

St Dunstan's Review

February 1998



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Cover picture: *Good Elf
for the New Year. Head of
Nursing and Residential
Care Jacqui Greer found
a comfortable toadstool
for Christmas.*

From the Chairman



Welcome to Peter Irven who has taken over from Peter Marshall (now retired) the administration of Admissions, War Pensions and the organising of Area Reunions. A Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Artillery, he retired from the Army last year after 34 years' service.

I am also pleased to welcome Mrs Sally Leaver who will be joining St Dunstan's on Monday, February 16th to take up the post of Head of Welfare.

Sally Leaver is at present a freelance consultant at management level within Social Services.

Belated Happy New Year to you all.



NOTICE BOARD



CHANGES TO ST DUNSTAN'S GAS SERVICE CONTRACTS

To all beneficiaries in St Dunstan's properties with British Gas Service Contracts for central heating boilers, gas fires, water and wall heaters.

British Gas have transferred all individual contracts into a new National Bulk Contract, No **S4861433**, in St Dunstan's name. If you need to contact them for services or problems with any of the appliances, please call them on 0645 500 400 quoting the contract number above.

Eric Scullard
Insurance & Estates Co-ordinator
Estates Department

GLOVES AND SCARF

A lady's pair of gloves and a lady's scarf were found by St Dunstan's Ophthalmic Consultant Mr Rolf Blach following Remembrance Sunday. Anyone missing these items should contact the Public Relations department at Headquarters.

COMPUTER GROUP MEETING

Dolphin-Access Systems will be holding a 'surgery' at Ovingdean on Wednesday, April 29th. The venue will be in the new Training Wing. Those interested in HAL95 or any of the Dolphin products are encouraged to attend. There will be a Computer Group meeting the day before, commencing at 0930, when the Parrot talking organiser (further details on page 14) and a speech friendly Internet access programme will be demonstrated. Please book early via your Welfare visitor.

ROYAL TOURNAMENT 1998

This year The Royal Tournament takes place from July 21st-August 2nd. We urgently require items for sale, such as wooden or knitted toys, baby and children's clothes, or any other handcraft item made by St Dunstaners, widows, widowers, wives and families. Please contact Robbie Hazan at HQ.

ANNUAL WALKING HOLIDAY

The above will take place at Stratford-upon-Avon arriving on Friday, April 3rd and departing Thursday, April 9th. The Stratford Ramblers have kindly agreed to organise the five daily walks of approximately 8 to 10 miles with a lunchtime pub stop.

Accommodation will be at the *Stratford Moat House Hotel*. This is a 4-star hotel with leisure facilities, easy access to relief areas for guide dogs and only two minutes walk from the town centre. The charge is £28.50 per person, per day, halfboard, sharing a double room and £40.50 per day for a single room. Participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and ideally should organise their own escort.

Arrangements will be made for those wishing to complete a half-day's walk only, though this may involve some cost towards the hire of transport.

Those interested should please contact Ray Hazan at Headquarters as soon as possible, unless they have already been notified.

NEW £2 COIN

The Royal Mint is to use two types of metal for a £2 coin due to be introduced in March. The new coin has an outer ring of nickel-brass and an inner disc made from cupro-nickel. This makes it easily recognisable by blind people because of the raised join between the two parts. The design of the coin, which is marginally wider and heavier than a new 50p piece, represents the progression of technology from the Iron Age to the modern day.

THANK YOU FOR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Members of staff throughout the country, both serving and retired, wish to thank all St Dunstaners, widows, widowers and their families for their cards and kind wishes received over the Christmas period. They reiterate their wishes for a healthy and happy 1998.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

The final date for submitting items for publication in the April Review is February 26th.

REUNION DATES FOR 1998

Norwich	Wednesday, April 1st
Brighton I	Wednesday, April 22nd
Liverpool	Wednesday, April 29th
Brighton II	Wednesday, May 6th
Birmingham	Wednesday, May 20th
Shaftesbury	Wednesday, May 27th
London	Saturday, May 30th
Newcastle	Tuesday, June 2nd
Leeds	Wednesday, June 3rd
Nottingham	Wednesday, June 10th
Exeter	Wednesday, June 24th
Cardiff	Wednesday, July 1st

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE 1998

St Dunstaners, widows and widowers can now apply for tickets in this year's *Review* Derby Sweepstake. This year, the race is being run on June 6th. 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 29th. Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and a stamped addressed envelope, to The Editor, DSS Department, *St Dunstan's Review*, 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. Of the total money received distribution will be as follows:

50 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the winning horse.

20 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the second horse.

10 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the third horse.

20 per cent to be divided equally among those drawing a horse which actually starts the race.

No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold. The draw will take place on June 1st.

WANTED - DRESS BRAILLE WRISTWATCH

If anybody has a quality dress braille wristwatch that they no longer require, please contact the Public Relations department at Headquarters.

TICKETS FOR THE CUP

The big match of the year will take place at Wembley on May 16th. It is possible that St Dunstan's will be allocated tickets for the FA Cup Final. Any St Dunstaner wishing to go should send their name and address to Carole Woodgate in the Welfare department at Headquarters. A draw will be held if we receive tickets.

MESSAGE FROM VIV JACKSON



Sir Henry presents Viv Jackson with a token of affection from St Dunstaners, widows and staff.

To all my dear friends,

It is sad to have to say 'goodbye' after 16 very happy years with you. If you have enjoyed those years, even half as much as I, then it has all been worthwhile. Together we have seen good times and bad - we have all had both - and you were such a comfort to me during my bad times.

Thank you so much for your generous donations towards my leaving present which have meant that I shall have a lasting memento, something very special to remind me of St Dunstan's. As you know my garden is my pride and joy and now I shall be able to enhance it even further with an antique sundial and a statuette (not a gnome!!).

I wish you well and I'm sure, with Marie, you will be in safe hands.

TAKING ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS

December 10th 1997

by Ray Hazan

True to the ideals of Wellington's Light Infantry Division, former Royal Green Jacket Steve Pendleton has not forsaken his love of marksmanship (see December 1997 Review). This time, Steve was involved in a competition between the House of Lords, the Mayfair Gun Club and the Sound Vision team.

The GAN Financial Services Challenge Trophy, sponsored by GAN, was organised by Peter Dickson of the Mayfair Gun Club. The Sound Vision team included Steve, Ray Hazan and to add glamour (and points as it happened) Sarah Meadway.

The Lords team consisted of the Earl of Denbigh, Lord Rowallan, Lord Holmpatrick, Lord Chesham and Lord Calverley.

The Gun Club team was made up of Quentin Russell (Senior Financial Consultant of GAN), Mark Vicars, Graham Powell and Jeanine Saba.

All shooters used the same rifle a .357 Marlin Carbine with a Swarovski acoustic sight. This produces a sound tone via headphones - the higher the pitch the nearer to the bull you are. As sighted people cannot see through the sight, all competitors were in the same boat.

Six shots were fired at a range of 10 metres with the best three scores from each team counting. The highest score of 51 out of 60 was attained by Sarah. The Sound Vision team beat the House of Lords by 140 to 132 with the Mayfair Gun Club scoring 130.

It was a very congenial occasion. The sounds of rifle shots mingled with the sounds of popping champagne corks! The Lords were the most convivial of guests and were both fascinated and appreciative of the challenge of shooting by ear. For Sarah, Steve and Ray it provided the opportunity to compete on equal terms.

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 Penny Lord, London

I would like to express my warmest thanks to all those people, who kindly sent me cards and good wishes for Christmas and the New Year. These were greatly appreciated.

From: Bernard Mason, Romsey, Essex

Whilst shopping in Southampton recently, a lady held the shop door open for my escort and I. "Is that a St Dunstan's badge you're wearing?" she asked. We talked about my experiences and how I became a St Dunstaner. She then went on to say she had received an appeal letter from St Dunstan's and would now respond in kind.

I feel I have done my bit for St Dunstan's by wearing my badge in public and urge my fellow St Dunstaners, if not already doing so, to do likewise.

Laurie Austin

Laurie Austin, whose association with St Dunstan's spanned nearly 60 years, died on November 20th. He joined the organisation as an Orderly in October 1938. When he retired in November 1978, though this was by no means the end of his involvement with St Dunstan's, he was Head of Transport at Ovingdean.

Among his hobbies were model railways and archery. His enthusiasm for this latter activity was passed to many St Dunstaners. In 1976, he and Jock Carnochan started a project to establish if archery was a suitable sport for St Dunstaners, needless to say, it proved a great success.

To the St Dunstaners, Laurie was not only their coach but a real friend, as he was to all that knew him. He dearly loved his archery and would try to get or make equipment so the St Dunstaners could take part whatever their disability and enjoy the friendly rivalry and competition.

Laurie was always ready to help and share his expertise and we have all lost a dear friend, coach and mentor.

Roger McMullan

MARINES RARE ACCOLADE FOR JOE



The General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland, Sir Rupert Smith recently presented Joe Humphrey with the President's Award of The Royal Marines Association at the November meeting of the Northern Ireland branch.

It is considered a prestigious award in the organisation since it is given entirely at the discretion of the President of The Royal Marines Association and has only been awarded twice before.

The citation praised Joe's career in The Royal Marines, his fund raising activities for St Dunstan's and his work in encouraging the Northern Ireland Branch of The Royal Marines Association.

AIMING FOR OCTOBER



Not that the likes of Kate Moss or Jo Guest have anything to worry about, but there are two new faces on the pin-up calendar scene. Later this year, many a bus driver will have a date - 31 in fact - with Ron Cattell and Roger McMullan.

A bus inspector for Brighton & Hove Buses, Roger has been a long-standing volunteer with St Dunstan's Archers and this contribution is feted in a calendar for nationwide bus workers. He is pictured tutoring St Dunstaner Ron Cattell in bowmanship on the October page.

A mountain figure



Shortly before he retired, Peter Marshall presented Sir Henry Leach with a cheque for over £18,000 raised for St Dunstan's by the Mt McKinley Expedition. Peter's son Dominic was part of the team that braved the upper reaches of Alaska's most formidable mountain with St Dunstaner Reg Perrin.

IN MEMORY OF ADEN

St Dunstan's new Pensions and Admissions Officer Peter Irvén (left) travelled to Aden with Major-General Andrew Keeling on Remembrance Sunday. There they placed a wreath at the British Military Cemetery, Silent Valley.



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF FUND RAISING

The popular opinion is that St Dunstan's is irrelevant to young people. However, just before Christmas we received the following letter from Glynne, Howard and Rachel Barratt of Rotherham, South Yorkshire which seems to indicate that this is not necessarily the case:

"I was very pleased to receive your leaflet inviting me to give a donation to St Dunstan's. If you find this a rather strange response let me explain.

"My daughter Rachel is nineteen years old and was born with a congenital eye defect which has meant that she was almost blind until the age of seven but with the help of a brilliant surgeon at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, and as a result of fifteen operations on her eyes, she is now able to see, although she is still partially sighted. She has had a tremendous struggle to gain an education as I'm afraid that 'Special Education' is a bit of a political 'football'; no one really wants to get down to the real issues but everyone wants to be seen to make an issue of being seen to support 'special needs'.

"My husband and I have had to make considerable changes to our lives because of the struggles that Rachel has had, but because of her we have learned so much about the caring side of so many people, but most of all that, if someone believes in you, and offers encouragement, then nothing is impossible. Despite all her difficulties, Rachel is currently studying for her 'A' levels and has been offered a place at Sheffield University. She also has interviews in December for Kings College, Cambridge, and York University.

"I opened my letter by saying how glad I was to help St Dunstan's, the main reason being without doubt my admiration for all the brave people who have been so dreadfully injured for me and everyone like me, so that we can still enjoy our freedom. But there is a more personal reason. Not long after my daughter gained some useable sight we were watching the Remembrance Parade in London on our television. Rachel would have been about nine years old. She was very moved by the St Dunstan's ex-Servicemen and women who turned their sightless eyes to the Cenotaph. She said then that if these people can get on with their lives without seeing, then

she could too. Every year we watch the parade, and every year we wait and clap and cheer when 'our' St Dunstan's people pass. Please tell anyone who may be feeling downhearted that they are not forgotten, and that they are and have been a tremendous inspiration to us all.

"May I pass on our best wishes to everyone and hope that you all enjoy a very happy Christmas and New Year."



We also received from Dorothy Donnelly a photograph taken in 1918 of four collectors including her mother, Mary Dobson, born 1894 and Aunt, Lilly Dobson, born 1898. The caption with this photograph reads: "These four young ladies collected £8.12/-1/2d in one and half hours. Good, wasn't it?" Would anyone care to hazard a guess at what that would be worth in today's money - £500?

Happy New Year to everybody from all in the Fund Raising department.

A visit to the Enchanted Isles

Mike Tetley explores the exotic world of the Galápagos



I landed on Baltra island in the Galápagos, where an airstrip had been made by the Americans during the war to protect the Panama Canal, then had to step over sea lions lounging on the quay, to board the *Beagle 3*, a former survey ship owned by the Darwin Research Foundation. The sea lions showed no fear of man and when I trod on a flipper by mistake the sea lion just grunted and pulled it away and grunted again as if to say "Can't you see where you are going?"

It was an unforgettable experience to move amongst animals and birds that had no fear of man and they were not aggressive towards one another. When I swam from the golden sandy beaches in water at a temperature of 80 Fahrenheit the sea lions swam round me and tickled my flesh with their whiskers. On the beaches a mockingbird fluttered on to my arm to use it as a perch but he dug his talons into my arm which made me jump and flick him off. One cheeky bird undid the laces of a trainer, probably mistaking it for a worm. On another occasion two blue footed boobies were preparing their nest right alongside the path. The nest consisted of a circle made by a white ring of faeces.

The male whistled at his mate and gave her a pebble which she took and made a noise as if to say "Not yet." I was so close that I could stroke the two birds which were the size of a very big pigeon. As food was plentiful the sea lions seemed to have time to play and one grabbed a marine iguana by its tail just as it was trying to land and pulled it back into the sea. It repeated the game whenever the iguana tried to get on shore.

The Galápagos are 15 large islands and several smaller ones lying on the equator some 600 miles off Ecuador in the Pacific. They are volcanic up thrusts and were a favourite place for pirates and whalers who supplemented their diet by catching the giant tortoises. I saw some of these at the Darwin Research Centre. They were very kind to me and let me into their enclosure to feel three of them. They are big and their carapace or upper shell was over 3ft long and the head when extended, some 2ft, could come up to my chest. They could weigh up to 500 pounds and had feet like small elephants and these could exert a tremendous force. Farmers who enclosed a field with chain link fencing found that the tortoise just pulled his neck into the shell then used it like a bulldozer to push the fence over.

There was symbiosis between the finches and the tortoises. The bird would sit on the shell and tap it. The tortoise would extend its neck and the finch would pull off the ticks and other parasites. To my surprise I could stroke the neck and he did not even flinch. I am glad I did not meet a prehistoric tortoise *Colossochelys atlas* which had a shell measuring 19ft. As their shoulder and pelvic girdle are within their ribs, they expand their lungs by pulling and pushing their bodies within the shell. The Americans call a tortoise a land turtle as opposed to a marine turtle. These latter not only breathe with their lungs but also absorb oxygen through their mouths, cloaca and shell and can stay alive for a year without food or water.

People, pests and plants have altered the local environment. People have introduced animals and then let them go. On one island they let three

goats go and 24 years later there were 30,000 of them. They also introduced pampas grass which has spread like wildfire and sunflowers grow up to 24ft and are like trees. We were lucky to have a naturalist as a guide and she showed us things we would never have noticed. There is one cactus type plant with a leaf about the size of a 50p piece. To conserve moisture it turns the edge of the leaf towards the sun and as the sun moves across the sky the leaves all turn with their edges upwards. It makes you wonder just how a tree can twist its leaf. Another leaf was 3ft long curved in both directions but an inch thick and was very heavy.

In the museum they let me handle the skulls of all the animals as well as the stuffed birds. The empty shell of a huge tortoise only weighs about 7 pounds which is not too heavy when you remember the weight of a man's skeleton is only 18 pounds. The albatross drinks sea water and excretes the salt into his beak.

It was a wonderful experience. Darwin put evolution down to the survival of the fittest but I am blown if I can believe that survival of the fittest is the only force in evolution but I could not tell you what the other forces are, so I am just waiting for a better theory. Survival of the fittest only seems to modify existing structures like making beaks longer to enable a finch to get food from a deep crack but it does not invent a complete new system.



Above: Mike gets the point of a local cactus.

Below: Examining the ancient tortoise shell.

Left: Mike meets a live giant tortoise.



The Life and Times of Ovingdean

by Margaret Bingham

Outings during the latter part of October whether during the day or a pub visit in the evening were made more pleasurable by the continual warm sunshine and generally very dry conditions. It was very chilly in the evenings but the pubs were warm and cosy!

LIFE'S A WITCH

October 31st, being Hallowe'en (why the apostrophe between the e's, does anyone out there know?) was celebrated here in the usual style, with deference to supernatural happenings emanating from pagan times. The menu designed by Head Witch Margaret was a masterpiece of ingenuity with a picture of a hooked nose witch holding a glass ball in her talon-like bony fingers. Amongst the 'delicacies' on offer were 'Witches Brew' (Tomato Soup with chopped green parsley), 'Red Hot Pokers' (Chicken Satay with chilli), and 'Snake Pit' (Spaghetti Bolognese). Ugh!!

The party later in the day was a real spooky one indeed with dimmed lighting, flashing skulls on the wall and pumpkins all aglow! Lynne and Richy spoke in low sepulchral tones as they moved amongst us with bowls holding horrible slimy objects for us to feel. Even cold rice pudding has a mystifying texture when fingered. Taste and smell followed, graphically described as 'sparrow's legs' (lengths of spaghetti) 'cat's tongues' (lemon wedges) and so on.

COLOUR SCHEME

Blind people throughout the world may soon be able to 'see' and appreciate colours following the development of a unique touch system. Lois Lowrie, who is blind, founded Tactile Colour Communication eight years ago. Her idea is the use of different textured fabrics to indicate colours, thus enabling blind people to feel colour. The RNIB is very interested and we St Dunstaners who visited the Centre found it a very worthwhile project.

The Guy Fawkes Party on the evening of November 5th went with a bang! Well almost! We each had 'sparklers' and they were large and plentiful and gave a lovely shimmer of sparks in the darkened lounge. Good childish fun!



A small party (above) visited St Dunstan's Cemetery to lay wreaths of poppies and to pay tribute to our men who are buried there. Father Duncan, assisted by the Rev David Williams, gave a short but very moving service of Remembrance.

DISCO STAN

Stan Grimsey celebrated his 80th birthday by holding a disco in the Ballroom. Dancers twisted and swirled to the (taped) music of Ian Kerr ably assisted by Ben Gillam and what with a few drinks and titbits provided by PBK, the evening was a great success.

KEEP 'EM FLYING

A very interesting guided tour to the Aviation Museum, Shoreham was made recently. All exhibits and photographs on show were of the Second World War in general but concentrating on the D-Day era. Many of the planes participating in this great epic were flown from Shoreham and the nostalgia engendered from handling the models gave a great feeling of warmth and gratitude for the miracle of D-Day and the crews which participated.

YULETIDE LOG

Some of our activities began to take on a yuletide flavour, what with a Smugglers night held in Rottingdean when the partly blocked off road was crowded with dancers and singers. No doubt the pubs did good business! A fireworks display crowned the activities.

Southdown Girls Choir entertained us one evening and their singing was a real pleasure to hear. At the end of their performance they wandered amongst us for a chat and we in turn were keen to learn of their scholastic life and achievements.



Our Headquarters minstrels ministered a mellifluous and masterful music hall medley of meritorious melody, mirth and melodrama to make merriment for the masses at Ovingdean.

Roedean Girls School invited us to a carol concert and we thoroughly enjoyed it! Unfortunately, due to a number of flights of steps, people in wheelchairs were unable to go.

An invitation was received from the Deaf School, Ovingdean to see the pantomime Cinderella and listen to a carol concert. Although not quite keeping to the traditional 'Cinders' it was easy to follow with much laughter and audience participation! A variety of musical instruments were played by the pupils and we left the school marvelling at such an achievement by the pupils and their very dedicated teachers.

On another evening The Brighton Male Voice Choir nearly raised the roof with their beautiful harmonious renderings. We do appreciate all this kindness.

We were entertained by a group of HQ staff with Ray Hazan as a very jovial and competent MC and had a very uproarious afternoon.

A Christmas dance and buffet in the Ballroom was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all. A combined Staff and Residents Show resulted in a happy and noisy concert with a large variety of 'turns'. Such talent!!

Many went to church on Xmas morning and later Santa Claus paid us a visit when Christmas presents were distributed and drinks were handed round. An exceedingly good traditional dinner was served and PBK excelled themselves. (As they did with all the Christmas fare). Various activities occurred quizzes, prize bingo etc.

On Saturday Olga, who runs the tea dances at the King Alfred Centre, Hove joined us with members of her club for an afternoon dance. Most enjoyable. To crown the Festive Season, a service held in our own chapel and officiated by Father Duncan, who was

joined by members of the choir from St George's Church, Kemp Town. How the chapel rang with their lovely singing which surely gave a deeper interpretation to the well loved carols!

Our very sincere thanks to all who helped make this such a good Christmas especially to Lynne Thomas, Entertainments Co-ordinator for all the hard work she put in.

A Happy New Year to all.

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

by Ron Cattell

The annual Staff It's A Knockout competition in the swimming pool held the attention of the house on December 16th. It was organised by Grant Cooper and his energetic staff, Wendy and David, and featured a variety of water-based events utilising rafts and inflatable animals, including Nessie! Diving for pearls (not real ones, of course!), tightrope walking across the pool and diving from a cage into the deep end were some of the challenges that the staff had to endure.

For the second year running, the winning team was the Training Team, consisting of Grant, Kendrick, Janis, Wendy and Linda, followed closely by the Domestic/Security Team of Sam, Tom, Harvey, Ian and Patrick. There were three other teams - PBK, Nursing and Office and Miscellaneous.

All teams are to be congratulated on their strength and stamina. All walked away with a prize for participating.

The Sports Department hope to arrange a Midsummer It's A Knockout when the same teams and others will rise to the challenge.

WINTER OLYMPICS by Ron Cattell



The winning team! Ron Cattell, Alf Waters, Ann Curry, Winnie Edwards and Pat Curry with David Goldsmith.



The return of Gunner Margaret! Not as powerful as a machine gun, but this shot was a bull's-eye.

Jolly hockey sticks!

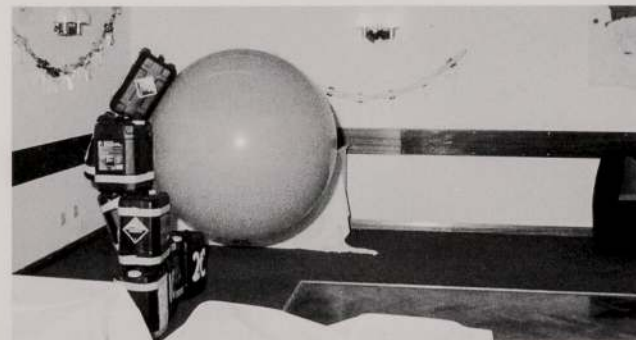


The Winter Olympics were held in the Ballroom on December 18th with three teams participating in a programme of five events - throwing snowballs, rifle shooting on skis, hockey, avalanche and curling. All these events were carefully and closely contested, so it was agreed that all contestants would receive a teddy bear and either an oscar or a medal. The same awards were presented to our six escorts in whose caring hands we were able to perform so well.



Alf Waters tries his hand at out-sized bowling ...

... and over they go.



Sir Henry hangs dirty laundry out for prize



Sir Henry and the decorated Laundry Crew.

They were bound to win. The Ovingdean Laundry Crew whipped up a little seasonal spice for their Christmas decorations transforming their work area into a 'sin-bin'. St Dunstan's Chairman Sir Henry Leach denounced their den of depravity before awarding them this year's Sid Doy Christmas Decorations Trophy. Second prize was taken by last year's winner, Maureen Mann, for her more traditional approach to the Reception area.



Above: An ice skater in Ovingdean reception.

Below: Christmas as envisaged by the Nursing staff.



Balancing the Books

by Ted Bunting

The Waiting Sands

Author: Susan Howatch
Reader: Jacqueline King
Duration: 6 hours
Catalogue number: 8167

Whenever I encounter a creditability gap in a novel, that is to say when hearing is not also believing, then I know my enjoyment of the story will not be unconfined ... I sense it's going to be boring or balderdash or both!

Well, *The Waiting Sands*, unfortunately, is a case in point, there is this brilliant Oxford professor it says, who has for a wife a young girl not yet 21, a beautiful heiress no less, but one who is obsessed by the idea that he is about to cause her death.

The notion is as preposterous as the story's setting, a vast but primitive mansion in some unspecified remote region of Scotland, complete with a "Great Hall", an unfrequented wing or two and a mysterious housekeeper who seems effortlessly and single-handedly to perform all the domestic chores in the establishment, including feeding a marvellously intelligent dog and making the morning porridge.

As an attempt to recreate the Gothic novel of yesteryear, however, (if indeed this was the aim) the result falls woefully short of the mark; the plot is implausible, the characterisation feeble to say the least, the action almost non-existent and the dialogue is wholly unconvincing.

The finished product, I am sure, couldn't rank higher than mediocre even on a good day. It would have been better had the tone of the book not been so pretentious and snobbish and the women had possessed names other than Rachel, Rebecca and Desima, (what's wrong with Doris, say, or Morag since it was supposed to be about Scotland) but I fear that no amount of tinkering around the edges could turn this dog's breakfast into something palatable.

Talking Organisers

by Ray Hazan

Until recently, keeping records of telephone numbers, notes and diary dates has been a matter of using tape recorders, Braille or computers. Electronic organisers which carry out all of these functions, have been available at low cost to sighted people for many years. I have recently evaluated two Talking Organisers for use by blind people.

The Parrot Voice Recognition Talking Organiser measures 5x3x1/2 an inch. It is powered by four AAA batteries. The device has a wide range of functions including memo taker, diary, appointment book, calculator, calendar alarm clock and telephone dialler. The telephone directory can store up to 300 names, 300 addresses and 1500 numbers. These can be retrieved using voice recognition and then dialled using the built in autodialler.

The memo pad can store up to 999 memos with 13 minutes recording time. Memos can be edited. The appointment book can store up to 999 appointments, which can be retrieved by speaking a key word. Information can be saved on a computer with an optional data link.

The keys are small and fairly close together. Not all functions talk so sighted assistance is required at the initial setting up stage. Number keys do not 'talk' nor is the memory status shown on the display panel spoken.

The Voice Diary is shaped like a rounded door wedge, measuring 5x2x1 inch. The keys are a little larger and more widely spaced than on the Parrot. Functions include:

Appointment Diary - stores recorded messages under specific date and time. Recurring events are easily stored. A 'Daily To Do list' can be copied or moved.

Notepad - allows spontaneous recording of any message for later processing.

Phonebook - simple entry of telephone numbers. Voice recognition of names for telephone number retrieval. Tone dialling output.

Talking calculator, clock/calendar, stopwatch, and timer. Alarm settings for Diary entries and

reminders - daily, weekly, monthly and annually. Sight free operations, no visual display - voice prompt for every key stroke. PC connectivity by serial communication.

The unit has internal batteries which must be re-charged every night if used on a daily basis. Information is not lost if the batteries run down.

If you would like a copy of the instruction cassette for either device, which gives an idea of the voices and functions, please send a C60 or 90 to the PR department quoting I 11 for the Parrot and I 12 for the Voice Diary.

The Parrot is available at £120 from Cobalt Systems Ltd, The Old Mill House, Mill Road, Reedham, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3TL. Tel: 01493 700172.

The Voice Diary is available at £290, which includes on site training, from CVIP Ltd on 0181 420 1338.

The Freestyle Cordless Telephone with Digital Answerphone

The above has all the facilities of a cordless telephone, i.e. it can be used up to 100 metres away from the base unit. In addition, the handset and base can act as an intercom between each other - useful when you are in your workshop at the bottom of the garden and you need to be notified lunch is ready!

The base is also a digital answerphone, i.e. it needs no tape cassette to record messages. Digital does have the disadvantage of interfering with tape recorders nearby if you are trying to record a message. You can leave messages for members of the household, but this recording function does not operate when the handset is in use.

However, all functions on the answerphone 'talk' making it easily usable by blind people. A real female voice is very intelligible and buttons are large and easily located. The unit costs around £100. For more details contact your local BT sales or any large store such as Dixons.

The RNIB Resource Centre markets a similar telephone, catalogue number DH126 at £111.63. They may be contacted on 0171 388 1266.

Shut out that burglar

Here are some more hints to deter burglars. This time, we concentrate on how to avoid tell-tale signs if you are going away from home. Only tell those who need to know - don't tell the whole world!

Cancel all deliveries, milk, papers and talk to the post office about holding your post for you.

Make sure your doorbell is only audible from the inside - let people assume it's not working, rather than not being answered.

Disconnect phones that can be heard left ringing, particularly on window sills.

Fit timer switches to your lights so that your house can be lit up at night.

Ask your neighbours to park their car occasionally on your drive or in front of your house. They could also put a bag of rubbish out for you on bin day.

Keep garage doors shut and locked. If your garage has windows, use curtains or blinds to block out prying eyes. No car means nobody at home!

CLUB NEWS

BOWLING

The National Bowling Club held a tournament from November 1st to 7th when 15 members took part, together with their wives and escorts. Although the majority stayed at Butlin's, we travelled daily to Ovingdean for the Tournament.

We were all pleased when Jesse Mills was able to take part after his illness and I must say he played exceedingly well as you will see from the results.

Totally blind

Winner	Jackie Pryor
Runner-up	Bob Osborne

Partially sighted

Winner	Jesse Mills
Runner-up	Mansell Lewis

Pairs

Winners	Bob Osborne & Jesse Mills
Runners-up	Alan Mitchell & John Hopkins

I was very impressed by the standard of bowling which has been maintained despite the fact that, unfortunately, we are unable to meet as often as we would like. Apart from bowling it is a wonderful opportunity for us to meet our friends and reminisce.

I would like to thank the following people, whose help we rely on so much, Edna Cope, John Mugan, Reg and Vi Bradford, and of course, Rita Pryor and Joan Osborne who take care of all the arrangements and organising of the games for the Tournaments. Also thanks to Susan Harrison for her cooperation during the week.

If any St Dunstaner would like to learn and take part in this enjoyable game of bowls will they please contact

Rita Pryor	01273 582523
Joan Osborne	01273 302115

or write to them, care of St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

We are hoping to hold another Tournament on March 23rd-30th. In conclusion may I wish you all a happy and healthy 1998.

R. Osborne
Chairman

FAMILY NEWS

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Dave and Brenda Thomas of Haywards Heath, West Sussex on November 18th.

RUBY ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Bill and Ada Wilcock of Darwen, Lancashire on December 30th.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Herbert and Jean Downward of Gloucester, Gloucestershire on December 23rd.

Horace and Irene Underwood of Thornton Cleveleys, Blackpool on December 26th.

Marcus and Katherine Graham of Esher, Surrey on January 3rd.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Frank and Myrtle Simonds of Southampton, Hampshire on January 1st.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Mrs Irene Edwards of Coventry on December 1st. She was the widow of *Joseph 'Lyn' Edwards*.

Mrs Edith Elphick of Herne Bay on December 1st. She was the widow of *George Elphick*.

Mrs Mabel McDonald of Leicester on December 19th. She was the widow of *James McDonald*.

Mrs Marion Hill of Southgate, Crawley on December 22nd. She was the widow of *John Hill*.

Mrs Joan Phillips of Bromley, Kent. She was the widow of *David Phillips*.

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.

John Blanch,

8th Australian Division

Major John Andrew Blanch of Victoria, Australia died on October 10th, aged 77. His wartime service was on the staff of General Gordon Bennett in Singapore. After the war, he joined *The Herald* and was their London Manager for four years. In later years, he served as President of the Blinded Soldiers of St Dunstan's Association and Vice President of The Association for the Blind where he chaired the Blind Members Council. His work for blind people was recognised by the presentation of the John Wilson Award. Our sympathy goes to his wife Barbara, sons John and Graeme and all of the family.

Alfred Moody,

Military Provost Staff Corps

Alfred Douglas Moody of Goring by Sea, West Sussex died on November 28th, aged 78. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1991.

Mr Moody, known as Doug, enlisted into the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) in December 1939 with the intention of becoming a regular soldier. Throughout the Second World War he served in France with the British Expeditionary Force. After

Dunkirk he was posted with his regiment to the Middle East, serving in Persia, Iraq, the Western Desert, Sicily and Italy.

Following treatment for gunshot wounds to his eyes in 1944, Doug Moody, by now a Sergeant, returned to his regiment. He was posted with them to Japan as part of the occupation forces. As a result of deteriorating eyesight Mr Moody had to transfer to the Military Provost Staff Corps and went on to serve in Gibraltar, Malaya and Malta, although he spent most of his time at the military prison in Shepton Mallet. Due to further deterioration of his sight Doug Moody retired in 1964 with the rank of WOII. He had served in the Army for 25 years. He had a lifetime interest in sport. Sadly, Mr Moody's wife Pauline predeceased him in 1994. We send our sympathy to his son Major Ronald Moody and all members of the family.

Alfred Mead,

Northamptonshire Regiment

Alfred James Mead of Kettering, Northamptonshire died on December 15th, aged 76. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1974. Mr Mead enlisted into the Northamptonshire Regiment just eight days before the onset of the Second World War. He was discharged in 1946 having suffered injury from a mine explosion. This resulted in the loss of his left eye, damage to the right and his right leg was amputated below the knee. Following discharge from the Army he worked as a Chief Wages Clerk in Desborough but had to retire on health grounds. A keen gardener, he also enjoyed making toys and picture framing. Our sympathy goes to his wife Doris, daughter Eileen, son Raymond and all members of the family.

Donald Stott,

Royal Air Force

Donald Stott of St Dunstan's Ovingdean died on January 4th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1953. Enlisting in the Royal Air Force in 1937 he served as a Corporal until failing eyesight led to his discharge in 1952. After training at St Dunstan's he worked as a capstan lathe operator for the De Havilland Engine Co and then as a machinist for Rover. He retired in 1977 and after the death of his wife Gladys in 1979 became a permanent resident at St Dunstan's. Our sympathy goes to his niece Mrs Ann Rees and all members of the family.