING CONTEST

The third World Blind Sailing Championships will be held in Portland Harbour, Weymouth on June 7th-14th. Over 200 blind people will compete in the event and UK teams hope to build on their gold medal success in previous years.

SIMPLY CAPITAL!

Civic honour bestowed as Gwen receives the Freedom of the City of London



Free Ma'am of London! Gwen accepts this coveted honour. **Below:** Gwen and friends.

Many congratulations to Gwen Obern of Aberdare, who was presented with the prestigious honour at London's Guild Hall on March 22th. The presentation included a plaque and a brooch emblazoned with the crest of the City.

Gwen lost both her sight and her hands in an ammunition factory explosion in 1940. Her friend, Ivy Sharpe, read out the pledge for her to repeat. The ceremony was followed by a champagne reception and lunch at the Guild Hall.

Gwen was first told about the honour just before Christmas, and says it was one of the nicest Christmas presents she has ever had!

"I have no idea who put my name forward, but it was a great honour to receive the Freedom of the City of London. I have never had such a wonderful day. It was definitely one to remember. It was just so

sad that my husband, Ernie, was too ill to accompany me. But I must thank my cousins Jean and Russell Fitzgerald and Ann and Stephen Barnes for their company."

Gwen has always been a loyal supporter of St Dunstan's, working tirelessly in her home area to raise awareness and funds for St Dunstan's. She plays an active part in both the Ladies' and Handless reunions. Gwen is the first lady St Dunstaner to receive such an honour and surely there is no one more deserving?



Life and Times of Ovingdean

by Margaret Bingham and Ron Cattell

At the time of writing, the grounds at Ovingdean are looking particularly lovely with the show of daffodils and other spring flowers. The mass of these golden yellow blooms on the embankment, going up towards the garages, is particularly eye-catching from the road, as is the garden from the wicket gate to the top seat. Opposite the car park, down the drive, is a magnificent display of narcissi. The gardeners do their job well!

Our tea drives are still popular as are the visits to garden centres in the area. Not everyone is an enthusiast though, but the stock is varied. Aviaries with beautifully coloured birds, ponds stocked with carp and Japanese koi and all other gardening sundries. Surely a place of interest to all.

A new activity at Ovingdean has been organised during the week by Grant, Wendy, David and Dave - music and movement in the lounge. The sessions last about an hour and all the exercises are done sitting down and are gentle and relaxing.

We have two games evenings held in the annexe and here again, the games cause no strain, putting the ball, skimming frisbees through a diagonally squared off area, and knocking a pile of numbered boxes down with a large soft ball are just three of the games. Very competitive and lots of fun!

A visit to Tangmere Aviation Museum in West Sussex proved to be both interesting and nostalgic. Especially to one or two of our ex-RAF men who were stationed there. One of them was George King whose brother had helped to build the 'drome.

A guided tour through Brighton Pavilion was very enjoyable as well as being

informative. In the kitchen we handled the massive pans and ladles which were needed to cook the exorbitant amount of food eaten by the well-to-do in the 18th Century.

We are awaiting with interest the arrival of a large coach in the middle of May, which is equipped to take wheelchairs. A 19 seater which is also equipped to take wheelchairs is being retained. In the meantime, a couple of new vehicles have been delivered seating six people, but not in their wheelchairs.

One in the eye

by Margaret Bingham

When it was discovered we had a flat battery in one of the two 'tail-lifts' taking us on a day's outing to Hastings, we wondered if this was a prelude to more mishaps which might occur in the next few hours. While the staff offloaded and bump started the coach, we on board gave them a cheer. The motor started and the trip was on. The onset of rain, earlier than predicted, more or less compounded this thought. But, being the optimists we are, we were determined to enjoy the day visiting both castle and caves.

The drive to the Cinque Port of Hastings took about an hour. On reaching the castle area we pulled up in a parking area to eat the tasty packed lunch provided by PBK.

It had been ascertained there were no steps in the caves and nothing to impede our wanderings through them. But we had not been informed about the steps up to the entrance. This was a great disappointment, but in the castle there would be an audio-film giving a potted history of the events from the 11th century to present times.

We were a party of about 30 and, as it was still raining, it was quite a mammoth task for staff to make sure we were well wrapped up for a battle against the rain and wind. We were taken in relays along a rough tortuous pathway. At times, two or three people had to coax wheelchairs round slippery bends, but at last we came to a halt in a sort of ante-room, relaxing in the comforting warmth.

The show was very cleverly done. It described events which led up to the Norman invasion of 1066 and how Harold met his defeat at the hands of William the Conqueror - killed by a spear through the eye. It was the last time that anyone successfully invaded Britain.

Back in the coaches and after a hot cup of coffee, it was decided to return to Ovingdean but break our journey at Newhaven and visit the Paradise Garden Centre there.

All in all it had been a good day and no mishaps whatsoever. It certainly was interesting to visit the port whose claim to fame is that most famous year in British history - 1066.

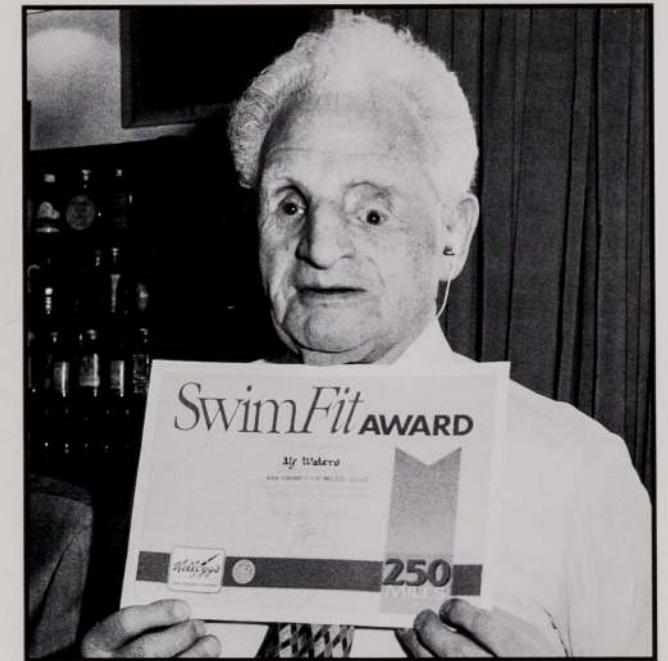
Goodbye, Billy

It is with regret that we will be saying goodbye to Billy Rundle at the end of June. Ill health has forced Billy to look for a less stressful job. Billy started work at St Dunstan's, Pearson House on February 4th 1973, as a counter assistant. Because of his high level of skills, dedication and his friendly attitude to St Dunstaners and staff his promotion was fast and he reached the top of the ladder as a Director of PBK Catering Limited.

I know that Billy has made a great number of friends at St Dunstan's and that we will all miss him greatly.

We wish him good luck in his new ventures.

Paul James
Friend & colleague



Alf, who swam the equivalent of six Channel crossings, proudly displays his award.

Alf Waters swims fit

Well done to Alf Waters, one of our regular swimmers who, through the Swimfit Award Scheme, has been awarded a certificate for swimming a cumulative total of 250 miles.

As part of the scheme, Alf has been totting up his twice weekly swim, averaging a total of 4,400 yards, and has subsequently joined the ASA Swimfit 100 Miles+ Club.

Congratulations also go to Ron Tingay who, between chatting, manages to fit 5,000 yards in each session. He has reached a grand total of 1,500 miles! Meanwhile, Tiny Pointon recently reached a total of 1,250 miles throughout years of swimming.

Other swimmers in the scheme include Ray Sheriff and Ron Cattell. Anyone is free to join the scheme no matter what age or ability and whether they swim little or often.

Wendy Longworth,
Sports & Recreation Assistant,
St Dunstan's Ovingdean

Des Chandler reports on tee time activities during St Dunstan's Golf Club AGM Weekend April 5th-6th

THE BETTER HOLE



Tiger Woods, eat your heart out! Steve Pendleton makes his mark on the world of golf.

WHERE IS EVERYBODY? You've heard this enough times on the BA advert, well it is now the motto for St Dunstan's Golf Club.

As in the past this weekend, the most important on the St D's golf calendar, was supported by the same members who religiously turn up every other golf weekend. To those people, I applaud you.

Saturday

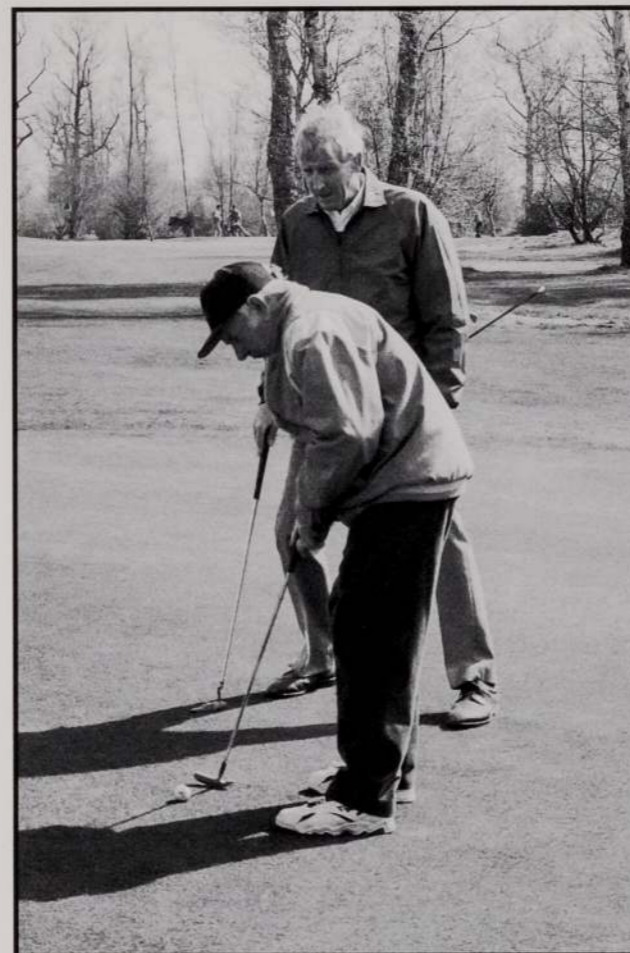
The day started with Francois Pienaar giving valuable coaching lessons to the blind as well as instruction to the new guides in the club. It was then on to the golf course for 18 holes to try out old and new found skills. Well we do have to try to show that we can play golf. Steve Pendleton gave an excellent exhibition of golf on his first

outing with the club and with the aid of a first time golf player and guide, Gary - well done Steve and Gary. This was the fun day of the weekend and, on completion of the 18th hole, all saved their best till last, the final stroke to the 19th hole. Such accuracy has never been seen in St Dunstan's sporting history before.

The evening events got on the way with the 'out-going' Chairman's address, followed by the Captain's and Treasurer's reviews for the past year. It was then time for the election of the club committee and Des Chandler was unanimously re-elected as Chairman, Iain Millard as Treasurer and Francois Pienaar as club Captain. The five new committee members elected were Elizabeth Chandler and Chris Falcon as club Secretaries and David Goldsmith, Steve Pendleton and Jean Falcon. The AGM was followed by some excellent demonstrations on the lifting of the elbows to consume copious liquid refreshments.



Swing king! Des Chandler receives a surprise presentation from club treasurer Iain Millard.



On the green, St Dunstaner Peter Surridge listens to directions from escort Alex Durie.

Sunday

What can I say - it was gratifying to see such a high standard of blind golf - well done to Steve and Des, however Iain pulled the shots out the bag to win the first medal of the year by one point. And for the first time in over a year Francois was able to win the sighted medal, even though he is now playing off a 6 handicap. It must be said however, that all of the players over the weekend were winners, especially Des who was surprised on the Saturday evening by being presented with the St Dunstan's Blind Golf Champion Trophy for 1996.

The next weekend of golf is June 28th/29th and we hope to see all members there as well as any other St Dunstaners who wish to join the club.

For more information contact David Goldsmith at Ovingdean on 01273 307811.

Message from the Head of Fund Raising



You will have received a letter from Peter Marshall regarding the arrangements which have been made for the Cenotaph Service and Parade which takes place this year on Sunday, November 9th.

Following last year's parade, we received some very significant comments from members of the public to the effect that they were so impressed with the St Dunstan's contingent that they all felt they wanted to send a donation to St Dunstan's as a result. The greater number of St Dunstaners and widows we have on parade, the longer our contingent takes to pass the Cenotaph and the result of this is that the commentator has more time to tell our story. This has a greater effect on potential supporters.

In consequence, I do urge you to try to take part in this year's Cenotaph Parade if you possibly can. It is a very important occasion which gives us the opportunity to remind the nation that St Dunstan's exists to help men and women blinded in the Service of their country. This, in turn, helps to bring the name of St Dunstan's and its St Dunstaners to the forefront of people's minds when they consider their charitable giving.

This year, St Dunstan's Cenotaph weekend, November 8th/9th, will take place at a new venue, which we hope you will enjoy. We believe it will be an improvement on previous years. Please complete your application forms as soon as possible so that you will not be disappointed in the event of over-booking. Should you require any help or advice beforehand, please contact Peter Marshall's office.

The Cenotaph weekend is a time for the St Dunstan's family to get together to remember and to reflect on the past, and to look to the future with confidence. I sincerely hope I will have the opportunity to meet you there.

Neil Swan

Thank you from Cynthia Mosley



Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, St Dunstan's President, had the pleasure of presenting Cynthia with an overwhelming gesture of affection from St Dunstaners and widows.

I was very moved by all the cards and letters of good wishes I received for my retirement and then quite overwhelmed by the cheque, to which so many had kindly contributed. To say this was most generous is the understatement of the year - I am told my jaw dropped when the cheque was given to me and even now I can hardly believe it. To be able to indulge myself to such an extent will be luxury but I must gather my thoughts first before I shop till I drop! First of all I think I shall buy a piece of jewellery which will be something lasting which I can treasure; then I favour a reclining chair which will be a nice change of posture from years spent behind a desk; the garden tubs and troughs can be replaced with others far nicer - and so the list will grow and grow.

Thank you all most sincerely and my affectionate good wishes to you for the future.

Cynthia Mosley

Balancing the Books

by Ted Bunting

Mary Tudor: A Life

Author: David Loades
Reader: Robert Ashby
Duration: 15.5 hours
Catalogue No: 8239

Arguably the most popular period in our history is that which spans the Tudor dynasty, when little England was emerging as a power to be reckoned with, producing the likes of Raleigh, Drake and Thomas More. But, of the five monarchs who ruled during that time, the impression most people have of Mary 'Bloody Mary', the devout daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, is of a vengeful bigot, a spiteful witch; someone to be feared. But is this a fair assessment of England's first queen regnant? Was she really the bitter and twisted woman of common conception and if so, what were the factors that rendered her so? In this most interesting and well researched history, David Loades gives not only the answers but the reasons for the answers. There's no hiding the fact that she was, like her father, prone to extreme fits of rage, but when we remember that as a child she had gone from legitimate heir to bastard and back virtually every time her father had taken a new wife, it would surely be ridiculous to expect her to become Goody-Two-Shoes. Then there was the religious dimension; Henry, desperate to produce a male heir, not only put Mary's mother aside but even broke away from Roman Catholicism, the faith which Mary clung to herself and was determined to champion. Of course, what she did when she became queen did not make her too popular because people tend not to like being set fire to, so it is difficult to feel too much affection for her. But strangely, having learned something of the complexities of Mary's life, I find myself much more sympathetic, though she must have been awful to live with.

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: Harry Preedy, Saltdean, Brighton
RE: CLARE PREEDY

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to all the friends, colleagues and staff of St Dunstan's for the support and help given to me during her illness and following my wife's death.

I have received sympathy letters, cards and telephone calls from various parts of the country and numerous visits to my home, which have proven a comfort to both myself and my family.

It was indeed consoling to see so many attending the service at Woodvale, which made me aware of the high esteem Clare was thought of by you all.

She will indeed be greatly missed.

From: Francis Murphy, Brighton

The legend of the Angel of Mons in Simon Rogers's article (*April Review*) reminds me of an old legend regarding Ypres. The tune in memory of this event is played every hour in the Cloth Hall belfry clock.

A quarter of a million British troops were killed defending Ypres between 1914 and 1918. The legend of 1383 however, tells us that the apparition over Ypres told the English to cease attacking that town!

I quote verbatim from an English test of the history: "The English, allies of the people of Ghent, besieged Ypres (1383). An old legend tells that the Holy Virgin, surrounded by a hedge, appeared in the clouds during the siege, and ordered the besiegers to depart." In memory of this miraculous event an annual procession through the streets of the town has become an institution. It takes place during the city fair called Tuyndag Hedge-Day. (I lived in Ypres from 1920 till the German invasion in 1940.)



Longmynd, Church Stretton.

From: Fred Ripley, Wimbledon, London

My wife and I recently had a little book sent to us about Church Stretton. It contained lovely views of the scenery around there and articles and poems written by the students at the local school.

The students were asked to encapsulate their feelings about their environment and its history.

We found it a charming reminder of Church Stretton and the great times we had there.

Here is a sample of the poems:

Along the Burway as we go,
Don't look down at the drop below.
The vast moorland is all around,
Heather and moss is on the ground.
Silent in the sleeping wind,
The Lawley, the Caradoc and Longmynd.

The Yew Tree pub, full of beer
Which Mr Williams is pulling here.

Printed by the Rea Valley Printers Ltd.
Price £3.75
Tel: 01743 790650

Alf Lockhart on the Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion, April 11th-13th

CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM



Our ex-PoWs: (Left to right, back) Ray Sheriff, Alf Lockhart, Bill Marsh, Jesse Mills and John Hopkins; (middle) Bill Griffiths, Tom Hart, Ron Cattell, Bob Forshaw, Reg Goding, Jim Fraser and Bill Orr; (seated) David Taylor, Ron Grimes, Richard Bingley and Mrs Daphne Ingram.

The Guests for this Reunion were Air Chief Marshal Sir John Gingell, GBE, KCB, KCVO and Lady Gingell, General Sir Charles Edward Jones KCB, CBE and Lady Jones. The General was our Guest Speaker. Also present were Mr and Mrs Cahill, Mary Stenning, Beryl Gardner and Susan Harrison.

On April 11th, eighteen St Dunstaners accompanied by their wives or escorts assembled at Ovingdean.

This group together with a few invited guests, made up a party of about 50. We had to make use of the bar as a function room. Nevertheless we had a jolly good time. PBK had laid on a buffet in a room behind the bar, plenty to eat and something to suit the taste of everybody. It was almost like old times, all that was missing was our old standby Ernie Took.

We learned that our Chairman, Bill Griffiths, had been awarded another honour

- the Blackburn Civic Medal. This medal, which was instituted 22 years ago, has been awarded eight times to date. It is awarded only to people who originally came from Blackburn and is given for outstanding and distinctive service to the community of the United Kingdom.

The social evening continued well into the night, it must have been somewhere around midnight before the party started to break up.

Saturday was the AGM. After the exhortation when we remembered our members who had passed away since our last meeting, Sir John Gingell gave the Presidential address and welcomed the members to the AGM.

He mentioned the forthcoming Centenary of Lord Fraser. Hope was expressed that St Dunstan's would make suitable arrangements to mark the occasion. He regretted the Admiral was unable to attend this reunion because he was taking a short holiday to recuperate from a recent operation.

Honorary

One of our Honorary Members, Mrs Daphne Ingram, visited us this year. We were all very pleased to see her, but were distressed to learn about her failing sight. Daphne was taken prisoner in Hong Kong, where she served in the QAIMNS and knew several men who later became St Dunstaners. We all wish her well.

We ran through the business smoothly. The main item of note was the change of Hon. Treasurer. After six years of first class stewardship, Ray Sheriff stepped down and was replaced by Alf Lockhart.

Ambassador

Our most sincere thanks go to Ray for his sterling work in office. Our Chairman, Bill Griffiths, told us about some of the functions he attended, more or less as St Dunstan's unofficial ambassador, i.e.: the launching of a new book on the life of 'Weary' Dunlop and a birthday party for Sir Laurens Van der Post.

When the meeting closed, a photographer from the *Argus* put in an appearance and took photographs of various St Dunstan's ex-PoWs. They did not appear in Monday's edition, but there was a good write up of the ex-PoWs reunion.

We met again at 1830hrs for sherry before the reunion dinner at 1900hrs. PBK again did the catering with a high degree of expertise and professionalism. The meal was superb and the service excellent, and we must thank the cooks and the caterers for a truly excellent dinner.

Black Rod

After dinner, Sir John Gingell introduced the Guest Speaker, General Sir Charles Edward Jones. The General, who is the present Black Rod, spoke about the Houses of Parliament. Chiefly about the House of Lords, some of his anecdotes about some of the more woolly-headed members of the aristocracy were most amusing and well received. Later we all adjourned to the bar to finish off the night.

On Sunday, the Memorial Service was conducted by the Rev. Duncan Lloyd-James. Richard Bingley read from *St Paul to the Corinthians*. A cameraman from the BBC turned up and a brief extract was televised on *South Today* news.

For the Sunday night entertainment we had the Fortunairs, a barber shop group of singers. They gave us over an hour of easy-to-listen-to-music which they sang remarkably well and were loudly applauded. One more trip to the bar to finish off a highly successful reunion. That the reunion was highly successful, we have to thank our Committee and their helpers - Chairman Bill Griffiths and Alice, Treasurer Ray Sheriff and Betty, Hon. Secretary Tom Hart, who gets so much help from Mary, and our two wonderful ladies from Rottingdean, Assistant Hon. Secretary Beryl Gardner and Mary Stenning who is always there to give a hand.

Date of next years reunion is April 17th-19th. DON'T FORGET TO BOOK EARLY!

Computer advisors

Experienced and potential computer users may be interested to read about two organisations which can offer help and advice in addition to our own Janice Sharpe at Ovingdean.

The Computability Centre

The Computability Centre (TCC) is a national charity dedicated to improving the lives of disabled people through the use of computers and associated technology.

TCC shows how computers, with the appropriate 'get round' technology, can help people with all kinds of disabilities to be more independent, to communicate more freely and to reach their full potential at work, at home, in education and at leisure.

'Get round' technology

'Get round' technology is our name for hardware and software ideas that enable disabled people to use a computer freely and efficiently, 'getting round' the apparent disability. It can include alternatives that any user might choose, as well as adaptive approaches designed for disabled people. It ranges from free software to 'tune' the keyboard to speech recognition, from simple choice of colour and character size to speech or braille output for blind users. It offers choice and challenges. The first barrier is lack of knowledge of what is available and possible. TCC can help to overcome this.

Advice and Information

We give advice and information on all aspects of computing for people with special needs. We offer a freephone advice line, handling hundreds of enquiries every month. We will listen, advise and send out fact sheets. We do not sell or supply equipment because we wish to retain total independence in the advice we give.

Free Introductory Sessions

These are run at the Computability Centre in Warwick and at other venues around the UK. They are designed as introductory awareness sessions, for disabled people

themselves and their carers. There is some limited opportunity for 'hands on' trials of alternatives. In some circumstances a personal visit may be justified. These are arranged individually. Our consultants will assess an individual's requirements and make recommendations which cover all aspects of the person's computing needs - at home, at work, and at leisure. A separate information sheet describes this in detail.

Training

We offer a range of awareness training opportunities for practitioners and those in the voluntary sector working with disabled people, as well as for employers. They offer an introduction to 'get round' technology, using demonstrations and case histories.

Consultancy

Our experience and expertise is available through this totally flexible service, e.g.: we can help an organisation to ensure its computers can be used by disabled employees and customers.

If you have any further questions, or think we can help in any way, please do contact us on Freephone 0800 269545.

The Computability Centre, PO Box 94,
Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 SWS
Tel: (or minicom) 01926 312847.
Fax: 01926 311345.

The Foundation for Communication for the Disabled

Another registered charity, The Foundation for Communication for the Disabled was set up to provide alternatives to handwriting and speech for people with different types of disability. Much of this work centres on the use of computer technology.

A non-profit supplier, they offer unbiased advice on the most suitable systems. They also offer a free assessment service anywhere in the country and produce large print and tape versions of instruction books.

The FCD also installs software on any system they supply, making sure programs work together.

Unlimited free telephone support is also supplied and formal training can be provided. For blind or visually impaired people, the FDC concentrate on screen

magnification software, print magnifiers, screen reader systems, speech synthesisers and braille systems.

The Foundation for Communication for the Disabled, Beacon House, Pyrford Road, West Byfleet, Surrey KT14 6LD.
Tel: 01932 336512. Fax: 01932 336513

Let's hit the Hut

At 8am, on a rather chilly Saturday morning, Dawn McAlpine, Jill Barnett and Ron Cattell boarded their transport from Greenways to London Heathrow Terminal One. There they met the rest of the party comprising of Peter and Sue Walker, with their teenaged daughter and son, Heather and Gareth, Charlie Daly, Steve Guinn, Don Planner, Alan Goldthorpe, Gerry Jones and Dick Vonesch. Greetings over, we boarded the British Airways BA950 and took off on time -11.30am. After a smooth and uneventful flight we arrived on time at Munich Airport at 14.15hrs local time.

Outside the airport to greet us were several Paratroopers who had volunteered to act as our guides and instructors. We boarded their minibus which took us on a two hour journey to Kranzig where the Para-Gliding Centre, our home for the coming week, was situated and, we were soon to learn, was called the Hut. Our escorts and instructors were the ever-faithful Peter Zamudio, Mick Shepley, Peter Shand, Andy Crouch and Vince Stone. They were joined by Dick Vonesch and Frin Robinson.

Our first morning was largely taken up in being fitted with skis and ski boots. Then it was on to the various slopes, according to ones ability. Tuesday was a full days skiing but overnight the heavens opened and rain poured down for nearly 24 hours. However, all was not lost as Major Tony Field, the officer in charge took the opportunity to cross the border into Austria and found much better snow and slopes. This meant an hours drive each day but the changed

Ron Cattell reports on the Skiing Trip, February 22nd - March 1st, to Kranzig, Germany



conditions made the journeys worthwhile. Evening trips were to a nearby swimming pool and a nine pin bowling alley and also to various local shopping centres.

All too soon, the week ended and we were back at Munich where we expressed our sincere thanks, and gratitude to Major Field and his merry band of volunteer instructors whose knowledge and skill had made our skiing trips so safe and enjoyable.

Back in the wild, Mike Tetley makes a trunk call from Kenya



TALES FROM AFRICA 1997

I have just returned from Kenya where I was born and where I served with both the Kenya Regiment and the Kings African Rifles. I thought some details were worth recording.

I went with my friend Reg, a former Metropolitan Policeman, and we met up with Rusty, a childhood friend who still lives there. On the first night, we stayed in a small hotel built in the trees overlooking a water hole. Even as we were signing the register, two elephants were sparring only 20 feet from us and the clashing of their tusks was clearly audible as were their grunts. Having exhausted their energy,

they lay down in the water, completely submerged with only their trunks above the surface, virtually snorkelling.

Instead of crossing a cattle grid to enter the park, we crossed an "eli-grid" and the electrified fence to keep them in the park is known as an "eli-fence". I was very surprised to see so many women in positions of authority in what was formerly a very male dominant society. Entering the park, we had to pay 20 dollars a day. I thought this was extortionate as I had ridden all over there on my bike as a youngster. As I could not see the animals I tried the following approach: I said to the

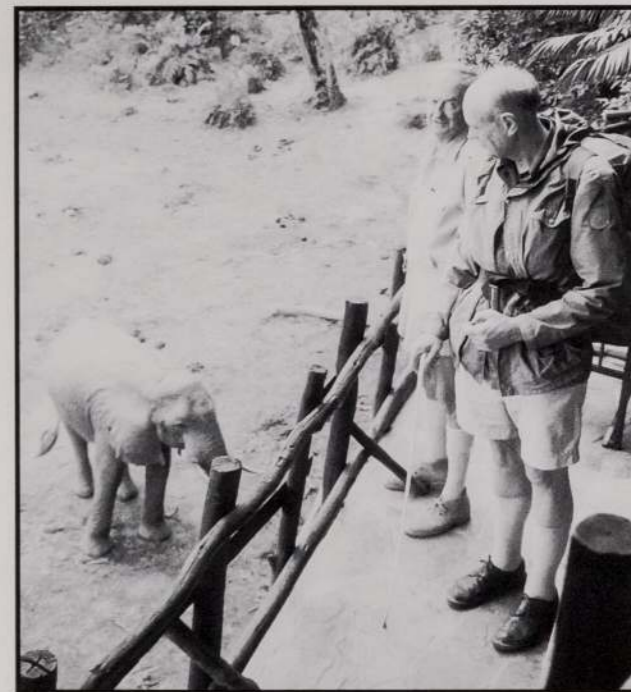
gamekeeper that as I was blind, I could not tell if she was fully dressed. She may be a beautiful woman and my friends might be most desirous to date her but I could not appreciate her charms unless I touched her and this I would not do. In the same manner if we met a lion or leopard, I could not appreciate what the others were looking at until I ran my hands over those dangerous animals and like my approach to her I did not intend to, so could she let me in for nothing. Because of my cheek she let me in for free and this ruse worked on all other occasions.

We did see many lion and one lioness on heat. If you want to know why the lion is called King of the beasts you realise his prowess when he can cover a lioness three times an hour every hour for three days. Our tented camp overlooked another water hole. Three thousand five hundred elephant watered there that week as well as herds of over a thousand head of buffalo. Lion roared round the tent at night.

An old bull elephant called Fred walked with measured tread down the middle of the road and if you did not reverse, your car was moved out of his way. One day, as we approached the park gate, we saw Fred on the far side. The gamekeeper saw us and opened the door of her wooden hut to open the gate for us but only saw Fred's legs near the door as the door opened. It was quickly shut and she jumped out of the window, opened the gate and jumped back again through the window.

Elephants are clever. A silted up dam became very treacherous when elephants walked across the mud to the last bit of water. They sank into the mud and the more they struggled the deeper they went. They would have died but my friend passed ropes round them and pulled them out with a tractor. When a baby was being pulled out, the mother was standing only 15 feet away and did not attempt to interfere with the rescue as if she knew that her infant was being helped.

Tungsten has been found in the sand dunes at Malindi and it will be the second largest



Left: Rumble in the Jungle! Two bull elephants wrestle. **Above:** Baby elephant walk. Mike and Rusty meet a baby tusker.

source in the world. On the other hand the Japs are building good roads in exchange for the sole fishing rights for 200 miles off the Kenya coast.

Finally, I could not understand why there was such a large Italian community until it was pointed out that we held many Italian prisoners of war from Abyssinia during the war and afterwards they stayed on. Now they outnumber the British at Malindi. The camp site has an open-air bar under a thatched roof. It was three o'clock in the afternoon and we were drinking beer and watching the elephants play when there was a loud drumming of hooves and a young impala buck dashed through the bar followed by a cheetah 50 feet behind, intent on having the impala for lunch. Just then an Italian woman rounded a building between the impala and the cheetah, the latter took one look at the lady, turned tail and ran back so losing its dinner.

We round the bar felt sorry for the man who was married to the Italian lady who had such an ugly face that even a cheetah on viewing her countenance turned and ran.

Conference down-under

by Colin Beaumont-Edmonds

Joyce and I felt very privileged to represent St Dunstan's at the 33rd Bi-Annual Conference of The Blinded Soldiers of St Dunstan's Australia, in Canberra on March 10th, 1997.

The morning began with an informal reception of the three Service chaplains from the Army, Navy and Air Force, representing the Protestants, Roman Catholics, and other denominations, and then the officials from the Department of Defence, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the National War Memorial, and the Returned Servicemen's League, each of whom were to receive one of the Books of Remembrance.

At ten o'clock, The Governor General and his wife, Sir William and Lady Deane, arrived. In opening the Conference, Sir William spoke knowledgeably of the origin and work of St Dunstan's.

After delivering the greetings from our own Chairman, Sir Henry Leach, and John Chadwell (Chairman of the Ontario branch of The Sir Arthur Pearson Association) I presented the five copies of the Australian Books to John Henry, President of the Federal Executive, who in turn, invited Sir William Deane, Patron of St Dunstan's Australia, to present the Books of Remembrance to the four organisations, who would be caring for them.

Sir William and Lady Deane obviously enjoyed meeting everyone over a cup of coffee, for they invited us all to Government House the next morning.

Built in 1830 by a wealthy sheep farmer, it was bought by the Government in 1927 for the use of the Governor General.

Sir William and Lady Deane stayed with us while we had coffee, and then showed us the various public rooms, all beautifully furnished, and with most attractive

arrangements of flowers, which, when entertaining foreign dignitaries, reflect the colours of their national flag.

We then returned to the hotel to complete the work of the Conference, and to hear a talk by Major General Arthur Fiddock, concerning Repatriation Hospitals, and the availability of repatriation beds in the public and private sector, and the special care required by visually impaired patients.

Finally, the new President, Kevan Ward, and a new Vice-President, Alan Williams MBE, both from New South Wales, were elected to hold office for the next two years.

In the afternoon, we all visited the National War Memorial where the President laid a wreath at the Grave of The Unknown Warrior, beneath the dome of the great hall.

The afternoon concluded with a tour around the new Parliament building, ending in the large main hall, used by many organisations on special occasions, where a huge tapestry, 20 metres by 9 metres, is held in place with velchrome.

The St Dunstan's Dinner took place on the last evening of the Conference, and Major-General 'Digger' James, National President of the RSL, proposed the toast to St Dunstan's, to which I responded, expressing my pleasure at the steps being taken to preserve the name of St Dunstan's with the co-operation of the RSL and Department of Veteran Affairs. Finally, Kevan Ward, the new President, thanked everyone for their contributions to a very successful Conference, and the evening closed happily with John Henry, past President, telling humorous stories.

Before leaving Australia, Joyce and I were able to have a few days in Melbourne and visited John Blanch, who is in a residential home for the blind; it was there that we met

Marjorie West, of the radio station 3RPH, the Reading Print Handicapped station for Victoria; each state has an RPH, which broadcasts news and information during the day, and at night takes the BBC World Service. I was designated their Guest of The Week, and for half an hour spoke about the origin and work of St Dunstan's.

We had three days to spare before seeing my brother and his family in Sydney, so we flew to Hobart in Tasmania, where we spent an afternoon with Harry Leggo; both John and Harry are past Federal Presidents of The Blinded Soldiers of St Dunstan's Australia, and neither had been able to attend the Conference.

NEVER MISS AN OPPORTUNITY

It seemed quite an ordinary day in the beginning; a trip to town for some shopping and to change the library books. A library notice caught my attention; a Professor Deidre Beddoe would be at the library that afternoon, her subject *Creative Writing - for Welsh Women who had served in the War*. Why not go - I had served in the ATS during the war and had some spare time that afternoon.

I was the first to arrive, we chatted for a while, and much to my surprise she had heard about my army trade as a Kine Theodolite operator, and in fact, there was a chapter in her book about it. By now, other ladies had appeared and we spent a pleasant afternoon reminiscing and that was that!

About 18 months later, the professor phoned and asked if she could visit for a chat - I presumed she was writing some more history. We talked for a while and she recorded some of the conversation - another pleasant afternoon. As she was leaving, she dropped the bombshell "I may be making a TV film, would you be interested in being included?" Was I interested!! What an event when you're in your seventies!

Time went by, and eventually I heard that it was actually going to happen. There was to be a series of four films on HTV; other ladies would be representing different aspects of War Service and these would

cover a wide range. I was to be in the episode which included a Land Army girl who had worked as a rat catcher.

The great day for filming arrived and I was taken to Ty Croes in Anglesey where I had been stationed at an artillery practice camp, and where I had met my future husband in 1942 at a dance - incidentally a Ladies' Choice!

The camp had nearly all disappeared, but two or three buildings remained, all very ramshackle, one complete with faded notice "Guard Room", with which the producer was delighted. I had a lovely day, everyone was so kind, and it was great seeing the old haunts. I had to describe what firing was. Subsequently, I had been posted to research establishments and to this day, I don't really know what we were doing! I remember being taken in the middle of a field to be given some instructions - presumably so that no one could overhear!

When the films were actually presented, it was most interesting to see in one of the series, Gwen Obern, a well known St Dunstaner. St Dunstan's had kept in touch with my husband since 1944 when he was injured, but he only became a St Dunstaner in 1996. Now I hope to meet Gwen sometime and hear how she enjoyed her experience as a film star.

**Olwen Landin,
Wife of St Dunstaner Dennis Landin**

Close encounters of the bovine kind



Ted John, Stan Tutton, Stewart Harris, Mike Tetley, Ray Hazan, Trevor Tatchell, Bob Fullard, Ken Walker and Tom Roddy savour the aromatic delights of the countryside.

Ramblin' Ray Hazan stays on the beaten track with the wanderin' stars of St Dunstan's annual Walking Holiday which ran April 25th - May 1st

The ability to read a map is a reasonable pre-requisite if you are going to walk in the countryside. My levels of concern were running pretty high within only hours of arriving at the Moat House Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon. Despite receiving a town map, hardly anyone found their way into the hotel car park as changes had occurred since our stay a year ago. Mind you, even a local taxi driver could not find the entrance, so the party was vindicated!

The next concern occurred at three the next

morning, when a St Dunstaner got up to spend a penny. He mistakenly took the main door to the corridor for the one into the bathroom. Now there are not too many folks around at that time to answer the question "Can anyone help me?" But Lady Luck, in the form of a male guest, heard his plea and without a room key our hero was able to re-enter his room without having to traipse down to reception.

Regrettably, the security alerts on April 25th had prevented Steve Nixon and Nikki

getting through by road to Stratford. He was much missed. Amongst the 11 other St Dunstaners taking part, we were very pleased to welcome a newcomer, 'Woody' Oakes and his escort George Hanham and Ken and Mary Walker, who rejoined the group after a break the previous year.

Wales was more than adequately represented by Norman and Mary Hopkins and Trevor Tatchell. Ovingdean was represented by a senior member of the group, Stan Tutton and his escort Peter Westbrook. Ted and Beryl John, Tom Roddy and Jenny ensured the North was there, whilst Mike Tetley and George Male, Stewart Harris, Bob Fullard and escort Jim and the Hazan's played the 'southern' card. Together with 'old' friends, including Bill and Betty Weisblatt, Denis and Susan Church, George and Catherine Johnston, Bill and Bidy Reid, we numbered 28 in all.

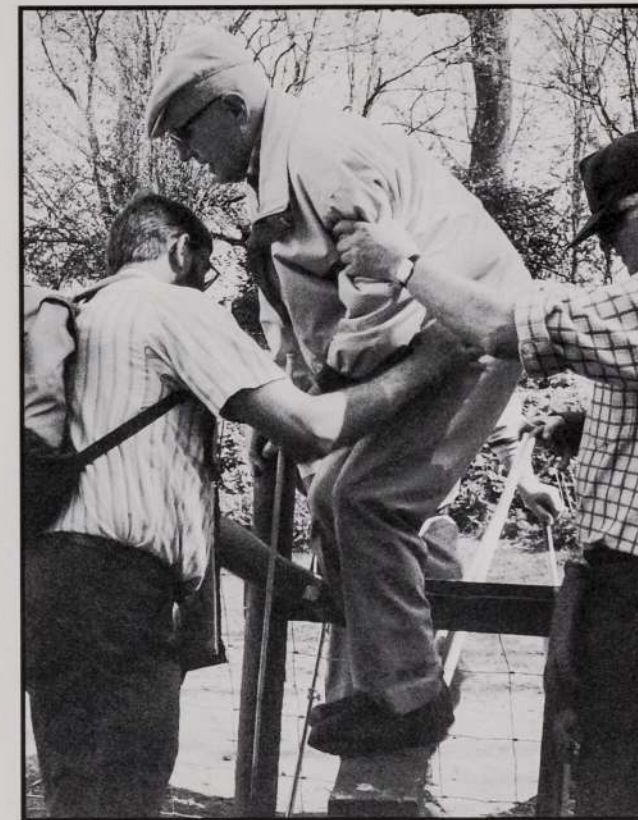
Second visit

This was our second visit to Stratford. The hotel is ideal, located as it is near the High Street yet with plenty of greenery in its grounds for the dogs. A Health and Fitness club enable you to steam or jacuzzi away your aches and pains at the end of the day. An excellent carvery most effectively nullifies any weight lost with the unaccustomed exercise. These splendid facilities were generously given to us at less than half the going rate - thank you Moat House.

The next day, the previous plea of 'Can anyone help?' was converted into "What on earth am I doing here?" For the rain which had greeted our arrival had set in for our first day's walk, a by now, familiar pattern to such holidays.

St Dunstan's has obviously struck up an affinity with the Stratford Ramblers. Ray Bennett had very kindly organised five daily walks, each led by a different Rambler. Every day, some ten Stratfordians would accompany us providing escorts, guides, local knowledge and very welcome company.

Our daily routine would consist of a



Stile leader! Bob Fullard gets a helping hand from his escort, Jim, and Ted John.

With a song in his heart, Trevor Tatchell steps out as leader of the pack.





These are the days! Mary and Norman Hopkins wade through the long grass.

generous English breakfast followed by a five to ten mile drive to a car park. A four mile morning walk would bring us to a pub and a further three or four mile afternoon amble would return us to the car park. Some would only walk a half day - we are not attempting marathons! A relaxing soak in the Health Club would lead us pleasantly to the Carvery for supper. 'I must get to bed early tonight' was a common call leading to a midnight dispersal of some tired and happy groups.

England had experienced its driest April for 200 years - until St Dunstan's arrived! Stratford and its surrounding countryside appears to be made up of particularly clinging clay soil. Angela Bravington led the first day's walk and our boots got heavier and heavier as the day wore on. In accordance with the local Ramblers' rules, we all wore matching Tesco or Sainsbury's carrier bags over our boots to ensure a friendly welcome at the *Royal Oak* in Whatcote. It is a very strange feeling to slide around with this funny rustling at your feet but the beer tastes the same!

An encounter of an unusual kind occurred that afternoon. As we passed through a herd of cows, they were heard to question, 'Is it a plane, is it Superman? No, it's Birdman!' They became very excited and started kicking their hind legs in delight. Meanwhile, we were asking ourselves, 'Is it B.S.E?' and beating a hasty retreat. Whether it was George Johnston's yellow, flapping poncho or the dogs, which caused them to gather round us in a somewhat threatening manner, we shall never know.

The sun shines

Alan Cumming, the Chairman of the Stratford Ramblers, led our Sunday walk. As last year, the sun shone for him and us. We are fairly certain his being a lay Methodist preacher has something to do with it! We followed the banks of the Avon with its pleasure craft and then climbed a ridge with a magnificent view over the river valley. The scene both on that day and all the others was enhanced by the sound of the new born lambs crying for their mothers, the skylarks just full of the joys of life and

all to the absence of airplanes, car and lorry noise made it as near paradise as one can get. This is the champagne of life, especially for us Londoners!

Phyl and Ray Collins led us on a most interesting walk along a canal towpath, which included crossing the Edstone aqueduct. The canal was dug with local prison labour and the aqueduct built in 1813. The water crosses the road in an open ended iron tank, the height of your shoulder, and has lasted some 150 years. Mike Tetley is working out some means of curing one of our party from her fear of heights!

Highest point

The weather improved daily and Jack Sowerby led us across fields of bright yellow rape, broad beans and corn to Ebrington, a quiet and peaceful village, which we had visited last year. The afternoon took us along a ridge past Foxcote House, acquired by the American film actor Tom Cruise. The building is currently wrapped in plastic sheeting and many trees are being planted to encourage pheasants for later shooting! Our way took us over the highest point in Warwickshire, no oxygen required at 800 feet. The breeze was cooling, most misleading, as our faces began to suffer from sunburn.

Our final day in and around Snowhill was led by Ray Bennett. The sun positively tore down on us as we climbed to a ridge and walked along the Cotswold Way for a while. The garden of the *Snowhill Arms* was most inviting and very difficult to leave after lunch. One of the guide dogs returning from a drinking stop spied a most tempting plate of turkey sandwiches sitting on a table seemingly without an owner. What would you have done in its place? The plate was pawed off the table and two sandwiches had disappeared almost before they had hit the ground! Someone else's dog was most adroit at cleaning up trays of left over food left in the hotel corridor.

A sauna is normally a pretty revealing place, though as this one is mixed, the bare essentials are covered. It is also a good spot



Stan Tutton, Peter Westbrook and Stratford Rambler Ray Bennett on the final trail.

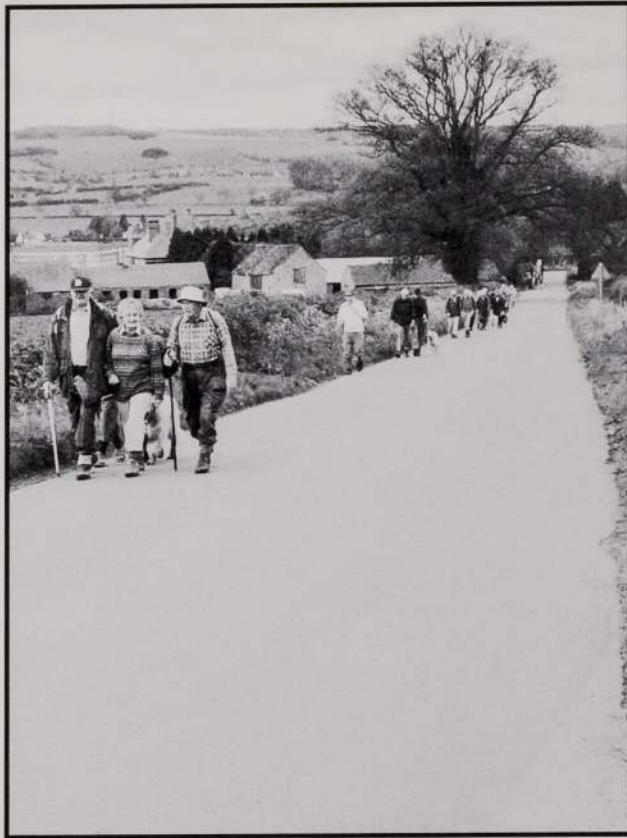
for a chat, to divert one's mind from the 90 degrees or so heat. It transpired the sweaty body next to me was sitting as a candidate in the general election the next day. I felt very honoured, and said, "But shouldn't you be out canvassing?"

"I am standing as a UK Independence candidate, and can expect 12 votes."

"Do you have to pay your £500 deposit?"

"Yes - but luckily I have just been paid."

It also transpired he was a Captain in the Army until 1984 and he is now a script-writer for *The Archers*, *The Bill* and *Taggart* on TV. So we bared the facts -as you might say. We are trying to educate one of our Celtic members that if you find the



Ted and Beryl John with Jack Sowerby.

sauna or steam rooms too hot, you make yourself unpopular by leaving the door open!

The final evening is by now traditional, ending with speeches. Our 'talented, talkative, troubadour' Trevor Tatchell thanked all our escorts, especially the Stratford Ramblers, in his own amusing and inimitable way. Ray Bennett said we were welcome back at any time.

Finally, George Male read out a poem comparing the 'snootier' side of Hove with the more common place Brighton. A presentation was made to Ray and Robbie, which was very much appreciated.

For two years, St Dunstan's has enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Stratford Ramblers and has delighted in the predominantly green, attractive and interesting scenery of Warwickshire. The walking has been relatively flat, smooth and uncluttered by too many styles - in short, perfect. Despite this, it may be time to move on and discover other parts of this great country of ours. Do please join us at the same time next year.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Arthur Morgan, a Commando St Dunstaner from York, was the first man home in a six mile Victory Walk. He completed the course in 57 minutes and 37 seconds. In the process, he won cash, an electric clock and the Morgan Cup - a trophy which he had offered for competition the previous year.

St Dunstan's first Massage Superintendent, Mr A. Mace, set off for a new life in Australia. Over the previous 28 years he had devised the apparatus and equipment for fledgling physiotherapists and made plans for starting them out in private practice.

Sir Ian Fraser was elected National President of the British Legion with three times the votes given to rival Lord Tovey.

On March 31st 1947, Mrs Atlee, wife of Prime Minister Clement Atlee, visited trainees at Ovingdean with messages of good luck. Some St Dunstaners were in dire need of it for the country had been hit by floods in many parts. Jerry Lynch of Hornchurch lost a considerable part of his tobacco and confectionery stock when water from a blocked sewer exploded onto his premises. Others had almost 4ft of water in their living rooms and relied on outside helpers to bring food by boat.

St Dunstan's started a wedding dress loan service for "prospective brides of St Dunstaners or girl St Dunstaners about to marry." Does anyone recall using the service?

Ted Miller started work as a guide at Warwick Castle. A model of the castle was constructed at Ovingdean so that he could acquire a knowledge of its grounds.

Ex-Featherweight Champion of the World Jimmy Wilde joined ex-Mile Record holder Joe Binks, Number One boxing referee Charles Barnett, and *News of the World* Sports Writer George Harrison for a 'Sports Brains Trust' at Ovingdean. Harrison later said: "I figure we learned more than we taught." He recalled that a blindfolded Harold Abrahams had lost a sprinting contest to a St Dunstaner.

Oh to be 80!!

Jerry Lynch has recently joined the Horsham branch of the Normandy Veterans Association. He has sent us this article for the Review which has been reproduced by kind permission of the Horsham NVA.

I have good news for you the first 80 years are definitely the worst. The second, so far as my experience goes, is a succession of pardons. If you forget your neighbour's name, forget to keep an appointment, or promise to be in two or three places at one time, or spell words wrongly, you just need to explain you are 80 years old. Everyone wants to carry your bags.

At 80 you can relax with no misgivings, you have a perfect alibi for everything, absolutely everything. No one expects much of you. If you act silly it's your second childhood. This is a great deal better than being 70 or even 65. At that time you are expected to retire to a little house or home and become discontented, fumbling, limping old has-beens. If you survive until you are 80 everyone is surprised that you can still

walk. At 70 people are mad at you for everything. At 80 they understand and forgive. If you ask me life begins at 80. Remember too, old folk are worth a fortune - with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet, and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a little older since last talking to you, and a few changes have taken place. Yes, I've become a frivolous old girl. I'm seeing three gentlemen a day: On waking, Will Power helps me out of bed; then I pay a visit to John Arthur Ritus who arrives mid-morning. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long so moves around - takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired and ready for bed with Vic Vaporub. What an interesting life.

Oh yes, the preacher came the other day too. He said at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him I do all the time. No matter where I am, in the kitchen, upstairs in the bedroom, or down in the garage. I ask myself "Now just what am I here after?"

STATE OF THE REUNION

The following reunions have taken place. As usual, St Dunstaners and widows have met up with old comrades and headquarters and area staff.

Brighton on March 5th. Mr Kenneth Wills presided at Ovingdean for the first reunion of the year. Seventeen St Dunstaners and 11 widows attended.

Exeter on March 19th. Presiding was Air Chief Marshal Sir John Gingell. Thirteen St Dunstaners and 15 widows attended.

Shaftesbury on March 26th. Presiding was Major-General Andrew Keeling. Fourteen St Dunstaners and ten widows attended.

Norwich on April 9th. Presiding was Mr Dennis Cadman. Eight St Dunstaners and ten widows were in attendance.

Brighton on April 16th. Presiding was Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox RN. Twenty-one St Dunstaners and 15 widows gathered at Ovingdean.

Liverpool on April 23rd. Presiding was Mr Tom Taylor. Thirty-three St Dunstaners and 20 widows attended.

Southampton on April 30th. Presiding was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach. Five St Dunstaners and six widows and one widower were in attendance.

G3STD CALLING

G3STD, the call-sign of the St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society, was very much in evidence once again when members and their wives gathered at Ovingdean for the AGM during the weekend of March 14th-16th. There is always a wonderful family atmosphere on these occasions, which is typical of the hobby worldwide.

The meeting was held in the Winter Garden on the morning of Saturday, March 15th. All the members were pleased to see our Chairman, Bill Shea (G4AUJ), with us again. Bill began by advising us that since the last meeting one long-serving member and one very good friend of the Society had both gone "silent key". They were Eric Rowe (G3ULX) and Harold Lunson (G3WR), the Chairman of the Brighton District Amateur Radio Society. In addition, he referred to the sad and untimely death, under very tragic circumstances, of Beth Robinson, the granddaughter of Des Thompson (G8SBU). Everyone present stood in silent tribute to the memory of all three and their loved ones.

The meeting then got under way with the Chairman and the Secretary, Ted John (G3SEJ), giving their reports with a mixture of fact, laced with plenty of good humour. Bill mentioned that his own radio activities had been curtailed of late and that he had not been able to come to the October meeting, but he understood that it had been a success and that Sir Henry, our President, had been able to join us. He also remarked that since the formation of the society 21 years ago Ted, our Secretary, had not missed a meeting.

Ted expressed the hope that more members might be able to come to the meetings, particularly now that we were "back in the House". Mike Tetley said that train travel was easier now, with much assistance from the railway companies for blind travellers. There was also assistance from

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ST DUNSTAN'S AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

by Arthur Taylor (short-wave listener)

Headquarters with travel between the different London Stations and Victoria.

With regard to finance, Ted was happy to report that the accounts are in good order.

At the October meeting, our friend Brian Freeman (G3ITF), from Rottingdean, was made an Honorary Life Member of the society in recognition of his services as QSL manager and for maintaining our Station, and we are so grateful to him for all his willing help.

When it came to election of officers, the existing committee, with the exception of Trevor Phillips (GØIBH), had signified their willingness to continue and this was agreed by the membership.

Trevor had been unable to attend any of our recent meetings and he felt that, in the circumstances, he should resign his seat on the committee. There were many tributes to him for the contribution that he had made to the society. This left a vacancy for a new member and Ray Peart (GØFHK), who had just been re-elected, nominated Ray Hazan, (GØPQQ) and this was approved unanimously. Ray No.1 then pointed out that with two Rays sitting in committee there was likely to be some confusion, and it was suggested that we should refer to them as the 'handsome one' and the 'good-looking one'!

On that same evening, we went back to

what had been a tradition in the past by having a dinner in the Winter Garden. A really superb meal was served by the catering staff, and they were congratulated on the quality of the food and for the service they provided. In fact, the evening was such a success that everyone agreed that at all future meetings, arrangements should be made for the Saturday evening function to feature prominently.

Radio reception conditions that weekend were very good, with particular reference to North America. From the weather reports given to us by our contacts, it was fascinating to hear of the variations in the weather patterns in that continent. For example, for the past three weeks, Florida had been sweltering up in the mid-80's, Tennessee was in the 70's, the ice was just beginning to break up in Milwaukee, and it was snowing in New York!

It was good for us to see George Cole (G4AWI) at the meeting, and also to have his presence on the Monday morning net.

Finally, I would like to end on a personal note, as a tribute to the excellent fare that we received at Ovingdean. For some time now, I had been getting some very cryptic remarks from my ever-loving about the size of my waistline, so I invested in a set of talking bathroom scales. The mystery voice

informed me that I had weighed in at 13st 4lbs, so I took drastic measures on a diet about one month prior to travelling to the AGM. Before leaving home, I had a final check and to my delight I was informed that I was 12st 12lbs. But, after just four days of good living, we returned home and it was with a good deal of apprehension that I stepped onto the scales again.

The mystery voice was not at all sympathetic. "Your weight is 13st 4 lbs!" it said. Well, that was where I came in and it's now back to the drawing board for me. My only consolation is that I have another six months before the catering staff can do their worst for me. But seriously folks, you all did a grand job!

The date of the next meeting is fixed for October 11th and it goes without saying, of course, that members should book their accommodation at an early date. The Radio Society is always happy to welcome any St Dunstaner into its ranks, who is interested in taking up the hobby. Any enquiries regarding membership should be sent to the Secretary, Ted John, at the following address:

52, Broadway Avenue,
Wallasey,
Wirral,
Merseyside.
L45 6TD.

A moment to spare...

...with Sydney Scroggie

COMET RELIEF

Many are the phenomena we've watched from the back gate of Roseangle, noctilucent clouds, meteoric showers, northern lights, eclipses of the moon, and now it's the comet Hale-Bopp, rushing towards us, we're told, at a speed of a hundred thousand miles an hour, yet apparently motionless amongst the stars of the northern sky.

It's 40 years since the comet Arend-Durand, the same fuzzy blob of light, the same translucent tail, lingered a month or

two in that part of the sky, and again this was watched by us on clear, frosty nights from that same gate. Various comets, Kohutek, Halley, Hyataku, have proved a bit of a disappointment, an embarrassment to astronomers, but Arend-Durand and Hale-Bopp have come up trumps, enabling us to understand with what awe, even fear, these mysterious apparitions were viewed in the past.

Halley comes round every 79 years, spectacular when my mother saw it in 1910,

but on the wrong side of the sun for us in 1989 when it took a telescope to make anything of it at all. The much-vaunted Kohutek we would look at, my wife, Margaret, George Shanks and myself, from the top of our local hills, the Sidlaws, and it was with a long walk and a good climb behind us that we eventually found ourselves, darkness having fallen, in the gap between Baludderon and Auchterhouse hills. There was no sign of Kohutek, though it was supposed to be visible low in the south west, but the planet Venus was very bright, and I suggested to George that he should adjust his telescope and have a look at this instead.

George did so, then, "That's funny," he said; "you'd think a planet should show up as a disc, but actually this one's a crescent." We may not have seen Kohutek that night, but at least we'd independently made an astronomical discovery.

I found out later that, as observed from earth, it's only Venus, of all our sun's planets, that ever appears as a crescent. Hale-Bopp has started to recede from us, it won't be around again for 4,000 years, but there are plenty more of the same, debris from the start of our solar system, and it may not be long till we're down at our back gate again scanning the skies for some as yet unsuspected Hale-Bopp successor.

Welcome to St Dunstan's

We welcome the following and hope they will settle down happily as members of our family.

Mr Robert Casson of Birkenhead joined St Dunstan's on March 5th, aged 73. He started work as a bank messenger but joined The Royal Marines as soon as he was old enough and before being conscripted. His left eye was severely damaged on a training exercise in 1942 but, after a period in hospital, he returned to his Commando and served with them throughout the invasion of Europe and the following

campaign. He was married shortly before he embarked for the invasion of France. Mr Casson was discharged from The Royal Marines in 1946 and joined the police in Merseyside. On completion of his time with the police, he worked as a storekeeper but was forced to retire early as the sight in his good eye began to deteriorate. Mr Casson and his wife have a son and daughter.

Mr Terry Walker of Portsmouth became a St Dunstaner on March 5th, aged 65. He was, until his recent retirement, our Communications Instructor at Ovingdean.

Mr Walker joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as an apprentice vehicle mechanic 11 days after his 16th birthday, and was looking forward to a full career in that regiment. He completed his training and joined Man Service as a L/Cpl. He then began work with a road transport firm as Fleet Engineer until his sight began to deteriorate.

In 1985 he was registered blind by Hampshire County Council, and he was admitted for training in January 1986 under the terms of the Gubbay Trust. Mr Walker then began to work for St Dunstan's, first as a telephonist and then as a very successful braille instructor.

He and his wife, Patricia, have two sons.

Mr Charles Blockley of Sileby, nr Loughborough, Leicestershire became a St Dunstaner on March 19th, aged 77. He started work in the local boot and shoe industry and was called up early in 1940, joining the Leicestershire Regiment. He was married shortly before his regiment embarked to Malaya, where he arrived just in time to be caught up in the Japanese invasion. After the Fall of Malaya, Mr Blockley spent five months in hiding, supported by the local Chinese people and was not captured by the Japanese until April 1942. He was a prisoner in Penang and later Changi gaol, before being moved to Thailand to work on the Burma Railway. After his release from captivity, he returned

to the UK and spent some time in Service hospitals before being discharged from the Army in 1946. On return to civilian life he was unable to return to his old job and instead did various factory jobs, eventually retiring early in 1980 as his sight deteriorated.

Mr Blockley and his wife live in their own house and their son resides in the same area.

Mr Harold Gill of Southport, Merseyside became a St Dunstaner on March 19th, aged 78. Mr Gill served in the RECCE Corps during the Second World War and was captured by the Japanese in the Far East. Discharged from the Army in 1947, following treatment for various conditions contracted whilst a FEPoW. He was unable to return to his old employment with the Railways, therefore, he worked as a shop assistant. Unfortunately, he was forced to take early retirement due to failing sight.

Regrettably, Mr Gill's wife died in 1988 and shortly after this he moved in with his daughter and son-in-law.

Mr Leslie Hough of Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire joined St Dunstan's on March 19th, aged 79. He worked for the Co-op for several years after leaving school.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, he volunteered for service in his local regiment, the West Yorkshire Regiment (now the Prince of Wales's Own). After completing his training, he was posted to the Far East where his battalion formed part of General Slim's Division.

He was captured during the retreat through Burma in March 1942 and remained a Prisoner of War until the capitulation of Japan in 1945. Mr Hough was discharged that year from the Army. Mr Hough took up various unskilled jobs until 1956 when he obtained employment with the Post Office and worked as a postman until 1978. Mr Hough was married in December 1953 and he and his wife, Eileen, have one daughter who lives nearby.

Mr Frederick McCluskey of Norwich joined St Dunstan's on March 19th, aged 78. He joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1940 and on completion of his training was posted to their 2nd Battalion which was then serving in the United Kingdom. While boxing for his regiment, he sustained an injury to his eyes. This resulted in being discharged from the Army in 1942 with a detached retina in his left eye. This eye was removed in 1959 and his right eye was subsequently removed in 1963.

Mr McCluskey is a widower with five adult children - three daughters and two sons.

Mr James Poole of Yeading, Middlesex became a St Dunstaner on March 19th, aged 49. He joined the Royal Air Force on leaving school in January 1965. On completing his training, he was promoted to the rank of Junior Technician, and also passed his City and Guilds Certificate in Engineering.

Whilst on duty in December 1969, he was involved in a road traffic accident which caused severe head injuries leading to his loss of sight. He was eventually discharged from the RAF in April 1972, and obtained work as a storeman with the Civil Service at RAF Northolt where he remained until September 1996 when he was made redundant. Mr Poole is single.

Mr Henry Sykes of Sothowram, Halifax joined St Dunstan's on April 18th, aged 70. On leaving school, Mr Sykes worked as a milkman in Halifax. He was called up for service in the Royal Air Force in June 1941. On completion of his training, he was posted to the Far East and the Pacific area. Whilst overseas, Mr Sykes, represented his Service at cricket in both Australia and India. On returning from the Far East in 1945, he was taken ill and was, for a time, totally blind. He regained sufficient sight and, after being discharged, worked as a labourer.

His wife, Gisela, whom he married in July 1951, comes from Austria and they live in their own bungalow.

Mr Joseph Carr of Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire joined St Dunstan's on April 24th, aged 58. He joined the Merchant Navy on leaving school. At the age of 19, he left the Merchant Navy and joined the Royal Air Force where he was trained as a photographer. On completion of his training he served in Malta and Cyprus, but deteriorating sight meant that he was eventually invalided out of the RAF. He started training at Ovingdean whilst still a serving Corporal. Mr Carr found employment as a computer operator with Thorn EMI. During his time there, he was promoted to the position of senior Systems Consultant for one of Thorn EMI's associated companies, Data Sciences. Mr Carr and his wife, Helen, have two children, one living and working locally, while the other is working in the Gulf States.

Mr Edwin Miles of Basildon, Essex became a St Dunstaner on April 24th, aged 76. He joined the Army as a Bandboy and was posted into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers with whom he remained for the rest of his Army career. After completing his instrumental training on the clarinet, he served with the regimental band in India and Singapore. He was captured in 1942 by the Japanese and spent the remainder of the war in Changi gaol. On his return to the United Kingdom, he was discharged in October 1945 as being no longer fit for service in the Army. He then worked for a short time for the Civil Service as a clerical assistant, but this was followed by a succession of labouring jobs from which he retired in 1979. He is a widower and has three daughters.

Mr Roland Harvey of Burntwood, Walsall joined St Dunstan's on April 30th, aged 78. He started his working life as a labourer in Walsall. He was called up for service in the Army at the age of 21 in 1940, and after completing his basic training was posted into the Dorset Regiment. During a battle training exercise at night-time in 1942, he lost his right eye as a result of gunshot wounds. Mr Harvey could have taken a medical discharge from the Army at this

stage, but he chose to stay with his regiment and went with them to North Africa. During his time overseas he saw action in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, and by the end of the war was serving on Garrison duties in Gibraltar. He was discharged from the Army in December 1946 and returned to Walsall and his old job. In later years he worked for Walsall Council. Mr Harvey retired on account of his declining health in 1981, and began to lose the sight of his left eye. Mr Harvey and his wife, Marion, have two adult children.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Rory Cuthbertson on December 28th. He is the son of *Jamie and Shauna Cuthbertson* of Bearsden, Glasgow.

Georgina Louise on February 28th. She is the granddaughter of *George and Lilian Roake* of Saltdean.

Bethany Jean on April 15th. She is the daughter of *Steve Pendleton and Michaela* of Rochester, Kent.

MARRIAGE

Congratulations to:

Barry and Brenda Foxley on March 8th at Crawley Register Office. Barry is the eldest son of *Bill Foxley* of Crawley, Sussex.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Stanley and Marjorie Gimber of Whitton, Middlesex on April 3rd.

Bill and Helen Perry of Corsham, Wiltshire on April 3rd.

John and Edna Brett of Dartford, Kent on April 21st.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Charles and Olive Cummings of Verwood, Dorset who celebrated 65 years of marriage on March 26th.

ACHIEVEMENT

Congratulations to:

Dr Stan Sosabowski of Wimborne, Dorset on being awarded life membership of The Parachute Regimental Association, Wessex Branch.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Mrs Lela Vickers on March 20th. She was the wife of *Allen Vickers* of Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire.

Mrs Clara Preedy on April 2nd. She was the wife of *Harry Preedy* of Saltdean.

Mrs Elizabeth Bentley on May 5th. She was the wife of *Fred Bentley* of Saltdean.

Mrs Ivy Warner of Denton, Manchester on March 15th. She was the widow of *Wilfred Warner*.

Mrs Mary Peel of St Helen's, Merseyside on March 19th. She was the widow of *Albert Peel*.

Mrs Mary Sutherland of Rochester, Kent on March 27th. She was the widow of *Samuel Sutherland*.

Mrs Betty Mosley of Solihull, West Midlands on March 31st. She was the widow of *Joseph C. Mosley*.

Mrs Mary Medlock of Wakefield, West Yorkshire on April 4th. She was the widow of *Horace Medlock*.

Mrs Mary Belsham of Broadway, Worcestershire on May 1st. She was the widow of *Sidney Belsham*.

Mrs Lilian Reader of Tysley, Birmingham on May 2nd. She was the widow of *Horace Reader*.

Kenneth Robinson on April 7th. He was the son of Mrs Olive Robinson of Darlington, Durham and the late *John Robinson*.

Phillip Preston on March 19th. He was the son-in-law of *Sylvia Meleson* of Wembley, Middlesex and the late *Harry Meleson*.

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.

Arthur Kennard,

Royal Sussex Regiment

Arthur Vivian Kennard of Ealing, London died on March 9th, aged 73. He had been a St Dunstaner since April 1944. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Phyllis, and all other members of the family.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have produced this brief obituary in accordance with the expressed wish of our St Dunstaner during his lifetime.

Kenneth Chubb,

Army Catering Corps

Kenneth Martin Chubb of Oxford died on March 10th, aged 70. He joined the Army in June 1944 and served as a Private with the 1st Battalion, Highland Light Infantry until being demobbed in 1948. During this time, he trained as an Army Catering Corps cook and rejoined the Army in this capacity in 1950. This time he was sent with the 1st Battalion Black Watch to Korea. He was attached to the 1st Battalion Royal Scots when invalided out in March 1954 due to the failure of his sight. He became a St Dunstaner in 1954 and trained for industrial employment. In 1958 he joined the assembly line at Morris Motors Ltd (later to become British Leyland) in Cowley, Oxford. This remained his career until December 1978 when he was made redundant. In retirement, he enjoyed holidays abroad and pottering in his garden, though health problems beset him, culminating in the amputation of both legs beneath the knee. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Lilian, her daughter, Margaret, and all of the family.

Arthur Snowden,

Royal Navy

Arthur Roy Snowden of Grimsby, South Humberside died on March 15th, aged 86. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1978. A builder by trade, he served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946, rising to the rank of Chief Petty Officer. In 1942, he was

wounded by a bomb blast at Swansea which eventually led to his loss of sight. After the war, Mr Snowden settled in Australia. In 1978 he returned to the United Kingdom, leading a fiercely independent life, though he frequently returned to Australia for family visits. Our sympathy goes to his sons and daughters and all of the family.

Peter Jones, BEM,
Government Research

Peter Henry Hamilton Jones, BEM of Bradway, Sheffield died on March 20th, aged 74. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1974. His university studies curtailed by the outbreak of war, Mr Jones joined Firth Brown Laboratories where he was placed in a Ministry of Defence project developing new aeroplane alloys. His work concentrated on the fledgling science of spectrographic and X-ray analysis. In 1940, his sight was destroyed by an accident with molten aluminium. While training with the RNIB, he took part in a pilot programme to teach blind people to use machine tools, though he pursued a career in telephony, retiring in 1981. Radio had long been a passion for Mr Jones who built crystal and portable radio sets during 1932. In 1948, he became the first blind person to pass the recently introduced Radio Amateur Examination. His call sign was G3DRE and for many years he was Chairman of the Sheffield Amateur Radio Club. A strong supporter of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society, which he chaired for four years, he designed BROMA - Binary Read Out Meter Adapter - a device that allows blind users to check the levels on any electrical meter. In 1984, he began evaluating the BBC Micro computer which incorporated a speech unit. As a result, he promoted the development of Audio-calc, a talking spreadsheet, and laid the foundation for adaptive technologies so common today. Another passion was do-it-yourself. This interest led to evaluating tools for the RNIB and writing items on woodwork for the *New Beacon*. He also broadcast on Radio 4's *In Touch* programme and his work was collated as a braille book, *Woodwork for the Visually Handicapped*. In 1978, Mr Jones' work as a telephonist was

recognised when he was awarded the BEM. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Eileen, daughter, Rosalind, and all of the family.

George Maslin,
Royal Signals

George Cyril Maslin of Ovingdean died on March 24th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1995. Mr Maslin wanted to join the Army from a very early age, but as his parents were set against this he enlisted instead in the TA in March 1931. Joining the Brighton Royal Signals Squadron he trained as an Operator Signals and distinguished himself in this field. Mr Maslin was embodied into the regular army at the outbreak of war in 1939. He was moved, almost immediately, with his squadron to France. He was a Dunkirk Veteran. After the squadron was reformed in England they were posted to Malaya where George Maslin was captured by the Japanese in February 1942. Following his release from captivity in November 1945, he was discharged from the Army in July 1946 as being no longer fit for service. He was by this time extremely deaf and his sight was beginning to deteriorate, due to his days as a FEPoW. Four representatives of the Royal Corps of Signals were present at George Maslin's funeral, one of whom bore the Standard of the Corps. Our sympathy goes to his daughter, Maureen, and all of the family.

Roy Lavery,
General Service Corps

Roy Wilfred Henry Lavery of Minehead, Somerset died on May 7th, aged 69. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1982. Enlisting into the Army in 1945 at the age 18. He served as a Private with the General Service Corps until being discharged in 1946. Returning to civilian life, Mr Lavery worked as a clerk and then joined the acting profession, having gained a scholarship to RADA in 1952. Later on, he worked for the Ministry of Defence but was invalided out in 1979. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Daphne, daughters, Carolyn and Joanna, and all members of the family.