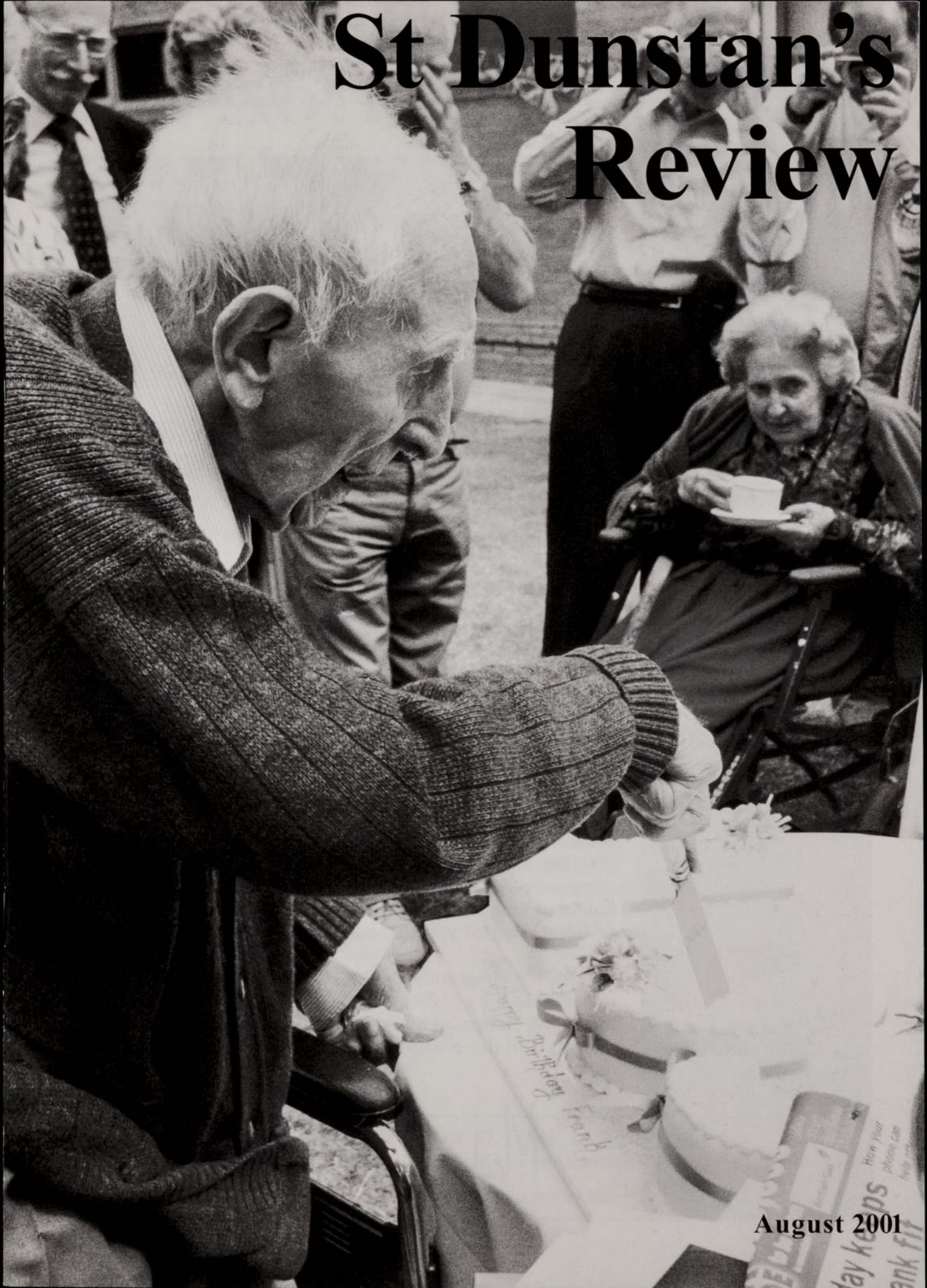


St Dunstan's Review



August 2001

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Cover picture:

St Dunstaner Frank
Parsons cuts a three-piece
cake celebrating his 105th
birthday. Each segment
was a number.

We wish Frank a very
happy birthday on page 6.

From the Chairman



Ovingdean has witnessed many structural changes since its completion in 1938. We have always striven to keep up with current needs and expectations. Whilst it might seem a large building, space has always been at a premium and we have needed to ensure no rooms have been left unused.

I am pleased to report that the new bedrooms on the 4th floor, north wing are now in use. Hopefully, by the time you read this, those in the fuselage will also be ready for occupation.

I know many of you will be happy to hear the swimming pool is back in commission and timings are printed elsewhere in this issue. This facility is not cheap to run in terms of both manpower and maintenance. We are starting with a limited number of days and will monitor use over the coming weeks. I do hope many of you will make use of the pool.

Finally, my congratulations to Frank Parsons, who reached the remarkable age of 105 in June. I also express my admiration to all who competed in the London to Brighton bike ride and thanks to all those who supported them.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



NOTICE BOARD



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

On the occasion of her official birthday, St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN sent the following message:

"On behalf of St Dunstan's Council and our blinded ex-Servicemen and women I would be grateful if you would convey to Her Majesty the Queen our most loyal greetings on the celebration of her Official Birthday on Saturday.

"We send Her Majesty all our good wishes."

Her Majesty replied:

"I was pleased to receive your kind message of loyal greetings sent on the occasion of my Official Birthday on behalf of the Council of St Dunstan's and the blinded ex-Servicemen and women for whom the organisation cares.

"The Duke of Edinburgh and I much enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate the eighty-fifth anniversary of St Dunstan's last month, and as your Patron, I send you my warm thanks to all concerned for their good wishes.

"Elizabeth R."

MARTIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The South of England Martial Arts Festival for Disabled People will be held at Lordswood Leisure Centre, near Chatham, Kent on Thursday November 15th.

The Festival will offer taster sessions in a wide variety of martial arts including karate, judo, aikido and, for the first time, the Tibetan martial art of tetsudo. There will be demonstrations by disabled martial artists.

For further information contact Festival Director Terry Taylor on 07812 100420 or e-mail him on terry.taylor@dial.pipex.com.

CHARGES FOR THOSE CANCELLING TRAINING COURSES AT OIVINGDEAN

We would like to inform everyone that cancellation charges for those attending training courses at Ovingdean were introduced on August 1st. These will be identical to holiday cancellation fees as follows:

If longer than one months notice	No charge
2-4 weeks notice	£25
Under 14 days notice	£50

This is being introduced due to the unfortunate situation that does occur when St Dunstaners cancel at the last moment. This makes for bad utilisation of staff and prevents other St Dunstaners from being scheduled into a training slot.



St Dunstaner Ron Tingay was the first person to swim in the re-opened pool.

SWIMMING POOL OPENING TIMES

The Swimming Pool at St Dunstan's Ovingdean recently reopened. The opening times are as follows:

Tuesdays & Thursdays

09:30 - 12:00	St Dunstaners only
12:00 - 16:00	St Dunstaners & Guests/Family

Sundays

09:30 - 12:30 and 13:30 - 16:00	St Dunstaners & Guests/Family
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DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The final date for submitting items for publication in the October Review is August 31st.
The final date for submitting items for publication in the November Review is October 1st.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE

We have some new designs for you this year and we hope that you like them. They come in two sets, each with two designs.

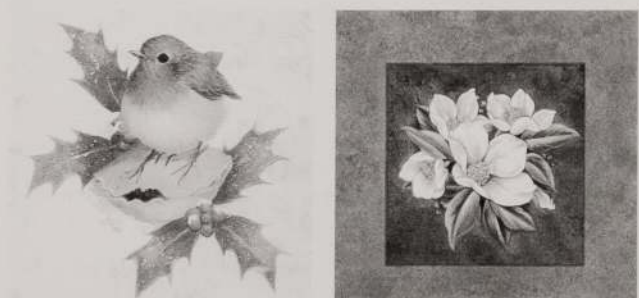
Set 1 (Code M1) £2.00 per pack of ten cards (five of each design). Card size 130 x 98mm.



The first card, *Christmas Fanfare*, from an original painting by Karen Taylerson has a trio of winged angels blowing a fanfare on tasselled trumpets against a gold background with stars. The image is surrounded by a scarlet border and flanked by a blue column of holly and baubles.

The second card is an acrylic painting of *Bethlehem*. The travelling star rests over purple towers as doves fly through the sky. At the centre of the town is a nativity scene with the three wise men attending the new born Messiah in the stable.

Set 2 (Code T2) £2.50 per pack of ten cards (five of each design). Card size 125 x 125mm.



Robin and Mince Pie is an apt title for this card painted by Barbara Mitchell. It shows a plump red breasted robin sitting on a mince pie with frosted holly on either side. The pie has been pecked open on one side and crumbs lay on the snowy background.

Christmas Rose, from a painting by Tricia Harrison shows the white bloom with red berries. It has a green background and is framed by a deep red border.

The greeting message inside the card reads "With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year". All the cards state that they are sold in aid of St Dunstan's.

If you would like to place an order please state which set you require, either M1 or T2. 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 on 020 7723 5021 or send in a written order to PR Dept (Cards), 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

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 on 020 7723 5021 or send in a written order to PR Dept (Shirts), 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL TICKET SCHEME

RNIB allocates tickets for its box at the Royal Albert Hall at greatly reduced rates. For information on performances and booking, contact Ben Flanagan or Isabella Murdoch on 020 7391 2063.

Barabara Degenhardt reports on the Archery Week June 9th-14th SUMMER OF CHAMPIONS FOR ST DUNSTAN'S GOLDEN SHOTS

Unbelievably, the week showed how great an English summer can be, but so rarely is. For most of the week the sun shone on the righteous and unrighteous alike and the shooting reflected this. Starting on Saturday June 9th with a visit to a local club, a four-way competition was won with our team beating all three opponents. The Host Club is well known for the magnificence of its catering and they certainly took the honours for tea.

This was followed on Sunday by a team from Norfolk giving us a return match - which again we unsportingly won. This time PBK put on an excellent dinner for our guests.

Monday was a rest day as we were booked for a match against the Army at Sandhurst on Tuesday. Our team always receives a very warm welcome from host clubs, but shooting against the Services is very special. As reported in the July *Review*, the match resulted in a win for us and another fine meal.

On Wednesday and Thursday we stayed at home, shooting against each other for in-house trophies. The Dacre Trophy was retained by Tony Parkinson, and the RUC Pairs Champions were Steve Moseley and Clive Jones.

The British Blind Sports Archery Nationals were scheduled for the weekend and although we were all saddened by the death of Sid Doy, one of our



British Champion Tony Parkinson.



St Dunstan's Archers with Alison Williamson.

stalwarts, we set off for Lilleshall, the National Sports Centre in Shropshire full of determination to bring back some silverware. Summer was back to normal and the motorways were doing their best to thwart our ambitions.

A magnificent venue, the house with its spectacular grounds and gardens was once the country seat of the Duke of Sutherland. The Championships, which had sponsorship from GKN, started at 9.00am on Saturday and we were honoured to have Alison Williamson, Britain's No. 1 woman archer, as Lady Paramount. Also on the line shooting from her wheelchair, was Tracy Lamb, a Paralympian shooter, whose score filled us with envy and admiration.

However St Dunstan's were certainly no slouches. In a field of 29, one bronze, two silvers, two British champions and a British record have put us firmly on the archery map and we are looking forward to consolidating and adding to these awards at the Indoor Championships next February.

Steve Moseley	B3 Non-tactile, Recurve	Gold
	British Record and Champion	
Tony Parkinson	B1 Tactile, Recurve	Gold
	British Champion	
Norman Perry	B1 Tactile, Compound	Silver
Nigel Whiteley	B2 Tactile, Compound	Silver
John Lilley	B2 Tactile, Recurve	Bronze

MANY HAPPY RETURNS!

Family and friends toast St Dunstaner Frank Parsons as he celebrates a very special birthday

by Lyn Neville

On Friday June 15th, we had a very uncommon occurrence at St Dunstan's Ovingdean - a 105th Birthday Party!! Frank Parsons, who was born in 1896, celebrated his birthday along with 60 plus family, friends, St Dunstaners and staff.

St Dunstan's President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds congratulated Frank, passing on the best wishes of the Chairman, Members of the Council and fellow St Dunstaners.

Frank, his voice projecting clearly and sharply across the garden, thanked everyone for joining him at Ovingdean to celebrate.

MUSICAL CELEBRATION

A thanksgiving service was held, followed by a lovely birthday tea. Music has always played an important part in Frank's life and that was reflected in the choice of entertainment. Brighton Male Voice Choir, joined by members of their Thanet equivalent and some of Frank's family, sang a wide selection of songs. To close the party, a friend of Frank's played his favourite piano pieces for him. "You really lived that," said Frank of one piece.

Amongst Frank's many guests was his friend Albert Marshall, or 'Smiler' as everyone called him. 'Smiler' is probably one of the few people to appreciate how the world has changed around Frank, he is a year younger - 104 years old!

They met in France during commemorations for the 80th Anniversary of Passchendaele during which Frank read the lesson and 'Smiler', The Lord's Prayer.

Top: Frank, with his daughter Audrey, thanks everyone for coming. **Middle:** With special guest Queen Victoria. **Bottom:** "Smiler" Marshall, a mere snip of a lad at 104, greets Frank.



Another guest at Frank's party bore a close resemblance to Queen Victoria. The lady portraying her has taken the role in a number of Dickens Festivals. Frank pointed out that he was only five years old when the real Victoria passed away. More contemporary Royal greetings came when a birthday message from our current Queen was read out.

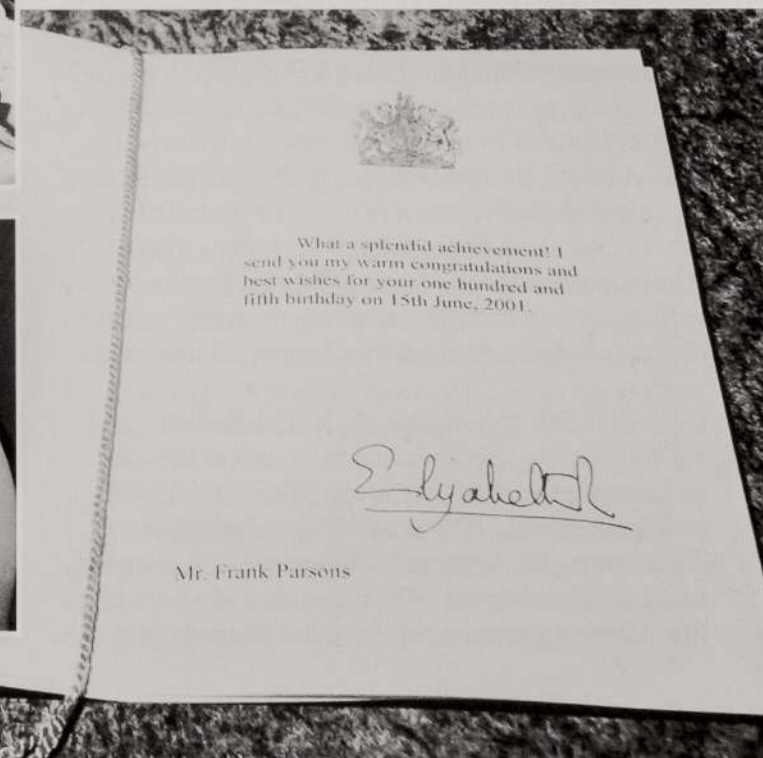
Frank is one of the few St Dunstaners to have served during the First World War. He joined the Royal Engineers in August 1915. As a corporal, he served as a drill and musketry instructor at Chatham and was later posted to Egypt.

He left the service in 1919 and worked as a carpenter with his father in Gloucestershire until 1934 when he moved to Southport and became clerk of works to a firm of architects. In 1947 he set up his own business as a jobbing builder before retiring in 1966. A keen cricketer he played as an all-rounder for a number of local clubs.

Frank's interest in carpentry continues to this day. He can often be found in the Workshop producing some outstanding items such as a miniature chest of drawers, stool and magazine rack. He recently took up weaving and constructed a wastepaper basket for his daughter.



Above: Frank during The Great War with his wife to be Caroline. **Left:** St Dunstan's President passes on best wishes from the Chairman and Council. **Bottom left:** A cake like no other. **Below:** Birthday greetings from Her Majesty The Queen.



ST DUNSTANER RETURNS TO NORTHERN IRELAND



St Dunstaner Ray Peart meeting members of 1GBW Regiment during his visit.

Northern Ireland veteran and St Dunstaner Ray Peart, from Gloucester, recently visited the 1st Battalion The Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment at their base in Northern Ireland. Ray, accompanied by his wife Claire, was treated to a VIP visit of his former Battalion on a typically bleak and rainy day on June 15th. The poor weather could do nothing to dampen Ray's enthusiasm to bring himself up to date with life in the Battalion today.

Having joined the Gloucestershire Regiment in 1966, he completed his basic training in Exeter (having been awarded best recruit) and went on to serve in Chester, Cyprus, Berlin, Honiton, Minden (Germany) and, of course, Northern Ireland. During his third Operational tour of Northern Ireland, he was severely injured by a terrorist bomb whilst on patrol at Divis Flats, Belfast on July 17th 1973, which left him blinded. Sadly, two of his patrol were killed in the attack and others were left with serious injuries. After a long period of recovery, Ray eventually went to St Dunstan's in Brighton to come to terms with his disability and prepare himself for his new life unsighted.

During his time at St Dunstan's, Ray made many good and long lasting friends (some still going to this day) and prepared himself for the rest of his working life by learning braille, typing, mobility and telephony. After leaving the Army and St Dunstan's, Ray returned home to Gloucester in 1975 and settled into civilian life. A keen sportsman before he lost his sight, Ray

decided to compete in the 1976 Olympics and was chosen to represent Great Britain in the Pentathlon event for the visually impaired. After attaining a very creditable 10th position in the world, Ray was congratulated by then Prime Minister James Callaghan at a reception held at 10 Downing Street, where he met other sporting icons including Sir Henry Cooper.

Ray continued his sporting pursuits and competed twice in the Sporting Valour Awards being beaten in the first year by a French Tour de France cyclist and in the second year by Formula One race ace, Niki Lauda. Ray secured employment at Barclays Bank PLC in Cheltenham when he met his second wife Claire, who also worked for the bank (and still does today), and emerged from a difficult time of his life to find happiness with his soul mate of almost 20 years. He claims that Claire was his saviour and the reason why he has remained so positive and active for the past 20 years. Ray has continued his sporting interests over the years and has competed in a marathon, half-marathon, triathlon and many other sporting events. Now retired, his hobbies include playing cribbage for a local team, swimming, amateur radio and attending local lodges in the Gloucester area. A recent highlight of Ray's life was meeting Her Majesty The Queen at a Buckingham Palace reception to celebrate St Dunstan's 85th anniversary. Not only was he delighted to be invited to attend this very special anniversary, he was amazed and honoured to be able to actually meet and chat with The Queen in person. Ray and Claire continue to attend St Dunstan's reunions and are members of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society.

During his visit to Northern Ireland, Ray also had the opportunity to visit his son Jonathan's family, and stay with other Gloucester-based Servicemen at RAF Aldergrove. However, without a doubt, the highlight was the visit to his former Battalion, for which he is grateful to all those involved.

Ray said, "I have always been a little apprehensive about returning to Northern Ireland. But this trip has laid a ghost to rest. Claire and I very much enjoyed ourselves and we are looking forward to going back there again. We really are grateful to all those who made this trip possible and looked after us so well."

BRIGHTON OR BUST!

Lynda Stringer reports on the London to Brighton Bike Ride on June 17th



St Dunstaner Steve Nixon and Grant Cooper came cruising out of Clapham Common in valiant form. However, mechanical problems would later force Steve to abandon the ride.

The alarm rings at 03:40! Another alarm rings at 03:45, just in case! Do I really want to be doing this? Suddenly getting up at the crack of dawn does not seem such a good idea. Still, it'll be better when I'm up. It's the London to Brighton Bike Ride today, as well as getting myself organised I have also promised to pick up Steve Sparkes who lives nearby and Billy Baxter and Arthur Harvey from Nevill Road – hope they've not overslept.

At 05:00 everyone is gathered at Ovingdean; some old hands who know what they have let themselves in for yet again, and others who are anxiously anticipating the events about to unfurl before them! The bus has been loaded with a various assortment of bikes, tandems and the pièce de résistance – the new Trice! This is a three-wheel recumbent tandem purchased especially for St Dunstaner Steve Nixon to use in this year's event. This time he will be guided not only by Grant Cooper, but also Mike Godden and Dave Goldsmith. Hopefully, they will cover around 20 miles each with Steve.

The journey to Clapham Common passes fairly uneventfully, save for the lack of seats on the bus

taking the riders. Still, the floor is not that uncomfortable! Packed breakfasts, courtesy of PBK are passed around and everyone tucks in.

We arrive at Clapham Common at around 07:00. The bikes are unloaded and everyone makes for the start line where there are thousands of other cyclists congregating. Some are making last minute adjustments, some just milling around and lots dashing off to the loo one last time before they leave.

The Trice causes quite a stir amongst everyone, with a special mention from the commentators before being given special clearance over the start line. As everyone gradually makes their way forward their cards are stamped and we're off, only to stop again as the foot-and-mouth outbreak makes its presence felt and we have to dismount and push our bikes over disinfected mats. Then we're really off.

Its quite a cold morning, not like last year when we sweltered on the hottest day of the year. Still, the going's good even if it is a little chilly. There's lots of banter to be had amongst the team as we weave our way through the Clapham traffic and head south.



St Dunstan's Cyclists prepare an assortment of tandems, bicycles and the Trice for the bike ride.

From the left: Malin Hammonhog, Dylan Kethur, Terry Bullingham and Dr Graeme Douglas, Sarah Jarron, Pete Walker, Mike Godden, Bob Willis, Steve Nixon and Grant Cooper, Gary Lomas, Steve Sparkes and Lance Freeborn, Lynda Stringer and David Goldsmith, Trevor Richardson, Billy Baxter and Ian Hebborn, Maeve Dillon, Arthur Harvey and Dave Keller.

Terry Bullingham is resting his legs, letting Graeme Douglas take the strain, Billy Baxter is lowering the tone of the conversation as he does, aided and abetted by Ian Hebborn and Gary Lomas just sings as usual – making sure I stay awake.

The going is good and we wave at some of the girls, Janis Sharp, Gaye Staff, Katy Russell and Lyn Neville who have found a pub already!

Grant and Steve have got away to a flying start and it is some way before we catch up with them. All appears to be going well, Mike and Dave have taken the opportunity to burn a little rubber and spurt ahead to meet with Grant and Steve further along the road.

Still the going is good but then we get disaster Number One! A phone call on the much maligned, but extremely useful mobile phone. Stan, our driver has had a call from Grant, who by now has changed places with

Dave Goldsmith. Grant and Mike have managed to break the chain on their tandem and need assistance. Stan will not be able to meet us at Nutfield for a refreshment break as planned since he has gone to find Grant and Mike. Several phone calls later to the rest of the team to let them know and we press on.

Ian Hebborn by now, has made several adjustments to team bikes – where would we have been without him? Eventually stopping for a natural break Dave and Steve join us at a refreshment stop. They are going well, but Dave's getting worried that Mike is not around to take over from him. We push them off into the road only to catch up with them a few miles further on.

Disaster Number Two! The lower cog on the Trice has got mangled in the chain and is useless. Ian to the rescue again, but this time there is nothing he can do. He manages to straighten the cog so that Dave can

carry on, but without the low gears now, making uphill climbs impossible. Ian and I, with Billy and Gary decide to stay with Dave and Steve to give them a push when they reach the inevitable hills. All too soon the first hill is before us. Ian and I leave Billy and Gary with the tandems and start to push.

As we near the top of the hill, Simon Rogers is spotted, followed closely by Bob Willis from the gym. It slowly dawns on us, as we push, that we have reached Nutfield and Stan is there with the bus after all. Grant and Mike had managed to reach an official repair station which left Stan able to head back to Nutfield after all. What a welcome sight!

We decide to wait with Dave and Steve until Grant and Mike arrive to decide what to do next. It doesn't take long to make that decision! Sadly, the ride is over for the Trice, and consequently for Steve.

The Trice is loaded onto the bus and a very disappointed Steve is led to his seat to continue the journey back to Brighton in comfort. Hard luck Steve. It just goes to show it doesn't matter how much planning and preparation is done beforehand, you can't account for everything.

Dave climbed on the bus with Steve. Grant and Mike headed off towards Turners Hill, our next rendezvous point. By this time most of the team were already at Turners Hill and were missing out on their packed lunches. Still, can't be helped. Poor old Stan can't be everywhere at once.

By the time we get to Turners Hill Gary Lomas and I are bringing up the rear. What I would have given to get on that bus and ride back to Brighton. Still – can't give up now. What a day so far! Feeling worn out already, I can only hope that the second half of the ride is better than the first.

We carry on regardless and it does get better. No more disasters (not yet anyway) and we settle down to quite a nice ride, down through Haywards Heath, towards Ditchling Beacon. The thought is daunting. We go past Ditchling Common (ah – that's where Mike Varney met us last year, what a welcome sight he was), no refreshment break there this year. Nearer and nearer to the Beacon. There it is! We start to pedal. I'm sure Gary is having a rest. Time to walk. Get a call from Ian, he and Billy have managed to pedal right to the top! We eventually arrive at the top ourselves.

While sitting on the grass having a rest, the phone rings again – Ian and Billy have had a blowout racing down the Beacon (Disaster Number Three!). Ian has tried to mend the puncture but to no avail and they have no choice but to finish the ride on foot and set about walking into Brighton.

After hearing Ian's bad tidings, I decide to take it easy on the descent. The race marshals were taking no chances either, keeping people in smaller groups to help prevent accidents.

The seafront is getting nearer. The packs of cyclists queuing into Brighton are getting bigger and bigger and soon we have to start dismounting just to cope with the congestion. This has to be the hardest part. So near, yet so far. There it is, the Pavilion, the Palace Pier, and nine hours after setting out - THE FINISH!

Well done everyone. All managed to complete the ride, albeit at very varying times (what did happen to whiz-kids Pete Walker and Steve Sparkes).

Thanks to Stan, our intrepid driver, PBK for the magnificent packed lunches and the after ride food laid on in the Winter Garden, and everyone who helped to make it such a successful, if eventful, day.



Is this the new Ike and Tina? Gary Lomas and Lynda Stringer reach the Nutfield hilly limits.

The Team

Steve Nixon, Grant Cooper, Mike Godden,
Dave Goldsmith

Gary Lomas, Lynda Stringer
Billy Baxter, Ian Hebborn

Arthur Harvey, Maeve Dillon

Steve Sparkes, Lance Freeborn

Terry Bullingham, Graeme Douglas

Pete Walker

Katy Russell, Janis Sharp, Gaye Staff, Sarah Jarron,

Lyn Neville, Trevor Richardson

OOPS-A-DAISY

St Dunstaner Terry Bullingham talks of life on a bicycle made for two



Terry and Graeme have their tandem out at Clapham and ready to roll.

A chance telephone discussion back in February with Lynda Stringer, of the Rehabilitation department, resulted in my inclusion in the annual British Heart Foundation's London to Brighton cycle run, as part of the St Dunstan's team.

I am fortunate in that my 'Claude Butler Majestic-2' tandem resides in my garage with its rear axle nestled into a turbo trainer, thus enabling me to establish a training regime protected from the rigours of the 'Black Country' Winter weather on the 700' contour. (A turbo trainer consists of an 'A' frame supporting the rear-wheel spindle at either end whilst the tyre bears on a small roller connected to a centrifugal fan of about 6" diameter. It is amazing how much resistance the device provides, indeed in the early days lower gears were necessary.)

I was additionally fortunate in having a volunteer 'pilot' in the guise of Dr Graeme Douglas, of the Research Centre for the Education of the Visually Handicapped, part of Birmingham University. We made it a point to go out most Sundays, weather permitting, on practice runs, eventually building up to 30 miles.

These runs were invaluable inasmuch that they made the manoeuvres, inherent in proficient tandem riding, instinctive. They also graphically demonstrated that the beloved traditional leather saddles, fitted to the machine, were definitely not going to 'fit the bill' for the 58-mile journey to the South Coast. Two plastic-covered, gel-filled, sprung models were purchased and substituted.

David Vinall's Transport Department safely conveyed the machine to Ovingdean during the week prior to the run, terminating training. Graeme and I travelled to Ovingdean, from Birmingham New Street, courtesy of 'Virgin,' 'London Underground,' 'Connex', and finally the ubiquitous 27 bus to Ovingdean in time for supper. On the fast train from Victoria, we were very aware that we had to replicate the journey under our own power on the following day, a feat that the train seemed to do in just 50 minutes with consummate ease.

An early night was planned and we both spent a relaxed evening participating in Fiona Higgs' Lounge quiz. Upon completion we retired for final preparations. These included trying on capes as Radio 4's Michael Fish was not particularly optimistic in his weather forecast.

Sunday dawned and we were up bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, to join the rest of the party in the foyer at 5am for the coach to Clapham Common. It was gratifying to note that the weather was dry, if a little chilly, as well as joining other like-minded individuals. Despite the early hour, the coach was filled with the familiar banter of such occasions and the packed breakfasts were eagerly consumed. It was very pleasant to 'wolf down' a Mars bar without feeling at all guilty! We arrived at Clapham Common at 6.45 and the machines were unloaded from the accompanying coach.

We joined the crowds of other riders and machines in a loose group. Starting was delayed due to sheer numbers, however, Steve Nixon and Grant Cooper somehow managed to avoid the queues and get away on their magnificent state-of-the-art tandem tricycle (You can always rely on a Naval 'club-swing' to know the ropes!). After half an hour's wait, Graeme and I walked over the start line, together with Billy Baxter and Ian Hebborn, and Gary Lomas and Lynda Stringer. We mounted our respective machines and headed off as a

mini group through the sleeping South London streets. I say sleeping, however, I feel many would have been wakened by the noise of our six-way conversation! The streets were mostly cordoned off and shouts of encouragement from policewomen on picket duty were very welcome.

The sheer size of the operation started to dawn on me at this stage. We were riding four abreast for a lot of the time as other participants on a variety of machines moved through the streets. One soon became accustomed to the constant clanging as indexed derailleur-gears found their respective sprockets as well as the hornet drone of mountain-bike tyres on tarmac. It was pleasing to discover that the relatively slim 27" x 1.25" 'World Tour' tyres of our 'Claude', together with the lightness of its 'Reynolds 531' frame, gave us the edge on the solo machines and we were able to move through the pack, rather like Chuck Berry pursuing *Nadine* in his immortal song.

Graeme advised me that we were passing through Tooting (familiar from the Underground map) and events started to merge as the miles started to accrue. Carshalton was announced and the first official toilet stop came at ten miles. We were able to 'sail' past having used an unofficial bush on Clapham Common.

Similarly, we did not require food due to our substantial breakfasts. We encountered Arthur Harvey and Maeve Dillon pulling off the road at this stage. We elected to forge on and get up onto the Downs.

It was here that we encountered what was to become a continual feature of the journey. Due to the sheer weight of numbers, nearly everyone was forced to dismount and walk the hill, leaving only an extremely narrow lane on the right for the serious Club riders. This had the advantage of providing the opportunity for a bit of a rest with no loss of face.

The weather was turning out to be absolutely ideal, overcast with no apparent wind. 'Chaining it' along the top of the Downs was extremely exhilarating and it was at this stage that we realised we had a sporting chance of completing the journey. I recall a particularly sobering moment. On descending into a village, in a fold of the Downs, the marshals urgently warned



On your marks! Dave Keller, Terry, Graeme, Billy Baxter and Ian Hebborn share a joke.

everyone through megaphones to reduce speed due to a wet road. At the bottom there was an ambulance attending a luckless individual who had obviously parted company with their bicycle at speed. I remember having a conversation with Arthur and Maeve as we passed them walking up Turners Hill (about halfway). How had they managed to get in front of us? There were less serious incidents. A gentleman proceeding in an apparently leisurely fashion on a machine fitted with an armchair, in which sat his lady, taking tea! A chimney sweep was encountered on several occasions. I was finding the journey difficult enough in padded shorts, never mind fancy dress! Several male cyclists 'steaming' behind a hedge slightly out of view of a banana stall. Private enterprise was much in evidence, many households on the route set up stalls, selling anything from bananas, soft drinks, to commemorative T-shirts. An annoying feature was that the route was not always completely cordoned and it was somewhat disconcerting to be startled by the blast of an impatient motorist's horn in the oncoming lane!

The 'bête noir' of the journey was approached with some trepidation - Ditchling Hill. The reverence with which the climb was referred to imparted the proportions of the north face of the Eiger! We meandered blissfully and naively losing valuable height, through a succession of postcard villages until Ditchling Common. An official toilet stop, Mars bar, banana, and we were off. A roundabout, a bend, and there it was in all its magnificence. A seemingly endless snake of dismounted cyclists labouring up the hill, rather like an Old Testament exodus. We joined the throng and I quickly became aware that I had not done much walking practice and the unused muscles started to protest, necessitating several

pauses. Psychological well-being was not enhanced by the fact that Graeme (over 6ft and 33 years of age) was feeling no apparent ill effects. I was lost in admiration for an intrepid 'Clubman', out of his saddle, proceeding smoothly up the right-hand lane politely requesting "excuse me," as he stormed the ascent.

The summit was eventually reached and another refreshment break was taken prior to descending to Brighton. It was then that we realised that the longed-for descent was not going to be a 'picnic'. We were being passed by a multitude of solo machines travelling at suicidal speeds. Our lack of manoeuvrability dictated that this was not for us - a pension trap! Graeme was able to keep the machine under control; however, a slightly misaligned front brake block resulted in the front tube 'blowing out' with the heat near the bottom. Graeme brought us skilfully to a safe halt. Luck was with us; it was the front wheel, and we had a spare tube in our tool roll. We only suffered a 15-minute delay before rejoining the melee and completing the descent into the northern suburbs of Brighton.

The next part was the one real 'negative' of the day. The City Council had not seen fit to segregate the riders in any way! The usual Sunday-afternoon traffic was superimposed by innumerable tired cyclists endeavouring to make the finish line on the seafront. Machines were on the cycle tracks, pavements, and threading around the vehicles on the dual carriageway. After an hour of this fiasco, Graeme and I put in a left turn parallel to the Coast Road joining it at the Aquarium. We then had a pleasant ride past Roedean School to St Dunstan's in time for a very welcome cup of tea and a calorie-rich fruit cake in the Lounge.

Our deviation meant that we didn't actually finish the course, however, we were comforted that we probably did 60 miles in total. It was two tired individuals that returned to the West Midlands and it must be confessed that we slept like innocents between Euston and New Street.

As I write this, the tandem has been safely returned by David's team and thoughts turn to the day. It was a privilege to participate in a very well organised event, not to mention the thrill of being included in such a mass exercise. It would have been even nicer if the St Dunstan's contingent could have stayed together. This was, obviously, impractical due to the numbers on the road and varying abilities of our group. Whether to repeat the exercise next year ...?

Life and Times of Ovingdean

by Lyn Neville

THE SENSATIONAL ARTHUR HARVEY

Last year St Dunstaner Gary Ogden crafted a trophy to be presented to the St Dunstaner achieving most during training. On June 14th Gary had the pleasure of presenting it to his fellow trainee, Arthur Harvey at a surprise ceremony at the Nevill Road annex.

"Arthur has been an inspiration to many trainees for his commitment and his sense of humour has kept him going for the set backs he has had since his sight loss," said Head of Rehab and Training Lesley Styche.

A letter from Arthur can be found on page 19.



Arthur with Maeve Dillon before the London to Brighton Bike Ride.

The last couple of months have been very busy at Ovingdean. The highlight was the Buckingham Palace reception. Here is an account by Kath Harding, a St Dunstan's widow.

"Wednesday May 16th, an evening to remember indeed. Our coaches from Brighton swept through the gates at approximately 5.15pm. Help was on hand from every quarter - the welcome mat was in the ambience if not the fact.

"What a thrill to actually walk on the red carpet, how graceful we felt sweeping up the stairs, heads on a swivel, not to miss any of the paintings, tapestries and ornamentation."

AN INVITATION TO WIN



Phil Dobson and the best team.



Steve Sparkes takes a swing.

St Dunstaner Reg Perrin was declared best blind golfer at this year's Open Invitation Day at Rusper Golf Club on June 23rd. Like Matt Rhodes, Reg is paralysed down one side of his body and has to use a single arm sweep to strike the ball.

The result is extremely effective and although he is a recent convert to the game, Reg won the Alan Logan Trophy. Last year's winner Des Chandler didn't go away empty-handed. He finished the day with what some might regard as a more useful prize, a case of beer.

The Open Invitation Day also attracted teams from Ericsson, Courage, City of London Police, and Rusper amongst others.



One in the hole! Reg Perrin makes his final putt during the Open Invitation at Rusper.

TRIBUTE TO SID DOY



St Dunstaner Sid Doy at Liverpool Docks after being released from captivity in 1944.

I first met Sid Doy at Klosta Haina, Germany in 1941. We had both spent several months in different hospitals before being sent to Rouen for repatriation along with many more severely wounded Prisoners of War. However, this was not to be, for instead of being put on a boat to Blighty, the repatriation fell through and we were sent back to Germany to spend several more years before we eventually got home.

At Klosta Haina, the Blind School was formed under the leadership of Lord Normanby. Sid took a great part in the various activities that the School provided especially the Hobbies for we all know how much Sid although a great lumbering giant was so skilful with his hands. He made nets and string sandals with the string from around the Red Cross Parcels and made use of anything he could lay his hands upon for the benefit of the Camp.

One must remember that from the time he was wounded, all the time he was in the POW Camp and

for many years after he was repatriated, his face was hidden by layers of bandages. Psychologically, this must have had a tremendous effect on Sid's life but he never showed it. At times he even made a joke of operations he had to build up his face. He took the opportunity whilst staying at Ovingdean of spending many hours in the Workshop, going out to all the functions which interested him. Archery became one of his later activities and he became good at it and won many awards Sid was very frank in what he said and he will be greatly missed at the Residents Meetings at Ovingdean.

Tom Hart

There is now an empty chair in the craft workshop where Sid sat nearly every day. Until recently he always came straight to the Workshop from breakfast because he couldn't be late for work. He applied the same ethics to his hobbies as he had to his paid employment before he retired. Sid has been coming to handicrafts daily for the last 15 years.

During his time in the Workshop, Sid had a "go" at most of the crafts we could offer. Sometimes he had ideas of his own that were novel, when I had to put my thinking cap on to see if it could be made to work, not always very successfully. Sid always enjoyed something new and was one of the first to try pottery. He always wanted to know if there were any new wood kits. He was also particularly good at making stools. He liked to use a needle bent in the shape of a U, this being peculiar to Sid. So when his needle was lost, he just bent the new six inch metal one to the required shape with his own hands, no mean feat.

In the last few years Sid took up papier-mâché, a very messy business, but one he enjoyed immensely. Many people have a moneybox or mirror that Sid had made from old newspaper. His pièce de résistance was a cat he modelled, which took pride of place in the Workshop. Many people asked to buy it, but it is now fittingly with his daughter.

Over the years there have been many changes, but Sid was always constant. He had great patience with his work, but not always with some of the mere mortals! He did his best to keep me on my toes. We shall miss him.

The Workshop

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING IN FOR A PENNY...



A sheer 200ft drop tied to the end of an elastic band is not (thank goodness) the only way to raise money for St Dunstan's.

Running the London Marathon dressed as a chicken, bungee jumping over the Victoria Falls, eating 100 boiled eggs in three minutes ... Some people will do anything to raise money for charity. But you don't need to go to extremes to help make a difference.

We're looking for St Dunstaners of all ages and abilities (and their friends and families) who want to help build a brighter future for new St Dunstaners.

Perhaps you have a story to tell about your time in the Forces? We're thinking of setting up an oral history project in schools and you may be just the kind of person we're looking for.

Or, you may be interested in joining the highly successful group of St Dunstaners who give talks and speeches around the country – they've raised thousands through their moving and amusing stories.

There are also dozens of other fundraising activities that may suit you such as putting on a review show, holding a barbecue or taking part in a knitting project. And we can give you guidance and help on all of these.

But as well as asking for your support, we also really want to hear YOUR ideas on ways of making money.

So, please if you have a thought – do get in touch. We're a friendly lot in the Fundraising team and if your idea looks like a runner, we will do everything we can to support you including practical, public relations and even financial help. For more information on anything mentioned or to have a chat about any fundraising ideas you might have, give us a call now on 020 7616 7960.

Nick Ward



Picture: Imperial War Museum

Winston Churchill knew how to give a speech or two. If you're interested in finding out more about giving talks, call the Fundraising team.



They're a jolly lot! From top, the Fundraising team are Merle Adams, Carole Squires, Jo Castleton, Greville Malet, Linda Rowlands and Nick Ward.

WELCOME TO ST DUNSTAN'S

June 7th

Joseph Gregory of Lache, Chester served in the Royal Welch Fusilliers from 1936 to 1946. He joined as a boy soldier at 15 and served in Hong Kong, Sudan, India and the UK. After leaving the service he worked as a postman. A founder of his tenants association, Mr Gregory has been very active in his local community. He and his wife May have two daughters, three sons, 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Lionel James of Wells, Somerset completed national service in the Royal Artillery from 1949 to 1950 before transferring to the Royal Armoured Corps as a regular from 1950 to 1971. He served with the Queen's Own Hussars in Hong Kong, Malaya, North Africa and BAOR before moving to Bovington where he acted as the personal assistant to the Director Royal Armoured Corps. He retired as a Warrant Officer Class I. He worked as a Civil Servant, an instructor at the Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Armoured Corps, and in the construction industry. Mr James and his wife Elaine have two daughters and five grandchildren.

Dennis Martin of Widegates, Looe served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1945. After training he was posted to Belfast and joined a supply ship supporting Atlantic convoys. He was then posted to the Middle East and joined his next ship in Alexandria. He spent the remainder of the war in the Mediterranean. In civilian life he worked as exhibition manager for the British Steel Federation. In his younger days he enjoyed playing rugby and won a competition as a dress designer. He has two daughters and three sons.

Dennis Parrish of Woking, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946. He was selected to train as a navigator bomb aimer. His ship was torpedoed and he spent nine days in an open boat before rescue. He joined the 2nd Tactical Air Force and flew with Mitchell bombers on 40 operations for his first tour and joined a Mosquito unit for his second tour. He was awarded the DFC in 1944. After the war he worked for ICI and Shell. He and his wife Elizabeth have a son, daughter and four grandchildren.

Rosemary Watson of Northwood, Middlesex served in the ATS from 1942 to 1946. After training she was posted to an ack-ack unit and became a fire control officer co-ordinating the response of guns. In civilian life she returned to the Post Office, where she worked in the HQ at London for over 42 years. Her interests have included travel, having spent time in the USA, Hong Kong, North India and various European countries. She was also very active in the Girl Guide Movement and recently retired as chairman of the Young Movement. Her interests have included paper hanging and picture framing.

June 27th

Ronald Everitt of Hailsham, East Sussex served in the Royal Artillery from 1938 to 1943 and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1946. He was deployed to the Middle East and was with the 8th Army through Sicily and Italy. He took part in Cassino and reached Austria by the end of the war. He then returned to his job in Smithfield meat market but volunteered for one year with the occupying forces in Germany. In 1948 he became a watchmaker and later ran a boarding house. He enjoys bowling, talking books and used to fence. He has a son, daughter and three grandchildren.

William Gedge of Tavistock, Devon served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946. He joined his first ship HMS *Elfreda* in San Francisco for Atlantic convoy duties and later took part in D-day. After the war he worked at Fort Halstead as a storeman before moving to Tavistock as a wood machinist. He later worked for GUS and EMI. A keen pianist, he led his own band for 20 years and was a keen gardener. Mr Gedge has three sons, three daughters, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Denis Grimmer of Halifax, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1946. He served in India and the UK laying minefields, building pillboxes and pontoon bridges. After the war he worked as a bricklayer and builder. Mr Grimmer enjoys gardening and works regularly on his allotment. He also enjoyed watching horse racing, walking, cards and chess. He is a member of the Deaf/Blind Society. He and his wife Marion have two daughters and five grandchildren.

Francis Lile of Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946. He was posted to India and Ceylon as a fitter/armourer. After the war he returned to the Civil Service but later became a commercial traveller. Keen walkers, Mr Lile and his wife Valerie, often used to visit Dartmoor and have completed the Pennine Walk. They have a son and granddaughter.

William Medhurst of Whitstable, Kent served in the Royal Signals from 1934 to 1946. A member of the TA he transferred to the Royal Signals and was commissioned in 1941. He took part in the Sicily landings and moved through Italy to the Alpine Borders. After the war he taught history before becoming a solicitor. His interests include opera and

collecting books. He and his wife Joyce have a son, two daughters and three grandchildren.

Anthony Newland of Hove, East Sussex served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1950 to 1956. He served in the UK, Germany, Korea, Libya and Malta. After leaving the service he worked as a bricklayer and builder. His interests have included football, cricket and gardening. He and his wife Margaret have a son.

Kenyon Westcott of Porlock, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946. He served in South Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Corsica and Algeria. After the war he returned to his family greengrocer/fish business. Mr Westcott and his wife Lorna have a daughter and one grandson.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are always welcome. Send a letter, tape or disk to 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Fax: 020 7224 9616. E-mail: ray.hazan@st-dunstans.co.uk

From: Arthur Harvey, Halesowen, West Midlands

Since receiving the Gary Ogden Achievements Award I would like to thank everyone at St Dunstan's for all their support over the last two years. I would also wish to say a special thanks to the Rehab and Training department for all the time and effort that they have given me.

Before I came to St Dunstan's I found it very difficult to find my way around, it was here where I first met Lesley Styche who taught me mobility. This made a big difference and gave me confidence. I would like to express my gratitude for all she has done for me.

Also I have made many good friends at St Dunstan's, one of which is the person who presented the Trophy to me, Gary Ogden.

From: Tom and Grace Renshaw, Radcliffe on Trent, Nottinghamshire

Thank you to staff and friends for the beautiful flowers we received on our 61st wedding anniversary.



Mum and Mr Armitage

Author: Beryl Bainbridge
Reader: David Sinclair
Catalogue number: 5991
Duration: 4 Hours

This is a collection of funny stories, though not, I fear, "funny" in the comical or amusing sense. No, personally I found them odd, peculiar, strange and even somewhat weird.

The secret of successful short story writing I believe, (as demonstrated by Arthur Conan Doyle, W. Somerset Maugham, and other past masters of the art) lies primarily in finding a suitable ending, to round the narrative tidily off, or give a twist in the tail.

Dame Beryl, as she now is, chooses to solve this difficult problem by ignoring it completely - she just stops! Sometimes, it is true, she may use a "throw away line" but the ending is still abrupt. It might be intentional, of course, involving something psychological that I'm not clever enough to spot. I hope it is, in a way, because otherwise her stories are like half-eaten jam sandwiches discarded by little children; very messy, very untidy and unsatisfactory all round.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTH

Congratulations on the birth of:

Bridget, the great-granddaughter of Mary McCarthy of Godalming, Surrey and the late *Alfred McCarthy*.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Joseph and Mary Kelly of Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside on June 21st.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Thomas and Grace Renshaw of Radcliffe on Trent, Nottinghamshire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on June 23rd.

ACHIEVEMENT

Congratulations to:

Andrew Perfect on gaining a BA (Hons) 1st Class in Philosophy and Politics from Manchester University. He also received the Philosophy prize. Andrew, who was president of the University Debating Society, was recently elected General Secretary of the University Students' Union. He is the grandson of *John and Audrey Perfect* of Devon.

DEATH

We regret to announce the death of:

Ellen Bane of Sutton, Surrey on July 4th. She was the widow of *Joseph Bane*. Our sympathy goes to her 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.

William Harrison

Welch Regiment

William Arnould Harrison of Swansea, West Glamorgan died on March 30th, aged 82. He served

as a substantive Sergeant in the Welch Regiment from 1939 to 1946. Served with BEF in France and was evacuated from Dunkirk. He returned on D-Day and fought with his Battalion through North West Europe. He was wounded at Arnhem and Bergen, a village near Belsen. After the relief of Antwerp he was awarded the Albert Medal (Belgium). In civilian life he worked in administration, first with the electricity board and then in local government. Our sympathy goes to his widow Edna and all other members of the family.

Sidney Doy

Grenadier Guards

Sidney James Frederick Doy of Ovingdean died on June 14th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1943. Having worked on farms, he enlisted in 1937 and served as a Guardsman in the Grenadier Guards. Grievously wounded during the retreat from Dunkirk, he was presumed dead. In December 1941, the Red Cross revealed that he was being held as a prisoner of war at Klosta Haina where Lord Normanby had established a braille school. Mr Doy was repatriated in 1943. The haunting image of Sid disembarking at Liverpool Docks, his face swathed in bandages, would later become synonymous with the sacrifice made by St Dunstaners who served during World War II. After training at St Dunstan's Church Stretton, he worked as a capstan lathe operator for Southern Railway Works and then as a drilling and tapping operator for Stanhay. His interests included archery, gardening and handicrafts such as woodwork, wrought iron work. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Ann, sons Thomas, James and Peter, and all other members of the family.

Edward Bizzell

Royal Navy

Edward Parkin Bizzell of North Tawton, Devon died on June 23rd, aged 96. He served in the Royal Navy from 1921 to 1945. As a member of the Gunnery Division, he served on many different ships, including HMS *Rodney* and HMS *Duke of York* with Admiral Sir Henry Leach. Mr Bizzell was Mentioned in Despatches in 1942. He was involved in the battle with the *Scharnhorst*. He retired from the service as Chief Petty Officer and joined the Coastguard. He also ran a fish and chip shop for 14 years and later opened a business supplying fishing tackle. Our sympathy goes to his widow Sarah, daughter Barbara and all other members of the family.