



St Dunstan's Review

July 2001

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Cover picture:

Our Patron Her Majesty The Queen with St Dunstaner Barbara Bell during a reception at Buckingham Palace to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of St Dunstan's.

Full details on page 10.

From the Chairman



On Wednesday May 16th, 250 St Dunstaners and 150 widows and widowers, plus guests and escorts were privileged to be received at Buckingham Palace by our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. She was accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH Princess Alexandra and the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy. The occasion was to celebrate the 85th anniversary last year of the founding of our organisation. St Dunstan's is honoured to have been able to mark such an occasion at Buckingham Palace.

Her Majesty could not have been more gracious in her conversations with many St Dunstaners and widows. HM The Queen must have enjoyed herself talking to you all, because two hours and forty minutes is an all time record for attendance at a similar function! Neither could the Palace staff have been more generous with their hospitality. We are deeply grateful to our Patron and the members of the Royal Family who accompanied her. I am sure it was an event, which many will remember for a long time to come.

As you may imagine, many people were involved in the organising of such an occasion. I would like to pay tribute to Peter Irven, Chantale Venchard, the Welfare Officers, David Vinall and his drivers and the staff of Harcourt Street and Ovingdean, who were all involved in ensuring the smooth running of the day. Thank you all.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



NOTICE BOARD



RECEIPTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Message from Lt Col Peter Irven, Head of Welfare

With the increasing numbers of St Dunstaners and widows there is an inevitable increase in the number of receipts that people would like financial help with through St Dunstan's grants system. I would just like to enlist your help to make the system work to everyone's advantage. The system we use has worked for many years and is designed to ensure that receipts do not get lost and that they are processed with the minimum of delay.

In order to do this would you please keep your receipts in a safe place and hand them to your Welfare Officer when she or he visits, which they do at least every six months. Please DO NOT send receipts directly to Headquarters; please DO NOT send your receipts directly to your Welfare Officers, as they can so easily be mislaid and lost with all the paperwork with which we have to deal.

If the cost of a particular item or service is too great for you to wait until the next visit please speak to your Welfare Officer and they will almost certainly suggest that you send that particular receipt to them for immediate action.

Your help with this will be greatly appreciated.

Help with Medical Expenses

You may not be aware that St Dunstan's will help St Dunstaners, wives, widows and widowers with a number of medical expenses. It may be helpful if I outline what these are.

Chiropody: St Dunstan's will refund the cost.

Dental Treatment: St Dunstan's will refund half the cost of dental treatment.

Glasses: The cost of new lenses can be refunded but not the cost of the frames, as they are a matter of personal choice. Please ensure that the cost of the lenses is clearly stated on the receipt by the optician.

Physiotherapy & Medical Bills: If you are considering asking for a St Dunstan's grant towards these expenses, please discuss this with your Welfare Officer before receiving the treatment, as these may well have to go to the Welfare Committee for a decision. Help can always be given where there is financial need.

Most other expenses are considered on a basis of need. St Dunstan's is usually very generous, however we are required to ensure that the funds are not given regardless of need, and we have to make sure that we stay within the rules set down by the Charity Commission.

DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING

Nick Ward took up his appointment as Director of Fundraising on May 14th. After graduating with a BSc Economics from the London School of Economics his career developed initially as associate director of an international advertising agency. He subsequently expanded into marketing and research with the establishment of his own specialist consultancies.

Following his wife's early death from leukaemia he set up a small memorial charity which funds research at the Royal Marsden Hospital. His continuing interest in the voluntary sector has prompted a recent project investigating more effective charity management.

Nick has now remarried and with a family of nine children, he has finally accepted that the only home, which will be big enough to accommodate everyone, will be the house that he builds himself. In between amusing the children he is an enthusiastic sailor with interests in archery, snorkelling and bee keeping.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The final date for submitting items for publication in the September Review is July 30th.

The final date for submitting items for publication in the October Review is August 31st.

NEW HOME FOR RNIB TALKING BOOKS

The RNIB Talking Book Service has recognised the need to develop its services taking full advantage of technological advances. As the current analogue tape system has now become very dated we have embarked upon a programme of digitization. It became clear, very early in the process, that the current ageing Wembley site was unsuitable to house this development.

We are now pleased to inform you that we located new premises and that the Talking Book Service moved in mid May. Our postal address will change to: RNIB Falcon Park, Talking Book Service, Neasden Lane, London NW10 1TB.

There will be no change in the local call telephone number for Customer Services which will remain as 0845 762 6843.

The above information is also being sent to members of the library on tape which is for you to keep. If you require a braille version please let us know.

Editor's note: The RNIB hope to launch their new system of talking books on CD in April next year.

DERBY WINNERS 2001

There was a little bit extra in the kitty for the *St Dunstan's Review* Derby Sweepstake this year, a total of £447.65p. The Derby itself proved to be one of the most fiercely contested races of recent history. The outcome of the 2001 Sweepstake was as follows:

The first prize of £223.83p was claimed by Mrs E.J. Griffiths of Kidderminster, Worcestershire who had drawn Galileo. The second prize of £89.53p went to Mrs O. Robinson of Enfield, Middlesex who had drawn Golan while the third prize of £44.76p was won on Tobougg by Mr M.W. Ash of Sidmouth, Devon.

The Starters' Prize was divided amongst Mr J. Harris, Reading, Berkshire; Mr C.W. Cummings, Verwood, Dorset; Mr H. Wessel, Birmingham, West Midlands; Mrs M. Quinn, Ripon, North Yorkshire; Mr T. Hart, Sandwich, Kent; Mr C.T. Coston, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire; Mrs V. Jerome, Cookham, Berkshire; Mr T.J. Adams, Kingsteignton, Devon; and Mr A. Wortley, Lincoln, Lincolnshire.

Congratulations, one and all!

ST DUNSTAN'S SHIRTS FOR SALE

New stock of St Dunstan's T-shirts, polo shirts and sweatshirts are now available in medium, large and extra large sizes. The logo is of St Dunstan's badge with the wording "Caring for blind ex-Service men and women" underneath.

Prices as follows:

White T-shirt 100% cotton with blue left-hand chest logo £4.30

Navy T-shirt 100% cotton with yellow left-hand chest logo £4.30

Navy polo shirt 100% cotton with yellow left-hand chest logo £8.30

White polo shirt 100% cotton with blue left-hand chest logo £8.30

Navy sweatshirt 70% cotton/30% polyester with yellow left-hand chest logo £9.00

Postage & packing will be added which will depend on the quantity ordered. You will be notified of this charge on your payment request.

To order please telephone the Public Relations department (Shirts) on 020 7723 5021 or send in a written order to PR Dept (Shirts), 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

URGENT HELP REQUIRED

We will be taking part in the International Festival of the Sea, in Portsmouth on August 24th-27th. We urgently need some products to sell. These must be of a maritime or marine connection such as sea creatures, pirates, boats/ships, Naval personnel (knitted preferably) and anything you can think of which would enhance the St Dunstan's stand.

If you can manage to send something we would be very grateful. We need to have all items in by the end of July. Please send them to Robbie Hazan, Public Relations Department, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD. Tel: 020 7723 5021.

FOR SALE

CD version of the tutorial on the Eudora E-mail program by Brian Hartgen. Price £15. Please apply to Ray Hazan at Headquarters.

THE TOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Disney's Woody and Buzz return in the audio-described edition of *Toy Story 2*. The computer generated animation that brings toys to life for a fun family film leads the latest batch of releases from the RNIB Home Video Service. It has additional narration to provide detail about facial expressions, body language, actions, scenery and costumes. *Toy Story 2* (Order No AV088, price £17.99, Certificate U) stars Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.

The Talented Mr Ripley (Order No AV090, price £14.99, Certificate 15) is a suspense filled thriller about stolen identity. It stars Jude Law, Gwyneth Paltrow and Matt Damon.

Al Pacino and Russell Crowe delve into the murky world of the tobacco industry in *The Insider* (Order No AV089, price £14.99, Certificate 15).

The makers of Wallace and Gromit turned *The Great Escape* into the animated antics of a flock of chickens trying to break free of the pie factory. *Chicken Run* (Order No AV085, price £16.99, Certificate U) offers fun for all the family.

End of Days (Order No AV087, price £14.99, Certificate 18) pits Arnold Schwarzenegger against

Gabriel Byrne's Satan on the eve of the apocalypse. The film contains violent scenes and strong language.

Finally, there is a wake up call for Disney classic *Sleeping Beauty* (Order No AV086, price £14.99, Certificate U). The spectacular adventure is enlivened by music from Tchaikovsky's ballet.

These and other videos can be borrowed for up to two weeks for £2.50 (inc p&p). Alternatively they can be purchased for the recommended retail price.

Contact RNIB Customer Services department on 0845 702 3153.

Future releases include Anthony Hopkins' *Titus* and Colin Firth's *My Life So Far*.

AUDIO DRAMA

Two American dramas have their performances enhanced by VocalEyes Audio Description at the Donmar Warehouse in London. Tickets are a cut price £12. On July 28th, *The Lie of the Mind* draws a detailed map of domestic intimacies, while on November 10th *Little Foxes* stars Penelope Wilton as a ruthless wife who tolerates her husband only for his position. For details telephone 020 7845 5813.

Message from Director of Fundraising



Very few days have actually passed since I joined St Dunstan's but I can already say that it is a great pleasure to be part of such a family organisation.

At the same time, I've also taken on an enormous challenge. The primary goal of fundraising is to make it possible for St Dunstan's to meet its charitable objectives and last year's constitutional changes have definitely set formidable goals. Having said that, overcoming challenges is what St Dunstan's is all about and my aim for the future is to make dramatic strides forward not only raising the funds but also in the imaginative way in which we can use these new resources.

However, this is a task where the Fundraising department can only succeed if we can draw on everyone's assistance. In particular, I would appreciate advice, comments and suggestions from everyone, St Dunstaners and staff, on what you think that we as an organisation do best, what you think we can do even better and what you would like to see us do.

Please feel free to contact me at any time through the Fundraising department by e-mail on nick.ward@st-dunstans.co.uk, letter or telephone on 020 7616 7960. I look forward to building on past success.

Nick Ward

RETURN OF THE IRON MEN

Rusty Simon Rogers finds the fit and ferrous running back to Ovingdean with a new pure gold record



Air Commodore Alan McLoughlin, Director of the RAF Infrastructure presents St Dunstan's Susan Harrison with an impressive cheque reflecting the effort put in by the Sappers and RAF crew from Brize Norton.

The Iron Men of RAF Brize Norton (and some Iron Ladies too) tested their mettle in aid of St Dunstan's on June 6th. Around 70 Sappers and RAF crew took part in the fourth Exercise Iron Man, a unique triathlon event.

Making a 5.00am start at RAF Benson with a 2.5 mile swim, they saddled up for a 150 mile cycle ride from Wiltshire to Southwater, near Horsham before breaking into a 32 mile run to St Dunstan's Ovingdean. A further 30 people followed their progress in a support role.

A slight navigation problem meant that some of the Iron Men actually cycled round part of the course twice. "You obviously enjoyed it," was one wag's comment.

The Exercise Iron Man event was devised by Sappers from Royal Engineers (Airfields) who this year convinced their Royal Air Force colleagues to join them in the endeavour.

The Iron Men were joined at the King Alfred Sports and Leisure Centre, Hove by a team of St Dunstaners

for the last five miles along the coast. St Dunstaners Billy Baxter, Clive Jones, Arthur Harvey, Iain Millard, Steve Sparkes, Mark Threadgold and Steve Nixon ran or tandemed along the seafront. Collecting buckets were shaking all the way.

Legend has it that alchemists turned base lead into gold, but iron seems to have greater effect as the athletes beat last year's £3,000 total.

Air Commodore Alan McLoughlin, Director of the RAF Infrastructure flew in to Ovingdean by helicopter to present a cheque for £4,560, though the final total raised is expected to exceed £5,000. He later paid tribute to those who had taken part in Exercise Iron Man on behalf of St Dunstan's.

The day was crowned by a PBK barbecue followed by the now traditional barn dance.

For St Dunstaner Steve Nixon and Sports Supervisor Grant Cooper it was an opportunity to test a new tandem for the London to Brighton Bike Ride. A full report on how they got on will appear next issue.



Top left: The Iron Men head for Ovingdean.

Above: The public responded with generosity.

Top right: St Dunstaner Mark Threadgold sets the pace on the Brighton seafront.

Middle right: Some of the Brize Norton ladies who took part in Exercise Iron Man 2001.

Bottom right: Pedal power was provided by St Dunstaner Clive Jones and Adrian Tilford.

Below: Thumbs up! It was a flying finish for this member of the Iron Man team.



MORTON IS TOP BOWLER

St Dunstaner Morton Williams has won the first International Indoor Bowling Tournament held in the United Kingdom for Visually Impaired Bowlers. The event was sponsored by British Blind Sports and organised by the Welsh Association of Visually Handicapped Bowlers. It was held at the Glebe Indoor Bowling Centre, Newport, Gwent.

Morton won both the semi-final and final on Saturday April 21st to become the Welsh B2 Indoor

Bowls Singles Champion. On Saturday April 28th, the International took place, Wales v England, there were four classifications B1 to B4, eight Men and eight Ladies. "I won a very close and exciting game 21-16," said Morton. "I have now won both the Indoor and Outdoor UK Singles Championships."

He added that the event was well organised with a friendly atmosphere. Both teams stayed at the Kings Hotel, Newport and enjoyed a great evening together.

CALL ME A CAB



Mr Marino Di Vito of Mann & Overton hands over the keys of the new taxi for Headquarters to Chief Executive, Robert Leader. The cab features a built-in ramp for wheelchairs, a swivel seat, air conditioning and intercom – all designed for the greater comfort and ease of access for St Dunstaners.

HAPPY 105th BIRTHDAY!

On Friday June 15th, Ovingdean Resident Frank Parsons celebrated his 105th birthday. This is a wonderful achievement and on behalf of all readers and members of St Dunstan's family, we extend our warmest congratulations. A party for relatives and friends was held at Ovingdean on the 15th.

A full item about Frank and the party held in his honour will appear in the August *Review*.



TWO BIRDS MAKE ONE HOME

Two Birds came hand-in-hand when St Dunstaner David Bird married Karen Bird in the chapel at Ovingdean on June 6th. Their union was witnessed by family, fellow St Dunstaners and David's guide dog Scott who led the happy couple up the aisle. The ceremony was performed by Rev Tony Otterwell who recently became St Dunstan's padre.

THE BLIND AND HANDLESS REUNION

May 9th-15th 2001

by Iris and Ted Miller

On Wednesday, May 9th we arrived at Ovingdean at about 3 o'clock after a very pleasant journey with Bill and Alice Griffiths who had come down from Blackpool. Our driver, Tracy was most helpful.

After we had unpacked our luggage, we met Pam and Wally Lethbridge, Gwen Obern our chairwoman with Ann her escort, and Bill and Alice for a good old chat. But we were sad to hear that Winnie Edwards was very ill up in the sick bay. On Thursday morning after breakfast we went into the Blue Room to discuss our plans for the coming week. That night we had supper in the Winter Garden with Susan Harrison. We were joined for a very short time by Winnie, who tried to join in the talks, and it was lovely to see her, as she was always so cheerful. But it was sad to see the change in her, and she only stopped a very short time. We had a really lovely supper laid on by Paul and Trevor who never let us down.

On Friday we left Ovingdean to do some shopping in Chichester. After a look round the shops we all joined up at the Jarvis Hotel for lunch, with Ben the orderly (medical) and Tracy the driver. The weather was kind and we enjoyed the trip. In the evening after supper we all went into the lounge to listen to a concert which was very enjoyable. After a few drinks at the bar, we made our way back to our room.

On Saturday, after a meeting in the Stables, our afternoon was free. In the evening we went to Brighton for a dinner at the Belgrave Hotel. Brighton was absolutely packed with visitors and there didn't seem to be any worry about the 'foot-and-mouth' scare. David the driver and Ben were most helpful as always.

On Sunday our plans were changed. We were going to Mr and Mrs R. Petley's at their farm in Heathfield, but due to the 'foot-and-mouth' scare it was cancelled as there were a lot of sheep in the area. So instead, David took us for a ride around the Sussex countryside. We passed by Glyndebourne on our way to a tea garden, which was very nice.

In the evening after supper, we went into the lounge to listen to the Brighton and Hove Male Voice Choir and we enjoyed the music as they sang very popular songs.

On Monday we had a short discussion in the Stables before lunch and at 2.30pm we had a meeting in the conference room with Mr Robert Leader, St Dunstan's Chief Executive, Mr Peter Irven and our President Sir John Gingell. It was a very friendly and informative discussion. In the evening we all met for dinner upstairs in the Winter Garden. Our guests included Sir John and Lady Gingell, Mr and Mrs Robert Leader, Susan Harrison, Mr and Mrs Peter Irven, Miss Carol Maloney, Miss Carole Woodgate, Miss Marion Lurot, Mr Tim Osborne, Mr David Vinall, Mrs Liz Hutchison and Audrey Gaygan.

Sir John Gingell said Grace before the meal and after dinner rose to toast The Queen. After saying a few words, he introduced Gwennie to give the vote of thanks, which she did with her usual witty and excellent speech. She sat down to a great round of applause. Then Mr Leader stood and introduced himself. He told us of his ideas and plans of how he would like St Dunstan's to proceed under the new Charter. He spoke for some time. It was very interesting and we hope his dreams come true. Flowers were then presented to our lady guests and a little gift was given to Gwennie and her escort, Ann, for all the help she gives to our small group. Our thanks to Paul and Trevor for our lovely meal, and our thanks to all the staff and drivers for their help. It was lovely to see Audrey Gaygan whose husband Tommy was one of our handless group. It was later that we heard Winnie had passed away in hospital and we shall all miss her laughter, she was always so cheerful.

On Tuesday, Gwen and Ann and Pam and Wally went back home. Bill and Alice and ourselves stayed on until Wednesday to go to Buckingham Palace - which is another story...

BORDEAUX ARCHERY WIN

The British Blind Sports Archery team won the European Visually Impaired Archery Championship in Bordeaux, France on May 13th. Amongst the winning team was St Dunstaner John Lilley who, individually, came fourth out of 49 contestants.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Ray Hazan reports on a very special occasion

Photographs: Fiona Hanson, PA News



Our Patron Her Majesty The Queen is introduced to Ted and Iris Miller and Billy Baxter.



St Dunstaners Edmund O'Brien and David Thomas chat with Her Majesty The Queen.

No doubt everyone who visited Buckingham Palace on May 16th will have a story to tell. One widow may only reluctantly relate how the time was spent in Accident and Emergency at a London hospital having experienced a bad fall that afternoon. Others may tell you how husband and wife ended up in separate hotels, one clutching the washbag but no clothes (that is the suitcase containing them), the other the clothes, but no washbag!

But almost everyone made it in the end and were delighted and impressed with all that happened. The sound of smashing glass was rarely heard and Palace staff were quick to reassure that it wasn't a priceless antique. The hubbub of conversation was thankfully not overwhelming as a result of the spacious distribution of people amongst the rooms. The waiters were polite and helpful, the drinks constantly flowed and the canapés were tasty!

Her Majesty must have talked to a vast number of people. You will have your own conversations in



Left: Having spoken with St Dunstan's President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, Her Majesty The Queen welcomes Chairman Michael Gordon-Lennox.

Below: The Chairman wrote to Her Majesty to thank her for her hospitality.

mind. But it appears to be her interest in those with whom she was conversing and her understanding in being more tactile with St Dunstaners and her relaxed attitude, which impressed many. Her responses were those of a true veteran of such encounters:

"Thank you, Ma'am for being here."

"Well, it is my party!"

"Who is it?" asked a slightly deaf St Dunstaner.

"I'm the one giving the party!"

Others will have talked to the Duke of Edinburgh, Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvy and they will have many treasured memories.

Many letters of thanks have been received - here are a few extracts:

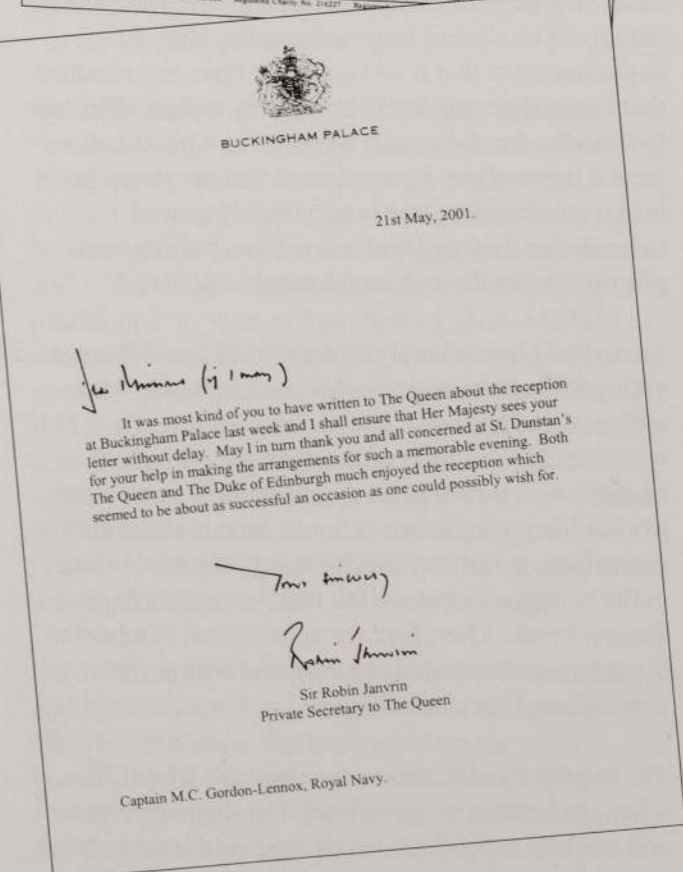
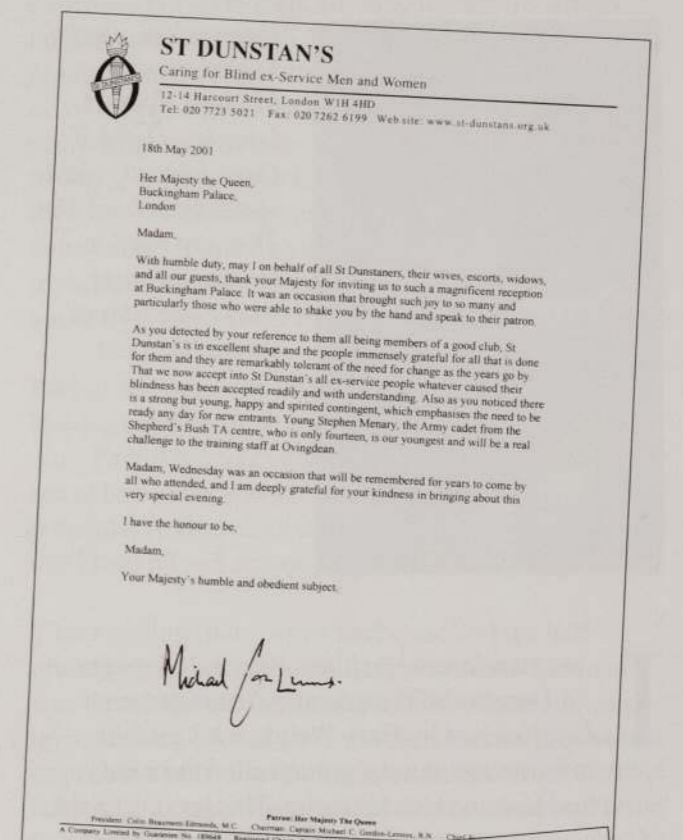
"I never expected the Queen to shake hands with us, nor to meet Princess Alexandra. The Queen was so informal and happy."

"We remarked how much my father would have enjoyed the occasion but know it is thanks to him and what he gave for us that we were able to experience such a wonderful time."

"It certainly will leave a firm imprint of great happiness on everyone's memory."

"Duffy and I loved every minute of the very special celebration of St Dunstan's 85 years' work. The visit to Buckingham Palace is one we shall always remember."

Next year, Her Majesty will celebrate the 50th anniversary of her reign. She will also have been our Patron for half a century. Only another 15 years until St Dunstan's 100th anniversary!



SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

by Jackie Greer, Head of Care



Progressive pilgrim! St Dunstaner Michael Ryan at Lourdes. Head of Care Jackie Greer is standing behind him. They are outside Hosanna House where they stayed during the visit.

Last year Susan Harrison, General Manager of St Dunstan's Ovingdean and myself were approached by Gary Wright who gave us some information about a group called the Joint Services Hosanna House Group. This group consists of service personnel who take disabled ex-Service personnel on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Gary explained to us that it was a charity type organisation that assisted people in raising money to fund their trip to Lourdes for those who were not in a position to fund it themselves. He explained that the group had a hostel type building that is specifically geared towards the disabled and is used as a holiday and pilgrimage for those deemed suitable to attend.

Susan and I immediately thought of Michael Ryan, a young St Dunstaner who is blind, completely deaf, epileptic and has had a stroke, leaving him in a wheelchair. I volunteered to accompany Michael because we knew that he would require some care. Michael has a facilitator at home, who is absolutely marvellous in the way that he assists Michael to live in the community but we felt that it was time to give Terry a break. Therefore we approached Michael to see if he was interested in going and with some trepidation, I feel, he said yes.

The big day finally arrived on Thursday May 17th when we headed down to Exeter to stay overnight and catch an early flight first thing Friday morning to

Tarbes airport in Lourdes. We had a fairly uneventful trip to Exeter - apart from the fact that I made myself feel very car sick as I had been signing to Michael, telling him what was going on. Eventually I retreated into silence. Arriving at Exeter we decided to go out for some tea. I informed Michael what was on the menu and he immediately picked scampi and chips. After eating he stated that it was the first time in quite some while that he had been out for a meal and had fish and chips. That was pleasant.

Friday morning we arrived at the airport as requested and could not initially see any of the group that we were to meet there. Eventually a very attractive man in jeans and a T-shirt introduced himself, adding that he was with the group. I thought "This holiday is looking cheerful already" until he informed me his name was Father Ian - what a shame.

However, everyone was lovely and the group eventually arrived. Michael and I ended up making a joke that it was organised with military precision because the stewardesses kept calling for the group to Lourdes to check in and none of us were moving.

Apparently our tickets were with others who had not yet arrived. When they eventually did, we were loaded onto the plane and Michael was manhandled into his seat. Being 6'2" in stature, he was wedged upright between two chairs with his knees hitting the table of the seat in front. I thought "Oh dear, this is going to be awful." Michael looked round, smiled and said "I can't believe I am here, I never thought I would be in an airplane again." This was the first of many times that I felt a lump in my throat.

The flight was fine. We arrived in Lourdes and as soon as we were checked into our rooms we had to go and assemble with the other military personnel. I had not realised that this was the International Military Pilgrimage. There were over 20,000 people there, most of whom were service personnel from around the world bringing sick and disabled friends and family on pilgrimage. It was extremely emotional. We were formed into groups who marched through the streets of Lourdes with the military bands, down to the opening ceremony. This had almost 50 ministers on the altar, joining in the service.

Everybody was very friendly and helpful. On return to our house we were able to take in the surrounding areas. The views were absolutely fabulous, we were at the foot of the Pyrenees. There were green fields for miles all around us, the weather was beautiful.

I gave Michael a detailed description of the surroundings and he told me that it had brought two memories back. The first being *The Sound of Music* film and I knew exactly what he meant as one expected Julie Andrews to appear on the horizon and the second, of his days in Cyprus. It was nice that it had triggered memories for Michael.

On Saturday we had a long day. This consisted of a parade in uniforms into an underground Basilica. It was a huge arena in which there was another service. After the service, Kath, one of the Hosanna House helpers, brought over a gentleman from the RAF, who with me signing had a long chat with Michael and updated him on changes within the service. Michael was delighted to receive this information. We were supposed to have a concert that evening followed by a procession, however, the concert was cancelled and Michael and I again joked about the organisation with military precision.

That morning Michael was to be showered. On entering the shower room, which was wheelchair accessible, with no curtains and no doors, I asked Michael how he could best cope. He stated that if I helped him by putting his hand on a grab rail he would stand and lean on his good side against the wall until I got the shower chair behind him. He would then sit on this. However, the shower controls were of a lever type for the disabled as opposed to a turn type. When Michael stood up and leant on the wall he promptly leant on the lever and had a freezing ice-cold shower! The air was slightly blue with shock, but we did laugh.

On Sunday morning Michael had a croissant for breakfast, which was like 'manna from heaven'. He thoroughly enjoyed it and the fact that he had company all around him. We then found an area beside Hosanna House that we nicknamed The Glade. This area had a few trees, a bench, an altar and a figure of Our Lady. The reason we went here was that I could hear what Michael was saying. He is quiet spoken and at times it is difficult if there is background noise to make out precisely what is being said. Michael and I spent many happy hours retreating to The Glade and having long chats about the people, the surroundings and life in general.

Sunday was the closing service for the Joint Services International Military Pilgrimage and this was extremely emotional. There were 20,000 people gathered together in the Grotto area. Military bands from all countries played their tunes and then one of the military baritones got up to sing. He sang hymns in various languages and in English he sang *Glory Glory Hallelujah*. To finish they sang *Auld Lang Syne* and all of these people started to wave their hands and sway from side to side. There were sick people on trolleys, in wheelchairs, in rickshaw-type pulleys and they were all smiling and waving. That is when the tears came! It took me almost four hours to control myself sufficiently to hold a normal conversation with anybody. I have never experienced emotions like it.

Part of me was very moved to see all these people looking happy and coming together internationally to pray. Part of me was very angry that Michael could not see or hear what was going on. There was one particular Andrew Lloyd Webber song and each time that I hear it I will always think of Michael there.

That evening there was a barbecue and we had invited a number of the military personnel. Michael was the centre of attention; the ladies were queuing up to shake his hand and introduce themselves. A lot of people came to give him information about the RAF and to ask where he had been posted and I think that although he was tired he thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone.

On the Monday we went to The Glade and then decided to go for a walk to Bartres. It was a local village and the walk was extremely pleasant in country lanes etc. We went to visit a house where St Bernadette had lived and worked for some time and I described to Michael a scene that had been partitioned off with a large sheet of glass. Michael was able to tell me that he had recollections of having seen this as a child on the programme *Blue Peter*. I told him about the goats in the field next to us and he commented that he had not had cause to think about a goat for quite some years. I also informed Michael that there was a nudist colony next door to us. His response "Thank God I'm blind." That evening there was a quiz night, which everybody enjoyed.

On the Tuesday it was extremely hot in the morning and Michael and I accompanied two other people to Bartres for a walk. On the way there the most beautiful little dog came over and allowed Michael to scratch its belly as it lay on the ground. The dog decided to follow us to Bartres and Michael was

asking how the dog was doing and where it was. However, halfway to Bartres, an Alsatian bounded over a fence and chased the dog, squealing up the road. At first I had been terrified that the Alsatian had been coming for Michael and I, then, if I had got the dog, I would have kicked it for scaring off the terrier. However, we went to visit the church where St Bernadette was christened and came back to the house. It was a wet misty afternoon. I was explaining to Michael that there was a halo of cloud hanging over the mountains and that the mist was rolling down them. It was the first time that I understood the song *Mull of Kintyre*.

On the Wednesday, Michael and I decided to take the opportunity to go into Lourdes where we had not really seen anything of the area. We went to visit the Basilica and the Rosary Church. We went to the Grotto and we found the most beautiful shop where there were animated puppets – wooden puppets, in various scenes in courtyards, inns, the nativity scene etc. I described to Michael the puppets in detail and how they were moving. He thoroughly enjoyed this as he is interested in woodwork.

We had lunch out at a street café and when we came back to the house there was a talent contest put on by all of the members of the JSG. At one stage when a song was being strangled Michael commented, "Thank God I'm deaf." It had been a lovely day.

On Thursday we decided to pay a visit to the Cenotaph as a group so that Major General Chambers and Father Evans could lay wreaths in memory of fallen comrades. There was a 60's night in-house that night, which was quite enjoyable. Michael seemed to be more reserved today and I feel that it was probably because he knew that tomorrow our trip would end.

Friday was a quiet day. We sat around the house waiting for the time to go to the airport when two of the other pilgrims, Suzy and Gary Wright approached us. Suzy realising that Michael could not see the group photograph, presented him with a card she had made. It was the most beautiful thing that I had ever seen. It was a tactile card made on a type of papyrus paper – the front had a raised emblem of the charity, like a St Dunstan's badge, with Michael's name in raised letters and on the inside, tactile mountains to remind Michael of the surrounding area.

At this stage for the first time in my life I could not speak. Michael was visibly moved by the effort that

Suzy had made because she had obviously spent a lot of time on the project and he made a small speech to thank them all for having given him such a wonderful week. I had to leave the area to go to a bathroom and fetch some tissues. The group was very, very friendly and very fond of Michael and extremely helpful to us throughout the whole holiday.

All in all it was an emotional roller-coaster of a week. Would I go again – definitely! Would I go with Michael – absolutely! Was it worth the trip – every minute. I thoroughly enjoyed it and felt it was an honour and a privilege to be in the company of Michael Ryan for seven days. I only wish it could have been longer.

50 YEARS AGO

The debate about broadcasting football matches continued! The Football League had banned the BBC from broadcasting live matches, partly on the grounds that it harmed attendance. St Dunstan's Chairman Sir Ian Fraser raised the matter in the House of Commons in an attempt to restore normal service.

Feedback from St Dunstaners included the suggestion that supporters were only interested in their local clubs. "A man in London isn't sitting at home to listen to a match between, say, Everton and Newcastle when he can go and see a London club," was one comment. Another argued that broadcasts did not interfere with attendance. "A broadcast is nothing nearly as good as being present at the actual match."

The final comment concerned better ways of spending FA money. "Instead of paying £25,000 transfer fees for players who only do pretty things, spend the money on improved accommodation, get busy with floodlighting and have evening games and challenge the speedways and greyhound racing."

Four St Dunstaners flew to Jersey to take part in the Island's Liberation Fete. Proceeds from the event were donated to St Dunstan's.

St Dunstaners from Ovingdean visited the Dome of Discovery at the Festival of Britain.

Ovingdean was presented with a "Mechanical Horse". A flick of a switch simulated the movements of a canter, trot or gallop. It apparently provided the same exercise obtained from riding a horse and all the associated aches and pains.

POET'S CORNER

PAGEBOY

by Ernie Bowditch

Seventy-four years ago
I was placed in my first job
As a pageboy
In this here Royal Air Force Club

I wore a uniform of bright blue
Which fitted me like a glove
Now if it had fitted me like a uniform
I'd have been a match for the Lords up above

I started work at six o'clock
Polishing the shoes of the aristocracy
I did not mind this menial job
As we lived in a democracy

But waiters were ten bob a week (with tips)
Which was quite a pity
As the only tips I ever got from the Lordships
Were for the last race of the dogs in the White City

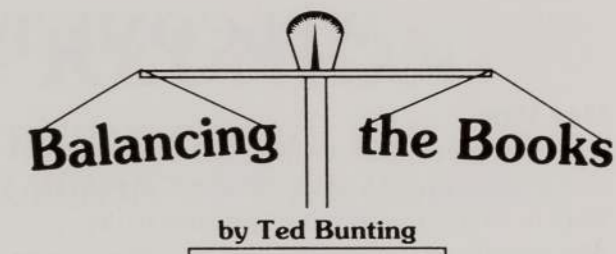
I worked six days a week
And Wednesday was my day off
So picture me walking up Park Lane, ten bob in my hand,
I felt just like a toff

Now the year went by, as years usually do,
It was Spring, and I needed a change
So I gave in my notice to the Secretary
And kept out of the Hall Porter's range

A week later saw me in Park Lane
With my luggage in my hand
And when a Thomas Tilling bus came along
I thought now ain't life grand!

The bus went past Buckingham Palace Gardens
And I waved a hand to King George V
This was quite permissible
As he was still alive (I think)

Then the bus went into Victoria Station
And I caught a train to Brighton
Where I got a job in the First Avenue Hotel
In the playground of the nation!



Secrets

Author: Bernard Maclaverty
Reader: Margaret D'Arcy
Catalogue number: 5642
Duration: 5 hours

When I was a little boy, and my parents used to read stories to me, my favourites all had happy endings and the central characters were invariably what used to be called "decent sorts". Unfortunately, amongst the 15 tales comprising *Secrets* there isn't a single one that approaches my childhood ideal. In describing them, in fact, I was on the point of saying the English language needs fifteen variants of the word "rubbish" to avoid repetition. But then my natural reluctance to be too critical imposed its restraint. "There are cheats, liars, drunkards and 'bad eggs' in the world," I thought, "and in that respect Bernard Maclaverty may well be reflecting the truth." It just seems such a pity that he concentrates on the uglier aspects of life; realistic they may be, honest too in a way, but that doesn't make them pleasant to listen to, does it? We also know there's something nasty on the underside of a zoo-keeper's boots but we don't want to dwell on the subject.

REUNION ROUND-UP

St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided over a gathering of around 100 people at the Liverpool Reunion on May 30th. There were 37 St Dunstaners and 14 widows attending.

The Derby Reunion on June 6th was attended by 30 St Dunstaners and 12 widows. Ray Hazan was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding.

St Dunstan's President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds presided over a gathering of 12 St Dunstaners and three widows at the Cardiff Reunion on June 13th.

WELCOME TO ST DUNSTAN'S

May 30th

Harry Beevers of Castleford, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Army Education Corps from 1948 to 1950. He was initially posted to the Warwickshire Regiment but later transferred to the RAEC. He spent his last year in Mogadishu. After leaving the service he taught History and English until the deterioration of his sight forced him to retire. He then retrained as a physiotherapist. A keen sportsman, he takes part in tandem cycling. Mr Beevers is married to Joan.

Richard Bowyer of Bolton, Lancashire served in the Sherwood Foresters from 1940 to 1943, the Buffs from 1943 to 1945 and the Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1946. He was deployed in North Africa as part of the 8th Army and was injured at El Alamein. He rejoined the North Africa campaign and took part in the Anzio landings. In civilian life he worked for Bolton Water Works and a local bronze powder works. He and his wife Claire have three daughters and a son who is serving with the Army Air Corps. They have 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Herbert Jessey of Finchley, London served in the Sherwood Foresters as a signaller from 1941 to 1946 in India, North Africa, El Alamein, Italy, France and Germany. In civilian life he worked as a carpenter before joining the Royal Mint and then the Health and Safety Executive. Mr Jessey's interests include bowling. He and his wife Doris have two sons and three grandchildren.

Charles Keens of Broadstairs, Kent served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946. He was deployed to France and after Dunkirk was sent to join the 8th Army in North Africa. He was involved with the siege of Tobruk, and El Alamein. After leaving the service he worked for ESSO. A keen sportsman, he enjoyed athletics, tennis, badminton, squash and now bowls. He and his wife Margaret have a son and two grandchildren.

Walter Leathley of Horsforth Leeds served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1942. All workshop personnel were then transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and he remained

with them until 1946. He served in the Western Desert, taking part in El Alamein, Salerno, the liberation of Italy and the Normandy landings. He then returned to work as a mechanic at a mill in Leeds before becoming a general handyman for a hotel group. An active Cub Scout leader for 26 years, he enjoys talking books. He has two sons and five grandchildren.

Wilfred Robins of Fairford, Gloucestershire served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1952 to 1959. He trained as an aircraft technician and served in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. In civilian life he worked in engineering. He enjoyed carpentry, gardening and clock making.

Ernest Stainthorp of Darlington, County Durham served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946. He served in North Africa and Germany. After leaving the service he worked in the building trade and as a wagon repairer on the railways. He used to enjoy football and cricket and played in the district league. He has three sons and two daughters.

Get well soon, Maria



Maria Bullingham's sterling effort in the London Marathon took on a new dimension after a visit to the doctor!

Last issue we reported how Maria, wife of St Dunstaner Terry, had made the 26-mile run even though she feared she had torn a tendon. In fact, she was running with a broken foot.

At time of writing, Maria had her foot in plaster. We wish her the swiftest of recoveries.

A CANADIAN REUNION

16TH NATIONAL REUNION OF THE SIR ARTHUR PEARSON ASSOCIATION OF WAR BLINDED

by
Colin Beaumont-Edmonds

When Joyce and I left Heathrow it was cold and wet, so the warm sunshine in Toronto, seven hours later, was really wonderful. So was the warm welcome we received from Anne Sanders who was there to meet us. Later Marjorie Chatterton drove us down to The Ramada Hotel at Belleville, an expanding town on the banks of Lake Ontario, and about forty miles to the East of Toronto.

We had arrived a day early to recover from the jet lag, and had a delightful afternoon with Ruth and Ted Wooding. They showed us around Prince Edward County, a rural island just over the bridge from Belleville.

The first official gathering was the President's Welcome Luncheon, which gave me the opportunity to deliver the good wishes of the Council and everyone connected with St Dunstan's for a happy and successful Reunion. In the afternoon at their General Meeting, Anne Michielin was re-elected President of the Sir Arthur Pearson Association (SAPA). Before further business was started, I was whisked away to take part in a broadcast interview, when Bill Mayne spoke of the origin of SAPA and I explained how Sir Arthur founded St Dunstan's.

The next morning I attended a meeting at which I explained the changes that we had made in the U.K. and the changes, which now affect the war blinded in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

Before the meal was served that evening the Pipe Band from CFB Trenton entertained us, and afterwards the Guest Speaker was Cliff Chadderton, Chairman of The Veterans Affairs Canada and Chief Executive Officer of The War Amputees of Canada.

Saturday morning saw us gathered around the Cenotaph at Trenton Air Base for a memorial service and wreath laying ceremony. Followed in the afternoon by a most interesting tour of the CFB Trenton Museum, where volunteers were busy reconstructing a Halifax bomber. Most of this had

been raised from the bottom of a Norwegian fjord where it had lain for almost sixty years.

Sunday was given over to Veterans Affairs seminars and workshops.

The Canadian National Institute hosted the closing Banquet for the Blind. Before listening to Larry Murray, the Deputy Minister for Veterans Affairs Canada, I was able to thank everyone for giving Joyce and myself such a pleasant and enjoyable visit, and for presenting me with a wooden plaque of the Sir Arthur Pearson Association badge, beautifully carved by the craftsmen at the CNIB.

Officially this may have been the final Reunion, but the members will always be remembered through the SAPA Room at the CNIB Headquarters and by the Scholarship Foundation, founded by Fred Woodcock, who I knew when he was training at Church Stretton in 1945. He returned to his own country, where he wished to assist the young civilian blind, who were leaving school, to enter college or university.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**From: Walter Briggs, Netherton,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire**

I feel compelled to write to congratulate all the staff at St D's for the wonderful organisation of the recent visit to the Palace. A great deal of work must have been put in by lots of people for everything to go smoothly. Everyone I have spoken to had a wonderful night. Well done to all of you and a special thanks to the drivers. I know that some of our drivers worked beyond the call of duty, even going without meals. Thank you all.

**From: Gwen Hannant, Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire.**

Thank you to all the nurses and staff at Ovingdean who looked after my husband Ernie so well.

St Dunstan's Archers beat Army and Air Force in Sandhurst shoot ***STRAIGHT AND ARROW***

by Simon Rogers



Team supreme! St Dunstan's Archery Club won the day and Nigel Whiteley, Lady Paramount Margaret Carter, David Poyner, Cliff Ford, Steve Moseley, and Terry Ottewell take a bow!



Army and Air Force archers take aim.



Army archer Sgt Weeks watches St Dunstaner Tony Parkinson prepare to shoot.

St Dunstan's Archers came out tops when they stood on two teams from the Services at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on June 12th. They successfully routed teams from the Army and the Royal Air Force in a hotly contested match of 60 arrows shot over 100 yards.

Sandhurst is regarded as the "Home of Archery in the Army" and their cricket ground provided a suitable field for the contest. While on the field, as they basked in the sun, the team were not so sure of the potential for victory. As St Dunstaner Tony Parkinson said, "There is no wind, we're shooting on level ground - it's all stacked against us!"

In the end, Lady Paramount Margaret Carter revealed that St Dunstan's had beaten both teams, though they only had a one-point lead on the Army. St Dunstan's winning team consisted of Nigel Whiteley, David Poyner, Cliff Ford, Steve Moseley and Terry Ottewell.

Both Service squads took their defeat in good cheer and praised the skill of the members of St Dunstan's Archery Club. There was eager anticipation for a re-match at Ovingdean.

ALAN LOGAN TROPHY LIBERATED

by John Stevens

On Thursday May 18th, a party of St Dunstan's Golfers travelled to the Royal Marines Barracks at Chivenor, near Barnstaple, Devon, to play for the Alan Logan Trophy. The coach party was driven by Brian "Sparky" Muggeridge. Other players, a party of Guides from Swindon, travelled independently. The evening was spent socially in the Sergeants Mess.

Friday morning we all tee'd off in sunshine and a cool breeze. Each St Dunstan's player was accompanied by a Libbaton club member and a Royal Marine. I can only comment on the three ball in which I was playing Dave Kingdon and Royal Marine Mick Wilton. The most important person in each team was, for us, the guide. I am sure that all our players enjoyed their individual games. Dave Kingdon was constantly heard to remark when I played a good shot "that's 'ansome" a London phrase not often heard now!

After play we were treated to Libbaton Golf Club's excellent hospitality, followed by the presentation of the Alan Logan Trophy to St Dunstan's Golfers. The final score was St Dunstan's 191, Libbaton 188 and the Royal Marines 144. The Trophy is now on display in the Blue Room at Ovingdean.



Top: John Stevens, Chris Ottewell, Des Chandler holding the Alan Logan Trophy, Reg Perrin and Phil Dobson. **Bottom:** Craig Neller, Stephen Sparkes.

Unfortunately this year we had no sponsorship but our Chairman Dave Morris provided prizes for the best individual score, presented to Des Chandler and his guide, Royal Marine team player Nigel Small. Our grateful thanks to Colour Sergeant Ceri Lewis who organised the event. Finally to the guides without them we would not be able to play the game we love.

POSTCARD FROM GALÁPAGOS

St Dunstaner Mike Tetley recently received a reminder of a trip to exotic climes. Back in 1998, Mike wrote in the *Review* of his trip to Galápagos, the tropical island where he encountered giant tortoises and Darwin's finches.

During that visit he came across a relic of pioneering seafarers, an ancient postal system that relied on a travellers code of trust to pass on messages.

On the island was a barrel which, in the 16th century, would have been used by the Navy and merchant vessels to deposit messages in the hope that ships heading back to Blighty would pass word to loved ones at home.

On occasions, these messages would be intercepted by pirates with their own nefarious agenda for the contents. If a privateer left word that it was carrying

some fine bounty it could find itself the target of an unexpected attack.

These days, tourists are encouraged to leave a postcard in the barrel in the hope that a subsequent traveller will deliver it. Mike left a postcard in the barrel during his stay on the archipelago. Some three years later, another tropical tourist delivered the card to his St Albans home.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTH

Congratulations on the birth of:

Elly Pippa on June 2nd. She is the sixth great-granddaughter of Sylvia Meleson of Wembley, Middlesex and the late *Harry Meleson*.

RUBY ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Anthony and Helen Bowyer of Rushden, Northamptonshire on May 27th.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

John and Doris Bolton of Allerton, Liverpool, Merseyside on June 2nd.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Samuel and Grace Keating of Exmouth, Devon who celebrated 65 years of marriage on June 6th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Margaret Hamilton of Thetford, Norfolk on May 16th. She was the widow of *Benjamin Hamilton*.

Mary Windley of Irlam, Greater Manchester on May 19th. She was the widow of *Harry Windley*.

Gladys Patton of Gosport, Hampshire on May 24th. She was the widow of *Albert Patton*.

Annie Higgs of Guildford, Surrey on June 6th. She was the widow of *Edward Higgs*.

Hilda Mash of St Brelade, Jersey on June 7th. She was the widow of *James Mash*.

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.

Winnie Edwards

Royal Ordnance

Winnie Edwards of Partridge Green, West Sussex died on May 15th, aged 78. She had been a St Dunstaner since 1944. Mrs Edwards was a

Munitions Worker at Royal Ordnance Factory Swynerton when she was blinded and lost both hands in an explosion. Despite this multiple handicap, she raised her children with all the dedication of her peers. Renowned for her independence and cheerful approach to life, she regularly took part in the Gardening Club, Ladies' and Handless Reunions and had an interest in music. Our sympathy goes to her sons David and Phillip and all other members of the family.

Harold Tyler

Royal Air Force

Harold Tyler of Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire died on May 16th, aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946 with Coastal Command at Leuchars, Scotland and Gibraltar. After the war, he worked in the gas industry. In retirement Mr Tyler was an administrator for a university college. Our sympathy goes to his widow Tanya, their three sons and all other members of the family.

Percival Blackmore

South Wales Borderers

Percival Joseph Blackmore of Cardiff, South Glamorgan died on May 29th, aged 75. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1945. Mr Blackmore worked as a machinist before joining the South Wales Borderers in 1944. He was wounded in action in Holland. After training at St Dunstan's he worked in industry. His interests included archery. Our sympathy goes to his widow Evelyn, daughters Nerys, Nesta, Ruth and Barbara and all members of the family.

Ernest Hannant

Royal Air Force

Ernest Albert Arthur Hannant of Hemel Hempstead, died on June 3rd, aged 93. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1979. Having joined the Royal Air Force in 1941, he was injured in 1944 while serving as a Leading Aircraftman in Egypt. After his discharge in 1946 he worked in local government. Mr Hannant joined the choir of St John's Church, Boxmoor as an eight-year-old in 1915. On the way to his first practice he had to duck for cover as a Zeppelin was shot down. He was still singing for the choir 76 years later and this achievement was feted by the Royal School of Church Music. His other interests included bowls and bridge. Our sympathy goes to his widow Gwendoline, daughter Susan, son Michael and all other members of the family.