

St Dunstan's Review

www.st-dunstons.org.uk

April 2002

The roaring twenties

The number of bus passengers rose rapidly in the 1920s, overtaking even the tams in 1921. Most people travelled with the London General Omnibus Company (LGO) or its associates. But from 1921 the LGO's dominance was challenged by a wave of new operators.

The London Traffic Act of 1924 brought an end to any further competition, and the next ten years saw huge improvements in the comfort and performance of motor buses. These revolutionary steps were to be the merging of all London's bus companies under London Transport in 1933.



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12-14 Harcourt Street,
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Tel: 020 7723 5021
Fax: 020 7262 6199

Editor: Ray Hazan
ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk

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Cover picture:

*Fares please! David Taylor,
David Humphrey and
Wallace Burnett-Smith by a
Twenties Bus, preserved in
the London Transport
Museum in Covent Garden.*

Full details on page 6.

From the Chairman



We may sometimes tend to believe that today's electronic technical innovations are firsts of their kind. Although the Kurzweil Reading Machine and the Optacon were the first really practical reading aids for the blind, produced in the 1970's, breaking the winner's tape was the 'optophone', which appeared in 1917.

In 1999, Ken Moss was 'guided' in a straight line to achieve his world blind solo land speed record by different sounds in his earphones. The Oboe system was used during the Second World War to guide RAF bombers. It used Morse code in the pilot's ear.

St Dunstan's, and Lord Fraser in particular, was behind the development of the Talking Book Library between the wars. We are looking forward to the introduction of the Talking Book on CD imminently.

Each decade appears to extend the boundaries of existing technological developments. Whilst the objective, be it reading print, mobility, daily living or accessing IT, may not change, the approach and ease of use gives the blind user a greater degree of independence. In turn, this gives dignity and self-respect. St Dunstan's will continue to monitor developments closely.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



NOTICE BOARD



IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR VISITORS TO OIVINGDEAN WHO ARE ON MEDICATION

Would St Dunstaners or their spouses, who are staying on either the Nursing or Residential wings at Ovingdean, please note that they MUST bring a fresh prescription with them for their drugs. They should also bring three days supply of their medication in correctly labelled bottles. This is a regulation of the Nursing Homes Inspectors. The reason for this is that St Dunstaners often bring in bottles that state 'take as directed' or that have no label, then the carer is not covered professionally to administer this medication as she has no prescription or evidence of dosage.

Many St Dunstaners bring in repeat order forms as opposed to prescriptions and these are not acceptable for obtaining medications from our pharmacist. The Ovingdean Doctors cannot supply repeat prescriptions for non-resident patients. A three-day supply of medication that is clearly labelled is requested to cover the period between admission and filling the prescription. Any remaining drugs will be returned to the St Dunstaner.

Visitors to the Holiday wing who do not require any assistance from staff to take their medication are to bring their own tablets and continue with their normal practices.

It is my priority to offer a well-organised and safe service to St Dunstaners. However, I must also ensure that I meet the regulations governing Care Homes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Jacque Greer
Head of Care

CHANGE OF E-MAIL SUFFIX

E-mail users please note that the St Dunstan's e-mail suffix has changed from 'co.uk' to 'org.uk'. The new address should read: name@st-dunstans.org.uk.

A SALUTARY WARNING TO ALL

A case has recently been reported in which one of our widows allowed an unsolicited caller and his assistant into her house. They claimed to be from the electricity board and needed to check her fuse box. Whilst one kept her distracted, another helped himself to cash and jewellery.

We can only repeat and beg you once again, to never allow anyone into your home until you are sure of their identity. Either, without opening the door, ask them to post their identity card through the letterbox, or you could also check, by telephone, with the office which they purport to represent. Despite any story they may give you, please be firm and do not allow them in until you have ascertained their 'bona fide' with the appropriate Electricity, Telephone, Water or Gas Board. Many utility companies operate a password scheme to identify their workers.

DOXFORD HALL THANKS EX-POWS

A "THANK YOU" Party to honour all British ex-Prisoners of War is being organised at Doxford Hall, Alnwick, Northumberland on June 21st. The event, which is free of charge, is part of the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations and open to all ex-POWs. It will feature a variety of entertainment such as regimental bands, singing groups and RAF demonstrations. A fish and chip lunch and tea and scones are also on the menu. Activities will start from around 12 noon and close about 6.30pm. For full details contact Brian Burnie on 0191 261 5135.

METRO GAMES

The Metro Games Visually Impaired Athletics and Pool Tournament will be held in London on Saturday, June 22nd. Some accommodation is available. For details contact Derek Mileman at Flat 29, Gilda Court, Watford Way, Mill Hill, London NW7 2QN. Tel: 020 8203 1286. Fax: 020 8202 6196. E-mail: delboy29@tiscali.co.uk.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The final date for submitting items for publication in the May Review is April 8th 2002.

The final date for submitting items for publication in the June Review is May 10th 2002.

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE 2002

St Dunstan's Review annual Derby Sweepstake is open to St Dunstaners, beneficiaries of the Diana Gubbay Trust, widows and widowers.

Tickets are 30p each and issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. The closing date is June 5th and the draw will be made that day. The Epsom Derby is on June 8th.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and a stamped addressed envelope, to Simon Rogers, Derby Sweepstake Department, *St Dunstan's Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Of the total money received, distribution amongst the winners will be as follows:

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

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

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

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

No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold.

SUMMER CRAFT EXHIBITION

The Rehabilitation & Training department at Ovingdean is organising another Summer Craft Exhibition from June 14th-19th. All St Dunstaners, friends, relatives, volunteers and staff are welcome to join in. Entries will be judged in various categories and, if you wish, exhibits can be offered for sale.

The opening of the Exhibition will be on Friday June 14th, so all entries need to be at Ovingdean by Monday June 10th. Bring, or send them in, anytime after the middle of May – let us know if you need something collecting and we will try and arrange it.

If you would like to take part, please contact Vanessa Young in the Rehabilitation & Training department at St Dunstan's, Ovingdean (telephone 01273 391475) and she will send you, or fill in on your behalf, an entry form.

BUILDING ALTERATIONS AT OIVINGDEAN

Chapel

We have now refurbished the inside of the Chapel, following the installation of the pitched roof a few years ago. Recent works involved the eradication of rising damp, the re-plastering and repainting of the interior. The resetting of the leaded light windows in a triple glazed unit has been done for preservation purposes and for increased heat retention.

Grounds

Six additional bench seats have been strategically installed on the pathways. The start and end of each bench can be felt by tactile markings underfoot. In addition, a new tactile paved crossing has been created immediately outside the main entrance, leading from the building across to the pathway and running down the drive.

Main Building

The gentlemen's toilet facilities at the rear of the Reception Area have been completely redesigned. Kindly ask any member of staff for re-orientation to these new facilities when next visiting Ovingdean.

Following requests, we have installed two new air cleaning units in the ceiling above the Main Lounge and Bar areas. To date, these have proved most effective in clearing cigarette smoke.

M G Hordell Facilities Manager

HAVE YOU EVER MET THE QUEEN?

As part of St Dunstan's celebrations of Her Majesty The Queen's Golden Jubilee, we are seeking St Dunstaners anecdotes of their encounters with our Patron during her reign (prior to the St Dunstan's reception at Buckingham Palace last May). If you have any memories of such an occasion or photographs, please write to Golden Jubilee Project, *St Dunstan's Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

SULTAN CAMP 2002

The camp at HMS *Sultan* will take place from Friday July 26th until the morning of Saturday August 3rd. Will all those who enjoyed the camp in previous years and would like to come again please contact Elspeth Grant at High Acre, Catmere End, Saffron Walden CB11 4XG or telephone her on 01799 522874. Please contact her no later than May 9th.

DEVON HOLIDAYS

Cliffden Hotel, Teignmouth, Devon offers a dedicated service for blind holiday makers. All the staff have been trained to recognise and appreciate the needs and special requirements of visually impaired people. Guide dog owners will find all the facilities for looking after their guide dog. They have a number of themed breaks planned for later this year covering rambling, beer and jazz festivals, activities, gardening and dancing. For full details of these events and general breaks call Cliffden Hotel on 01626 770052 or e-mail cliffden_hotel@afbp.org.

MICHELHAM MEMORIES

Michelham Priory, Upper Dicker, Hailsham, East Sussex, which was host to many Servicemen killed during the raid on Dieppe in August 1942, would like to hear from anyone who has recollections of that time. They are preparing a display to mark the 60th Anniversary of the raid. If you have any relevant information contact Helen Poole, Senior Museums Officer at Michelham Priory on 01323 441279.

RNIB CAMPAIGNS

The RNIB is lobbying the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him to make £3 million available to fund the production of 20,000 audio description modules for use with digital television. They have produced a draft letter which can be adapted to send to the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, MP. They are also asking people to write to their MPs to support amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which will remove exemptions for certain types of employment. They also argue that anyone registered blind should be automatically accepted as disabled under the DDA and that public functions, such as the responsibility for paving, be covered. Copies of both letters can be found on the RNIB website at rnib.org.uk/campaign or by telephoning them on 020 7391 2123.

ST DUNSTAN'S TIE

A navy blue tie in polyester, with a centred St Dunstan's badge, is available at £5 including postage. Please contact Roberta Hazan on 020 7616 7933.

CORONATION TRAY

Would anyone who has any information concerning a St Dunstan's 1937 Coronation tray please contact Roberta Hazan on 020 7616 7933.

OBITUARIES:

Tony Pond

The funeral took place on February 16th of Tony Pond, widely acclaimed as Britain's foremost rally driver for much of the 1970s and '80s. He died on February 7th of cancer at the age of 56.

In 1999, Tony helped ex-Policeman Ken Moss achieve an ambition – to be the fastest solo blind person on land. This Ken achieved at 131mph, earning a place in *The Guinness Book of Records*.

Without Tony it would never have happened. He put his whole professional reputation on the line to secure the car, budget and workshop. Over and above that, he spent day after day in a two-seater car helping train Ken for the big day. In Ken's words, Tony was his 'Mental Mentor'.

We extend our sympathy to his widow Nikki, his son James, and all members of the family.

The Rt Rev Roger Wilson

The Rt Rev Roger Plumpton Wilson, KCVO, DD (Lambeth) died on March 1st, aged 96. He had been a Governor and Vice President of St Dunstan's since 1973. The former Bishop of Wakefield and then Chichester, he became the Hon Assistant Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1974. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Phyllis Kaye

Phyllis, who died on February 10th, joined St Dunstan's in 1974 as Assistant to Phyllis Rogers the Southern Area Superintendent. She continued in the same capacity as Penny Lord's assistant and her work was truly appreciated in the Welfare department.

Phyllis Kaye who retired in 1995 will be especially remembered by all St Dunstan's staff at HQ for the active part she played in writing sketches for the annual staff parties at Christmas.

Many St Dunstaners and staff will be sorry to hear that Phyllis Kaye's well earned retirement was blighted by three and a half years of ill-health which necessitated her living in a nursing home in Littlehampton.

Our sympathy goes to her husband Gerald and to her son and daughter, each of them supported Phyllis throughout her long illness with their love and attention at all times.



Above: Grenville Waterworth feels the piston on a steam driven tube train. **Below:** David Taylor hears about trams from the Old Kent Road.



A BUS LOAD of St Dunstaners had the chance to sample a golden age of public transport when they visited the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden on February 21st.

The museum charts the development of transport in the capital from horse drawn carriages through Thomas Tilling trams to Routemaster buses and steam trains used on the early Underground. Our St Dunstaners were given a whistle-stop tour that concentrated on both World Wars.

St Dunstaner Ken Burton recalled that his mother had been a clippie - a bus conductress - in Sunderland. Care Assistant Pat Curry had a similar memory. St Dunstaner Wallace Burnett-Smith recalled that some of the buses on display were used to transport RAF personnel around aerodromes.

There were opportunities to touch or climb aboard some of the exhibits and a chance to have a go at punching an old style ticket, marked in shillings and pence, with a conductors' silver ticket machine. It gave a satisfying ring as it clipped a hole in the ticket.

Based in a former market building, the museum has been equipped with ramps and lifts to enable wheelchair access, though the tram tracks and escalator installations proved to be realistically bumpy.

Terry Clark

TERRY CLARK (Snr), Services Supervisor at St Dunstan's Headquarters retires on April 5th. He joined the organisation in 1986. Many St Dunstaners will be familiar with his cheery greeting when they phone HQ or have been picked up from a London station on their way to a medical appointment. We wish him a long and happy retirement, no doubt, allowing him to indulge in his favourite game of tennis.

CHEERS FROM ESSEX



Raise your glasses please! Publican Alan Gloyne pulls five golden pints for St Dunstan's.

REGULARS at the Broker Free House in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex pulled out the stops for St Dunstan's. They raised an impressive £5,000 through a variety of events including quiz nights, golf games and raffles.

Landlord Alan Gloyne who runs the pub with his wife Elaine, presented the generous donation to St Dunstaner Les Davy who praised the Broker Free House for its excellent effort and hospitality.

CARDS WITH FEELING

YOUR OWN message can be embossed on a greeting card, courtesy of a new online service. BrailleCards offers personalised greeting cards for blind and visually impaired people. Orders can be placed on their website, www.braille-cards.co.uk, choosing from a selection of fine art and hand crafted cards. They then visually print your message, using a large font if requested. Finally, your message is embossed on plastic and fixed securely in the card.

Ken Revis

As we went to press we learnt that St Dunstaner Ken Revis had passed away. A full obituary will appear next issue.

Life and Times of Ovingdean

by Lyn Mullins

DURING THE LAST couple of months we have had two special interest weeks. These have proved to be a great success.

The first was the Music Appreciation Week. This consisted of several days of trips out to various locations featuring different forms of music. There was a variety of in-house activities which were music based including a music quiz.

The week finished on a high note with an in-house recital by Louise Beckermann whose soothing yet inspiring repertoire proved to be a perfect ending for a most enjoyable gathering (More on page 12).

The second event was a "Widows' Week" aimed at ladies who are not as mobile as they once were and were finding our traditional Widows' Weeks a little too taxing.

We held Ovingdean based activities such as a flower arranging evening and an in-house fashion sale. There was a shopping trip to Eastbourne which was under



Rose Glover, Dorothy Coutts, Doris Ward-Best, Linda Barley, Margaret Richardson with Dick Lake at the Widows' Week luncheon.

cover and all on the flat. Finally, we enjoyed a super visit to the theatre to see *Single Spies* by Alan Bennett.

Dick Lake, Ovingdean Manager, joined us for his first invitation to the Widows' Luncheon which was most enjoyable. PBK, as always, provided an excellent meal and we had a lot of laughs and the pleasure of getting to know each other. It is hoped that these special weeks will be repeated next year, and more people will join us.

BROADCASTING FROM BRIGHTON

Ray Hazan (G0PQQ) tunes into the Amateur Radio AGM March 8th-10th



St Dunstaner Ted John and our Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox.

IT WAS A small but select band of 'faithfuls' who attended the AGM of the St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society held at Ovingdean on Saturday March 9th. The Society was pleased to have the company of their President, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox and missed those unable to attend through illness. Several friends and helpers, affectionately known as 'Freeman, Hardy and Willis', but more accurately Freeman, Houlihan and Wilson were also present. These latter do an exceptional job in keeping the radio station and its aerials in working order despite all that the English Channel weather can throw at them.

Concern was expressed at the lack of new members joining the Society. Licence regulations are very much simpler now. Morse code is not even required

for permission to transmit at low power and then only at five words a minute for the senior A licence. The Society's secretary Ted John (G3SEJ) has all the information regarding new licence regulations and would be very happy to speak to anyone who calls him on 0151 638 5514. If you would like to travel the world without ever stepping outside your home, then amateur radio is the hobby for you!

The customary high standard of lunch, prepared by PBK, was then enjoyed by everyone in the Winter Garden. The Radio Society's Chairman, Bill Shea (G4AUJ) then presented the G3MOW Memorial Trophy to the person deemed to have contributed most to the Society over the previous year. This was unanimous in a vote amongst members countrywide; Ted John, who has never missed a single meeting in 26 years, and, assisted by his wife Beryl, is a pillar of strength to the club.

Whilst the immediate after-effects of the luncheon were conducive to anything but radio transmissions, the remaining time in the evenings and during Sunday was spent in contact with other St Dunstaners around the country and radio amateurs worldwide.

The air of conviviality, which is amateur radio, was certainly extended amongst the gathering at Ovingdean. It is a very worthwhile hobby and anyone can come along to the meetings to 'see what it is all about', without there being any obligation. The next meeting will be held at Ovingdean from Friday October 11th to Sunday October 13th.



St Dunstaners will run for gold



TWO ST DUNSTANERS are taking part in an international baton relay in honour of The Queen's Golden Jubilee. The event will be used to herald the start of the Manchester Commonwealth Games in July 2002.

The Baton was flown to Canada on March 11th where it started an 85 day tour, passing through 21 Commonwealth Countries (currently it is being carried through African states). It will be flown into Belfast on June 6th for the UK leg of the tour.

From Belfast, it will be carried through over 500 cities, towns and villages across the nation, carried by 5,000 individuals, each running for 500 yards. Amongst them, St Dunstaners Don Planner and Clive Jones who will pick up the Baton in their respective areas of Poole, Dorset and Market Drayton, Shropshire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: George Tytler,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Congratulations on an excellent February edition of the *Review*. The contents were absorbing, especially the "Desert Run". The front cover was brilliant, everything was so sharp and the colouring (a first for the *Review* for me) was outstanding. The position from which it was taken, lying on the ground I suppose, and the content told a story in itself of two indomitable spirits from St Dunstan's pitting themselves against the elements. It proves to the world we are not all "sticks in the mud" old codgers like me. Anyhow well done to the runners although they finally didn't make it, I was very disappointed for them.



From: Alf Lockhart, Dagenham, Essex

Please find enclosed my cheque for £7.50 for 25 tickets in the *St Dunstan's Review* Derby Sweepstake. June 5th, is my 54th Wedding Anniversary and in 1948 it was also Derby Day. The "racing fraternity" marked the occasion by letting "My Love" win the Derby at 20-1. I trust that the person who draws the tickets will know his duty.

Editor's note: Have you experienced a similar lucky coincidence? If so, tell us what happened at *St Dunstan's Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Applications for Sweepstake tickets can be made at the same address. Full details are on page 4.

David Brooks, Cople, Bedford, Bedfordshire

I read with great interest the February *Review's* account of George Powell of Leighton Buzzard who was blinded at Anzio in 1944. My father, Sgt G. Brooks, Royal Engineers, landed in Anzio in January 1944 and was blinded there on June 27th 1944. Coincidentally his name was also George and his right eye was also removed there; he was totally blinded.

Lieutenant A.D. Gurley wrote the following report the day he was wounded: "A party consisting of Lt Lyons, Sgt Brooks, Cpl Millard and myself set off to recon an area on the North side of the Moletta river, where it was believed certain Green Howards, and possibly Sappers, had been killed and were probably lying out unburied.

Letters to the Editor are always welcome. Send a letter, tape or disk to 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Fax: 020 7262 6199. E-mail: ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk

"I led the party along a route previously taped and made clear by Sappers of A/Pers. Mines and I pointed out where we had taken out some seven or eight bodies and, owing to lack of time, had not completed the job. Through my glasses I could see at some 40 paces a pair of legs sticking out from the sand and asked Lt Lyons if a route could be cleared to the spot. Cpl Millard set off at the crouch with bayonet, carefully prodding his way along. Suddenly an explosion occurred and Cpl Millard was seen to collapse with portion of his leg blown off.

"After a quick decision, Lt Lyons went back for stretcher and assistance. In the meantime, Sgt Brooks and I started to probe the ground around Cpl Millard with a view to getting him out as quickly as possible.

"Cpl Millard, after his injury, had fallen on a further mine, which had not gone off but had been made sensitive. I was probing in the vicinity of Cpl Millard's feet and Sgt Brooks at his head, in order to facilitate lifting him on a stretcher. At this juncture a further explosion occurred which partially moved Cpl Millard and the effects of which Sgt Brooks received in his face. Sgt Brooks staggered to his feet blinded, and his face covered in blood. I immediately grabbed him to prevent him from walking on further mines and gradually got him back a few yards from the spot, where I then hoisted him on my shoulder and carried him to the edge of the field and the waiting stretcher party.

"In conclusion, I unhesitatingly declare that Sgt Brooks displayed magnificent courage in going to the assistance of a wounded comrade and, when wounded himself was more concerned with my safety than his own wound."

I remember going to see my father in 1946 with my mother, Louie Brooks, for the first time in hospital after the war. I was 12 years old. In 1964 they moved to Saltdean, a St Dunstan's owned bungalow. Since my father died in 1988, my mother still continues to go to St Dunstan's Ovingdean daily to read to and comfort St Dunstaners. She has been a carer since 1946.

Norman and Sue spread the word

by Barbara Degenhardt

IN NOVEMBER 2001 County Coach Sue Habgood, accompanied by St Dunstaner Norman Perry together with coaches David Habgood and Colin Dickinson, attended the Grand National Archery Society's annual coaching conference at Lilleshall. Sue and Norman presented a seminar on Coaching for Visually Impaired Archers to approximately 80 delegates ranging from the newly qualified to National Coaches who are responsible for coaching British international archers, and all were engrossed by the talk and demonstration with Norman and his set up.

However, when it came to "hands-on" participation, experienced coaches visibly blanched! Hesitantly, and some treating Norman as though he would break if spoken to roughly, they took him through the preliminary setting up process. They found it less daunting as time went on and they gained confidence. Norman was questioned as to his history in shooting, but stunned everyone when, on being asked what was the furthest he had shot, he replied "two miles". (He had served with the Royal Artillery and nobody had specified arrows.) He also met archers who had shot with him in earlier years, and with his exceptional memory recalled details which most of them would have had to check in their records.

The question and answer sessions kept the St Dunstan's coaches on their toes and Sue was

complimented by David Sherratt, the Chief Executive of GNAS, amongst others. The event was highly successful in terms of archery, but just as important was the effect on people who had previously had little or no contact with visual impairment. It became clear at the Conference's closing session that the initial fear and ignorance present when archery for the blind/VI is first encountered would no longer be the case with the majority of the delegates. Norman received a spontaneous round of applause and responded in his usual calm manner making it clear that VI archers consider themselves first and foremost as *archers*.

The British Blind Sports Development Team for Archery have asked Sue and Colin to become part of the team to promote VI archery. A weekend was arranged at Ovingdean for March 9th and 10th for coaches in the southern area to attend a presentation by the BBS team of Harry Heeley with Dennis and Mary Baylis. Although the number of coaches was small, the weekend was a great success with everyone thoroughly enjoying themselves, and going away with much to think about. It is expected that Sue and Colin will be asked to present similar weekends throughout southern England. Already new links have been made with a local club whose members have disabilities other than visual impairment.

Our thanks must go to Harry, Mary and Dennis for their excellent and informative presentation, and of course to St Dunstan's for hosting the event.

Surrey swing shot targets clay pigeons



Stephen Menary waits for the tell-tale click before taking his shot.

ONE DAY as we were at the acoustic rifle shooting, Katie Russell from the Gym asked us if we would like to go to Bisley and have a go at clay pigeon shooting on February 18th. What a lovely time was had by all. We had a really great day, the hospitality we received was very good and we all enjoyed the clay pigeon shooting.

The caller told us when he was going to launch them. He said if

we raised the gun to a certain height and counted to five, we would hit something. They were very quick.

St Dunstaners taking part were George Oliver, Cliff Ford, Stephen Menary, Dave Humphrey, and our driver was Tracey, who we thank for a safe ride up and back. Once again we thank all at Bisley for arranging it.

Dave Humphrey

GREAT XP-ECTATIONS

Ray Hazan downloads the data from the Computer Club meeting March 6th-7th

IT IS VERY heart-warming to see the number of attendees slowly rising. Attempts are made to keep the language, and I refer to computer rather than conversational language here, simple, but it is not easy with the wide range of experience and ability present! The gathering is confined to two days, which is long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be interesting.

Gratitude was expressed to Terry Walker, who had prepared a 'hands-on' tutorial, in which all could get experience and hopefully learn something new. The group divided into pairs to solve the riddles posed by Terry in a couple of exercises. It was certainly less baffling than the Indian rope trick he performed at the last meeting!

In the afternoon, we were pleased to receive a visit from Iki, escorted by his wife Gabriel, of CVIP Ltd. The new Voice Diary Imp was demonstrated. Whilst considerably smaller in size on the outside, internal capacity has been enlarged. The device is a talking organiser, i.e. memo taker, diary, telephone directory, calculator, stopwatch and timer; all in a device which measures 5 x 2 x 1 inches and is specifically designed for use by blind people. Telephone numbers can be retrieved by voice and, if held over the mouthpiece, will dial the number for you. Upwards of 127 numbers can be stored. The cost is £180 if purchased for the first time and £130 if bought on a 'trade-in'. The device is a valuable tool for those with a busy appointment schedule.

In the evening a most enjoyable buffet, which was really an excellent three course meal on a self service basis, was enjoyed by all participants including our IT department guests - Janis, Gaye, Sylvia and Brad.

Brad is now a firm 'must-be-listened-to' expert and we were lucky to have him with us despite a busy business schedule on his part. The next operating system we shall all be compelled to use is Windows XP. Brad gave an excellent and objective talk on all its merits and drawbacks and was then able to demonstrate it briefly working in conjunction with the new HAL5 screen reader. It would not be wise to make comments about XP at this stage apart from

saying that it makes even greater demands on computer capacity and it may be better to wait until purchasing a new system rather than trying to upgrade an existing one.

The new HAL5 screen reader was the subject of the afternoon period when Janis, ably assisted by Bill Shea, the only other user in the group, picked their way through this newly designed speech programme. The demonstration of how HAL coped with Outlook Express, an e-mail programme, was less than impressive!

Whatever the experience or level of knowledge, everyone leaves these gatherings a little wiser, if only being aware of the gaps in knowledge. But we all are enriched by a deeper acquaintance with new and old friends. The fact that Allan Acutt had travelled all the way from Capetown to attend says everything!

CVIP Ltd (Voice Diary) can be contacted on 020 8420 1338. If you are interested, then please speak to your Welfare Officer first.

50 YEARS AGO

Jim Shaw explained how St Dunstan's got its name, how the blinded men at Regent's Park started to use the name of the house where they were staying.

William Hodder was the winner of St Dunstan's chess weekend at Ovingdean. Other grandmasters were H.Porter and J.Scott.

Actress Joan Rice who was Maid Marian in Robin Hood met a trio of merry men in Nottingham at the Raleigh Cycles factory. She met up with St Dunstaners N.F.S. Nunn, J.Langton and S.Fowler.

Duggie Cashmore was feted for his work at the Elliot Works factory. He was described as knocking the "dis" out of disabled.

Frank James of Hove won the Wingham Cup cribbage competition for the second year running, defeating five opponents in a row.



David Youngson conducts an overture of the Music Week

Strike up the band

DESPITE THE FACT that the programme of events was not known till shortly before we arrived, the Music Week (January 28th to February 4th) turned out to be a most enjoyable occasion. Some nine people had booked in for the experience, and residents and others who were at Ovingdean for rehabilitation, etc joined us from time to time.

After an informal get-together in the Blue Room with a welcome glass of punch, friendships were established. These were cemented throughout the week as a result of the serious gales and rain which prevented most of us getting out to Rottingdean and elsewhere.

Our first visit was to the Chapel Royal in Brighton for a lunchtime violin recital by Tatiana Cozhevatoa. A former pupil of the Menuhin School and in her final year at the Royal College of Music, she gave masterful performances of works both modern and in the traditional classical style.

A coach trip to the Phoenix Theatre in London's West End, with a lunch-stop at the Monkey Puzzle, to see a matinee performance of *Blood Brothers* was thoroughly appreciated by all. The theatre was full of teenagers and the noise before curtain up caused some concern. However, during the performance they were extremely appreciative of the show. The story was well-written and performed, but the end was somewhat contrived and predictable.

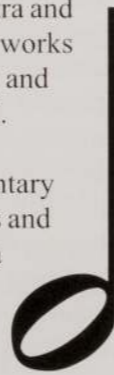
Several in-house evenings occurred. Thanks are due to the Care Staff who took over at a moment's notice for a Musical Memories evening. John Terry & Friends gave an enjoyable musical evening in the Lounge with songs from the shows. I somehow think John is getting to his "sell by date" but nevertheless it was good to hear many old favourites.

Louise Beckermann gave us a most interesting evening by singing with her own guitar accompaniment and introducing some musical instruments from India and Nepal. It was good to see many residents joining us for this.

A Musical Quiz provided the usual good fun and friendly arguments and the winning team each received a CD for their efforts.

The climax of the week was a trip to the Assembly Rooms at Worthing for a "promenade type" concert by the Worthing Youth Symphony Orchestra and Wind Band. The young people performed works both modern and traditional and the length and depth of the applause throughout said it all.

Thanks are due to the Care Staff and voluntary helpers who organised the in-house events and escorted us to the various venues. It was a thoroughly good week for music lovers of all tastes and one not to be missed in the future.



Maurice Aldridge examines the origins of an everyday phrase

FREEZING THE BALLS OFF!!

A BOOK of helpful tips for those hardy souls travelling to the frozen North urges any monkeys to make sure they pack a soldering iron along with their toothbrush. It's a nice idea but not based on scientific observation, let alone probability. The expression, in fact, has nothing to do with little brass animals running around at severe risk to their present happiness and future prospects. Its origins are to be found in naval history. In those far-off days when

ships were made of oak and the British Navy ruled the seas, gunners used to pile their cannon balls on a tray behind the gun called "the monkey". The monkey was often made of brass. Brass is a metal which contracts severely in extreme cold and when that happened, of course, the pile of balls literally tumbled on to the deck. The weather was, as the less fastidious among us say, cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey!

WELCOME

February 11th

Gerald Cluley of Leicester, Leicestershire served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1942. After training, he joined the Leicestershire Yeomanry ack-ack unit in Hastings. He was later posted to Hull with the Rescue Team during the period of heavy bombing. After the war he returned to his trade as a butcher. A keen gardener, he also enjoyed woodwork and snooker. He and his wife have three sons, a daughter, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

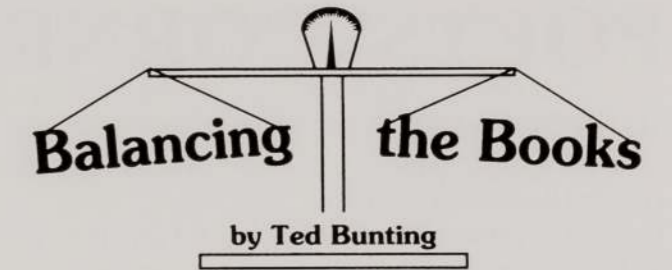
February 22nd

John Dumbleton of Southgate, London served in the Royal Fusiliers, Royal Irish Fusiliers and Royal Signals between 1940 and 1946. He took part in the landings at Algiers and Sicily and was wounded by shrapnel. After transferring to the Royal Signals he was posted to Greece. In civilian life he joined British Telecom as an operator. His interests include foreign languages.

Albert Dyer of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire served in the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1946. He went into France on D-Day +2 and served with 263 Regiment through to Germany. In civilian life he worked in an aluminium factory. His interests included fishing and gardening. Mr Dyer and his wife have two daughters, three sons, and seven grandchildren.

Philip Knight of Bognor Regis, West Sussex served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1940 to 1970. He had various postings worldwide, including Sierra Leone, Singapore and in the UK as RSM of Edinburgh Castle. After leaving the service, he managed a commercial computer centre and then worked for the IBA. His interests included walking, gardening and travelling. He has a son, daughter and seven grandchildren.

Anne Perry of Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945. She trained as a Wireless Operator and served in Lancashire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Scotland. After the war she worked for the local food office before leaving to raise a family. She has two sons and one granddaughter.



A Box of Tricks

Author: Simon Brett

Reader: Bruce Montague

Catalogue No: 5707

Duration: 9 Hours 50 minutes

A traditional maxim still in currency in Yorkshire says "There's now't so queer as folk" and how well this truth is demonstrated in this splendid collection of short stories. Ostensibly linked by the theme of murder, each tale also highlights particular traits in the human character which determine which of us may become a murderer, and which an innocent victim.

However, the best laid schemes of mice and men often go wrong, to paraphrase Robert Burns' observation, and since the unexpected is present in every good yarn you may be sure that surprises abound throughout the book. There's the intriguing question of destiny too; could the victim have avoided death if she or he had done this or that? Would the young woman, say, have remained alive if she had been less conscientious, or the older one if she hadn't been so greedy? Or are we predestined to meet our fate regardless of what we think of as our free will? I always like books that encourage the reader to think but when, like this one, they are wonderfully entertaining too, I simply love them.

I DRINK, THEREFORE ...

Descartes went into a bar and ordered a large whisky. Noticing some minutes later that the great man's glass was empty, the barman asked if he would have another. "I think not," Descartes said and promptly vanished.

MARCHANSWERS

- 1) The Archers live in Ambridge.
- 2) The Light Programme is now Radio 2.
- 3) Roy Plomley originally presented *Desert Island Discs*.
- 4) Sue MacGregor left the *Today* programme recently.
- 5) Jonathan Dimbleby chairs *Any Questions?*

POETS' CORNER

A selection of verse from
St Dunstaners and their friends

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

Just a line to say I'm living
That I'm not among the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful
And mixed up in the head.
I've got used to my arthritis
To my dentures I'm resigned,
I can cope with my bi-focals,
But ye gods - I miss my mind!
Sometimes I can't remember

When I'm standing by the
stair,
If I should be going up for
something
Or have I just come down
from there.
And before the fridge so often
My mind is full of doubt,
Now did I put some food away

Or had I come to take some out?
So remember I do love you,
And wish that you lived near,
And now it's time to post this rhyme
And say goodbye, my dear.
At last I stand beside the post box
And my face - it sure is red.
Instead of posting this to you
I've opened it instead!

THOUGHTS FROM AN ENDLESS NIGHT

(To Phil)
No more the shine on buttons brass
No more my face in the looking glass
No more the cap so firmly set
No more the one I can't forget
No more the peril in the night
No more the wait for deadly flight
No more the joy of that first leave
No more the stripes upon my sleeve
No more the dance on ballroom floor
No more goodnights on her front door
No more the waiting for the train
No more kisses in the rain
No more the pain of those goodbyes
No more the loving in her eyes
No more the days when we were young
No more the songs we always sung
No more the trials so bravely met
No more the kiss when eyes were wet
Now all has gone but memory clear
Of all the things I hold dear
As we move to journey's end
These little thoughts to you I send.

Frank Tinsley

QUICK QUIZ

- 1) When was the first FA Cup?
- 2) Which Newcastle United player won 63 England caps?
- 3) Who was the first Footballer of the Year?
- 4) Who led the England team to victory in 1966?
- 5) What do you call the table-top version of football?

AN OLD-TIMER'S POEM

A computer was something on TV
From a science fiction show of note.
A window, you hated to clean,
And ram was the cousin of a goat.

Meg was the name of my girlfriend,
And gig was a job for the nights.
Now they all mean different things,
And that really mega bytes.

An application was for employment.
A program was a TV show.
A cursor used profanity.
A keyboard was a pi-a-no.

Memory was something you lost
with age.
A CD was a bank account.
And if you had a 3" floppy,
You hoped nobody found out.

Compress, you did to the garbage,
Not something you did to a file,
And if you unzipped in public
You'd be in jail for a while.

Log on was adding wood to the fire.
Hard drive was a trip on the road.
A mouse pad was where a mouse
lived,
And a back-up occurred in your
commode.

Cut you did with a pocket knife.
Paste you did with glue.
A web was a spider's home,
And a virus was the 'flu.

I'll stick to my pen and paper,
And the memory in my head.
Nobody's been killed in a computer
crash, but when it happens
They wish they were dead!

PASSING THROUGH

In memory of Frank Parsons

There stood a man
So tall and strong -
As upright as could be -
And from him shone a beacon light
For all the world to see.

Steadfast he stood through all the
years -
A father figure, he;
Beloved guide and trusted friend,
Deep rooted as a tree.

And so, dear Frank
We've you to thank -
Example admirable.
You leave this world a better place -
Your love has touched us all.

Aubrey E. Smith
(himself an old sailor of only 86).

FAMILY NEWS

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Edward and Gladys Alchin of
Rottingdean, East Sussex on March 1st.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Anthony and Janina Rudzki of
Wolverhampton, West Midlands on
February 23rd.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

Frederick and Gwendolin Mills of Tavistock, Devon
who celebrated 62 years of marriage on February 24th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Sylvia Lewandowski on February 24th. She was the
wife of Bernard Lewandowski of
Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Grace Forshaw of Bognor Regis, West Sussex on
February 24th. She was the widow of Bob Forshaw.

Sylvia Meleson of Wembley, Middlesex on February
25th. She was the widow of Harry Meleson.

Our sympathy goes to their family 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.

Douglas Agar

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Douglas Agar of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on
January 30th, aged 81. He served in the Royal Army
Ordnance Corps from 1939 to 1942. He then served
with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
until his discharge in 1946. He went to France as part
of the British Expeditionary Force and was presumed
dead at Dunkirk. In civilian life he worked as a clerk/
storeman before breaking out on his own as an
insurance and credit broker. He later ran his own taxi
firm. His interests included mechanics, motorcycle
scrambling, rallying and flying. He was an active
member of the Dunkirk Veterans Association. Our
sympathy goes to Joan and all of the family.

David Smith

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
David William Smith of Worcester, Worcestershire
died on February 19th, aged 75. He had been a
St Dunstaner since 1945. Originally a machine operator,
he enlisted in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in
1944 and served in their 7th Battalion as a Private. In
1945 he was injured in action in Germany, suffering

gunshot wounds to his head. In civilian life he worked
for the Ministry of Labour as a telephonist. Our
sympathy goes to his widow Ruth, son David,
daughters Heather and Karen and all of the family.

Reginald Gadd

Royal Engineers

Reginald Kenneth Gadd of Sheffield, South Yorkshire
died on February 21st, aged 87. He had been a
St Dunstaner since 1977. Originally a Plumber by
trade, he joined the Royal Engineers in 1940 and
served as a Lance Corporal until he was wounded in
1942. In civilian life, he was a salesman. Our
sympathy goes to his daughter Carol, grandson James
and all other members of the family.

James Benn

Royal Artillery

James Allen Benn of Elswick, Preston, Lancashire
died on February 22nd, aged 82. He served in the
Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946, reaching the rank
of Sergeant. His regiment was sent into France after
Dunkirk and they almost reached Paris before the
French capitulated. Returning to the UK, they went
on to Tunisia with the 1st Army and then Italy. Mr
Benn also served in Syria and Greece. After being
demobbed he joined the Police. Our sympathy goes
to his widow Eva and all other members of the family.

Roy Marsden

Royal Army Service Corps

Roy Marsden of Hove, East Sussex died on February
23rd, aged 80. He served in the Royal Engineers
from 1938 to 1940, the Royal Artillery (51 HAA
Regiment) from 1940 to 1946 and then the Royal Army
Service Corps (TA) from 1956 to 1958. During this
time he served in North Africa, Italy and the UK. Our
sympathy goes to all members of the family.

James Higginbottom

Royal Army Ordnance Corps

James Higginbottom of Blaydon-on-Tyne, Tyne and
Wear died on February 24th, aged 83. He had been a
St Dunstaner since 1973. A shoe repairer by trade,
he joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1939.
While serving with them as a Corporal, he was
wounded by a bomb blast in France. Discharged in
1946, he returned to his business. His interests
included carpentry and gardening. Our sympathy goes
to his widow Theresa and all of the family.

"Jim" Blake

Royal Air Force

"Jim" Horace Stanfield Blake of Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire died on February 27th, aged 77. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1960. Originally a telephonist, he enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1953 and served as a Senior Aircraftman until 1956. In civilian life he worked as an inspector for Rank Xerox. His interests included amateur radio, organ music and horse riding. He also taught Braille. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joan and all other members of the family.

David Greenhough

South Staffordshire Regiment

David Greenhough of Blakebrook, Kidderminster died on February 27th, aged 66. He served in the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1953 to 1957. In Egypt he transferred to the Royal Army Pay Corps but later rejoined his regiment as their pay sergeant. In civilian life, he worked for the Walsall housing department, then Dupont Engineering. A qualified cabinetmaker, his interests included woodwork and DIY. He was a member of the Worcestershire Committee for the Blind and the Kidderminster Diabetic Society. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jessie and all other members of the family.

Frederick Ripley

Royal Signal Corps

Frederick Ripley of Wimbledon, London died on February 27th, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1942. Originally an engraver and stonemason, he enlisted with the Royal Signal Corps in 1940. While serving with them, he was wounded at Tobruk in 1942. Back in the UK, he trained as a physiotherapist. A keen Braille reader, his interests included carpentry, music and story writing (he won second prize in the *Review's* story contest in 1996). Our sympathy goes to his widow Peggy, son Jonathan, daughter Marion and all of the family.

Percival Skinner

Royal Artillery

Percival James Skinner of Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk died on March 3rd, aged 79. He joined the East Surrey Regiment as a 15-year-old boy soldier in 1937, transferring to the Royal Artillery in 1938. He was blown up in a bren gun carrier in Burma in 1943, suffering head wounds and loss of sight. He recovered

and returned to his duties. He was discharged in 1964. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dorothy, son David, daughters Linda, Susan and Gill and all of the family.

Walter Bramley

Royal Artillery

Henry Walter Bramley of Blackpool, Lancashire died on March 6th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1953. Originally a Capstan setter and operator, he joined the Royal Artillery in 1939 and served as a Gunner. Taken prisoner in Malaya, he was forced to work in a coal mine. During this time he suffered from malaria, beri-beri, malnutrition and privation. He was discharged in 1946 and, after training at St Dunstan's, resumed work in industry. His interests included woodwork and racing. Our sympathy goes to his widow Eileen, son Michael, daughters Patricia and Barbara and all other members of the family.

Ernest Ford

Royal Air Force

Ernest Ford of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on March 11th, aged 86. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1979. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 serving as a Leading Aircraftman. He was taken prisoner in Java in March 1942 and held in various camps before being moved to Singapore. The malnutrition and privation he suffered would eventually claim his sight. Discharged in 1946, he returned to work as an upholsterer, a job that led him to become manager of the workshops within a local hospital. A regular at St Dunstan's Ex-POW Reunions, his interests included gardening, DIY and music. Our sympathy goes to his widow Betty, sons Alan, Michael and Peter and all of the family.

Leonard Walker

Royal Navy

Leonard Walker of Melksham, Wiltshire died on March 12th, aged 81. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1990. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and trained as a gunner at HMS *Drake*. He then served as a DEMS Gunner on Atlantic convoys, also sailing to Malta and the Mediterranean. He was wounded during an enemy air raid which blew up an American ship carrying mustard gas. After leaving the Service in 1946, he worked as a storeman for Avon Rubber. His interests included sports. His wife Joan passed away on March 13th. Our sympathy goes to his two sons and two daughters and all of the family.