



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

St Dunstan's Review

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Cover picture:

St Dunstaner Les Trout,
guided by Don "Ollie" Oliver,
was closest to the pin during
the Golf Club's Open
Invitation Day.

Full details on page 18.

From the Chairman



The Chairman congratulates golfing St Dunstaner Les Trout.

WE ARE WELL over half way through the year, but at the peak of St Dunstan's calendar. The Archers are at full draw, the Walkers at full stretch, the Fishermen full of tales, and the reunions nearly over. I had the pleasure of representing HQ at an Invitation Day organised by the Rusper Golf Club in aid of St Dunstan's. The determination of the St Dunstaners golf shots was breathtaking. The HQ team (Harcourt Hackers) distinguished themselves by completing the course, with some relief that they were able to apply their "Mulligans" out of the public eye – all in the cause of fund-raising of course! It was a rare opportunity to witness at first hand yet another group of dedicated supporters (over £2,000 raised) who keep us going with such enthusiasm.

On June 27th, the Armed Forces laid on a most impressive display for Her Majesty at Portsmouth to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. St Dunstaner Terry Walker, who describes his visit later in this issue, represented St Dunstan's. In a symbolic gesture, St Dunstaners Don Planner and Clive Jones played their part in carrying the Queen's Jubilee Torch in their respective home areas. The torch will have travelled some 60,000 miles throughout the Commonwealth by the time it arrives in Manchester for the Commonwealth Games.

I am very grateful to all those who have represented our organisation during this Jubilee year, whether formally or informally and have done such a wonderful job upholding our name and spreading the word.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



NOTICE BOARD



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SPECIAL NOTICE

ARMED FORCES PENSION SCHEME SERVICE INVALIDING PENSIONS TAXATION ERROR

Some invaliding pensions paid to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel whose injuries or illnesses were accepted as attributable to their service have been mistakenly taxed over a period of years.

If you were in the Armed Forces and you receive either a Service Invaliding Pension (SIP) or a Service Attributable Pension (SAP) paid under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) and a War Disablement Pension (WDP) paid under the War Pension Scheme, you may be eligible for a refund of tax paid on your MPS pension. Widowed spouses or beneficiaries may also be eligible for a refund with respect to tax paid by the Service man or woman when he or she was alive.

In order to qualify for a SIP an individual had to be medically discharged from the Armed Forces after completing a certain number of qualifying years (before 1945 - 14 years, 1945 to 1972 - 12 years, 1973 to 1987 - 5 years, 1988 to present - 2 years). This refers to service in the Regular Forces and does not include periods in the Reserve Forces such as the Territorial Army. If you did not complete this number of years, you will NOT be eligible for a refund.

The taxation error does NOT affect those who receive only a WDP. You do not need to contact the Veterans Agency (formerly the War Pensions Agency) regarding the taxation of your WDP as these have always been paid tax-free.

What should you do if you think you may be eligible for a refund or require more information? To consider your claim we need you to complete the

form (available from St Dunstan's Pensions Office at Headquarters, 020 7723 5021 ext 7982) and send it to the appropriate Pensions Awarding Branch (address on form). If you wish to claim as a beneficiary of the will of someone who was in the Armed Forces you will also need to provide proof of your entitlement under that person's estate. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to you as the enquiry may take several months to complete.

For further information, contact the Armed Forces Pension Help Lines.
Royal Navy 02392 702316/702220/7022545
Army 0141 224 2351/2352/2353
RAF 01452 712612 ext 6474/6476/6477

Alternately visit the Veterans Agency website - www.veteransagency.mod.uk - look under Service Pensions - Taxation of Service Invaliding Pensions. If you require help in completing the form then you should contact the Veterans Agency Help Line UK Freephone 0800 1692277 (Overseas callers should dial +44 1253 866043).

HANDLESS REUNION 2003

The next Handleless Reunion will be held from May 7th to 13th 2003.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK

Miles Francis Stapleton Fitzlan-Howard, KG, GCVO, CB, CBE, MC, DL, otherwise known as His Grace the Duke of Norfolk died on June 24th. Joining the Grenadier Guards in 1937, he carved a distinguished military career, winning the MC in Italy. As Earl Marshal he was responsible for the State Opening of Parliament. His Grace became Vice-President of St Dunstan's in 1970 and he re-opened a refurbished Pearson House in 1973. He was a staunch supporter of St Dunstan's Handleless Group across the decades. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The final date for submitting items for publication in the September Review is August 12th 2002.

The final date for submitting items for publication in the October Review is September 12th 2002.

ACCOMMODATION AT O VingDEAN OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

As in previous years, there is likely to be insufficient accommodation at Ovingdean to meet everybody's requirements. Usually holiday bookings can be booked provisionally six months in advance directly with Jackie Castle, the Bookings Coordinator (01273 391422). These holiday bookings are confirmed at approximately three months prior to a visit. The reason we cannot go firm on bookings any earlier than that is because we have to allow space for the core business of nursing, residential care and training.

However, for the Christmas/New Year period bookings can only be accepted via Welfare Officers in the same way as Respite Care bookings and need to be with WOs for processing by September 27th. Because of the degree of uncertainty associated with the period, particularly issues about the lack of appropriate care packages available in local communities, accommodation will not be confirmed until November 29th though a provisional booking will be confirmed by October 25th.

Because of the likely demand, it is necessary to split the period into Christmas (December 21st/22nd to December 28th) and New Year (December 29th – January 4th/5th), and to limit bookings to one or the other though it may be feasible to have the week preceding Christmas or New Year plus a week. It will be possible to be placed on a waiting list for the other period but there can be no guarantee, I am afraid, that space will become available. Traditionally there has always been a surcharge applied to those who come into Ovingdean for the day over the Christmas and New Year period which reflects the significant cost of the extra food, drink and activities which are put on. For fairness sake, a surcharge will apply this year to those booking into Ovingdean over the same period with the exception of those already resident. The charges per head will be in the region of £30 for the Christmas period and £20 for the New Year.

In order to make the most of the accommodation available, some principles and priorities need to be applied. Firstly, we need to make full use of our two off-site premises: Nevill Road and Beacon Hill. It is accepted that there are limitations associated with these properties including transport schedules but they must be utilised especially by those who are fit and able to do so. Nursing-care need is the principle which determines who must be in Ovingdean itself as opposed to being offered accommodation off-site. There will be a presumption that people taking care of themselves in the community can, in most circumstances, use the off-site options though some

may need downstairs accommodation if their own home is configured that way. The final arbiter for a care need will be Jacquie Greer as Head of Care in discussion with the relevant Welfare Officer, backed, if necessary, by a doctor's written opinion. In addition, there will be occasions when sharing a room would create extra space and this will be considered as an option, with those sharing in these circumstances receiving a reduction in the room charge.

In determining the overall priority for those staying at Ovingdean over the Christmas/New Year period, the first call goes to those with a genuine care need, particularly as a result of insufficient care in the community over the holiday period. This includes Respite Care requirements. Second priority will go to the spouses of those living permanently at Ovingdean. Thereafter, the priority is other holiday makers as determined by their declared and authenticated care needs and their requests, with those living independently in the Ovingdean area only being considered after those who cannot participate on daily visitor basis. When accommodation has been allocated on the above basis, a waiting list will be established. Ideally, applications for accommodation should be made on the basis of the above principles, particularly by offering to accept Nevill Road or Beacon Hill or agreeing to share. We will do our best to give people what they desire but, in the final analysis, the offer of accommodation may have to be based on an assessment of need and upon balancing the requirements of all concerned. Due to the size of the main dining room we will almost certainly also have to restrict the numbers who come in for the day over the Christmas/New Year peaks as well I am afraid.

Dick Lake, Ovingdean Manager

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

In response to birthday greetings, sent on the occasion of Her Majesty's Official Birthday, St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox received the following message:

"The Queen has asked me to thank you for your kind message of congratulations sent on behalf of St Dunstan's Council and the blinded ex-Servicemen and women for whom you care on the occasion of Her Majesty's Official Birthday.

"The Queen, as Patron of St Dunstan's, thanks you for all your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and sends her best wishes to you all."

CONCESSIONARY FARES

When a registered visually impaired person travels with a companion for any purpose and does not hold a Disabled Persons Railcard, the following discounts on full fare tickets apply for both people:

Single	34 per cent off
First Class/Standard Day Return	50 per cent off
First Class/Standard Open Return	34 per cent off

No concession applies if you are travelling on your own and do not hold a Railcard.

To obtain these discounts a document confirming disability and issued by a recognised institution should be presented when purchasing tickets. St Dunstan's provides an identity card which can be used in this fashion. St Dunstaners can obtain their card by sending a passport photograph to Simon Rogers, St Dunstan's Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. The Disabled Persons Railcard cost £14 per year and can be purchased from most railway stations.

THE 'FOUNDATION LICENCE NOW' BOOK FOR BLIND READERS

By kind permission of the Radio Society of Great Britain and as a part of its activities to assist blind persons to become radio amateurs, a two-man team (one blind person and one sighted) have produced a spoken version of Alan Bett's book *Foundation Licence Now*. The product is available on C60 or C90 Cassettes or on CDs in either data or audio format. The reason for this broad approach came from requests to the team from blind persons already in contact via e-mail.

The team is busy exploring ways and means to get the work reproduced and have been given quite exceptional advice and guidance by Mark Allgar of RSGB. But until they have gauged the demand copies will be made by the team, in-house, onto six C60s, four C90s, five Audio CDs, or one Digital CD, for a nominal charge of £2.50 per tape or disk.

Requests should be sent to either Alan GM4FLX or Kelvin M0AID as in the RSGB Call book. Advice may be had by e-mail from alan@qti.org.uk or kelvin@qti.org.uk.

For more information e-mail AlanLovegreen@ic24.net or telephone 01505 843524.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MILTON MOUNTAINEERS

David Scott Blackhall was the first presenter of the BBC Radio programme for the blind and partially sighted, *In Touch*. In February 1969 he was briefed to mention that a party of blind Africans had set out to climb Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. He talked about the exploit and purpose of the venture and added a few words of his own on the spur of the moment: "We haven't anything as high as Kilimanjaro," he said, "but I wonder whether any of my listeners would be interested in making up a party of blind climbers to tackle Ben Nevis?" As he said in his book, *The Way I See It* (John Baker, 1971) – "I picked up a snowflake and started an avalanche." On Saturday July 12th 1969, sixteen blind people, plus their guides, climbed Ben Nevis in appalling conditions. They were barely off the mountain before his companions were asking "Where are we going next year?"

They had stayed at the Milton Hotel in Fort William for the first climb. Because of that and the fact that John Milton was a blind poet - as was David Scott Blackhall - the group called themselves the Milton Mountaineers. They have since climbed all the highest mountains in the British Isles.

A Charitable Trust was formed on the death of David Scott Blackhall in 1981 and donations to the Milton Mountaineers given in lieu of flowers at his funeral. His friend George Male, a long-time escort to Mike Tetley, became the Leader for the next ten years. Since 1992 David's daughter Anne has been the Leader.

There is no membership fee to become a Milton Mountaineer. If you are interested in receiving more details, or joining the group then please contact:

Leader: Anne Weyers, BA, Crawford Lodge, South Street, Crowland, Peterborough PE6 0AH.
Tel: 01733 211867. E-mail: anneweyers@aol.com.

A TUDOR TOUCH AT THE V&A

The art and design of Tudor and Stuart life will be examined during a tour with touch and description at the Victoria and Albert Museum on September 19th.

Chihuly glass sculptures will be discussed on October 30th. Guide dogs are welcome. For details of both events call 020 7942 2197.

Dorothy gives hot-shots something to aim for



THE HOT-SHOTS who have been dominating the acoustic rifle at Ovingdean may have to think about raising their game. Lady St Dunstaner Dorothy Wright gave the boys - Cliff, George, Derek and Ken - a run for their money on July 10th. She quickly honed her ear-hand coordination skills, listening to the changing pitch of the targeting device and scoring a bullseye during her first attempt at using the gun.

Former FEPOWs lay up Duchy Standard

ST DUNSTANER Dick Hooper of Penzance joined fellow members of the Cornwall Far East Prisoner of War Association at Truro Royal British Legion Club to lay up their Standard in June.

Dick, now 82, was serving with the Royal Artillery when he was taken prisoner by the Japanese.

The Standard has been laid up because there is no one left to carry it on parade, though the Truro branch will continue.



Dick Hooper (front left) with his fellow Ex-FEPOWs at Truro.

Photograph: Cameracraft

Ted puts his sea-faring days in the frame



ST DUNSTANER Ted Pepper made a special presentation at the Golden Jubilee Reunion Dinner of the HMS *Newfoundland* Association. He presented The Honourable Oliver Langdon, Minister for Municipal and Provincial Affairs in the Government of Newfoundland & Labrador with a framed print of HMS *Newfoundland* firing a three-gun salute.

Ted, who served on the Colony Class cruiser while in the Royal Navy, made the frame himself. Joining Ted and Mr Langdon on stage was Captain Phillip Webster, Canadian Naval Attache at the Canadian High Commission in London.

Deafblind man is king of the quadbikers

A DEAFBLIND man set a new world speed record riding a quadbike on June 22nd. Graham 'G-Force' Hicks of Peterborough broke through the 100mph barrier to set a record at 104mph. He actually took the bike up to 116mph but the force of the wind against the bike slowed the average speed of the two runs.

Graham, who has been both deaf and blind since childhood, took control of the four-wheel bike while pillion rider Rob Hall gave him directions. He was riding a custom-built quadbike modelled on a Honda TRX400EX fitted with a 1100cc Super Blackbird engine.

The event was also an opportunity to raise funds for Deafblind UK.

St Dunstan's own biking maestro Billy Baxter feted Graham's feat having met him at the British Motorcycle Federation Show in May. "I look up to Graham. He's deaf and



Photograph: Chris Lowdnes

Graham and Rob speed along the airstrip.

I get a little taste of what that must be like when I've got my helmet on. At high speed you can

feel the air rushing by, but you can't hear a thing. It is so scary! I take my hat off to that guy!"

Blindfold driver breaks Ken's record

THE 131MPH solo blind land-speed record set by Ken Moss has been broken by a sighted-man wearing a blindfold. On April 15th, Alistair Weaver drove a car at 140mph at Elvington Airfield, York - where Ken made his initial attempts to break the accompanied blind land-speed record.

Ken, who was blinded as a policeman during a high-speed pursuit, set the solo blind land-speed record in 1999. He was using a car fitted with a revolutionary guidance system.

"I set the record to be broken," said Ken. "Though I always expected it to be broken by a blind man, but that's the way it goes. When we did it, Tony Pond, who was my mental mentor, said 'We'll set it, leave it a while and then come back and push

Simon Rogers reports

it up to 200mph'. I'll have to speak to someone about letting me have a fast car!"

Alistair Weaver told the *Review* that his attempt evolved out of discussions with The Guinness Book of Records after he set a land-speed record driving backwards. "We did it for journalistic endeavour and entertainment," he said, expressing concern at suggestions that he was taking something away from a disabled person. "I wouldn't like to say that disabled people couldn't compete with able-bodied people.

"I would be more than happy if Guinness sat my record alongside Ken's, making it a blindfold record as distinct from a blind record. It was a challenge to beat it. During

these attempts we were keen to stress what had been done by Ken and Steve Cunningham - we were bringing attention to what they had achieved.

"I recently wrote a piece about Motability for The Times saying that the age old perception of disabled people getting about on blue tricycles should be laid to rest. Disabled people have the same aspirations as able-bodied people and quite rightly so."

The Guinness Book of Records say that they accepted Ken's record on the grounds that it would be open to attempts by all. The guidelines were set in consultation with St Dunstan's. As a result totally blind drivers should provide documents confirming their blindness, while partially sighted or sighted drivers should wear a black out mask.

Ex-POWs celebrate Jubilee at the Hall

Harry Chalmers reports

AROUND 1,000 ex-Japanese and German Prisoners of War met at Doxford Hall, Alnwick, Northumberland for a celebration party as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations on June 21st.

The event was organised and funded by Brian Burnie, a self-made businessman, via his charity PES Associates Charitable Trust. The link to the POWs and St Dunstan's is via Harry Chalmers, a fellow Director of Brian's. Harry's father was an ex-Japanese POW and also a St Dunstaner. Some of you will probably have met the late Bob and Betty Chalmers at various functions.

The 1,000 POWs travelled from as far as Southampton in the south and Aberdeen in the north and we even had two guests from Australia.

There were many tearful reunions as people met often for the first time since their release. One of the biggest coincidences was when two St Dunstaners, Bill Marsh and Vic Thompson found they were captured on the same day and were prisoners in the same camp.



Enjoying their freedom. Bill Marsh and Vic Thompson at Doxford Hall.

The ex-Prisoners of War were treated to a full day of entertainment with music supplied by The Tyne Tees Regimental Band, local school children, a pipe band and local singers. The highlight of the day was undoubtedly when the Station Commander of RAF Boulmer was winched from a Sea King helicopter with the first 1,000 fish and chips delivered to Doxford Hall for the POW lunch.

Everyone appeared to enjoy a truly memorable day out and I must thank all those who talked

openly to me about their experiences as it helped me understand what my late father had endured in Japan.

National Library needs support for campaigns

The National Library for the Blind (NLB) is forming a Campaigner's Network. They are seeking support to help protect the rights of visually impaired people.

Membership of the network is free and an information pack will outline current campaigns and days of action.

For more details telephone Reader Advisors on 0161 355 2000 or e-mail campaigns@nlbuk.org or write to National Library for the Blind, Far Cromwell Road, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SG.

Not so easy riding for Billy Baxter and the Flying Gunners

ST DUNSTANER Billy Baxter will be riding motorcycles with the Royal Artillery's Flying Gunners at the following events:

Cromer Carnival, Cromer August 20th-21st

Game & Country Fair September 6th-8th

Contrary to dates published in the last issue of the *Review*, Billy will not be appearing at Shrewsbury Flower Show on August 16th-17th.

The Sheriff and the bowmen



THE HIGH SHERIFF of East Sussex, the Honourable David Pennock and his wife, Jane, visited Ovingdean on June 19th writes Dick Lake. They were hosted by the Director of Professional Services, Susan Harrison. After a comprehensive tour of the building, they lunched with St Dunstaners Norman Perry, Barbara Bell, Nigel Whiteley, and Mark Threadgold. Then, as somehow fits the title, the High Sheriff met some of the Archery Club for an initiation into the noble art. He declined cheerful offers to act as target for the budding Robin Hoods!



ST DUNSTANERS Arthur Carter and Stephen Menary joined the Ex-Service contingent of the Jubilee Parade on June 4th. They carried St Dunstan's Standard through The Mall, guided by Tom Lang. Arthur expressed his pride at being part of the event celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's 50-year reign.

Ten questions on ...

Men and Women to be remembered

Compiled by Harry Beevers

- 1) In the year 1900 Arthur Pearson founded the *Daily Express* newspaper but which organisation did he establish fifteen years later?
- 2) The nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale was the first woman to be honoured with the Award of Merit, in which city was she born?
- 3) Guy Gibson led the celebrated Dambuster raid in 1943, of which RAF squadron was he leader?
- 4) Who topped the UK pop charts in November 1954 with the song *My Son, My Son* and was the first British artiste to top the US charts?
- 5) Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, one of Britain's leading military leaders of World War II had which two Christian names?
- 6) Who was born at 17 Bruton Street, London, on April 21st 1926?
- 7) Which former member of Britain's Royal Family had the Christian names Angela Marguerite and bought the country's most northerly castle, the Castle of Mey in the year 1952?
- 8) Which former British Prime Minister was offered the Dukedom of London in 1955 but refused the offer?
- 9) In J. and H. Massingham's series of essays *Great Victorians*, who alphabetically comes between Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone and author Thomas Hardy?
- 10) Which former Benedictine monk born near Glastonbury went on to become Bishop of Worcester and of London before being appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and is the Patron Saint of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Jewellers, Blacksmiths, Armourers, Lighthouse Keepers and others?

Answers on page 16.

Combined Forces Celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee in Portsmouth

By Terry Walker

THIS WAS BILLED as the largest military show outside London for many years. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh joined the Armed Forces to celebrate her Golden Jubilee on Thursday June 27th. An estimated 1,500 unit representatives and their guests were invited to join the celebrations. We assembled at HMS *Excellent* on Whale Island. Everyone was kept well aware of times and events, the day passing very quickly thanks to the polished organisation.

FROM THE QUADRANTS

A massive amphitheatre had been built, divided into quadrants. There was an enormous backcloth, which someone told us was thought to be the largest in Europe. Four giant television screens were cunningly sited to provide a birds-eye view of the Queen's activities throughout the day. These screens were lowered into position to enable us to see the live action whenever necessary.

ARRIVAL OF HER MAJESTY

Just before 11am an announcer told us the Queen was four minutes away. The sound of an approaching helicopter must have turned everyone's heads and we saw a dark red 'chopper' cross the skyline. On the screens we were able to see the Royal party leaving the helicopter, to be greeted by Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, GCB, OBE, ADC, Chief of the Defence Staff. At ten minutes past the hour came the first fly-past of the day; thirty-one Tucano planes in E^UR formation flying low over Whale Island. Just after this, Her Majesty made an inspection of the Multi-Service Royal Guard before setting off to tour the exhibitions.

Television cameras followed the Royal party moving round and talking to those manning the displays.

We enjoyed a very pleasant buffet lunch in a marquee on the upper lawn. We remained informed as the speeches were relayed from the Mess where Her Majesty was lunching.

A PRESENT FOR THE QUEEN

To mark the occasion, Combined Services designed and made a set of gates for Her Majesty's country home, Sandringham Park. The two gates span 4.5 metres and are 2.1 metres high, with matching ten-metre railings in three spans on each side. They were fabricated from mild steel and rounded in reinforced concrete. They will be painted black with gold embellishments, which include the Royal Cipher and the dates 1952 and 2002.

Following lunch, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce stood to speak on behalf of her armed forces. "This is a very special celebration where we offer our sincere thanks to our Monarch, in Her Golden Jubilee Year, for all the support she has given us." He spoke of the developing role of her armed forces highlighting the changes she must have witnessed during her reign. He went on to illustrate the skills of today, both in personnel and equipment employed and concluded with equipment of today and that currently in the planning stages. Sir Michael then presented Her Majesty with the Cipher as a symbol of the gift for Sandringham Park.

The Queen thanked the Services for their gift and added: "I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the special strains that this service places on wives, families and husbands. Service overseas, particularly in response to unexpected crises in distant parts of the world, inevitably disrupt family life. And I want to pay tribute to all service families for their support and their toleration of frequent separation.

"So thank you once more for inviting Prince Phillip and me here today. Britain is grateful to you, whether here in Portsmouth, in bases across the United Kingdom or across the world.

"You do this country proud."

A brief moment of silence was then followed by rapturous applause on the upper lawn.

There were several displays on site plus signposts and marshals to assist. We were invited to make a tour of these soon after arrival, or listen to the many military bands who gave of their best across the barrack square. Finally, we were issued with a gift pack that contained current issues of magazines dedicated to the three services, a programme, a poncho and a set of ear plugs!

BATTLE FOR WHALEONIA

Returning to our seats in the amphitheatre, it was soon time for the combined services to demonstrate their many skills and duties. As part of the display there was a battle to regain control of 'Whaleonia'. This was a fictitious island where bandits had taken control by force. The job of the British forces was to re-take control and declare the village safe, returning the island to normality inclusive of supplies support and leave the place in a peaceful setting.

We were suddenly plunged into the thick of it. We overlooked a village scene close to the sea. Two bandits were heard by control discussing their next meal. Rapid exchanges between units and "Go Go Go"! - we were dropped into the midst of a surprise attack. Yes, aircraft, tanks and helicopters - the whole might of our military were there! The noise

was tremendous. This was followed by scenes of the clearance of ordnance, with sniffer dog Buster going into action, First Aid being provided to the wounded, troops checking a village and clearing it of the enemy prisoners, and our forces supporting the local population through to a peacetime normality with food supplies and direct assistance.

Attention to detail? They even had Kate Adie there doing her interview bit! It was all exactly as we often see it on our television screens. If you thought The Royal Tournament was good, this one was for real. So close were we that at one point some of our audience were covered in 'muck; if not the bullets'.

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh viewed the action from the deck of *Ark Royal*. A final moment came when a Para jumped from a Sea King into the sea on a rescue and recovery mission. Returning to *Ark Royal*, he ran still dripping wet across the flight deck to surprise the Royal party with a bunch of Golden Roses for Her Majesty!

Our final view was a large fly-past of air power, all the planes and helicopters in service today; it was most impressive. We left Whale Island with a warm heart, a feeling of pride, and gratitude at being lucky enough to have taken part.

Handicraft skills on display in Brighton

THE SUMMER CRAFT EXHIBITION got off to a good start at the official opening on Friday June 14th. Around 60 people were there for the judging which this year was undertaken by the Ovingdean Manager, Dick Lake.

More than 50 exhibitors, including St Dunstaners, family, friends and St Dunstan's staff, contributed to the display. Just as two years ago, there was a tremendous response from people both in-house and locally, as well as around the country. The exhibition reflected the level of creativity and diversity of skills amongst St Dunstaners.

Alice Gimbrere took first prize in the St Dunstaners category, with her mosaic lighthouse picture. Alice is a permanent resident at Ovingdean and is a regular visitor to the craft workshop. It gives her a chance to try a variety of activities and socialise with other St Dunstaners. Alice's latest project is chair caning.

Ernie Bowditch came second with a papier-mâché tray which he made using copies of one of his poems. Ernie's poems are well-known at Ovingdean, both on display in the corridor and compiled in a book.

Ron Tingay came third with his multi-coloured rug. He's a keen swimmer, but manages to fit in craftwork between pool sessions. His favoured handicraft activities are making rug wall-hangings and chair weaving.

Guests at the Rehabilitation & Training department's Open Day were treated to a private view of the exhibition the day before it was officially opened, and another 70 people visited over the next few days, including the High Sheriff of East Sussex and his wife. A number of the 140 pieces on display were sold, raising money for the Inner Garden Project at Ovingdean.

Anything but 'Le Froid'

Ramblin' Ray Hazan provides an account of the Walking Club visit to France, June 16th-23rd 2002

CLOSE YOUR EYES and imagine a backdrop of mountains. There are hills in the foreground. Above, the sun glares down from a cloudless sky. There is not a man-made object in sight. Above all, it is the sounds, which are striking; playing the base-line are the crickets and grasshoppers with their constant 'sawing'. The top line of the musical score is the scream of swift and swallow, closely accompanied by a myriad of songbirds. To this must be added the sound of walking boots crunching on the sandy and rocky soil, frequently interrupted by the explosive hay fever sneezes of the author and the laughter and chatter of people enjoying themselves.

This was the most ambitious week yet in the St Dunstan's Walking Club's 13-year history – a trip

to the Massif Central in France. We have to thank the Brighton Ramblers from last year for having raised our interest.

We were a geographically varied group of veteran walkers; Ted and Beryl John, John and Sue Lilley and Ralph Taylor represented the Northwest. Bill and Betty Weisblatt, George and Catherine Johnston and Ray and Robbie Hazan represented London and the south was supported by Graham Johnson. We very much missed regulars Mike Tetley, attending a Regimental reunion in Kenya, and Tom Roddy and Jenny Wall, who had an illness in the family.

Our paths took us all to Heathrow airport and thence, in just under two hours, to a stifling Lyon, some 300 miles south of Paris and basking in 90

degrees of heat. There we were met by Monsieur André Marcon, owner of La Découverte, the base for our forthcoming holiday. With André at the wheel, our coach headed south on a motorway, which it then left to start its ascent up into the foothills. With each yard, or should it be metre, our spirits began to relax as a beautiful and unpopulated countryside started to reveal itself.

Two hours later we arrived at the hamlet of Saint Bonnet le Froid, meaning St Bonnet the cold, a reference to the long, hard winters. It lies at 3,575 feet. Our host André Marcon, with his wife Badou, assisted by Vincent, who acted as chef, coach driver, gardener, walk leader and guide dog and Karine, a sports student, run the 19-room 'hotel'. The word hotel is used loosely as informality reigns and the staff join the guests for the evening meal 'en famille'.

STRAIGHT INTO THE DINING ROOM

As time was getting on, we were ushered straight into the dining-room where what was to become the usual four-course meal awaited us, with as much red wine and bread as we could consume. There was no barman and you were trusted to fill in a list of your drinks. The rooms were well appointed, each with en-suite facilities and some enjoyed a superb view of mountains and countryside.

After dinner on that first evening, we took a walk along the deserted 100-yard high street with its empty bars (they close at 8pm), garlic shop, garage, hairdressers and general store. Nothing moved, no cars, no people and just a half-crescent moon looked down on us. Time stopped and any tension began to relax. Indeed, it was hard to believe that such villages still existed and were part of the 21st century!

Other evenings saw groups of our party huddled closely together in the village square as if on secret missions. It was, in fact, the only location amongst the houses where mobile phones could connect with their networks. Ted and Beryl were anxiously awaiting news of the birth of their sixth grandchild (now born since their return), whilst others checked up on family and their off spring's exam results!

Left: Our St Dunstaners and friends during a break.

Right: Beryl John develops a taste for rock music.

Our daily walks were divided into two levels. The 'sportive', for the hardier and more active types, consisting mainly of the other English and French guests and included Bill and Graham from our party. They covered some 15 miles a day at a steady pace being led by Dick, a Yorkshireman who spends many holidays in the area. The 'tranquille', meaning literally 'quiet' walks for the remainder were covered at a more modest pace and achieved half the distance. The first day's tranquille walk was led by Edmond and his wife Josette, a retired French couple. They had been visiting the region regularly for the past 17 years. They took us on delightful tracks around the perimeter of the village. The scent of the wild herbs, the views across the valley and the running commentary from Edmond were most enjoyable and eased us nicely into our first day.

From day two onwards, we soon settled into a programme of boarding the coach at 9.15, dropping the 'sportives' off some distance before the 'tranquilles'. The two parties would then meet up for



Photographs by Roberta Hazan





Where's Dorothy Lamour when you need her? John, Vincent and Ray on the road to Mandalay.

lunch before reversing the procedure; 'tranquilles' picked up after a 4 or 5-mile walk, then the 'sportives' and back to 'camp'.

The last day was the toughest in that André considered that by scaling one of the higher peaks in the region, we would be afforded a cooling breeze. We clambered up a stepped and then rocky path, through trees, which neatly blocked any breeze. Finally, with a lot of panting, muttered curses and gasped conversations, the summit of Mezenc, 1,753.1 metres (5,697.25 feet) was assailed! There we were met by a great view of the Alps and surrounding countryside, but also by swarms of flies, which curtailed our feelings of conquering heroes. The descent was slow and tricky down rock-strewn paths, but the cold beer and pique-nique, which awaited us at in the car park below made it all worthwhile – especially with hindsight!

'Les pique-niques', which were brought out to us at lunchtime were a feature in themselves. Not for the French the cardboard box containing a roll, fruit cake, apple, etc! Plates, cutlery, serviette and cup having been distributed, a cold hors d'oeuvre was followed by a hot course of meat and vegetables followed by cheese and fruit. The whole washed down with as much red wine and bread as you could take. Even the sites chosen were conducive; a picnic

bench in a park, tiny village bars, a river bank and car park, but all quiet and undisturbed. PBK, you have been warned!

Where possible, the walks were through shaded areas, as the sun really was a hot one! But even that could not detract from the peace of it all, with rarely a car to be heard and only the occasional military plane overhead. The countryside positively shimmered in the heat. In addition, the area had been a volcanic region. Extinct volcanoes rimmed the skyline whilst lower down, vent holes were surrounded by the black basalt formed from the lava flow of millions of years ago. When a piece was struck against a rock, it would sound a metallic musical note.

Occasionally, we would pass through a village. These consisted of dressed stone houses, few in number and seemingly uninhabited. Vincent told us that people worked away from home during the day in local industries. At home, they had animals, grew vegetables and were relatively self-sufficient. Many young people had moved into the nearby towns but were beginning to appreciate the value of country life and were slowly returning.

Most houses seem to have a noisy dog in the garden, no doubt as a guardian of their isolation.

Unfortunately, one dog took its task a little too seriously and one of our St Dunstan's party was bitten. Bill was taken to a nearby doctor and given a jab. When we parted at Heathrow, he was not foaming at the mouth at that point.

We nearly lost another of our party when he was spied lighting his pipe near some liquid gas containers. We had visions of carrying a pipe clasped in a set of false gnashers back to the UK as a relic! Yet others nearly fell foul of the very basic public toilets, which are to be found in these off-the-map villages – a hole in the ground is worth nowhere near two with a flush!

La Découverte was not just a walking holiday. Interspersed with our perambulations was a stop at a large market selling everything you could imagine, including live duck, quail, etc. Cherries were around £1 a kilo (2.2 pounds) and were typical of the cheaper cost of living that the French seem to enjoy today. We also stopped at a shop selling 'bee' products, where after a tot of mead, we sampled honey whose taste varied according to the vegetation in the area of the hive. There was even a pause to

allow those who wanted to watch England's football match. As there was a Brazilian lady in the other party, at least one person went away happy!

Entertainment was organised in the evenings. The French game of 'boules' is very similar in object to bowls, but is played on any rough surface. St Dunstaners acquitted themselves better at that than table-tennis, which was out of reach for us all. As if the pique-nique was not sufficient, several went out for a gastronomic evening at André's brother's restaurant. A four-hour meal was in the French style, ie with many courses, small in quantity but great in quality and washed down with a variety of wines.

On another evening, André, who has been Mayor of St Bonnet for 13 years, gave us a very interesting insight into French country life and explained the various levels of bureaucracy that exist. The 36,000 communes or parishes have regions and départements, or counties above them, each responsible for different aspects of village infrastructure. The village of St Bonnet itself was founded in the 12th century. The population topped 400 at one stage, but lost many during the First World War. There are currently 210 inhabitants. It has no policeman, doctor or fire service. Neither have there been any crimes or fires!

For the past 20 years, the French have adopted a Festival of Music on the June 21st, the longest day. Saint Bonnet was not to be outdone. La Découverte laid tables out in the garden and a barbecue was much enjoyed. Several courses found their way onto

our plates – cabbage soup, brochettes, spicy sausages, baked potatoes, the inevitable cheeses and crème caramel. The food did little to dampen the singing that followed. André has a very pleasant baritone voice and, accompanied by Dick on the guitar, had us all singing or joining in choruses as he and Dick alternated verses in French and English of popular folk songs. One song, in particular, André claimed originated during the 100 years war between England and France and came from St Bonnet itself! It went "My 'bonny' lies over the ocean!" sitting outside in short sleeves until well after dark, under a starry sky, a good meal washed down with wine, laughter and song made us feel very lucky and fortunate to be alive.

When we departed after our last breakfast on Sunday June 23rd, the sun was already blazing in a cloudless sky and the temperature not short of 80 degrees, even at that stage in the joining. The wait at Lyon airport and trying to book in is best left forgotten. I/we returned home perhaps not only larger in girth, but with greater knowledge of French country life, fresh air, exercise and an appreciation of a foreign land and its welcome. It appears an envious way of life; seemingly relaxed and with different priorities – the stomach being very near the top! Should a similar venue be chosen in future, then the recommendation is for as much culinary as physical training!

The decision on next year's venue has not yet been taken. If you are interested in being contacted as soon as more information is known, then please get in touch with either Ray or Robbie Hazan at HQ.



Pit stop on Mt Mezenc.

I'VE BEEN TO RIPON

St Dunstaner Harry Beevers reports on the generosity of the Royal Engineers

ON FRIDAY JULY 5th I went to Ripon. In normal circumstances a trip to England's oldest city would probably mean a visit to the old Cistercian Fountains Abbey, or the tomb of St Wilfred in the cathedral or even the Ripon race-course. However, on this occasion I had been invited to join the Royal Engineers Squadron recently home from Kosovo following their six months peace-keeping duties in the Balkans. July 5th was to be their medal-presentation day and after a short telephone conversation with Major Tony Moore for directions I set off via the A1 for my first army parade for fifty-two years.

A quick search through my wardrobe revealed that practically all of my original uniform was gone. The two remaining items, a disreputable-looking green Jungle hat and a tired-looking bush-hat with a faded puggaree seemed to be inappropriate so it was in blazer (sporting my St Dunstan's badge) and flannels that I set off as representative of our organisation with my colleague and guide RAF ex-LAC Acting Corporal Derek Stoker, a friend for nearly sixty years. Fifty-two years ago I too had been a member of a peace-keeping force in Mogadishu, East Africa, with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (although I am a Yorkshireman), and I was slightly worried as I am not quite up to light infantry pace these days.

After reporting to the guard-room we were met by the RSM and my hand went instinctively to where

my battle-dress pocket should have been just to check that I was properly dressed! What followed was an experience both my colleague and I will remember for a long time. After tea and biscuits in the Sergeants' Mess we assembled at the parade square where the OC Major Moore met us along with his wife and twelve-year old son and gave us an outline of the timetable for the day. After a short discussion with young William Moore on school life in general and Rugby Union in particular the proceedings commenced as the RSM brought the company to attention and the medal ceremony got under way.

Major Tony Moore, had followed in his father's footsteps as he also had been a Royal Engineer for thirty-nine years while his grandfather, a member of the Machine Gun Corps in World War I was a former St Dunstaner. Major Moore told us that his grandfather was blinded in action in 1916 and had left the army dejected and worried about the future. St Dunstan's gave him back his confidence and zest for life and he had gone on to get married and raise seven children!

The Squadron had collected £800 for St Dunstan's and when the medals had been distributed I made my way on to the parade ground accompanied by the RSM to receive the cheque from Major Moore. I didn't make a speech but I did thank the Squadron for their generosity and in the Sergeants' Mess afterwards I was able to tell some of them about the work carried out at Ovingdean

and Harcourt Street. I then sat back for a good hour whilst my RAF friend discussed things beyond my comprehension, core-grinding, tapping and pipe-bending, big ends, and other highly technical matters with members of the Squadron.

After an excellent meal, far better than some of the camel steaks which took some chewing back in Mogadishu my colleague and I were pressed to stay for the party to be held in the Junior Ranks' club-house. We didn't need much pressing. The wives, partners, girl friends and families of both officers and other ranks were enjoying an excellent social evening when the time for our departure finally arrived. What a day! I was almost tempted to sign on for a three-year term but I fear I may have failed the medical. Thanks again to the Royal Engineers for their generosity and thanks for the opportunity given to me to attend such a memorable day.

Quiz answers

From page nine, the answers are:

- 1) St Dunstan's.
- 2) Florence, in Italy.
- 3) 617 Squadron.
- 4) Vera Lynn.
- 5) Bernard Law.
- 6) Princess Elizabeth, now Queen Elizabeth II.
- 7) Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.
- 8) Winston Churchill.
- 9) W.G. Grace, the England and Gloucestershire cricketer.
- 10) St Dunstan.

St Dunstaner Ted Bunting of Scarborough won third prize in our story competition. His tale of military mischief follows:

CAPRICORN

by
Willy Ekerslike

EVERY MAN IN OUR fine battalion knows the date in 1879 when we won all those Victoria Crosses at Rourke's Drift. It would have been a very proud day I am sure, but there's another day I'll tell you about that we'd rather forget if I'm honest. It was the 1st of March, (St David's Day) 1964. "A black day of shame" as Colonel Lloyd-Jones poetically said, and just one member of the regiment was responsible. I personally witnessed his crimes and was there at his court martial too, so you can be sure the story is true. He was charged in the army way with "conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline" (though the lads in the NAAFI had a better way of describing it) and there was a second, more serious charge of indecent assault on a local dignitary.

The accused said nothing during the hearing; not a single word; he just stood there with his pale blue eyes staring placidly around. "Dumb insolence" they used to call that sort of thing in the old days, and Colonel Lloyd-Jones looked as though he would have liked to have him shot for it on the spot. But he's a fair man is the Colonel I must say, because he allowed Corporal Evans to speak instead, even though everybody knows Evans for a long-winded gas-bag from Anglesey.

"Well Sir," he said, as he began to give his evidence. "I was with the accused at the head of the parade, well, just behind the band look you, and they played *Men of Harlech* as we marched down Cardiff Road, *Heart of Oak* for most of the way up Market Street, and then, when we turned into High Street by Boot's the chemist you know..."

"Yes yes," interrupted the Colonel from behind the big desk, (nobody's patience is infinite is it?) "The parade marched through the town as it usually does on these ceremonial occasions, but get to the point man; get to the Town Square and the war memorial."

"Right Sir, yes Sir," stumbled Evans as he struggled to pick up the threads of his story, "Well they led us

onto the square and then the band counter-marched and went to the rear of the parade and left us at the very front."

"And then what?" prompted the colonel.

"Well that's when he did it Sir," spluttered Evans, getting red in the face.

"That's when he started urinating Sir, I nudged him Sir, I jolted him hard with my elbow, but he ignored me and he didn't stop Sir."

How true that was, and the best part of four hundred men, standing to attention behind him were witness to the fact, there was a steady cascade onto the cobblestones for the whole world to see, and two or three steaming rivers flowed down the cracks between the stones.

"You wouldn't have believed one bladder could hold so much" as Sergeant Major Morgan said later in the mess; "it was like watching the Horseshoe Falls."

"No, he did not stop," agreed the Colonel in his iciest voice; "he certainly did not, he disgraced us all it was a black day of shame. Now tell the court about the attack on the Lady Mayoress."

"Well it was her buttocks you see Sir," said Evans, whose face by this time was the colour of a beetroot. "Mrs Griffith-Williams is very very big down there, Sir, and when she bent down to lay the wreath, well it was too much for him, you know. He just saw her enormous pink panties, put his head down and charged. There was no stopping him Sir."

The Colonel glared angrily at the prisoner and Corporal Evans alike.

"Guilty" he snapped, "And as to you Corporal Evans, if this is the slipshod way you carry out your duties, it's high time someone else took charge of the regimental mascot."

John Stevens reports on St Dunstan's Golf Club's Invitation Day

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

FOR THE FOURTH year in succession Ruser Golf Club hosted St Dunstan's Golf Club's Invitation Day. Eighteen teams entered the competition on June 22nd from all points of the Country. This included six service teams - two Royal Engineers, two REME and two Royal Air Force. They had travelled from Yorkshire, Norfolk and Hampshire. The future of the Services was represented by 267 (Twickenham) Squadron ATC. Nine St Dunstaners also travelled from points north, east, south and west. Our long-term supporter Arnie Taylor (David Taylor's son) brought a team from the Osborne Downs Golf Club in Wiltshire. The Harcourt Hackers, a team from St Dunstan's HQ, was led by Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox. Ruser Members, ladies and gentlemen, entered four teams and several individual teams were represented. Each Service team requested a St Dunstan's player to join them as a team member.

Coffee and bacon rolls were served before the start. Some of us were ferried by Tracey in the St Dunstan's coach to our starting

tees for the nine o'clock shotgun start. The REME team, of which I was a member, was allocated the twelfth. Unfortunately the shotgun used for the start must have had a silencer on it. My three team members teed off first, according to my wife and caddy, "out of sight". Quite intimidating for a relative newcomer to the game, nevertheless I acquitted myself quite well, as we progressed through the course.

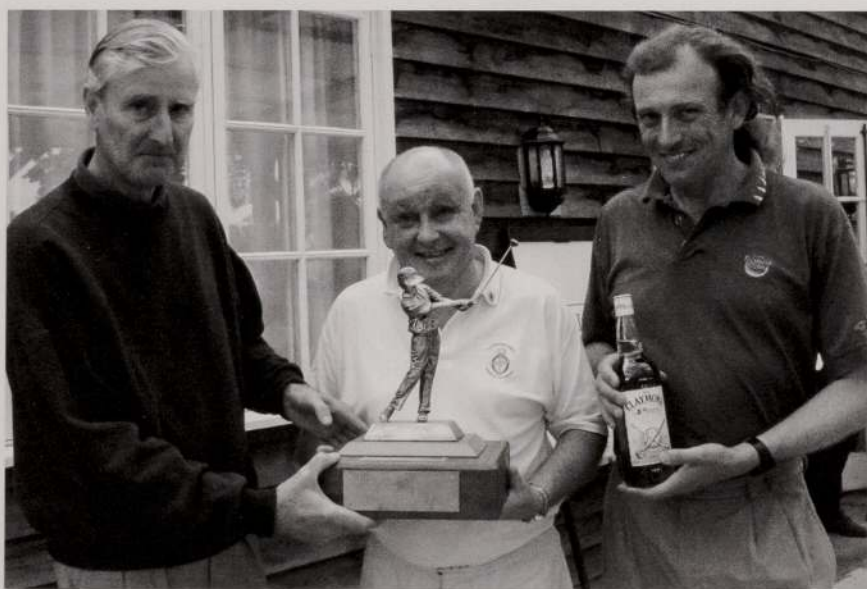
The heavy hitting resulted in a few lost balls, Wayne Guymer remarked "It's alright for those

who can keep the ball on the fairway." In an attempt to get the ball further down the fairway I recently bought a "hippo" driver which Graeme Wilson describes as a shovel. At the 16th, I dragged the club from the bag to attempt the longest drive. Luckily I got a perfect strike and carried a good 200 yards down and on the fairway. Frank Emery, another team member remarked "They'll have a job to beat that." However, St Dunstaner Alan "Reggie" Perrin did, and one handed at that! Tell us your secret Reg!

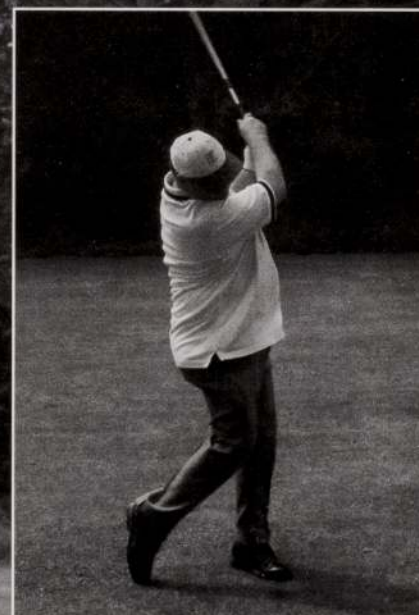
I managed to score for the team on a few holes with my high handicap. The fourth hole was nearest the green for the sighted players. Les Trout, our newest member, managed to get the ball two feet from the pin, any sighted player would have been proud of that shot!

For me, my round of golf was played in excellent company, our team finished with 71 points. This account is written from a personal perspective and I am aware that other players had their own experiences. Graeme Wilson, who was guiding our captain Phil Dobson, told this anecdote. One player in his team was driving the ball 300 yards plus, Phil was heard to say "Chuffin' eck! He hits the ball further than I go on holiday" (Stolen from Jimmy Tarbuck).

Within the competition nine holes of the course were played by St Dunstaners for the Alan Logan



St Dunstaner Des Chandler won the Alan Logan Trophy again.



Photographs: Simon Rogers



Main picture: John Stevens, aided by Charmaine, takes his final shot.
Top left: Mike Lloyd of RAF Benson auctioned several items.
Middle: Tony Blunden sells raffle tickets and mulligans with equal ease.
Top right: One golfer pays his water forfeit to an Air Cadet.
Above left: Mike Tumilson wacks one down the fairway.
Right: St Dunstaner Dave Morris is set up for a shot.

Trophy for best blind golfer. This year it was won once more by Des Chandler, an ex-Royal Engineer. He played with a Royal Engineers team that nearly took the competition with 92 points. The home team, despite being a man short, won the day by a point.

The buffet lunch followed play. Everybody with healthy appetites made short work of the excellent food. Replete and in good humour the assembled players and guests listened to a short address by St Dunstan's Chairman Michael Gordon-Lennox followed by the presentation of the prizes and trophies. Raffle prizes were many and varied. Our thanks to Tony Blunden, Rusper Golf Club owner, his valuable patronage allows us to play there each month. I can only echo his words about Jill Thornhill, the Club Secretary "without her this event would not take place." Her logistical expertise in organising such an event is stunning, tee times were arranged



Phil Dobson, Captain of St Dunstan's Golf Club proudly presents John Stevens with the Captain's Day Trophy.

to cause the least hold up, in fact during my 18 holes we rarely saw anyone ahead or behind us.

Our thanks also go to the ground staff for providing a perfect course, the Air Cadets who were ready with their forfeit buckets at the water hazards, our sponsors Norwich Union, Chris Johnson

and many others for their generosity. A total of £2,225 was raised by their efforts.

Highlights of the day included seeing so many people, especially the service teams, giving their time to raise funds for the St Dunstan's golfers and the positive comments about the abilities of the St Dunstan's players. Of course, we as the players know that our success is solely due to the dedication of our guides - after all we only have to hit the ball!

CAPTAIN'S DAY

The following day, June 23rd, we held the AGM. Chairman David Morris, Secretary Mike Tumilson, Treasurer John Stevens and Captain Phil Dobson were re-elected unopposed. We followed this with the Captain's Day, the first year the event has taken place.

St Dunstaner John Stevens took the trophy with 21 points. Close second was Mike Tumilson with 19 points. Individual medals were presented to all those who took part on the day.



St Dunstaner Anton Charlton guided by David Chandler.

REUNION ROUND-UP



At the Leeds Reunion Tim Bacon presents Eric Foster, a St Dunstaner since 1943, with the badge marking 50 years as a St Dunstaner.

THE NEWCASTLE REUNION on June 18th at Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle united 17 St Dunstaners and ten widows. Drew Lyburn was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding.

The Leeds Reunion on June 19th at the Posthouse, Bramthorpe near Leeds hosted the first presentations of the St Dunstan's badge marking 50 years or more as a St Dunstaner.

Presiding Council Member Tim Bacon made the presentations.



Ron Gadsby of Leeds, a St Dunstaner since 1944, was the next to receive his badge.



Above: Sydney Scroggie and Michael Kelbie at the Edinburgh Reunion.

Right: The Jubilee badge.



Nine St Dunstaners, 17 widows and one widower were present.

The privilege of the badge presentations fell to St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox at the second Brighton Reunion held at Ovingdean on June 26th.

The Chairman presided over a gathering of 34 St Dunstaners and 13 widows. Nearly 90 people in all attended the event.

There was a select gathering at the Edinburgh Reunion on July 3rd. Again Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox presided.



The Home Secretary Will See You Now

Author: Graham Ison
Reader: Stephen Thorne
Duration: 7 Hours 10 minutes
Catalogue No 8033

IF BRITAIN'S ACTUAL Home Secretary had not been David Blunkett, a blind man more famous than many St Dunstaners, I may not have chosen this title and subsequently I would have missed a real pleasure. For this is the sort of novel one always hopes for but so seldom finds; it is imaginative, earthy, interesting with a subtle touch of humour and most of all; it is entertaining from beginning to end. There are faults of course for nothing is perfect and some of these are rather serious. You can't gloss over the fact, for instance, that the story line is highly implausible or that the plot, for a detective story, is as transparent as a goldfish bowl. If one mentions in addition, that several players in the drama are more like caricatures than characters and that much of the dialogue could have come straight from an old B movie, you could even be thinking *The Home Secretary Will See You Now* has little or nothing going for it at all. But how different is the reality! When a book gives as much enjoyment as this one does, it's amazing what blemishes one can happily ignore.

PUTTING THE FUTURE BEHIND YOU

A blind fortune-teller says he can predict people's future by feeling their buttocks. He says it gives a more vivid impression than palm reading!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters are always welcome.
Write to the Editor, St Dunstan's
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London W1H 4HD. Telephone
020 7723 5021 or e-mail
ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.



**From: Sonia Bamsey,
Verwood, Dorset**
I would like to thank everyone at
St Dunstan's for the kindness
shown to my parents Charles and
Olive Cummings, during the time
that my father was a St Dunstaner.

*A TRIO OF ROYAL ENGINEERS are congratulated on a job well done
by St Dunstan's Facilities Manager Michael Hordell. Corporal Starr,
Sapper Griffiths and Sapper Kerslake from RE 24 Training Support
Squadron defied rain, hail and high winds to construct a ramp that will
allow the rear field at Ovingdean to be used as an additional parking
area. The task involved clearing several tons of earth.*

WELCOME TO ST DUNSTAN'S

June 21st

Eric Hale of Stourbridge, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946. After training, he became a photographer and made a number of operational flights taking aerial photographs. He also provided photo support for the Mosquito Reconnaissance (RECCE) Aircraft. He was later posted to the Dutch-German border until the end of the war. After leaving the service he returned to his work as a newspaper photographer working for the Birmingham Gazette amongst other publications. He also established a school for photojournalism.

Geoffrey Hockridge of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1952 and in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1952 to 1967. He served in the UK, Libya, and Egypt and was awarded the BEM for his contribution to the development of the REME pay computer system. In civilian life, he worked for British Steel Engineering Systems. A keen swimmer, his interests include biking, walking and ballroom dancing. He has a son and daughter, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Arthur Mason of Gosport, Hampshire served in the Hampshire Regiment and the Royal Army Service Corps between 1944 and 1963. He was posted to India for the last 18 months of the war. After taking part in the victory parade in New Delhi, he returned to the UK and was discharged early to help with the housing re-building programme. In 1947 he re-enlisted with the Royal Army Service Corps, serving in Germany, where he took part in the Berlin airlift, Italy, UK, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Jamaica. In civilian life he worked as a long-distance HGV driver and as an electrical fitter. He has two daughters, one son and six grandchildren.

Graham Murrin of Warminster, Wiltshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941-1968. After initial training he was posted to Coastal Command and completed his navigational training in South Africa. He was then posted to India and joined 210 Squadron in Madras as air crew with Catalina Flying Boats. In 1945 he returned to the UK as an Air Traffic Controller before his discharge in 1946. He soon rejoined the RAF as a Navigator, serving variously with Bomber, Ferry and Transport

Commands in Germany, Iraq and Singapore. After leaving the service he worked as a clerk, accountant and milkman. He studied Astronomy, Physics and Science and is also keen on sport and walking. He and his wife Alice have four daughters, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Benjamin David Howick on May 4th. He is the first great-grandchild of Margaret and the late *Joe Hamilton* of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire.

Megan Rebecca Churcher on June 18th. She is the first great-granddaughter of *Peter and Margaret Logan* of Radstock, Somerset.

A grandson on June 24th. He is the sixth grandchild of *Ted and Beryl John* of Wallasey, Merseyside.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Hugh and Jane Rance of Rottingdean, East Sussex who celebrated 63 years of marriage on June 17th.

William and Irene McNeal of Blackpool, Lancashire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on June 21st.

Thomas and Grace Renshaw of Radcliffe on Trent, Nottinghamshire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on June 23rd.

ACHIEVEMENT

Congratulations to:

Giles Hazan, son of *Ray Hazan*, on graduating as a Doctor of Medicine, MBBS (Lon) from University College London on June 26th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Jean Pratt on January 18th. She was the wife of *Hubert Pratt* of Wolverhampton, West Midlands.

Vera Smith of Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire on June 22nd. She was the widow of *Walter Smith*.

Our sympathy goes to their families and friends.

IN MEMORY

It is with deep regret that we have to record the deaths of the following St Dunstaners and we offer our heartfelt sympathy to their widows, family and friends.

Albert Dyer

Royal Engineers

Albert Dyer of Redditch, Worcestershire died on June 9th, aged 80. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1946. He went into France on D-Day +2 and fought through to Germany. In civilian life he worked in an aluminium factory. His interests included fishing and gardening. Our sympathy goes to his widow Marjorie and all members of the family.

Robert Mayberry

Royal Artillery

Robert Gerald Mayberry of Horley, Surrey died on June 27th, aged 83. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1937 and was deployed to France in 1940. Evacuated from Dunkirk, he later served in the Middle East and Italy before being discharged as Captain in 1946. After the war he worked as a solicitor. Our sympathy goes to his widow Lesley, their son and daughter and all members of the family.

Joseph Nicol

Royal Engineers

Joseph Hart Nicol of Cottingham, Humberside died on July 1st, aged 85. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1943. He worked as a fitter before joining the Royal Engineers in 1934. He served as a Corporal until wounded by gun shot in Tunisia. In civilian life he worked as a telephonist. His interests included wrought iron work and organ playing. Our sympathy goes to his son Leslie and all members of the family.

Francis "Mick" Turner

Royal Fusiliers

Francis Henry "Mick" Turner of Addlestone, Surrey died on July 10th, aged 76. He joined the Royal Fusiliers in 1939, serving with them in the UK and Italy. He suffered a bullet wound to his shoulder during the Italian campaign and was discharged in 1946. He originally came to St Dunstan's in 1991 under the wing of the Diana Gubbay Trust. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joan and all other members of the family.



I must go down to the sea again ...

Sarah Tait finds herself on the crest of a wave at the Sussex Sailability Open Day

THE DATE – June 14th. The place – Sussex Yacht Club, Shoreham. The conditions? Fair, the fog was lifting, there was a moderate breeze and the rain looked like it would hold off. A hardy crew of St Dunstaners (Harry Bell, Cliff Ford, Ray Hazan, George Oliver, Norman Perry and James Poole) were assembled and ready to set sail. The occasion? No, not a booze cruise to France, but the Sussex Sailability Open Day.

Sussex Sailability is a local division of the Royal Yachting Association, which promotes disabled sailing. With a regular programme of events open to disabled sailors throughout the year, Sussex Sailability is hoping to encourage existing sailors or people who would like to learn to sail to come and join the club.

A variety of boats from yachts to dinghies were available and the St Dunstan's crew set sail in Sport 16s. With Norman, Ray, Cliff and George taking turns at the helm,

we set a course up the River Adur and despite a few wet feet a fantastic time was had by all.

Special thanks must go to members of the Sussex Yacht Club, ably assisted by staff from Goldman Sachs, for organising not only a great day's sailing but also for lunch and the sumptuous afternoon tea they laid on.



Above: Norman Perry mans the helm.
Below: Ray Hazan pulls the jib sheet.

