

St Dunstan's Review



APRIL 1998

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Cover picture: Survivor of
the Japanese Prisoner of
War camps, Stan Grimsey.

From the Chairman



I am pleased to tell you that at their January meeting the Finance & General Purposes Committee approved a £500 grant per Club/Activity. This grant will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The aim of the grant is to assist with the administrative costs of running the Club/Activity, ie secretarial costs, hire of transport, guest speaker expenses, etc. We have always been keen to encourage and assist St Dunstaners pursue a wide range of activities and it is hoped this grant will encourage both young and old to continue supporting the various clubs.

I wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Henry Leach



NOTICE BOARD



SHAFTESBURY REUNION DATE CHANGE

The Shaftesbury Reunion has been moved forward a day. It will now take place on Thursday, May 28th.

RNIB COMPUTER VOLUNTEER NETWORK SEMINAR

Saturday June 6th

The RNIB is holding a seminar at St Dunstan's Ovingdean where visually impaired people can meet members of RNIB's Computer Volunteer Network. These are locally based computer experts who can offer technical help in the home to VI computer users. The seminar will provide an open forum where the volunteers can demonstrate the support they can offer - and where blind and partially sighted individuals can air their technical problems.

The seminar will be of interest to both experienced computer users and also those with an initial interest.

The seminar costs £5.00 including a buffet lunch. Places are limited and bookings can be made by contacting Gael Wright on 0171 388 1266.

CNIB 80TH ANNIVERSARY

We congratulate The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, which celebrated its 80th anniversary in March. St Dunstan's played its small part in their Foundation. Canadian St Dunstaner Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Baker lost his sight in Belgium in 1915 and trained in Regent's Park under Sir Arthur Pearson. Together with another war blinded veteran, he founded the CNIB in 1918.

TO ALL LISTENERS OF THE SOUNDINGS MAGAZINE

Would readers please note that the April issue will be the last where the cassette may be retained. As of the May issue, cassettes will be sent out in a postal wallet with a reversible label so that the cassette can be returned for re-copying.

BT IN-CONTACT

British Telecom is launching a new service called *BT In-Contact*. For a one-off payment of £9.99 (inc VAT) plus a fixed quarterly charge of £9.25 (inc VAT) customers can have a line installed that allows them to receive calls and to make free calls to the emergency services (999). They will also be able to make free calls to BT Customer Service (150), BT Repair (151) and to people who have given them their *BT Ring Me Free* cards. The only other expense is the cost of a phone which they can buy or rent from a choice of suppliers.

"Some people currently without a phone need to be contactable but have either no requirement or insufficient money to make outgoing calls," said BT. "For elderly or disabled people in particular, the peace of mind that a phone brings as their link with the outside world is a great benefit but they may be concerned about running up high bills.

SKIING 1999

Would anyone who is interested in joining a St Dunstan's downhill skiing trip please contact Ray Hazan at HQ as soon as possible. The venue is likely to be a resort in Europe for one week during the period January/March. An all-inclusive cost would be around £500 per person. An attempt by the Deputy Head of Fund Raising will be made to get each participant's Regiment/Unit to sponsor their guide. The project depends on sponsorship. A response by the end of April, without commitment, would be appreciated.

NEW CEO IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Charles Dickson succeeded Mrs Lauraine Jones as Chief Executive Officer of St Dunstan's Association for South African War-Blinded Veterans on January 5th.

Now in his mid-40's, Mr Dickson has previously worked in accountancy, Third World development and education.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

The final date for submitting items for publication in the June Review is April 27th.

SILVER JUBILEE FOR METRO SPORT

The Metropolitan Sports and Social Club for the visually impaired celebrates a quarter century of athletics with its championship on June 27th. The usual full range of track and field events will be contested prior to a celebration dinner and disco in the evening. For an entry form or tickets for the celebration dinner contact Derek Mileman, Metro Secretary on 0181 203 1286.

LAST CALL FOR SULTAN

Do not forget to book your place for camp at HMS *Sultan* from July 31st to August 8th. Applications should be made to Elspeth Grant on 01799 522874 (or by writing to her at High Acre, Catmere End, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4XG). Applications should be made by Saturday, May 9th. Do not miss the fun and comradeship and the opportunity of seeing your old friends.

Elspeth Grant

COUNTRY SOUNDS

A monthly tape tour through the countryside is provided by *Just Walking The Dog*. Produced by Fieldsman Trails, it captures the spirit of the countryside in words and natural sounds. A one year subscription costs £24. For more information contact: Colin Antwis, Fieldsman Trails, Fron Deg, Clayton Road, Mold CH7 1SU. Tel: 01352 756202.

SWEEPSTAKE TICKETS AVAILABLE

St Dunstaners and widows can still apply for tickets in this year's *Review Derby Sweepstake*. Tickets are 30p each and issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Applications should be made as soon as possible. Closing date is Friday, May 29th. Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to The Editor, DSS Department, St Dunstan's *Review*, 12/14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB.

Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered.

Full rules appeared in the February *Review*. The draw will take place in London on June 1st. The race is being run on June 6th.

GAS EXCHANGE

Useful hints and information about choosing a new gas supplier are offered on a tape, *Changing your Gas Supplier? It's as easy as ABC*. Produced by Transco (the national gas pipeline operator) and the Gas Consumers Council, it includes sections on contracts, meter reading, special offers, bills and moving home. There is also a list of helpful addresses and telephone numbers.

For a copy of the cassette (available in English and Welsh) contact Transco on 0121 623 2425.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

Some tickets have been issued for Trooping the Colour on Saturday, June 13th and we may be allocated some tickets for the Royal Tournament in July. Any St Dunstaner who would like to apply should contact Carole Woodgate, Welfare department at Headquarters by May 14th. Final allocations will be drawn from a hat. Any St Dunstaner wishing to attend these events must pay their own travelling and accommodation expenses.



PILOTS ONLINE MEMORIAL

The valour of "the few" who took part in The Battle of Britain is feted on a memorial website. People who use their computers to visit the virtual wing of the Battle of Britain Museum will discover the role played by RAF Manston in the defence of England. *The Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial* contains information about the battle itself and exhibits at the actual museum in Manston, Kent. The site also contains links to other aviation related sites. The address is: www.spitfire-museum.com/.

NEW CENTENARIANS

Congratulations to Miss Marie Williams of Nutbourne, Chichester who celebrated her 100th birthday on January 15th. She is the sister of the late St Dunstaner Lt Cdr Douglas Williams.

Mrs Doris Burden of Saltdean celebrated her 101st birthday on December 26th. She is the widow of St Dunstaner William Burden.

CHARLIE'S TALE ENDS UNDER THE HAMMER

Late St Dunstaner Charles Cooper had two claims to fame: he was the first rear-gunner to be nicknamed Tail End Charlie and he was the proud holder of a motorcycling record which can never be beaten.

His achievements have been highlighted by a Sotheby's auction of automobilia recently held at the RAF Museum, Hendon. Gold and silver medals for the remarkable boyhood achievement of completing the 1920 24-hour reliability trial from London to Land's End on a Douglas motorcycle were part of the collection going under the hammer.

Charles, then resident in Kenton, London, was only 14 when he won the classic event. "As you have to be older than 14 to get a licence nowadays, it's a title I'm not likely to lose," he would later recall.

In adult life he was the first commissioned rear-gunner in the Royal Air Force and was nicknamed Tail End Charlie - which came to be universally adopted for all rear-gunners. Flight Lieutenant Cooper lost his sight in 1941 when a German bomb exploded outside his billet at Mildenhall, Suffolk. He trained as a physiotherapist and practised in Worthing from 1947. Active in local politics, he became a town councillor and was made a life member of the Association of Pioneer Motorcyclists.

The collection, placed on auction by a relative, also included presentation boxes, newspaper cuttings and a photograph of Charlie in a school blazer and cap on the Douglas. It was expected to fetch about £600.

Feature reproduced by kind permission of John Vincent.

Rotary pat on the back for Huntingdon Physio

St Dunstaner Bill Shea was presented with an award for his services to the community as a Chartered Physiotherapist at an International Night organised by the Rotary Club of Huntingdon on January 29th.

Making the presentation, club President Mr Tomkies spoke of Mr Shea's service in the Royal Marines and thanked him on behalf of the community for the work he had done over so many years as Superintendent Physiotherapist at the Huntingdon County Hospital and in his private practice at Brampton.

Thanking the club for the award Mr Shea expressed gratitude to colleagues and members of the medical profession for the support they had given him. He also said that he had never met so many former patients spanning so many years under one roof, adding that he hoped they were not thinking of getting their own back.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FRED

Congratulations to St Dunstaner Fred Hobbs who celebrated his 99th birthday on March 1st. When he was born, Queen Victoria was still on the throne and radio transmissions had barely crossed the channel.

New Head of Welfare

Further to the Chairman's announcement last issue, Sally Leaver has taken up the position of Head of Welfare. She was latterly a freelance consultant at management level within Social Services.



All cats are grey ...



Ovingdean resident Sid Doy recently turned his hand to a new craft - sculpture using papier mâché. A treasure chest and several framed mirrors proved to be popular items, though this fine feline figure (could it be Blue?) seems a fair indication that Sid is master of his chosen art.

Tribute to Tom Gaygan

by Ray Hazan



Tommy Gaygan with his daughter Mary.

St Dunstan's means something different to each one of us. To some, it is the example of fellow St Dunstaners, often in far worse situations, who have been an inspiration in times of crisis. One such was Tom 'Tommy' Gaygan. Despite being reliant on his wife Audrey, for he was both blind and handless, his laughter and cheerfulness was an example to all who knew him as was Audrey's support of her husband.

Tom was born in Chelsea in 1920. In 1938 he decided to join the Forces. The Navy was his choice until a Petty Officer at the Recruiting Station asked him his age. "Eighteen," Tom replied, having added a year for luck. "Come back when you are a man" was the answer. So Tom, feeling pretty mad, went straight round to the depot of the 1/7th Queens Royal Regiment and enlisted into the Territorials.

Tom served with the 8th Army in North Africa and lost his sight and both hands in Tunisia in 1942. Following many operations on his eyes and arms Tom was eventually flown back to England and went to Church Stretton in 1943. Here he started to regain

his confidence. He was fitted with artificial hands - now he fed himself, learned to type and took up drumming and the trombone. On one occasion the band was playing in a show, Tom lost his grip on the drumstick and it went flying through the air into the audience. A woman was heard to say, "I wonder what he will do next?" True to form Tommy thought this most amusing.

In 1946 Tom and Audrey got engaged and eleven months later were married in Brighton.

Like most of his fellow handless St Dunstaners, a double handicap was no excuse for not earning a living. Tom trained on a specially adapted switchboard, which he operated with his feet, and a probe attached to his arm. Soon he was manning the switchboard at HQ as a fully qualified operator.

Tom was never short of a challenge. Using a St Dunstan's braille writing machine adapted by Norman French, he became the only blind and handless man to pass the official braille writing test in 1961. It enabled him to communicate with Wally Thomas, who was both deaf and blind.

One of Tom's interests was road walking. He used to beat most of his other blind friends in their races round Regent's Park in London and for some time was the St Dunstan's champion. At his best he could cover nearly seven miles in an hour - which is pretty good going, whether you are blind or not.

A highlight for Tom was the unveiling of the memorial tablet for Lord Fraser in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey in October 1976. Tom was the first and may well be the only blind/handless man to have practised archery. When the Queen visited Ovingdean in 1985 to open the South Wing, Tom was giving a demonstration, and true to form, scored a gold just as the Royal party looked on. In 1994 he helped raise funds for St Dunstan's through a sponsored shoot.

Tommy used to remark that most days were good for a hundred laughs if only you keep your ears alert. For Tommy life was full of pleasant surprises and people were fun. He lived.

His laughter will continue to ring in our ears.

Farewell, Tommy

I am writing as Chairperson of and on behalf of the Blind and Handless Group to pay tribute to Tom Gaygan whose very sad passing is a great loss to us all. His interesting contributions and genuine commitment to the work of the group was exemplary and will never be forgotten.

He had a wonderfully warm personality and an infectious laugh which endeared him to everyone and none of these lovely personal attributes diminished in any way despite the fact that during the last three years of his life he was unable, through ill-health, to attend the reunions. Tom was not there in person but he was assuredly there in spirit and influence.

Uppermost in our minds are his concern for others and the close interest he always took in their lives. He had a most selfless nature, never complained about his own problems, and was always ready to encourage and support people in whatever way he could.

We thank God for his life and for the privilege of knowing and loving him. He was a good man whose friendship and compassion touched and deepened the lives of us all.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his beloved wife Audrey, daughter Mary and son-in-law David.

Gwen Obern

Our last 73

The number of St Dunstaners from all over the country, who gathered at Ruislip Crematorium on January 28th was proof how popular and well loved Tommy Gaygan was. The congregation heard a most moving address by Tom Hart, who had known Tommy since Church Stretton days. Those of us who knew Tommy at Church Stretton remember well over the years his booming voice and his infectious laugh, and in spite of his disabilities his tremendous sense of humour. It was always a great pleasure to see Audrey and Tommy at our Amateur Radio meetings. We all admired the way Audrey looked after Tommy, nobody could have had more loving care.

Tommy's call sign was G4AFV, phonetically known as the "Armoured Fighting Vehicle". This was very apt, for Tommy was a fighter. His determination to get on the air when he was so very ill showed his

fighting spirit. Tommy came on the air on New Year's Day for his last QSO, shortly before he was admitted to hospital for the last time. Tommy's key is now silent and he has sent his last 73 and St Dunstan's Radio Amateurs have sent their last 73 to Tommy.

Bill Shea

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who sent letters and cards of sympathy on the death of Tom. I have received over 200 letters and I hope you will understand if I am unable to reply to them individually. May I take this opportunity to thank all those who wrote - they were much appreciated.

I also want to express my thanks for the donations sent in Tom's memory. These totalled £1,280 - of which £780 has been sent to St Dunstan's and £500 to the Talking Book Library for a new book to be recorded and dedicated to Tom.

Many thanks and love to you all.

Audrey Gaygan

Obituaries

Miss "Johnny" Walker

Miss Dorothy Mary Walker known as "Johnny" died on December 16th. Much of her time with St Dunstan's was spent working with physiotherapists. She joined the organisation as a VAD at Brockhurst, Church Stretton in February 1944 and then took over an emergency physiotherapy hostel at Croxley Green. She subsequently became Matron of St Dunstan's Physiotherapy Hostel at Park Crescent and then Broadhurst Gardens. She resigned in October 1952.

Jimmy Higgins

Mr Jimmy Higgins, President of The Royal British Legion Club in Cowes died on January 2nd, aged 83. A very good friend to all campers at *Daedalus* and *Sultan* for many years, he always welcomed us most warmly on our trip to Cowes. He was not at all well in recent years suffering from emphysema and this last year although very frail indeed insisted on leaving his bed to come and see us. He joined the Navy as a 15 year old and during the last war served as a Chief Petty Officer on convoys to Burma and Russia. He was a great character.

Elsbeth Grant



A MIRACULOUS SURVIVOR

Stan Grimsey talks to Ray Hazan



Herded on trains like cattle, forced to dig your own grave, scavenging for food. Stan's experiences are echoed in these sketches by another Far East Prisoner of War, Will Wilder (reproduced by his kind permission).

Publicity surrounding the Prime Minister's visit to Japan in January this year and the pending visit next month by the Emperor of Japan to the UK has focused attention once more on the treatment of prisoners of war by the Japanese. One of the current 59 St Dunstan ex-Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOW's) who has first hand knowledge is one of our Residents at Ovingdean, Stan Grimsey.

Stan is quietly spoken but that belies the inner strength, which must have enabled him to survive the nearly four years of incarceration. Who can say what elements constitute that strength - background, upbringing or way of life? Stan was born on November 12th 1917 at Woodhouse Farm, Rishangles, near Eye in Suffolk. His father was a farm bailiff or manager in modern parlance. Stan attended school at Playford, near Ipswich until the age of 14. On leaving school he went to work in the greenhouses of a Mr Stevenson, a local Liberal MP. "I wanted to learn about gardening, how plants were propagated and raised." Stan then became chauffeur to Ethel Sunderland-Taylor, wife of a prominent solicitor.



Stan has memories of bitterly cold days and nights on the Norfolk Broads guarding against possible invasion. He drove Officers around in an Austin 8 convertible before graduating to Brigadier Backhurst's driver in a Humber Super Snipe.

In October 1941 Stan embarked on one of the longest Divisional moves of the Second World War, which took him by boat via Canada, "where I saw lights for the first time in years - there was a blackout in the UK", the United States, Rio de Janeiro in South America from where he crossed over to South Africa. Training in Cape Town was followed by another boat journey and more exercising inland from Bombay in India.

It was whilst in India, Stan heard his mother's house

had been hit by a Hurricane - of the winged variety. The engine and propeller ended up in his and his brother's bedroom. "My mother heard bricks falling down the stairs and thought the house had been hit by a bomb. My brother sent me a photo afterwards. I still remember the number on the plane - 1960!"

The Division was recalled to Bombay from whence the journey by ship continued via the Soenda Straits between Java and Sumatra "where we were heavily bombed by the Japanese. We were very scared, but they missed! We were told before we arrived in Singapore, 'for God's sake, get off the boat as fast as you can'. I think the ships were hit by bombs just after I disembarked, but I can't be sure." This was a very short while before Singapore fell on February 14th 1942. When Stan arrived in Singapore, he was transferred to General Percival's headquarters.

"I was with an Australian in *Raffles Hotel* when Singapore capitulated. We were ordered to smash our rifles, but the Lee Enfield was tough so this was hard to do. We were marched to Changi without food or

water. Being a good climber, I was volunteered to climb a coconut tree to get at the green coconut, which contained 'milk'. There I was at the top of the tree, hanging on with one arm while I tried to loosen a coconut with the other. Suddenly I found myself covered with red ants! I slid back down the tree as quickly as I could taking much of my skin off. I never did get that coconut! I subsequently spent six months on the island working in a quarry. The Chinese were very good to us and I shall always remember a woman in the quarry who offered me a rice pattie. I worked on building a sea wall. I didn't mind that so much as it meant we could sleep on the beach to get away from the biting bugs, which infested our huts. It also meant we could dig our hips into the sand and so avoid the terrible corns, which developed from sleeping on hard surfaces.

"We were told we were being moved to the Malaya hills to 'recuperate'. This entailed a five day journey in steel encased railway wagons. We were 33 to each wagon with no room to sit or lie down. We were very ill and like many, I was suffering from dysentery. There was only a small gap through one of the doors where we could relieve ourselves."

Recuperation turned out to be a transit camp in Thailand, chest deep in water and glutinous mud. Many prisoners died there and in raids on a nearby rail marshalling yard, where Stan narrowly escaped death. From there he was marched to a work camp on the infamous Burma-Siam railway.

Stan worked for a year on the railway. Words cannot really describe the conditions - malnutrition, cholera, malaria, dengue fever and brutal treatment by the guards - any of which were not an excuse not to work. Stan suffered all these plus his fingers were smashed in a vice by a Japanese guard. "We stole from the Japs, objects like hacksaw blades for the doctors to use in amputations, we improvised - I made a splint for my finger out of bamboo and twine. I cannot forget a New Zealand doctor, McGibben, who treated a tropical ulcer in my foot, which had to



be cleaned twice daily. There was, of course, no medication. We survived by helping and sharing with each other."

At the end of 1944 Stan was moved with many stretcher cases by junk to a so-called sick camp in the Bangkok area. One day on the inevitable working party, Stan lost his G-string. To save his embarrassment at having to walk back to camp naked through the streets of Bangkok, a fellow Gurkha prisoner took pity and gave him his spare, which he was using as a headband.

Another incident is plain in Stan's memory. He was travelling through the streets of Bangkok in a Japanese truck when a blond haired European managed to whisper to them 'the war in Europe is nearly over'. It happened again the next day but the guard jumped out and bundled the man into the back of the truck. He was then escorted into the Secret Police headquarters. Some three weeks later Stan and his fellow prisoners were interrogated about the incident. The man was never seen again, of course, but the news of what was happening in Europe did much to boost morale.

A few months before the end of the war, Stan was moved 500 miles north east of Bangkok to build an airstrip, which he discovered later was used by the Americans to bomb Vietnam. "This was heavy work quarrying 'crag' from an open cast mine, knee deep in cold water. The load had then to be carried and laid to become an airstrip. But the day came when I

A Royal welcome home.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I bid you a very warm welcome home.

Through all the great trials and sufferings which you have undergone at the hands of the Japanese, you and your comrades have been constantly in our thoughts. We know from the accounts we have already received how heavy those sufferings have been. We know also that these have been endured by you with the highest courage.

We mourn with you the deaths of so many of your gallant comrades.

With all our hearts, we hope that your return from captivity will bring you and your families a full measure of happiness, which you may long enjoy together.

George R.I.

September 1945.

knew that something was wrong when the Japanese, in foul temper, ordered us to dig large trenches, 16ft deep by 14ft wide. We knew the Japs wanted no survivors. We even made spears and hid them in the soil." Fortunately, they were never required.

Shortly afterwards pamphlets warning of food drops and urging prisoners 'not to eat too much' were air-dropped onto the camp, followed by a British parachutist. "Soon we received an air-drop. It was just like Christmas - food, soap, paper, pencils, toilet paper, everything you could think of that we had not seen for three years and eight months."

Stan returned home in 1946. He was never able to go back to work. "The Japanese had taken too much out of me. I found it very difficult to adapt back to normality, back to sanity, back to the real world." He married and has one daughter. He became a St Dunstanian in 1977 and a permanent Resident in Brighton in 1979. He is very content with life at Ovingdean - "this is my heaven!"

Stan is grateful for all that St Dunstan's has done for him. In turn, Stan has not forgotten the time of sharing just over 50 years ago. He recently completed a 15km walk and raised £356 for the Far East Prisoners of War Association.

Dear Mr Grimsey
The London FEPOW Association has passed on your donation of £356 to the Fund to be used for the benefit of ex-Far East Prisoners of War. Thank you very much for this donation and for your efforts in raising such a goodly sum for our benefit. Congratulations.

Your kind thoughts for ex-Far East Prisoners of War shows that those who suffered so terribly at the hands of the Japanese during the Second World War have not been forgotten, and it will help us to provide the vital continuing care and assistance which so many of them, and their widows, now require in their old age.

Thank you again on behalf of the Trustees of the Fund.

Yours sincerely,
Denholm, Mrs
Secretary

Stan feels it is not in the nature of the Japanese to be able to apologise. "They were so cruel, it is very difficult to forgive."

In 1997, just two days before his 80th birthday he was escorted at the Cenotaph Parade by Sir Harry Secombe. On November 12th, he received a bottle of champagne with the message:

To Stan,
Great walking with you.
Happy 80th birthday.
Very best wishes from Harry Secombe.

Amen to that!

Message from the Head of Fund Raising



One year ago I revealed that we were undertaking a countrywide fund raising campaign involving the distribution of 10 million fund raising packs. I can now report that as a result, over 100,000 people sent in donations, started a covenant or pledged to leave some money to St Dunstan's in their Will. The value of donations received and covenants (for which payments are pledged over the next four years) is approximately £2 million. In addition, approximately £100,000 has been received in legacies to date.

In the third week of February this year we started the 1998 campaign, a major part of which consists of door-to-door distribution to nearly all the homes in the UK.

One area that we address with our fund raising pack is that of Legacies. It is vital that those who support St Dunstan's, and its reason for being, should be reminded that leaving a legacy to St Dunstan's will help to ensure that we can continue taking care of men and women blinded in the service of their country. To this end, there is a tick box on our leaflets for people to request legacy information. Our legacy packs, which are sent out on request, are

aimed at those who have never written a Will, as well as those who wish to modify their Will with a codicil leaving a gift to St Dunstan's. We hope that those who are in a position to do so will consider leaving St Dunstan's a legacy in their Will.

Finally, a number of *Review* readers have expressed a desire to help with fund raising and ask what they can do. Examples are running an event such as a coffee morning or a bring and buy sale or, for the more athletic, participating in a sponsored event, for which all the necessary forms and authorisation are supplied. In addition, on behalf of St Dunstan's, a number of people have approached their local pub, club, surgery or shop to ask if they will display a St Dunstan's collecting box, poster and leaflets. The collecting box is then managed in one of two ways:

1. Having been introduced (eg by a St Dunstanian), St Dunstan's Fund Raising department deals direct with the owner of the premises where the box is displayed and he/she periodically sends in the funds to St Dunstan's Fund Raising department.
2. The introducer (eg St Dunstanian) deals direct with the owner of the premises where the box is displayed and periodically sends in the funds to St Dunstan's Fund Raising department.

In both cases, we ask for the box to be emptied and a cheque or postal order to be sent to St Dunstan's Fund Raising department. A combination thank-you letter and receipt is then sent for display by the collecting box, together with a new seal.

If you wish to do this as a contribution to the fund raising effort, please return the coupon below and a collecting box pack will be sent.

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

Neil Swan

Your name:

Your address:

Your telephone number:

Please send me a collecting box pack.

Please send a collecting box pack to the person named below (You must put your details above as well).

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Please return to Neil Swan, Fund Raising Department, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB

The Life and Times of Ovingdean

by Margaret Bingham

Our Fancy Dress Ball, held in the Lounge, was a well attended and successful evening with everyone eager to join in the spirit of the occasion. A variety of costumes were worn by both staff and St Dunstaners and the judges must have found it difficult to pick out the three best costumes. Stan Grimsey dressed as a very convincing Batman (where was Robin, Stan? Maybe in the bar having a quickie!). Winnie, looking 'purrfect' as a black pussy, came second and an Ugly Sister - was that Granville in a floral dress, Ena Sharples hose, Cupid bow lips, scarlet cheeks and wig - was third. Well done!

New Year's Eve passed with the usual dance in the lounge and where a very tasty buffet was provided by PBK. A few St Dunstaners returned to the bar or bed but some of the traditionalists amongst us saw the New Year in in the usual manner!

STORMY WEATHER

The dreadful gales in The South came as a great shock after the mild weather of late December- early January. As we know, Selsey took the brunt of the typhoon but there was damage in the Peacehaven area as well. No damage here though but all transport was cancelled on one afternoon. Any holidaymakers due to return home on that day stayed for a further day. Gigantic waves crashed on the undercliff walk making it impassable and the spray which ensued caused flooding in the tunnel. Any person walking from the wicket gate to the house was literally bowled along at speed! Very frightening!!

HOT FOOT TO MYSORE

H.E.L.P.S. is a charity based in Shoreham and seeks to help the spread of health, education and literacy amongst the women and children of Bangalore in Southern India. Our Transport Manager David Vinall did a sponsored walk of some 86 miles over a six day period from Bangalore to Mysore. He hopes to raise £2,000 for the charity. Well done Dave!

Out of the blue, Lynne received an invitation from a Thai restaurant in Brighton for St Dunstaners and staff for lunch on a day when the restaurant is closed. Students explained the various foods and spices as they provided waiter service. All this was done with

such grace and charm that we felt completely at ease and felt we were amongst friends. It was a most enjoyable meal and we shall be visiting the *Thai Spice Market* again. Our thanks to Waan and Robert and staff for a most memorable and happy occasion.

HARMONY AND HISTORY

Entertainment in January has been worthy of note, what with a visit to the Dome to see *Annie* a musical which was most enjoyable and easy to follow. Then a visit to Ovingdean by the Harmony Singers, a group of nine local ladies who sang a variety of song in close harmony. Their beautiful singing was enjoyed by all and we hope they will visit us again.

Also the Copper Family from the Rottingdean area who entertained us with songs and stories - many about the local farming fraternity of yesteryear. The Copper Family as entertainers goes back a few hundred years.

Burns Night was celebrated with a 'wee drop of the hard stuff' and haggis tarts and music by guitarist Tim Wesmade. A very pleasurable evening.

A play reading by various staff members brought back memories of Church Stretton to one or two of us when, because of war conditions and limitations, we had plenty of in-house entertainment. The play, a ghostly melodrama, was beautifully read and we were all engrossed as the plot unfolded. Sid Doy provided a music box for sound effects.

A small party visited Hove Town Hall for a Woodland's Craft Fair and spent a very interesting afternoon listening to descriptions of the various goods on display and in some cases handling them. Frank Tinsley especially was absolutely fascinated by beautiful handmade rocking horses as this is his forte in our workshop. He had to be almost dragged away from the display!

A party of about 15 paid another visit to the cinema at Brighton Marina to see the film *Titanic* and all enjoyed it and had no problem following it.

St Valentine's Day did not pass without some romantic recognition and this began on the previous

day with a special Valentine's Day menu. PBK did us proud by serving up a large variety of aphrodisiac titbits such as Pink Hearts (prawns coated in Mary Rose Sauce and heart-shaped!). On Valentine's Day itself a very successful dance was held in the lounge which was decorated with large red hearts, some pierced with arrows. Ernie Took and his band provided the music. With the addition of a 'Happy Hour' spent at the Sussex Beer and Cider Festival at Hove Town Hall, this was certainly a lively weekend!!

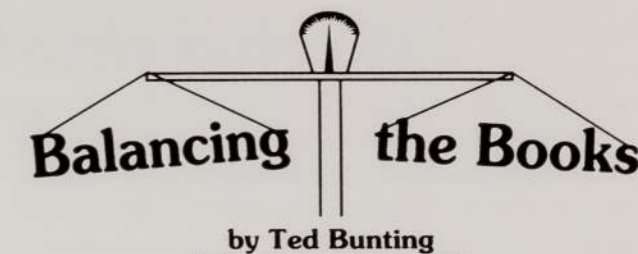
Top marks for Tracie



In February our Chairman, Sir Henry Leach, praised 22 members of staff at St Dunstan's Ovingdean when he presented RNIB Certificates for New Independence Training. Half of those who sat the exam achieved marks over 90 per cent and the majority score was over 80 per cent.

The aim of the training is to improve the service we provide to St Dunstaners by promoting independence and dignity while maintaining the core values of privacy, choice and fulfilment. A top score of 98 per cent was achieved by Senior Care Assistant Tracie Thomas (pictured), one mark ahead of Associate Nurse Sarah Millar.

Other staff members who successfully completed the training were Julia Baker, Marilyn Baker, Caroline Baldwin, Nikki Budinger, Denise Cotton, Maeve Dillon, Karen Dray, Rita Furness, Paul Garwood, Ben Gillam, Susan Harrison, Susan Hendrikson, Jennifer Low, Patrick McBride, Kendrick Morris, Janet Nash, Sue Rowland, Janis Sharp, Dawn Thorp and Glynis Vernon.



Policeman's Progress

Author: *Harry Cole*
Reader: Christopher Scott
Duration: 7 hours
Catalogue number: 6712

It may well be true that we all have a story to tell if only we would make the effort to write it down, but it is doubted if many of us could produce such an interesting and entertaining chronicle as PC Cole has, because his *Policeman's Progress* is a little gem. Not a particularly well polished gem mind you, for it doesn't have the smoothness of the master craftsman whose narrative would probably flow effortlessly from one topic to another. But that, in a way, is a mark of its authenticity; a copper on the beat never knows what might meet him around the next corner and in Harry Cole's long career he has turned many a thousand, only occasionally to encounter something worthy of note.

Although the tone of his book is mostly light-hearted; indeed, at times extremely funny; Harry Cole also describes several human tragedies with considerable skill and feeling, people and their lives have been his life and he clearly knows them very well and cares about them too.

Everyone can enjoy this book, I think; those of us whose memories go back a fair way will be reminded of events and conditions which may have been half forgotten, whilst the younger ones may learn something to their advantage. Either way it's impossible to be the loser by giving it a try.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From: Stan Heys, Peacehaven, East Sussex

I am writing to say thank you very much to all members of the Medicare Section at Ovingdean. Their kind help and attention during my recent illness was very much appreciated. Thank you all and best wishes.

A better theory of evolution

by Alf Bradley

This article is the result of the last paragraph of Mike Tetley's *A visit to the Enchanted Isles* in the February *Review*, in which Mike describes the flora and fauna of a time spent on the Galápagos islands. I think that it was after he visited the Darwin Centre, that Mike concludes, "I'm blown if I can accept evolution," and, "I'm just waiting for a better theory."

Some 20 or more years ago, I had the same feeling. My family were watching the *Life on Earth* series by David Attenborough and I was reading a very old braille book, *The Scripture of Truth*. This by an author, Sidney Collett, was first written in 1904 and had 19 editions. The braille copy was the 13th edition, transcribed in 1927.

Many times during the 13 weeks of that series my attention transferred from my book to the television.

The family were hearing how we progressed from the pond to fur or feather, and finally from four legs to two, then into our skirts and slacks.

But that wasn't what I was reading. Brevity blurs the picture in part, but to share something of the five braille volumes with you, I was deep in Biblical Creation. If I use the right words, I was reading about; Anthropology, Astronomy, Geology and all that makes for life on earth and more. Man in his full completeness of body, soul and spirit, writings and records of gifted folks of a bygone age and the custodians of the history of nations - Greece, China and Egypt.

Scientists, Astronomers, and their like had all been researched, collated giving a most satisfying picture, with the great theme of 'the better theory.' This touched the hand of the supernatural, not the unnatural.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

St Dunstan's moved into new headquarters at Marylebone Road on April 29th 1948. The telephone number was Paddington 5021 and the *Review* advised St Dunstaners that the entrance was at the side of the building in Harcourt Street.

Big 'arted Arthur Askey and the Western Brothers raced down to Brighton to put on a show for St Dunstaners at West House in-between turns at the *Hippodrome*. Busy bee, indeed!

Blackpool St Dunstaners had a glass of port on Joe Walch. The reason for imbibing? They were toasting the marriage of his daughter Joan to Bob Osborne on April 24th. A plea went out for all prospective father-in-laws to follow suit.

Tatler had high praise for St Dunstaner Beryl Sleight who was on a concert tour of South Africa.

St Dunstaner Ted Miller demonstrated how a blind and handless man could operate a loom when Her Majesty the Queen (now the Queen Mother) visited Ovingdean. She was also introduced to trainees in engineering, shoe repairs and typing.

Welcome to St Dunstan's

Mr Jason Hobday of Bedford became a St Dunstaner on December 3rd. He served with the Royal Air Force.

CLUB NEWS

ARCHERY

In memory of our club member and mate Tommy Gaygan and the founder of the club, Laurie Austin, who recently both passed away. Bless you both.

The Summer Land

Their time on earth now is done
Appear before this closing eye
Tell me again I cannot die

Here is my arm please hold it fast
Then with courage we shall pass across that bridge
that's built with love
Into the summer land above.

Bert Wood

St Dunstan's Archery Club Committee

At the St Dunstan's Archery Club AGM on February 16th, the following were elected to the Committee of the Archery Club:

Chairman	John Lilley
Secretary	Roger McMullan
Treasurer	Roger McMullan
Records Officer	Philip Varden
Equipment Officer	Alan Holden
Committee	Norman Perry
	Eric Bradshaw
Club Coach	David Habgood

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Joshua Lynch on May 2nd 1997. He is the third grandchild of *Jerry and Pat Lynch* of Horsham, West Sussex.

MARRIAGE

Congratulations to:

Glyndwr and Sheila Shoemith of Llanelli, Dyfed on November 20th 1997. Glyn is a St Dunstaner.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Colin and Elizabeth Johnston of Melbourne, Australia on September 1st.

Frederick and Peggy Ripley of Wimbledon, London on January 24th.

Reginald and Frances Craddock of Warrington, Cheshire on February 7th.

Edward and Mary Hinton of Wolverhampton, West Midlands on February 28th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Joseph and Ellen Bane of Morden, Surrey who celebrated 63 years of marriage on February 5th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Catherine (Kay) Hilton on January 1st. She was the wife of *Eric Hilton* of Rossendale, Lancashire.

Hazel Howse on February 1st. She was the wife of *Frank Howse* of Dartford, Kent.

Mrs Edith Kingsnorth on February 16th. She was the wife of *Mark Kingsnorth* of Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Mrs Ellen Whitley on February 20th. She was the wife of *Joseph Whitley* of Totton, Southampton.

Mrs Marjorie Cass of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire on January 13th. She was the widow of *William Cass*.

Mrs Martha Boulter of Stanmore, Middlesex on January 16th. She was the widow of *Eric Boulter*.

Mrs Martha Jordan of Crawley, West Sussex on January 17th. Aged 100 she was the widow of *Albert Jordan*.

Mrs Betty Oxley of Garforth, Leeds on February 2nd. She was the sister and cared devotedly for the late *Wilfred Orange*.

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.

Thomas Gaygan,

Queen's Royal Regiment

Thomas Richard (Tommy) Gaygan of North Harrow, Middlesex died on January 19th, aged 77. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1943. He enlisted in the 1/7th Queen's Royal Regiment but was seconded to the 44th Reconnaissance Corps when he was posted to Egypt. He was with the 8th Army during the advance across the desert and up the Tunisian Coast to Enfidaville. In May 1943 Tommy was sent to dismantle an abandoned enemy lorry for spares when a booby-trap exploded, Tommy lost both his hands and was blinded. On his return to civilian life, Tommy became a telephonist at St Dunstan's Headquarters in London where he worked for many years. He retired in 1969. His leisure interests included amateur radio, bowls, archery and travel. Our sympathy goes to his wife Audrey, daughter Mary and all members of the family.

Robert Fullard,

Royal Scots

Robert Arthur (Bob) Fullard of South Benfleet, Essex died on January 26th, aged 78. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1942. At the age of 20 he enlisted and served as a Corporal in the Royal Scots. Whilst giving instructions in the use of anti-tank grenades he received severe head wounds and was totally blinded as a result of an explosion. After his discharge he underwent training in basket making, braille and typewriting. The following year he was accepted by Christchurch College, Oxford to read languages and was awarded an Honours Degree in 1947. Bob then went to France and obtained the Diplome de Langue et de Litterature Francaise from Rennes University, Brittany and taught for a time, since this was his chosen career. He also worked in the Civil Service, having passed his final exams for the Diploma in Government Administration, until he took early retirement at the end of 1972. His favourite leisure time activity was Bridge and he participated in the St Dunstan's Annual Walking Week. Our sympathy goes to his wife Emille, son Martin and all other members of the family.

Edwin Miles,

Inniskilling Fusiliers

Edwin Frederick Miles of Ovingdean died on February 4th, aged 77. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1997. When still only 14 years old, he enlisted

in the Inniskilling Fusiliers and completed three and a half years of Boys' Service before becoming a Bandsman with this regiment. He remained with them for the rest of his army career. Following his instrumental training on the clarinet, he served with the regimental band in India and Singapore, where he was captured by the Japanese in 1943 and spent some time in Changi gaol. He then worked on the Burma Railway until 1945 and it was during this time as a prisoner of war, that malnutrition and privation took their toll on his health and also his sight was damaged. On his return to civilian life he worked, for a time, as a clerical assistant with the Civil Service, but he then took various jobs as a labourer, from which he retired in 1979. At the time of his admission, Ted, as he was known, was a widower and it was not long before he became a permanent resident at Ovingdean. Our sympathy goes to his three daughters and the other members of the family.

James O'Donnell,

Royal Air Force

James Joseph (Jim) O'Donnell of St Dunstan's Ovingdean died on February 16th, aged 57. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1966. At the age of 22 he enlisted in the Royal Air Force and within the year was found to be suffering from an eye condition which caused him to lose sight and he was discharged. On his return to civilian life he worked for some years in industry in Dublin until he retired on health grounds. Jim maintained an interest in athletics, invariably claiming a trophy at events such as the annual camp at HMS *Sultan*. He also enjoyed a sing-song and few social events at Brighton would be complete without a turn from Jim. He married at the age of 19, but sadly this was dissolved a few years ago. Our sympathy goes to his four children and all other members of the family.

John Price,

Home Guard

John (Jack) Price of Loughborough, Leicestershire died on February 16th, aged 87. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1986. He enlisted with the Home Guard in 1940 and, that same year, he was injured by a blank cartridge exploding in his face during a night exercise, which caused him to lose his left eye. However, he continued to serve in the Home Guard until 1945. Mr Price was a foreman coach painter and signwriter until his retirement and his main hobby was fishing, but he also enjoyed playing bowls and

did picture framing at Ovingdean. Our sympathy goes to his wife Doris, their children, and all other members of the family.

George Cole,

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

George Cole of Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex died on February 25th, aged 74. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1965. George enlisted at the age of 18 and served as Private with The Royal Welch Fusiliers (Parachute Regiment), the Green Howards and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. In October 1943 he was wounded in Italy and was discharged a few months later. On his return to civilian life he worked in industry until his retirement in late 1970 on health grounds. His main leisure time interest was amateur radio. George obtained his Radio Amateur Licence in 1972 - call sign G4AWI - and became a founder member of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society in 1976. In 1980 he became a member of the FOC - First Class Morse Operators' Club, of whom only 500 are recognised worldwide. In 1990 he was awarded the G3MOW Memorial Trophy for services rendered to St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society. To George amateur radio was a lifeline enabling him to have friends throughout the world at the touch of a morse key. George married Elsie in 1942 and in 1992 they enjoyed a marvellous party which the family had arranged in Wales as a surprise from them to mark their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Our sympathy goes to Elsie, their four children and all other members of the family.

Frederick Galway,

Irish Guards

Frederick Claude Galway of Sandbach, Cheshire died on March 5th, aged 78. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1952. He enlisted at the age of 20 with the Irish Guards as a Guardsman. In 1940 he was sent to France to cover the retreat to Dunkirk but was blown up at Boulogne. Blinded, he was taken prisoner and spent the next four years in captivity. His discharge came at Christmas 1944. Before the war Fred was employed as a printer and after training at Ovingdean worked in a variety of jobs. He also reared pigs and chickens but the abiding interest in his life was woodwork and handicrafts. In 1992 and 1993 Fred presented HQ and Ovingdean with tactile grandfather clocks which stand as proud mementoes to his craftsmanship. Our sympathy goes to his wife Elsie, their sons Graham, Christopher and Andrew, daughter Alison and all members of the family.