

BLIND AMBITION CAMPAIGN Stephen Menary drops in Mark's Rigid Lion record

St Dunstan's Review

www.st-dunstans.org.uk

October 2002



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

St Dunstan's Review

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OCTOBER 2002

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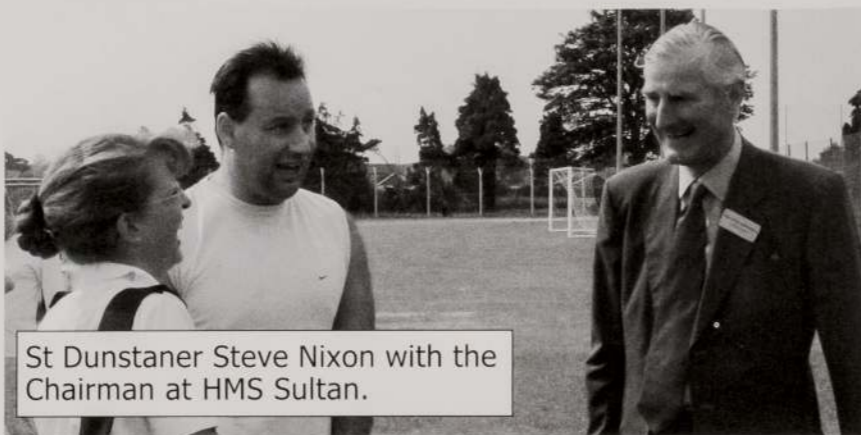
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Cover picture:
St Dunstaner Stephen
Menary hurtles through the
air at 120mph. He has just
jumped out of an
aeroplane at 13,000ft with
Red Devil L/Cpl Tim Skinner.

Full details on page 16.

From the Chairman



St Dunstaner Steve Nixon with the
Chairman at HMS Sultan.

THE FUNDRAISING department recently sent out the first of a biannual newsletter called *insight* to 250,000 individual donors. It has met with remarkable success; nearly 1,000 people have expressed interest in our Christmas cards, many others have asked for more information, want to purchase a ten-minute video about St Dunstan's or would like a speaker to visit their club. This demonstrates the degree of loyalty and support we enjoy as an organisation, without which, St Dunstan's could not carry out its work.

In addition, we are in the midst of a local radio campaign. I am grateful to those St Dunstaners who have agreed to be interviewed about how we have been able to help them. So far, Southern Counties Radio, Radio Berkshire and Radio Kent have carried features. This is wonderful PR.

Towards the end of the month we turn our clocks back, denoting the departure of our so-called summer, and the approach of shorter days. Remembrance Sunday is just around the corner, with more support so far than ever before.

During the season I have presided over four Reunions, each of which has given me the chance to meet more of you, and as always, I have been impressed beyond measure by the universal spirit and the constant and successful efforts to overcome lack of sight, and to be independent, cheerful and purposeful achievers. It has been a privilege to meet so many, and above all I have been proud to present a large number of the Golden Jubilee St Dunstan's 50 year badges, which recognise such a long association with St Dunstan's. Congratulations to all; it was and will continue to be, a humbling experience.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



NOTICE BOARD



VISIT TO O VingDEAN BY HRH THE DUKE OF KENT - TUESDAY OCTOBER 15TH

His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, will be visiting Ovingdean on Tuesday October 15th from 12.10 to 14.00 to open officially the refurbishment that has taken place in the Ansell Wing and in the new rooms on the Fourth Floor. During his time with us he will tour the building, meeting a number of St Dunstaners and members of staff en route, before unveiling a commemorative plaque. His visit will conclude with a buffet lunch in the Winter Garden.

Those of the St Dunstan's family who wish to be present are most welcome to join us and there will be various opportunities to get close to the Duke on his tour. We are keen that he sees St Dunstaners involved in our various activities like craft, sport and training. Obviously, numbers at the buffet lunch will be limited, so attendance will be by invitation only and will be based on a random selection of those who are actually staying in-house on October 15th thus covering a spectrum of permanent and respite residents, holiday makers and trainees.

For both security and catering reasons, anybody wishing to come into Ovingdean on that day from the local community must register their intention by Monday October 7th, please, and names should be passed to Linda Barley on Ovingdean extn 1412 (or, from outside, 01273 391412).

Lunch for day visitors will be in the main dining room if they normally take lunch there on a Tuesday and for others, if numbers so dictate, we will put on sandwiches and coffee in the lounge. Because of the timing of the Duke's visit, lunch in the dining room will be delayed until 1315.

Dick Lake
Ovingdean Manager

MASONIC WEEKEND

The Masonic Weekend will be April 26th-28th 2003. If any Masons would like to attend to please contact Ron Freer (123a Horsham Avenue, Peacehaven BN10 8DT. Tel: 01273 584221)

SENIOR CITIZENS UNITE

Seniors Network is a website for people with a common interest in Seniors Matters - an information resource for older people and their organisations. It covers a wide range of interests from pension matters to health issues, from entertainment to finance.

Completely independent, it is not allied to any political party or other type of organisation, but encourages all senior citizens to take an interest in technology, computers and the internet. A selection of forums and noticeboards also provide a great way to keep in touch! Current debates question whether better government for older people is really better government of older people.

Log on at <http://www.seniornetwork.co.uk>.

INTERNET TUTORIAL UPDATED

The *From The Keyboard Internet Tutorial* Volume 1 has been updated. It now encompasses Internet Explorer and Outlook Express 6.0, with extra sub-sections to cover any significant changes from Versions 5.5. Several more general sub-sections have also been added to the Outlook Express section.

The combined and updated version of Agent and Free Agent newsgroups reader (Version 1.92) is also included in the tutorial. Additionally, there is more information on broad band Internet connections.

Anyone who has already bought a copy, may have a replacement for £8 by e-mail or £10 on disk. First-time purchases cost £15 by e-mail or £17 on disk.

Another section has been added to the Nero Burning-ROM tutorial, covering burning whole folders, sub-folders and their files via Windows Explorer, and more details about the latest version of Nero 5.5X in general. The latest Nero INCD software (Version 3.31) has also been included. This tutorial still costs £15 pounds by e-mail or £17 pounds on disk.

For details of the full range of tutorials, contact John Wilson by e-mail at jw@onetel.net or by telephone on 0113 2575957 or visit his website at <http://web.onetel.net/~fromthekeyboard>.

STORY WRITING COMPETITION

Once again, *The Review* is organising a story writing competition. Entries may be on any subject, fiction or non-fiction and should not have been previously published. The competition is open to St Dunstaners, their wives, husbands, widows or widowers.

Please will you follow these steps when submitting entries:

- 1) Entries should be typewritten and should not exceed 1500 words.
- 2) Please submit your entry under a nom-de-plume.
- 3) Please write your nom-de-plume and your real name and seal them up in an envelope, which should accompany your entry. Envelopes will not be opened until the judge has made his or her decision.
- 4) Only one submission per person.
- 5) Entries must be received by the Editor, *St Dunstan's Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by Monday February 4th, 2003.

The winner will receive £50, runner-up £30 and third story selected £20. The winning stories will be published in *The Review*.

AUDIO DESCRIBED PERFORMANCES

The following plays, opera and musicals will be performed with additional description for visually impaired members of the audience.

Tosca on October 18th at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham (0115 989 5501). *A Number* at the Royal Court, London on October 19th (020 7565 5000). *King Lear* at the Hall For Cornwall, Truro on October 26th (01872 262466).

Singin' In The Rain on October 30th at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham (0115 989 5501). *The Phantom Of The Opera* at Her Majesty's Theatre, London on November 2nd (020 7494 5448) and *Henry IV Part I* at Bristol Old Vic, Bristol.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The final date for submitting items for publication in the November *Review* is October 7th 2002.

The final date for submitting items for publication in the December *Review* is November 11th 2002.

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.

BEWARE – YOUR RUBBISH MAY BE GOLD TO SOMEONE ELSE!

A fast rising crime is the fraudulent use of credit cards. You should be aware that any paper with your name and a credit card number, such as bank statements, bills, credit card and till receipts may contain some of the necessary information for others to use maliciously. Please do not just throw these items away; make sure you destroy them before discarding them.

THE POPPY PIN

This delightful lapel pin incorporates three cornflowers (the French flower of remembrance) and a single poppy with the words 'Never Forget' along the bottom edge.

Please send your order, with payment to: Sue Cox, Fovant Elm, Tisbury Road, Fovant, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5JY. The pin costs £2.50. Cheques should be made payable to Sue Cox.



SIGNALLING MANY HAPPY RETURNS TO ARTHUR

CONGRATULATIONS to St Dunstaner Arthur Halestrap of Kings Sutton, Banbury, Oxfordshire who celebrated his 104th birthday on September 8th. Born in 1898, Arthur of Banbury, Oxfordshire served in both World Wars. From 1916 to 1919 he served in the Signals Section of the Royal Engineers.

During the peace he worked for Marconi, developing communication links across the world, including India, Australia, Canada and the Falkland Islands.

This pioneering work laid the foundations for methods used in modern communications and computer systems.

Arthur's service life resumed in 1942 when he was commissioned into the Royal Signals. He worked in the intelligence field as trainer and chief signals officer.

At the beginning of this year Arthur recalled his experiences of trench warfare during World War I for a BBC television documentary.

STAFF DEPARTURES: Dorothy Rose

St Dunstan's bids farewell to General Ledger Supervisor Dorothy Rose who retires at the end of the month after 43 years service. She is currently St Dunstan's longest serving employee having joined the Accounts department in September 1959. Many St Dunstaners will know Dorothy from those numerous occasions when she has supported the activities of the London Club and the Bridge Club, often at short notice. She has also helped to keep St Dunstan's contingent running smoothly on Remembrance Sunday for many a year. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

Anyone wishing to contribute to a collection for Dorothy should send a cheque, made payable to St Dunstan's, to Carol Maloney at St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Jan Roser

After five years as Cashier at Ovingdean, Jan Roser has left St Dunstan's to seek pastures new. We wish her all the best for the future.

Bob Willis

Sports and Recreation Assistant Bob Willis left St Dunstan's on September 11th to join BUPA. We wish him all success in his new career.

Peter Rutland

Peter Rutland, Head of IT has left St Dunstan's to take up a post at the Royal College of Nursing. We wish him all the best for the future.

Veterans remember 60th Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid

ST DUNSTANER Bill Shea travelled to France in August for a ceremony commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid on August 19th 1942. Close to a thousand British and Canadian Servicemen lost their lives on that fateful day.

"On Sunday the 18th, the various organisations that were over there held their own ceremonies in different places," said Bill. "The Royal Marine group had a boat and we went out to the approaches to Dieppe and had a service onboard. A bunch of roses was laid on the sea for those who died in the area, they of course have no known grave. The French were very supportive. A large number were down at the Port, they really gave us a send off.

"Monday, the actual anniversary, the UK veterans went out to the British Military Cemetery where the dead are buried, those who have known graves. There was a Service, a lot of it was in French but nonetheless very impressive. We had the Royal Marine Band taking part. Wreaths were laid."

Bill paid particular tribute to the memory of three members of "A" Commando Royal Marines who later became St Dunstaners - Bill Hefferman, Des Bissenden and Joe Humphrey.



SD01: Christmas Tree.

SD02: Holly on Music.

SD03: Snowdrop Robin.

SD04: Following Yonder Star.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE

THIS YEAR there are four different Christmas card designs, available in single packs. The card size is 4 7/8 inches by 4 7/8 inches (125x125mm). They are produced on top quality board and are supplied with envelopes wrapped in cellophane in packs of ten. The greeting inside reads: "With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year" and on the inside cover it states that they are sold in aid of St Dunstan's.

Each pack of ten cards costs £2.75 each, plus postage and packaging.

SD01: Christmas Tree

This painting depicts an evergreen tree adorned with baubles against a red background. There is a blue frame marked with stars.

SD02: Holly on Music

This shows a sprig of holly with red berries lying on a sheet of music.

SD03: Snowdrop Robin

A red-breasted robin sits on a log in the middle of a snow-covered landscape. The Snowdrops and the odd blade of grass poke through and there is a church in the distance.

SD04: Following Yonder Star

The Three Wise Men line up in profile with their gifts for the newborn Messiah. This desert scene is framed by the music for the familiar hymn.

This year, we also have a selection of Note Cards and Christmas wrapping paper. The Note Cards are all sized 3 7/8 by 5 1/8 inches (98x130 mm). Each pack has ten cards (five each of two designs) and costs £2.50 plus P&P.

SD05: Fruit & Flora Note Cards

The first shows a golden apple with resting butterfly, a plum and wild flowers. There is notation in

the background and a white border. The second follows a similar design showing a damson branch, a butterfly resting on an orange, a pear and wild flowers.

SD06: Snowdrop Note Cards

The first card depicts a bunch of snowdrops in a flower pot framed by a white border. The second shows a bunch of snowdrops tied by a red ribbon.

SD07: Star Giftwrap

Five different coloured sheets of paper with gold stars and matching tags (flat, folded and bagged) priced £3 plus P&P.

If you would like to place an order, please fill out the order form on the right and send it to St Dunstan's, PO Box 280, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset BS22 9ZD. Alternatively you can call direct on 01934 522 920, quoting the reference codes.

To order Christmas Cards call direct on

01934 522 920

Please quote the reference codes.

CHRISTMAS CARD ORDER FORM 2002

Title:	Initial:	Surname:
Address:		
Postcode:		
Tel:		
E-mail:		

CODE	NAME	PACK COST	QUANTITY REQUIRED	TOTAL COST
SD01	Christmas Tree	£2.75		
SD02	Holly on Music	£2.75		
SD03	Snowdrop Robin	£2.75		
SD04	Following Yonder Star	£2.75		
SD05	Fruit & Flora Note Cards	£2.50		
SD06	Snowdrop Note Cards	£2.50		
SD07	Star Giftwrap	£3.00		
SUB-TOTAL				
*Postage & Packing				
TOTAL AMOUNT				
*Postage & Packing				
Up to 2 items	£0.60	6-10 items	£2.50	
3-5 items	£1.50	For larger orders please call 01934 522920 for P&P costs		

Please make cheques payable to St Dunstan's or debit my: Mastercard/Visa/Amex/Switch/

Credit card no: _____

Valid from: ___ / ___ / ___ Expiry date: ___ / ___ / ___

Switch card issue no (if applicable) _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please send your order to:

St Dunstan's
PO Box 280
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS22 9ZD

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

COME AND enjoy a trip down Memory Lane October 10th and 11th any time between 10.30am and 4.00pm at St Dunstan's Ovingdean

I would be delighted if any wives or husbands, widows or widowers or ex-members of staff who live within a convenient distance for Brighton could come and join me in an identification parade. I have been cataloguing St Dunstan's photos from 1915 to the present day. Unfortunately, many St Dunstaners

are not identified. I have a period from the 1940's onwards and quite a few from the latter years of Pearson House, which are unnamed. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are able to come and help could you please give me a call on 020 7723 5021 so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

Roberta Hazan
Archivist

Chief Constable commends bravery of St Dunstan's Widow

A 90-YEAR-OLD St Dunstan's Widow has been commended by Surrey's Chief Constable for her bravery and determination in tackling an intruder who coned his way into her flat to steal her pension book. Chief Constable Denis O'Connor told Joan Ransom he had been personally touched by the story of her bravery and spirit as she tackled a burglar at her home earlier this year.

Joan, the widow of RAF St Dunstaner Dennis Ransom, was suspicious when a man came round to her house in Great Bookham, Surrey on March 21st and told her there was a fire in the flat upstairs and she should get her valuables and leave. She didn't believe him and threatened to call the police. The man ignored her and went into the living room, where he took her pension book,

purse and a small amount of change. Despite her age and her frail health Joan gave the burglar more than he bargained for by grabbing hold of his sleeve and kneeling him in the groin. He pushed past her to get away, bruising her hand, and then made off. She was left shaken and upset by the experience, particularly as she suffers from a heart condition.

The Chief Constable heard her story and nominated her for a Chief Constable's Commendation which was presented to Joan at her home.

"We are very proud of Mrs Ransom not just because of her courage but her spirit in standing up for herself when many people would simply have given in," said The Chief Constable. "It is especially sad that predators prey on the vulnerable and elderly and

it lifts my heart that they feel able to take back control of their own homes as she did. The only thing that will be better than that is when we catch the man who broke into her flat.

"When you meet Joan her spirit and resilience shines through. She may be 90 in years but she showed a rare presence of mind and strength of character in her determination to safeguard her home. Despite her poor health I have had words with her about the possibility of a new career as a police officer!"

Joan told *The Review* that she was quite excited by the Chief Constable's visit. "I am rather proud of the commendation. My late husband and son would have been chuffed. I reacted in the heat of the moment, though I was quite unwell for a couple of weeks after."

Don't listen to the conman at the door

A St Dunstaner living alone had an encounter with a bogus visitor recently writes Jackie Greer. Having heard a knock at his door. He called out "Who is there?" and was told "It's John." Not knowing any John, the St Dunstaner asked what his business was and received the reply "Social Services have asked me to check on you."

The St Dunstaner put the chain on the door for safety before opening it. The caller then said "It is raining out here," to which the St Dunstaner replied "Stand

forward under the porch." The St Dunstaner asked which Social services department had sent "John" and was given the name of a street that the St Dunstaner had never heard of.

The caller then announced that he was "dying for a cup of tea or at least a drink of water." The St Dunstaner left the chain on the door and got a small glass of water that he could pass to the caller without opening the door. The St Dunstaner then informed the caller that in the absence of ID

he would not admit him, to which the caller replied "Even if I had ID you would be unable to see it." Obviously he was aware the St Dunstaner was visually impaired. After the caller left a check was made with Social Services who had not arranged for any such visit.

■ If you are unsure of an unexpected caller's identity, do not let them in. Most utility companies or officials will only call by appointment and many offer password schemes to identify their employees to blind or elderly clients.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to The Editor are always welcome.
Write to the Editor, St Dunstan's Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.
Telephone 020 7723 5021 or e-mail ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.

From: Susan Milne, Northchurch, Berkhamsted
I would like to congratulate you for printing Mrs Rose Shed's memoir 'My Life Story'. I found it very moving. I had already heard what life was like for poor people in London in the 1920's and 30's but it was salutary to be reminded. St Dunstan's comes well out of her story and the wonderfully positive personality of Mrs Shed herself comes through.

From: L. Heaney, Watford, Hertfordshire
As the husband of one of St Dunstan's Welfare Officers, I am privileged to be able to read *The Review* each month. I produced a newsletter myself for many years and know how difficult it is to come up with something lively and entertaining month-on-month, but you always seem to achieve it – so many congratulations. It must be lovely for St Dunstaners to be so well informed and entertained. However, I must say that last month I read something that really stirred my soul, and this is the principle reason for putting pen to paper. Rose Shed's life story was a moving and profound article and I am sure many St Dunstaners, their spouses and widows, could identify with much of the content. For those young enough to have lived through more fortunate times, I'm sure it puts their worries into perspective. I was a child during the blitz and later served in the armed forces, but compared to Rose and George's experiences, this pales into insignificance. It was a great story and I must congratulate Rose on her marvellous ability to bring words to life.

From: Maurice Aldridge, Bayeux Cedex, France
A while back, the local paper ran a story about a gentleman who was hit on the head by a falling dog while out walking in Caen. Apparently, the dog, Spot by name, had leaped out the fourth floor window of his owner's flat while pursuing a seagull. The walker had to be transported to hospital in a state of shock and poor Spot was taken off to the taxidermist to be stuffed and mounted. Remarkably, in yesterday's paper, we were told of a couple of Italian tourists who were driving happily in the Pyrenees when a cow landed on their bonnet having fallen off a

mountain. The tourists were rushed to hospital, the car was a write off and the unfortunate milker was removed to a corned beef factory. Remember to wear your helmet next time you visit.

From: Joseph and Amy Harris, Tavistock, Devon
Such happiness we received on the occasion of our 65th Wedding Anniversary. We thank the Welfare department for sending such a beautiful basket of flowers. To many friends and family who sent cards and flowers we also say thank you.

From: Walter and Thelma Scott, Hartlepool
Thanks to Welfare for the lovely flowers and congratulations on the occasion of our Golden Wedding Anniversary on August 9th.

Fine reflections



St Dunstaner Colin Best constructed this fine mirror frame while on Woodwork training at the Ovingdean Craft workshop. Framed in "Obeche" stained in oak, 27 inches x 21 inches, the corner decoration is carved limewood, with a rose and two leaves. One of the aims of his training was to develop ways he could continue carving when returning to Belfast, another was to work out jointing systems and guides to enable Colin to work independently at his own workshop, making his own frames and woodwork projects.

FLIGHT OF THE SILVER ARROWS

AFTER FLAMING JUNE had all but succeeded in drowning us, we were thrilled to see the sun on the first competition morning. Alas, it lasted all of two hours, and Ditchling Archers squelched back home yet again. However, having shown us just what they are capable of, the weather gods relented and smirked on us for the rest of the week.

The Worshipful Company of Bowyers have generously made us a grant to buy equipment and we invited them to see the bows in action at Sandwich. Our annual trip there was as happy as ever, from Sibbertswold's welcome in the morning to the evening dinner. One member nearly went to bed hungry as he had mislaid his choppers, although even that didn't prevent his talking - and talking ...

President John Glazier invited the members to tea in his fascinating garden on Tuesday, where they were most impressed with the variety of his sculptures. (PBK were puzzled with the number of orders for Marmite and lettuce sandwiches on the following day, so obviously it was not solely a cultural visit.) Our thanks to John for his hospitality, and please may we come again?

Two days of normal shooting followed and then there was Friday's Fun Shoot.

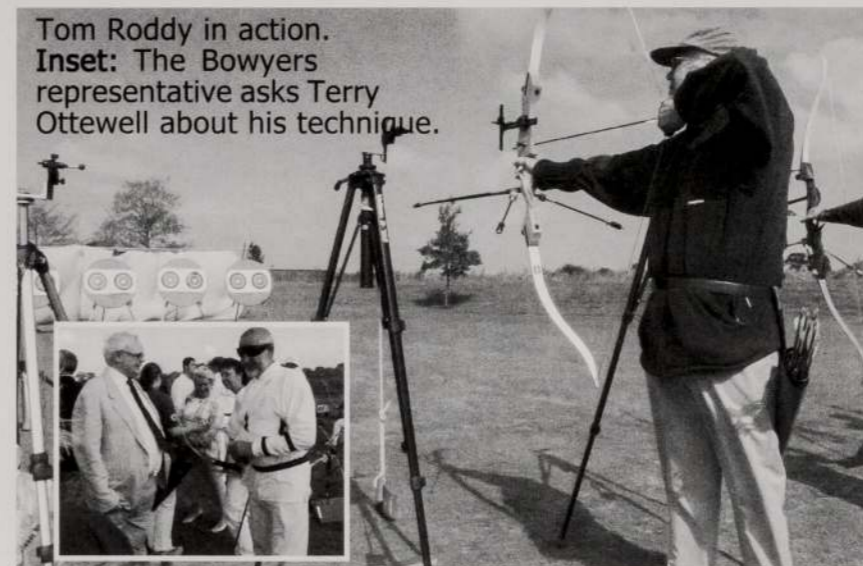
(Un)fortunately the writer was not able to attend this event and thus was spared the sight of a be-flipperd Welsh member in black fishnets with suspenders, a bright Hawaiian shirt wearing a face mask. (The archer - not the shirt.) It was thus not possible to determine the gender, but there are not many 6'3" women in the club.

This week was of course crowned with the 25th anniversary dinner, which was attended by members, friends old and new, and many guests, including representatives from Head Office, the Army, local clubs and the Grand National Archery Society. I am sure that the memory of many members who are no longer with us kept us company throughout the evening. The Club has come a long way since the first shots in the basement by one or two pioneers. There were 18 shooting members on the line this year and other retired members joined in the celebrations. As has been reported in previous *Reviews*, we



Eric Bradshaw takes aim at Sandwich.

Tom Roddy in action.
Inset: The Bowyers representative asks Terry Ottewell about his technique.



are proud to number several National Champions among the company. By the sound level in the Winter Garden archery is not the only activity they excel at. Everyone had a whale of a time, especially at the table where most of the raffle prizes ended up.

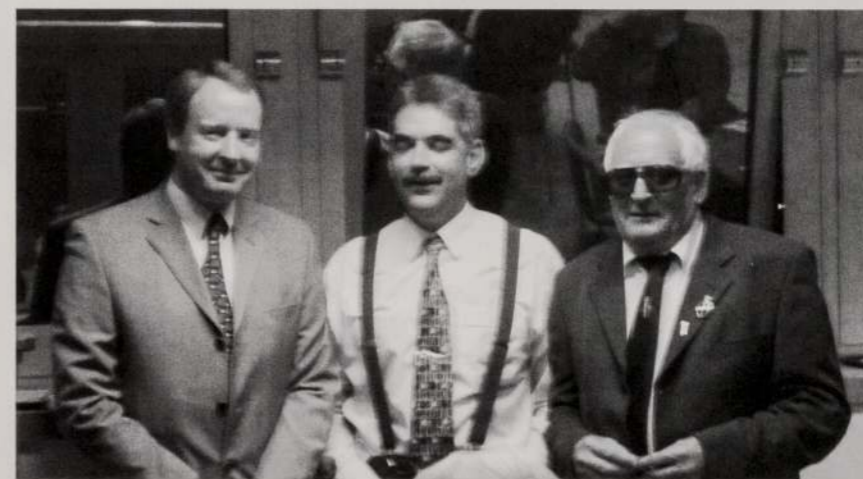
David Sherratt, the Chief Executive of GNAS, presented John Lilley and David Poyner with Third Class badges (a sign of their prowess with the bow) and then told us of the work of the Society. He was followed by Major Wendy le Gassick who described the way in which she had been inveigled into starting and running archery

clubs in the Army. We are delighted that she did so and we value her friendship greatly.

Catering was by PBK in their usual manner - good food, well presented and excellent service.

The final day was a match at Newhaven, and like the rest of the week was shot under strict British Blind Sports rules, that is everyone shooting as B1 had to wear an approved blindfold. Even so many personal records were broken.

As ever a most enjoyable week, and we're now looking forward to more archery in February.



David Sherratt of the Grand National Archery Society presented David Poyner and John Lilley marks of their increasing skills.

Ten questions on...

The subject of Food

Compiled by Harry Beevers

- 1) Parkin is a traditional English ginger cake originating in which northern county?
- 2) What kind of nut is used in a Waldorf Salad?
- 3) The letters "H.P." on an H.P. sauce bottle stand for "Highly Potent", is that true or false?
- 4) Which royal item on 14th November in 1973 was 5 feet 8 inches tall, comprised more than two dozen ingredients and weighed 145 pounds?
- 5) What do we call what the Americans know as "Variety Meat"?
- 6) Which four-letter word meaning "Food" comes from the Yiddish language?
- 7) Which food item shares its name with an aircraft's emergency landing?
- 8) What did Charles Hill, the Radio Doctor in World War II, refer to as "Black-coated workers"?
- 9) What is the principal food item of the Pirate Spider?
- 10) Feta cheese is traditionally made of milk from which animal?

Answers on page 28.

EXTREME ACTION

Bob Willis reports on the hyper-active adrenalin fuelled St Dunstan's Activity Week

Right: James Poole keeps his speeding surfboard steady.

Below: Bryan Alexander goes over the edge for an evening abseil.



St Dunstaner Chris Emery braves the rapids.

IT WAS A bright and sunny Monday morning, when the Activities Group set off. The destination was the Bowles Outdoor Activity Centre in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The participants were, as usual in good spirits and looking forward to a week of adventure and fun. When they arrived they headed straight to the dry ski slope for some sledging, where Mark Threadgold, Dave Powell and Peter Walker raced to the bottom. Rock climbing followed in the afternoon during which Bryan Alexander had made it half way up the rock face when he announced "I need to stop for a fag break." Laughter erupted and the group encouraged him on. Volunteer Roger McMullan was our chief anchorman with the team helping to belay while others climbed.

After a relaxing swim in the pool, we were set for an evening of abseiling. By morning everyone was looking forward to the legendary zip wire, followed by the most challenging event of all, the high wire course. This tested even the most daring participants who climbed to the top of a tree

and then negotiated their way across an assault course of wires and ropes to move from one tree to another. With legs trembling and hands gripping to the ropes for stability, those who attempted the course were all determined to complete it in one piece.

After recovering from the morning's antics, in the afternoon the group returned to the dry slope for some skiing. The more experienced skiers whizzed down the slalom course while the beginners got to grips with some skiing techniques. All was going well until Dave Powell took a tumble and caught his finger on the way down. It turned out he had actually chipped a bone in his finger, so would have to retire, injured. When the skiers had their fill, Chris Emery returned to the slope for some final descending in the barrel sledge and enjoyed it so much he went back for more.

Wednesday was spent close to St Dunstan's with the group going horse riding in Rottingdean in the morning followed by an afternoon at the Bowl Plex at Brighton Marina. Even with a broken finger

Dave still managed to get three strikes during the game – show off!

On Thursday the group were up and ready for a journey to Middlesex and headed to Lake Heron, the Home to The National Disabled Water-ski Centre.

We arrived at The National Disabled water-ski centre and were due to start at 11am. With us all organized into wet suits and the monster boat filled with gas we were ready to get wet. The weather was just right and the water wasn't too cold either. Pete Walker was the first into the lake and showed us all how it's done. The next man in was Mark Threadgold who again showed us all how it is done by standing on his third try and proceeded to ski round the lake a couple of times before eventually dive bombing into the lake. Then came the less experienced who were towed around the lake before Bryan "Mother" Alexander decided to drink the lake dry. With the lake refilled and the staff having a go it was time for lunch. The afternoon consisted of much the

same, by mid-afternoon most were thinking of the evening and the barbecue.

The next day, for some it was an early morning swim or canoe. For the sensible it was a lie in until the boat was fired up at 10am. This was more ski and some fun with other types of doughnuts that pulled people around the lake. The weather was not so nice which put off most people but Pete Walker, Louise Timms, Chris Emery and Bob Willis were in and out most of the day. The Chariot was used to try to scare us off but it took the mention of the ski jump to quieten us down, although this was tried and tested. Once all the wet suits were handed we were back off to St Dunstan's for the evening's entertainment.

This week has been a complete success and has been enjoyed by all involved and would not have been possible without the organization of Katy Russell. This is also an opportunity to thank all other staff and volunteers involved who helped make the week such a great event.

CHANDLER MEETS THE CHALLENGE



Des and guide Mike with the Challengers Trophies.

ST DUNSTANER Des Chandler had a double triumph winning the English Blind Golf Association's Challengers Trophy. In July he won the EBGA Challengers Trophy (South) 2002 in a tournament at Hirbridge Golf Course in Woking, Surrey and was presented with a stylish woodcarving of a golf club head.

Not surprisingly, the southern trophy has three equivalents for each point of the compass and in August, Des played against the blind golfers who had won in north, east and west areas. The

Simon Rogers reports

four-way challenge was held at China Fleet, Saltash in Cornwall and Des emerged as overall victor. There was a further prize for his guide Mike Mepham, who was deemed to be best guide. "There is a story behind that trophy," said Des. "They wanted to give something to the guides and somebody's guide dog had died, so they took a bone from the dog and put it on there."

Mike cleans up on the home front



Angela and Mike with Tony Blunden at Rusper Golf Club.

ST DUNSTANER Mike Tumilson and his guide Angela Templeman swept the board at the closing game of this year's golfing season. The final results were revealed when St Dunstan's Golf Club met at Rusper Golf Club on September 15th.

Apart from winning three monthly medals (May, August and September), Mike was declared to be the Most Improved Player of the Year and Player of the Year. Tony Blunden of Rusper Golf Club bestowed the relevant shields and medals on Mike. Angela Templeman was named Guide of the Year.

The Club's Captain, St Dunstaner Phil Dobson, won April's medal while Chris Ottewell won July.

Presentations were made to Rusper's Tony Blunden and Janice Arnold for all their support.

ST DUNSTANER TEES ONTO THE TOP OF THE WORLD



A triumphant David Morris and Linda Charlton in Canada.

ST DUNSTANER David Morris, Chairman of St Dunstan's Golf Club, who has long championed the cause of golf as a sport for blind people, was crowned World Champion Blind Golfer in August. He is the first Briton to ever win this international tournament.

David won the International Blind Golf Association's 2002 World Blind Golf Championships held at Niakwa Golf and Country Club near Lake Winnipeg in Canada. The tournament attracted 60 of the top Blind Golfers in the World from nine countries, including the previous Champion Phil Blackwell from the USA and the VI Champion Peter Robinson, from Australia.



Stephen Menary receives a few pointers from Janice Arnold.

The end of the first day, following a closely fought battle for the lead, saw David, who lives in the West Country, score 100 against Phil's 102. On the second day, David and Phil, being the main contenders for the title, were paired together which saw the game develop into a match play situation, with David and Phil being some 13 shots ahead of their nearest rival at the start of the day. Phil took two shots off David over the first two holes to level their scores. However, David keeping to his game plan and encouraged by Linda, his guide, who believes that consistency is the name of the game, continued playing down the middle, which seemed to unnerve the Champion, 'big hitting' Phil. David then slowly started to ease in front.

The hole that sealed the match for David was the dangerous 17th. This was a long par 5 with a lake all the way down the left hand side, a narrow fairway some 20 yards wide and trees down the right hand side; the lake cutting into the fairway just short of the green, making this a very challenging hole. David drove off using a safe utility club (borrowed from Mike Tumilson prior to going

to Canada for this very purpose) and hit a straight ball 190 yards down the fairway. Phil, seeing this shot, took out his driver, opened his shoulders and hit the ball as hard as he could. His ball flew past the spot where David's lay, only to tail off at the end of its flight to end up under the trees on the right some 100 yards further on!

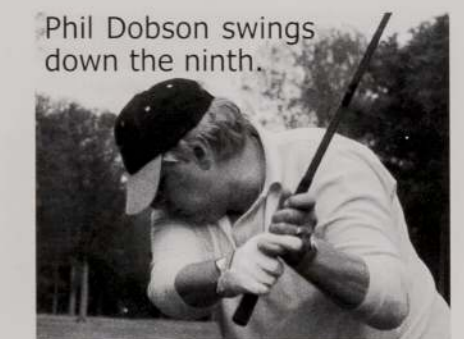
David then punched a 6 iron down about 150 yards, still in the middle of the fairway, whereas Phil could only chip back onto the fairway. Phil then, once again, selected a big wood in order to regain the advantage, hit the ball too far and it ended up in the water where the lake cuts into the fairway.

David then hit a 9 iron just short of the lake, then another 9 iron onto the green and 2 putted for a 6, giving him a 7 shot lead. This proves that a planned consistent game pays dividends and on this occasion captured the championship for the St Dunstaner.

On their return to England, David and his guide Linda Charlton were heartily congratulated by their fellow St Dunstan's Golf Club members.

NEW PLAYERS

Any St Dunstaner who is thinking of playing golf should contact the Secretary of St Dunstan's Golf Club for further information. Telephone Mike Tumilson on 02476460113 for details of next year's programme.



Phil Dobson swings down the ninth.

A Jump in One

Ray Hazan reports on Stephen Menary's fearless flight



Stephen and his sister Ciara.

IT WAS THE PERFECT DAY to throw yourself out of a plane! It was a clear view all the way down from 13,000 feet to the ground. There were a few fluffy clouds around, but a hot sun beat down mercilessly on the upturned faces of the majority of the onlookers. It was just a pity the sky-diver could not see the ground and many of the spectators could not see the sky!

The event, on September 4th, was a parachute drop by Stephen Menary, blinded and missing a hand as a result of a torch bomb in 2000. Together with 11 others, all accompanied by the famous Red Devils parachutists, he was making a sponsored jump. The charities benefiting were all those who had helped Stephen at one time

or another; St Dunstan's, SSAFA, Linden Lodge School (where Stephen is a pupil), and Children in Crisis.

The start of the day, however, was inauspicious; a thick bank of fog lay over RAF Weston-on-the-Green in Oxfordshire, where the drop was to take place. Those brave souls taking part in the jump were given some thorough instruction by their 'tandem masters'. They were shown the harness that would attach them to their 'master', the instructor who was to drop with each one and control the release of the chute, the guiding and landing. An audible altimeter would sound in the earpiece of the instructor's helmet when the height for pulling the rip-cord was reached. In addition a back-up altimeter is worn on the wrist.

They were shown the positions to adopt when falling at over 100mph through the air; a mock-up of the twin engine Islander was used to demonstrate boarding and exiting procedures. Then it was the hardest business of all – waiting for the weather conditions to clear.

Stephen's jump was part of St Dunstan's Blind Ambition Campaign, where St Dunstaners are enabled to achieve the ordinary and extraordinary. It all

began when Stephen visited the Red Devils at their base in Netheravon, but discovered he could not make a jump until his 16th birthday. He attained this age in June this year. Stephen appeared to have no fear or regrets as he gave interviews to British Forces Broadcasting Services and Central Television during the wait!

But as the sun rose higher and the temperature with it, the clouds were slowly dispelled. At 12.45 the high pitched whine of the twin turbo-props began to wind up and Stephen, L/Cpl Tim Skinner, his jump master, and Michelle, a reporter from the *Sunday Express*, who was to follow them out of the plane, plus a photographer, boarded for the 15 minute climb to 13,000 feet.

The reception party lined the landing zone; amongst them were members of Stephen's family and friends, though his sister Ciara preferred to see what it was like from above, making a jump herself. Stephen's fellow St Dunstan's Golf Club members were also there to support; Les Trout, Des Chandler, Mike Tumilson and Phil Dobson were watching for this 'jump in one'. The plane was barely visible or audible as it circled round above. Nor were Stephen and his instructor, or the photographer as they fell the

Helping blind ex-Service men and women to achieve the ordinary and the extraordinary

45 seconds at 120mph from 13,000 down to 5,000 feet before deploying their chutes.

"My instructor Tim was sitting at the door of the plane with legs dangling out and me on his lap. I could feel the slipstream. It was very cold, but I didn't notice that. I wasn't sure if we had launched or not. But we began spinning in the slipstream and then the small drogue chute deployed to steady us and keep the speed down. I felt the wind in my face, and I knew we were off! I could feel Tim turning us left and right to keep in line with the landing zone. The opening of the main chute surprised me. Because of the wind, it felt as though I was standing on solid ground, a rather strange feeling."

It took four to five minutes from the time the chute opened until they hit the ground. The parachutes are more like 'wings' and can be manoeuvred and turned in different directions. "Tim made us do an exhilarating corkscrew spiral at one stage."

The landing was not a classic! The tight straps inhibited Stephen from raising his legs as they came in and he slid forward on hands and stomach, but without any mishap. There was cheerful applause and no doubt, a sense of relief on his

mother, Carol Menary's face. All her hard work in raising sponsorship, publicity, etc had finally paid off.

It was a party atmosphere; sun, music and the smell of a barbecue as PBK fed parachutists, spectators and a swarm of jealous wasps. Everyone then adjourned to a nearby field, where Billy Baxter and the Flying Gunners, the Royal Artillery Motorcycle Display Team, proved to everyone that Billy could indeed ride a bike being guided, like the skiers, by words of command over a small radio set built into his helmet. The Gunners then jumped four cars placed end to end to prove that flying need not be confined to the skies!

It was a magnificent day. The Red Devils had enabled Stephen and others to fulfil an ambition not braved by many. Even nature had looked down benignly, providing splendid weather.

Our thanks go to all who made the event possible and benefited others as a result of their efforts.



Above: Stephen and Tim descend on Oxfordshire. Left: On landing, Stephen presented Michelle with a box of Milk Tray chocolates.

“The exhilaration was fantastic; wind in my face, salt, spray and speed!”

Thread of Power

New World Record For Blind Powerboat Coxswain

In the September issue of the *Review*, Mark Threadgold described his training and preparations for his 'Blind Ambition'; to hold the world endurance record for a blind per driving a power boat. Mark continues to describe the culmination of his attempt.

RIISING ON SUNDAY, August 18th, I found the weather dry and calm. The state of the sea was the only real fear I had held for the day, and the anticipation started welling up. A rough sea would hamper my world record attempt. We duly arrived at the

Sea Mounting Centre, Marchwood, Southampton for safety briefings and transport out for the guests and press. The destination was a military landing craft moored in the Solent opposite Cowes. This was to provide the start and finish line for the event. As we were to circumnavigate the Isle

of Wight, their view of us would be limited to the start and finish!

With guests all on their way, the two Humber Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats were prepared for boarding. These were in a remarkable shape having been driven some 3,000 miles around the mainland UK the previous week. My boat held myself, Steve Board and Andy Jones. Steve was to give sighted guidance and safety supervision throughout the drive, while Andy was to navigate our passage. There is something superstitious about being on a boat with a chap nicknamed 'Jonah'! The second Rib was to follow us with a Royal Yachting Association adjudicator and a film crew aboard. I took a back seat for the trip out to the start line and could hardly contain my excitement.

On taking the driving seat came the realisation that this was actually happening! All the

training and practice was now going to be put to the test. We held station behind the start line in reverse gear to stop the tide pushing us over it. The landing craft sounded its fog horn to signal the start and we were off. Full throttle on and the engine roared up to maximum revs. The boat lifted up onto the plane and we were doing 32 knots and skipping over the waves. The exhilaration was fantastic; wind in my face, salt, spray and speed! Within two minutes of the start the chasing camera boat radioed us to slow down, as they could not keep up! After two or three such requests we decided not to answer the radio for a while! We slowed to 28 knots and took the heading given by Andy. Steve started his excellent commentary and guidance with simple commands to keep us on track.

Sea conditions around the Isle of Wight could not have been better. There was a large swell

but no breaking waves whatsoever. The sun shone and the only wind was that which we left behind with our wake. The boat cut through the waves like a hot knife through butter. From time to time the noise of an army Gazelle helicopter cut the air. Its high pitched whistle was unmistakable as it made high speed passes for the film crew aboard to capture the day. Our engine noise was hardly detectable. Sound of the wash of the filming boat was the only indication they were getting close to us as we sped around the island. We passed anchored fishing boats and their net marker buoys that peppered the seas surface. A solitary pleasure craft crossed to our front with blatant disregard for the rules of giving way. We crossed his wake at speed and the boat jumped from the water. As we landed with a thump the engine stopped dead. This obviously forced an unwanted emergency stop upon us and we looked

quickly for the cause. My knee had hit the ignition key and turned it off! This was rectified and the engine burst into life once again. The wave of impending failure and humiliation was avoided and we had no other such problems over the rest of the passage.

An on-board camera was turned on as we approached the last ten minutes of the run. We started to increase the speed as Steve and Andy spotted the landing craft anchored in the distance. The camera boat fell further behind as we applied more power in the flight to the finish line. At 37 knots we powered over the finish line to a chorus of cheers and shouts and the sounding of the fog horn. I have to admit to not hearing a thing. I was hanging on for my dear life as we were doing 51 miles per hour in real money! Steve shouted that we had done it and we started to play with the boat. Now the real



Mark speeds the RIB towards the finish line.

ability of the boats was demonstrated as we made high-speed turns and emergency stops to please the crowd and their cameras.

We had done it! Without the rest of the team I could not possibly have managed. The record was set at 57.74 nautical miles in 1 hour and 50 minutes. We calmed down the show-off antics and motored over to the waiting landing craft. After a somewhat un-ceremonial climb across to the craft, the champagne was sprayed over all in its path! Interviews, quotes, congratulations and an emotional ending followed. The certificate from the Royal Yachting Association was presented to me confirming the UK record. Most of the rest of the celebrations were a blur as we headed off back into port.

World record status has yet to be ratified by the international organisations, but the UK record is confirmed. The contacts made doing this event may well be sought out next year as we think of the next record to break. The outright speed record for a blind cox stands at around 57 miles per hour, so the next attempt is already on the drawing board.



Congratulations! Steve Board shakes Mark by the hand as Andy secures the boat. Below: The Rigid Lion crew and friends.



Brian Holland muses on the esprit-de-corps forged in the wake of a crash

Lasting bonds come from disaster

MY FIRST MEETING with the Sisters and VADs of Princess Mary's RAF Nursing Service was certainly not a best blues occasion. I was dirty and unkempt and strapped uncomfortably to a stretcher. Nor was the date of any significance to me at the time. Although it was February 14th, Valentine's Day, for all I cared it could have been the year of the headless chicken. But later it turned out to be the beginning of an extremely happy marriage between Sister Ethel Littler and me which lasted for 48 very happy years, not even marred when we discovered that our second daughter, born five days before Christmas 1949, was a Down's Syndrome girl.

Two days before this meeting, on February 12th 1943, a pupil crew from 24 Operational Training Unit at Honeybourne near Evesham was forced to make an emergency landing at RAF Greenham Common because of engine trouble. The crew consisted of a Canadian pilot, John Roxburgh, two other Canadians, and an English navigator from Leeds, Christopher Smith. On February 14th, the same pupil crew was joined by a New Zealand staff pilot, Malcolm Peterson and myself as the staff WOP/AG. We were flown down to Greenham Common, having been briefed to take off, do a short air test, fly to Honeybourne and then commence a four-hour screened cross-country exercise.

But like so many plans of mice and men, this one went wrong within ten or 12 minutes of take-off. There was a sudden engine failure again. We ended up with a bent and broken Whitley 5 BD285, which caught fire and burnt out. Fortunately, after everyone had been either thrown out or had succeeded in crawling out of the wreckage. We were eventually bundled into an RAF ambulance from Moreton-in-Marsh and bounced all the way to the RAF hospital at Evesham. John Roxburgh, the Canadian pupil pilot was invalided home because of serious orthopaedic injuries. The screen pilot, New Zealander Malcolm Peterson was in a coma with broken ribs and femur and was later transferred to Cosford where he too met a nurse, married her before returning to New Zealand. Christopher Smith, the Yorkshire navigator, recovered, went on to my old squadron, number 77, but later went missing from his second tour in 1944.

Some 50 years later the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington near York, a rebuilt Halifax 3 was rolled out from the new hangar provided by the Royal Canadian Air Force, attracting some 3,000 visitors. A younger cousin of Christopher Smith had been trying to research his cousin's adventures. He got in touch with an Evesham ex-RAF man who had spent 25 years researching aircraft crashes in the area for a book, *Angry Skies across the Vale*, in which the crash of BD285 was described. This cousin, Gerald Myers and the author, Brian Kedworth, succeeded in eventually tracing John Roxburgh in Canada on Vancouver Island. At the RAF Honeybourne reunion held at the Park View Hotel in Evesham a couple of years later, I persuaded John to spend two weeks with me, and for Gerald Myers also to come down. Gerald knew that his cousin Christopher had been engaged to a local Evesham girl before going back on his second tour; all he knew about her was that her name was Betty Witts. I was able to locate Betty with help from the owner of the Park View Hotel and learned that she was now Mrs McSweeney, and lived only a few hundred yards from the hotel. So at that reunion I was able to get together Christopher Smith's cousin, the girl to whom Christopher had been engaged, the Canadian pupil pilot and myself. On the Sunday John Roxburgh and I, together with my Down's daughter Lorna, toured the area including a short drive down part of the Honeybourne runway, now breaking up under weeds. The old flight office was still there used as a storage area. We also paid a visit to the old RAF Moreton-in-Marsh airfield, now a National Fire Service training unit.

A few years earlier I had succeeded in locating a farm worker in the little village of Longborough near Stow-on-the-Wold. He had been working in the next field to the one in which BD285 crashed. John and I again visited Longborough only to discover that the man had died. However we were able to meet up with his son who was amazed that someone had come from Vancouver Island, Canada, to visit the site of a crash which had happened some 50 years earlier. I find it interesting that younger generations cannot understand this strong feeling of esprit-de-corps that still exists amongst war-time service people. This of course is exemplified in all the people who have gone through St Dunstan's.



The Walking Race remains a popular event on Sports Day.

After a week of camp at HMS Sultan, Stuart Planner says he's exhausted! In fact he is

Dog Tired!!

THE TITLE OF this article was the only one I felt apt in the circumstances. I am writing this some seven days after the close of this year's summer camp at HMS *Sultan* at Gosport, having just about recovered. My first year as a "dog" was exhausting.

To camp then! First some figures, 28 St Dunstaners, 24 helpers, seven days, 18 organised activities, a considerable number of calories, one birthday (Chris Ottewell), and 100 per cent fun.



St Dunstaner Mark Brewin hurls the shotput.

We arrived on July 26th and following an introduction and briefing from WO Dave Burrows and Elspeth Grant, we settled down to a relaxed evening in the Senior Rates Mess Snug Bar. I immediately experienced the great camaraderie that exists between the members of St Dunstan's and was made very welcome, particularly by those I was sharing a cabin with - George, Cliff, Brian and Derek.

Saturday dawned with a clear sky and light wind, ideal for that day's sailing activities on the Solent. The calm weather helped persuade those who were apprehensive to experience the water, but I'm sure Derek Hagar will continue to enjoy sailing in the future. Our trip on the Solent, whilst very enjoyable, was cut short due to lack of wind and we returned to

enjoy the hospitality provided by the Gosport Cruising Club. Following lunch, many of us took to the air courtesy of the Gliding Club at HMS *Daedalus*. For many of us it was our first time and encouraged by Liz we all made it into the air and enjoyed ourselves. We were lucky to get a trip at all; if Clive Jones had his way he would have taken all of our trips, having enjoyed his so much!

Sunday was a far more sedate day, with a pleasant Church Service in the morning. The afternoon saw an archery competition between the St Dunstan's team and Havant & Hayling Island Bowmen. The field of play was intense, although some light hearted moments came about on the "amateur" section. Sunday evening saw us enjoy a musical evening in the main bar, with Cliff

Ford and Terry Ottewell showing many of us UP on the dance floor. For those who remember previous years I have to point out that the singer this year was new to the camp - without a tattoo!

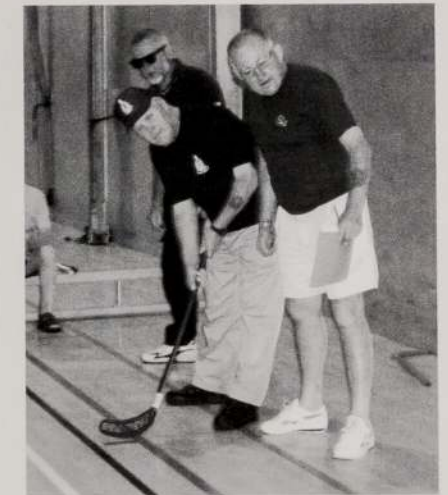
Monday morning and back to activities with the annual sports day. The teams, adopting a floral theme for their names, competed against one another with gusto, culminating in the walking race with some rather interesting tactics on the part of some walkers. It was interesting to note that Terry Ottewell's long established skills in football were sound. In the afternoon many of us went over to the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service (GAFIRS) for a high speed trip around the Solent. I shall never forget Norman Perry's manoeuvring at 36 knots and the look of horror on Simon Rogers' face as he was asked to take a photograph from the bow, whilst moving.

Unfortunately, Monday afternoon saw Chris Emery taken ill. Chris was taken to Hospital and I understand that having made a good recovery he was back in action for St Dunstan's Activities Week. Entertainment for Monday night was at RMH Haslar's Senior Ranks Mess where again Cliff used the dance floor to his best advantage. That evening saw the Vice-President of the Senior Rates Mess Bar read us a bed time story which certainly amused those of us awake at that time.

Tuesday came and we were back on the water. This time it was the annual trip to the Isle of Wight. We enjoyed a fine cruise on the top deck over to Cowes, and the hospitality of the British Legion was enjoyed immensely. The streets of Cowes were relatively quiet this year as Cowes week

had yet to start. We did find however Bryan "Mother" Alexander "soliciting" the area (his words, not mine). Notwithstanding this, some of the ladies did enjoy their retail therapy and came back with whips and face masks, resulting in them being invited to join the Captain on the top deck of the catamaran on the return leg of the trip. That evening saw more competitive spirit with games in the main bar. The teams, combined with ratings and HSBC Bank, undertook a variety of tasks, including ten pin bowling, indoor golf, and hoopla. The games also saw an increasing use of tactical marking and creative mathematics!

Wednesday was a relaxed day by comparison, with a few off to play golf. We met up with the golfers in the Conservative Club where we enjoyed their traditional hospitality. A relaxed afternoon allowed us to prepare for an evening in the Ward Room. After donning our best outfits the Commodore treated us to a good meal followed by a quiz evening, with questions that few outside of the Admiralty would know how to answer. For the brave few we followed the evening with a trip to the Senior Rates Mess Bar where a final end of term disco was playing.



Brian Beniston tests his skills with the hockey stick.

Thursday saw a divergence of the campers. Many went to the Guildhall in Portsmouth to see the Royal Marines Band passing out concert with the traditional beating the retreat. The remainder of us went to HMS *Daedalus* where HM Coastguard treated us to a helicopter trip around the Isle of Wight. That evening saw the annual prize giving. It was worrying to see the Commander try to present one prize to Neil Mason, the "dog" rather than the true recipient Don Planner. A full list of the winners follows this article. The prize-giving was followed by a disco with familiar names on the dance floor.



If we act fast, we can overtake that Threadgold fellow ...



Josh Morris presents Elspeth Grant with a cheque for £2,156.20 for camp funds.

Friday, and another trip to Lee-on-Solent - this time to the Royal British Legion, and the infamous pasties. It was here that Cliff Ford received a special prize for his charms and conversational abilities. That evening, a dinner dance rounded off a very busy week.

Kevin Rixon made a presentation on behalf of the campers and helpers. He presented Elspeth with a beautiful crystal rose and thanked her for 30 years organising the camp. He also presented a crystal butterfly to

Bridget Reed for all she had done to add to the fun and happiness of the camp. Both ladies were quite overcome and speechless!

And during our free time? Some brave individuals enjoyed tandem rides around the area, walks along the sea front, shopping for clothes in the new Gun Wharf Development at Portsmouth, and the putting green at Stokes Bay. And next year? WO Kirby Taylor will be taking over as sponsor from Dave Burrows. We thank Dave for his support and sponsorship over the years, and look forward to Kirby taking up the reins. However, it was noted that Kirby was looking rather worn out after a few days as a "dog", albeit dogging for Don Planner!

SPORTS RESULTS

ARCHERY

This year the totally blind archers were shooting in a match with the Havant & Hayling Island Archers,

so the shield for a totally blind winner was not presented. The Havant & Haling Island Bowmen won the match by four points.

Partially sighted

3rd	135 points	Billy Miller
2nd	140 points	Paul Walker
1st	177 points	Arthur Carter

Novice Archers

3rd	78 points	Chris Emery
2nd	135 points	Chris Ottewell
1st	142 points	Brian Beniston

THE WALK

3rd	Bronze	Terry Ottewell
2nd	Silver	Don Planner
1st	Gold	Chris Ottewell

The Dany Deacon

Veterans' Cup Arthur Carter

The Charles Stafford Cup for the Best Beginner in the Walk

Bryan Alexander

GOLF

The winner John Stevens

SPORTS

Penalty Goals	
Totally Blind	Don Planner
Partially Sighted	Gary Lomas

Shiela McLeod Cup for Best Overall Beginner

- tie George Oliver
Brian Beniston

Victor Ludorum

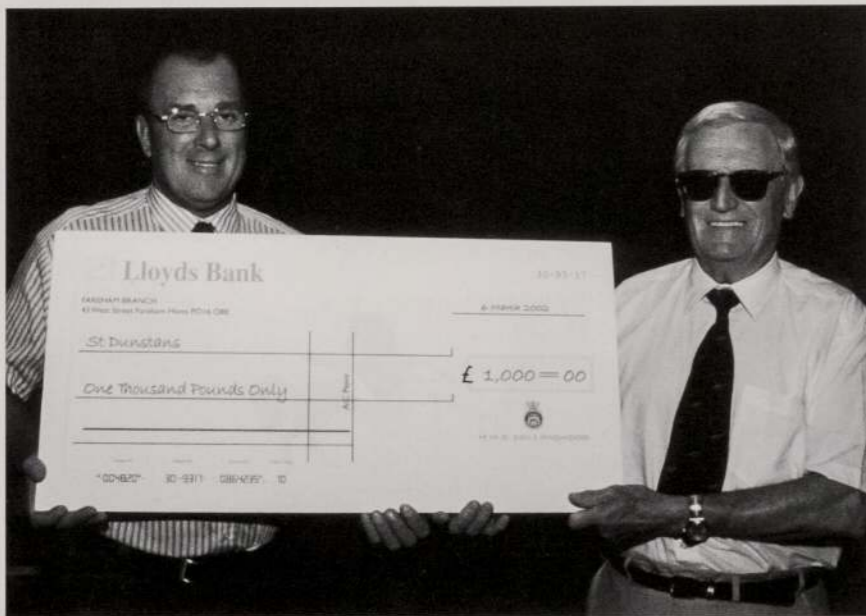
Totally Blind Don Planner
Partially Sighted Gary Lomas

Doubly Disabled Winner

Alan Mitchell

Team Result

3rd	Dancing Daffodils
2nd	Tiptoeing Tulips
1st	Happy Hyacinths Arthur Carter, Mark Brewin, Don Planner, Steve Nixon



HMS Collingwood generously donated £1,000 to St Dunstan's which was collected by Arthur Carter.



A SPECIAL PRIZE

The Don Minter Memorial Cup is a special prize which will be competed for annually. The cup has been carved and presented by St Dunstaner Terry Ottewell. On one side is a large gap which represents the fact that when Don left us the mould was thrown away.

This is not a prize to a camper who has excelled in any one particular field but to the one who is considered the best all-rounder, having participated in all camp activities, either this year or over the years with unfailing support and good humour. In 2002 the cup was presented to Billy Miller (pictured right with Commodore Latham).
Elspeth Grant

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST



OVINGDEAN'S OWN poet laureate Ernie Bowditch, also known as the Bard of Broccoli was recently presented with a medal for "being Ernie".

We all know that Oscar Wilde waxed lyrical on the importance of being Ernest, but perhaps it is the words of Benny Hill that most spring to mind. "We won't forget Ernie!"

BALANCING THE BOOKS

St Dunstaner Ted Bunting reviews the **best** and the **worst** of the Talking Books available

Nora

Author: Brenda Maddox

Reader: Kate Binchy

Catalogue Number: 7827

Duration: 20 Hours 26 minutes.

I imagine most people can easily name at least a dozen famous novelists or poets, but very few, I suspect, could say much about their private lives or their companions. Before hearing *Nora*, for example I knew nothing of the convent-school girl from Galway who ran away with the writer James Joyce, and, as it transpires, I knew very little of Joyce either. I had heard of him of course, and after reading his autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young man*, I formed the opinion that he was an honest craftsman deserving of some merit. But how terribly wrong I have been, because if Brenda Maddox is correct (and much of her evidence comes from Joyce's own correspondence) he was possibly one of the most obnoxious, dirty little characters that ever drew breath. Not only was James Augustine Aloysius Joyce a drunkard and a shameless beggar, but he was also a sexual pervert of the most repulsive kind. I am not narrow-minded, let me say, and I defy anyone to suggest that I may be. Without being offended or shocked I've heard the language used in calmness and in the barrack-room too; I have read *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Fanny Hill*, and the graffiti of a thousand lavatory walls but never was I so disgusted and appalled as with this account of Joyce's scatological obscenities. I don't believe in shooting the messenger because she brings unpleasant news, but I nevertheless consider this to be the most horrid book I ever heard. If the reason why we often don't know much about the lives and associates of famous people is because books like *Nora* are rare, then long may this remain so, for I hope never to encounter its equal again.

WELCOME TO ST DUNSTAN'S

August 16th

Enid Cavanagh of Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1942 to 1946. She was posted to the RAPC Centre at Leeds. At the end of the war she returned to work at the Midland Bank. She married her husband, a computer accountant, and they moved to Bahrain. Returning to the UK she spent 16 years visiting different schools assisting children with learning difficulties. She has a variety of interests including walking, singing and quiz games. Mrs Cavanagh has one son.

William Edgar of Carlisle, Cumbria served in the Border Regiment and Manchester Regiment between 1939 and 1946. After training, he became a PT Instructor but was temporarily discharged to help with repairs following the bombing of Coventry. When recalled, he was posted to the Manchester Regiment on attachment to the Officer Training School with 148 Brigade in Wrotham, Kent. After leaving the service he returned to Carlisle as a Slater. In his youth, he was a keen sportsman who enjoyed football and rugby and has a number of medals for swimming. He enjoys attending horse racing and was a regular at Goodwood and York. Mr Edgar and his wife Joyce have two daughters, five sons, nine grandchildren, six great-great-grandchildren and one great-great-great-granddaughter.

William Elliott of Patcham, Brighton served in the Royal Corps of Signals from 1939 to 1946. After completing his basic training he was deployed to France and escaped from Brest two weeks after Dunkirk. His unit was sent to Egypt as part of the 8th Army and he served as a signaller driver throughout the war in North Africa. He landed at Salerno Beach on D-Day+4. After leaving the service he became a Chauffeur in Brighton until his sight was affected and he was registered blind in 1949. He re-trained and worked as a lathe operator in Brighton. He is a keen Braille reader and was very fond of swimming, tandem cycling and horse riding but still maintains his garden.

James Gault of Hailsham, East Sussex served in the Merchant Navy from 1943 to 1948. He joined his first ship at the age of 16 as a Writer and completed a return Atlantic Convoy from Glasgow to

Newfoundland before joining a convoy to the Mediterranean. In civilian life he worked in education in Kent County. He used to enjoy motoring, travelling and playing draughts.

Dr Heymann Koefman of Christchurch, Dorset served as a Doctor in the United States Air Force from 1943 to 1946. After a brief attachment to the Medical Corps in Belfast, he was posted to the 8th United States Air Force in Alconbury, East Anglia where he joined a B17 Base. He was wounded in the hip when flying over Dresden. After leaving the service he bought a practice in Burnley and was eventually Chief Medical Officer to a number of corporations including Sainsbury's. He later lived and worked in Durban, South Africa. He used to play the violin, enjoys gardening and is a fellow of the British Planetary Society. He is married to Jean and has 18 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Thomas Ledward of Plympton, Plymouth served in the South African Air Force from 1943 and the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1985. He joined the South African Air Force and flew Sunderland Flying Boats. He then moved to the UK, attached to the RAF and joined Transport Command. He received a shrapnel wound to his stomach after sinking two torpedo boats off Norway. At the end of the war he returned to South Africa to work on his family farm, but was invited to become a regular with the RAF. He re-joined Transport Command and after a short tour in Egypt, took part in the Berlin Air Lift. He then joined 24 (Commonwealth) Squadron, completing tours in Cambridge and Northern Ireland before being attached to the Rhodesian Flying Training School. After being commissioned, he re-trained as an Air Traffic Controller and served in the Middle East, Fighter Command and the MOD. After retiring, he worked at the Liaison Information Centre, RAF Northolt. A keen sportsman in his youth, he was also a rugby referee and coach. He and his wife June have a son, two daughters and five grandchildren.

Robert Pepperell of Abingdon, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946. He was working in Paris as a Civil Servant with the Admiralty when war broke out. After training as a signaller, he joined the Home Fleet and was posted to mine

sweepers. Commissioned in 1943, he assisted in training operations for D-Day and also served in the Far East clearing mines. He returned to his appointment with the Admiralty, but later joined the Atomic Energy Authority. He has a daughter, three sons, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Hubert Redgrave of Headley, near Epsom, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946. He trained as a wireless operator and air gunner and was posted to the Air Gunnery College, Pembury as an Instructor. On a convoy flight, his plane was hit by flak from their own ships. He then joined 626 Squadron and flew in a variety of Wellingtons and Lancasters on bombing runs over Germany. After leaving the service he returned to work at Royal Doulton. He used to run the local Boys' Brigade, other children's activities and also started a local blind club making cane baskets. He and his wife Rose have four children and nine grandchildren.

Patricia Thompson of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1946. She was posted as a messenger to the Gunnery School at HMS *Excellent* before moving to Eastleigh plotting the location of enemy planes for anti-aircraft guns. After several months she achieved her wish and joined a convoy plotting team at HMS *Drake* where they were responsible for the Atlantic and Channel sea routes. She was on duty on D-Day and present on the coast when one of the last U-boats surrendered. The last three months of the war she became a driver at HMS *Victory*. She still enjoys walking and sea swimming. Mrs Thompson has two sons and a daughter.

Michael Watts of Blackheath, London served in the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment from 1940 to 1946. Initially, he was deployed as a Cypher Officer for the Norwegian Campaign, then later posted to Singapore. While in the Far East, he was wounded in action and Mentioned in Dispatches. After being taken prisoner by the Japanese, he was appointed as the Intelligence Training Course Officer responsible for smuggling out messages to the Thai Underground and planning re-action to events by the Prisoners of War if required. Whilst in prison he learnt Russian, Japanese and Thai languages to add to his Greek and German. After leaving the service he joined the BBC Monitoring Service and spent a number of years on the Russian desk and his final 10

years as Head of Thai Broadcasting commuting between London and Bangkok. After he retired he joined Swan Hellenic as a Lecturer of Arts and Treasures on their tours to Burma, Thailand, Japan and Singapore. Since then he has worked as a freelance writer/broadcaster.

August 30th

Sean Beatty of Ramsey, Cambridgeshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1975 to 1979. He joined as a 19-year-old and was posted to Hameln and joined an Amphibious Field Training unit. He took part in exercises throughout Germany and spent a tour in Northern Ireland. In civilian life he worked in construction and on the land. He is a member of the local football club, enjoys swimming and is a guide dog owner. He is married to Karen.

Archibald Brown of Woodingdean, Brighton served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1940 to 1946. Trained as a chef, he was called up and posted to Iraq, then Palestine and India before taking part in the North Africa landings. An infantry section corporal, he was leading an attack on Tobruk at Enfideville when he was struck by a mortar and suffered facial injuries and the loss of his left eye. He was treated in hospital in Tunisia before being hospitalised to the UK. He rejoined his unit in Colchester and, at the end of the war, was posted to Germany as part of the Occupation Force. After he left the Service he moved to London, became Head Porter for an insurance company and was then promoted to Manager of the building. A keen gardener, he also enjoys radio and music. Mr Brown lives with his partner Vera and has three sons, 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

John Evans of Edgware, Middlesex served in the Royal Artillery from 1943 to 1947. A garage mechanic, he was posted to 54 Anti Tank Regiment and served in Ireland and Scotland before deploying to France. The unit fought through Ostend, Holland and into Germany. He was then posted to 25 Field Regt with the army of occupation. After the war he returned to his job as a mechanic with Austin Healey in West Hendon and then moved to another garage in Edgware. When the firm sold out he moved to St Albans as manager of a garage and continued to run three garages. He has always enjoyed sport, particularly golf, football and rugby and is now a

member of the Barnet Blind and Partially Sighted Bowls Club. He is also a keen gardener, has his own greenhouse. He and his wife Brenda have one daughter and one grandson.

John Hutchinson of Richmond, North Yorkshire served in the Green Howards, West Yorkshire Regiment and the Gordon Highlanders between 1940 and 1946. He volunteered and after eight weeks training was promoted to Lance Corporal and posted to the Green Howards where he was promoted to Sergeant within 18 months. He then went through officer training, was commissioned and joined the 1st/5th West Yorkshire Regiment in 1942. He held a variety of different appointments in the Regiment and was promoted to Captain in 1943 taking command of D Company. He was then posted to Germany and joined the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders towards the end of the war and was 2IC of D Company. At the end of the war he was posted to 5/1 Division and was Camp Commandant of a German labour camp with 1,500 prisoners. After he left the Service he worked for a large builders merchant. His interests have included beekeeping, tandem cycling, and acting as Church Warden.

Anthony Pontet served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946. He volunteered for Fleet Air Arm but served as an engineer and conducted Atlantic convoys on HMS *Cyclops* before joining HMS *Nelson* as part of Force H where he completed Malta convoy runs. He then took part in the North

Africa landings and the Italian landings at Salerno where he served on a Monitor with two 16" guns. He then served in the Far East including Singapore and Malaya and was on his way to Burma when war ended. After leaving the Service he and his father formed a design and development engineering firm. A very keen model-maker and competition judge he specialised in building wooden ships and more recently matchstick models. He was a Scout Leader for many years and a long-standing member of the Hastings Association for the Blind and their bowling club. He has three sons from his first marriage and two step-children with his present wife Jean.

Hedley Richards, CBE of Purley, Surrey served with the Royal Tank Regiment from 1939 to 1946. A member of the TA, he was called up and deployed to North Africa with Matilda tanks where the regiment was severely damaged at Knightsbridge. He saw action at Alamein commanding a Flail tank. At the end of the Africa campaign he returned with 3rd Royal Tank Regiment and landed at Normandy on D+10. After Arnhem they were re-equipped with the Comet tank and completed the war through Europe. After leaving the Service he worked at the Home Office and spent 2 years working within the Police Force. He then joined the Immigration Department where he served variously at Dover, Heathrow and London Docks and rose to become Head of the Service. He was awarded a CBE. After retiring he did voluntary work for MENCAP and SSAFA. He enjoyed walking, fly fishing and painting water colours. He and his wife Janet have two daughters.

REUNION ROUND-UP

ST DUNSTAN'S CHAIRMAN Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided at the Aylesbury Reunion on September 4th when 15 St Dunstaners and eight widows gathered at the Holiday Inn, Aylesbury. A Golden Jubilee badge was presented to St Dunstaner William Miller.

St Dunstan's President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, MC presided at the third Brighton Reunion on September 10th when 37 St Dunstaners, 16 Widows and one Widower gathered at Ovingdean. Golden Jubilee badges were presented to St Dunstaners Albert Hobson and Tom Hart. Terry and Patricia Walker were congratulated on their 45th Wedding Anniversary and Birthday salutations were offered to Ted Higgs, Arthur Mason and Frank Welsh.

The reunion season closed in Exeter on September 18th when 27 St Dunstaners and 15 Widows gathered at the Southgate Hotel, Southernhay East, Exeter. Major General Andrew Keeling, RM was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding. Golden Jubilee badges were presented to Max Ash, Vic Davies and Jim Fraser.

Answers to Ten Questions on ...

From page 11.

1) Yorkshire; 2) Walnut; 3) False, H.P. stands for the Houses of Parliament; 4) The wedding cake of Princess Anne and Mark Phillips; 5) Offal; 6) Nosh; 7) Pancake; 8) Prunes; 9) Spiders; 10) Sheep.

Harry Beevers ponders his past performance as a prize pugilist

I COULD 'AVE BEEN A CONTENDER

I NEVER CEASE to wonder at the sporting achievements of St Dunstaners. This week the news that Mark Threadgold had set a world power boat record followed swiftly on the heels of Billy Baxter and his motor cycle feats not to mention Norman Perry and his fellow archers, the golfers, bowlers, mountain climbers and long distance runners. Nothing will ever surprise me and I am looking forward some day to hearing of a St Dunstaner challenger to World Boxing Champion Lennox Lewis. "Surely not" you may say but as I grow older I think back to the days when I was within three fights of toppling the great Rocky Marciano, the Brockton Blockbuster and as the winner of all his 49 professional bouts arguably one of the fiercest fighters in the history of pugilism. Or am I simply dreaming?

The story begins at Easter 1939 when I was ten years old. The annual travelling fair was visiting my home town and the focus of many of my contemporaries was Professor Boscoe's Boxing Emporium where the maestro himself, with the aid of a loud hailer would twice nightly exhort the local strong boys to take on in the boxing ring one of his three pugilists. A sum of £3, more than a week's wages in those days awaited anyone who could beat Mario Majesti, Battling Blondie or the Woodhouse Terror. The giant of the three, Mario, according to Professor Boscoe had had three fingers bitten off in a fight at Madison Square Garden, New York. However my uncle told me later that his real name was George and that he had worked in a local garage until an accident when his hand was trapped in a slammed car door brought this employment to an end. Finally Professor Boscoe brought forward a youth who looked just a little taller than me and said that any boy under the age of twelve could earn himself three shillings if he survived three two-minute rounds in a curtain-raiser. Three shillings was twelve weeks pocket money and offered the possibility of visits to see the fat lady, the flea circus, lots of brandy snaps and innumerable rides. So, to the cheers of the crowd and after looking round to make

sure my mother was not around I stepped forward and stood proudly next to Mario Majesti whilst a pair of rather large boxing gloves were fastened on to my puny fists. I had a good look to see if I could spot any teeth marks on Mario's damaged hand and took a closer look at my future opponent who suddenly appeared to have grown a further six inches. Eventually sufficient volunteers were found and the crowd surged into the marquee for the evening's entertainment. As the MC announced the opening bout I remembered to take off my glasses and hand them to one of the seconds.

I left the booth with
one eye closing,
puffed up lips and a
trickle of blood
from my nose

Suddenly the boy in the opposite corner seemed a little blurred and just a bit smaller so some of my evaporating confidence slowly began to return. I had never lost a fight before in my life as this was to be my very first and the previous week I had read an article in the *Sunday Empire News* about the Senegalese boxer Battling Siki. He had once defeated the darling of the French ring Georges Carpienter who had humiliated all Britain's heavyweight

hopefuls in double-quick time. Apparently, Battling Siki fought like a whirling Dervish swinging blows from all directions and I decided that if such a style could topple the handsome Georges nicknamed the Orchidman it should be good enough for me.

The bell rang and the re-born Siki leapt into action to the roar of the crowd, of course I was the local boy. I quickly learned three salutary lessons, firstly my opponent could run backwards faster than I could go forwards; secondly fighting like a Whirling Dervish is not much good if the blows fail to land and finally it dawned on me that my opponent was not going to go the way of Georges Carpienter. For two rounds I chased him and for two rounds he pummelled me. As I sat on the stool waiting for the bell for round three the referee came over to me and whispered "He says he's going to really batter you this round." I remember muttering "That's what he's been doing for the last four minutes." At this point the referee threw me a life-line, "If you are still on your feet at the end

of the fight I'll declare a draw," he said. Well, one shilling and sixpence was not as good as three shillings but surely I could last out the remaining two minutes. As the bell sounded the final round my opponent's tactics changed, dramatically, instead of running away and hitting me as he went he suddenly became the chaser. I discovered that I couldn't go backwards as quickly as he did and to my surprise I found myself on the canvas. I have always considered myself a determined individual although my wife nowadays has other words instead of "determined" such as "stubborn", "obstinate" and "awkward" so I was back on my feet with the count of three.

However, once again a straight left put me down again and it flashed through my befuddled brain that whilst I was being counted, I was not being hit. So I waited until the count reached nine and I was up again. I did survive to the bell and I did receive my allotted purse-money and I was then allowed to join the spectators and watch Mario and his colleagues demolish the local lads one by one.

When I left the booth with one eye closing, puffed up lips and a trickle of blood from my nose there was not a happier boy in the fair-ground. Unfortunately a concerned neighbour had informed my parents of my exploits and they were waiting as I emerged into the bright lights. My dad surreptitiously slipped me a shilling whilst my mother hit me harder than all the blows I had suffered in the ring. She did this because she loved me and hated the thought of my being hurt.

Ten years later I was in the army and as a Sergeant-Instructor with the DCLI. I took an active part in many of the sporting activities. I played rugby, basketball and softball and one day I was invited to try my hand at boxing. I was 19, I was fit and healthy and I had only lost one fight in my life so I decided to give it a go. I was five feet three inches tall (or more accurately short) and being stocky in build I weighed nine stones ten pounds. So did my first opponent but unfortunately he was six feet one, built like a bean pole and was as hard as one. I lost the second fight of my life. My next opponent, was a fellow-sergeant named Bert Love who hailed from Battersea. As a boy he had been a member of the local boys' boxing club and one of his friends was named Don Cockell.

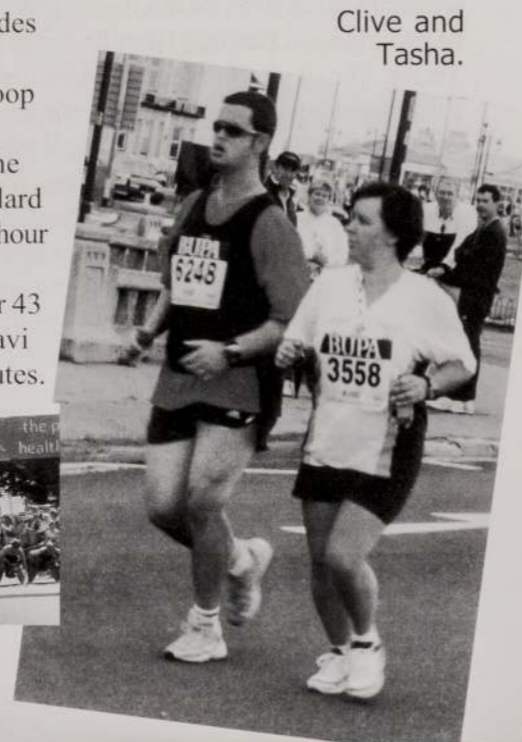
Now as some readers will remember, Don Cockell subsequently became British heavyweight champion and in a famous fight in 1955 fought a memorable battle with Rocky Marciano. So you can see, I was only three fights from a meeting with one of the world's greatest battlers and who knows what might have happened, though I have a good idea! Rocky Marciano defeated Don Cockell, Don Cockell once defeated Bert Love and in 1949 Bert Love brought my boxing career to an end. As I hung up my gloves for the final time I decided to stick to dominoes, chess and the odd game of Scrabble. At least when I lose at those the pain is only psychological and not of the physical variety. My final thought is for all sporting St Dunstaners who like me gave their all but never quite made it - but we do have our dreams.

RUN SOUTH YOUNG MAN



Maria and Iain keep up the pace.

FOUR ST DUNSTANERS and guides tackled The Great South Run on September 8th, running a ten-mile loop through historic Portsmouth and the Southsea Coast. Pete Walker ran the ten miles in 1 hour 30, while Iain Millard and Maria Bullingham equalised on 1 hour 42 minutes. Close behind was Don Planner and Martin Burton at 1 hour 43 minutes. Clive Jones and Tasha Razavi defied the odds with 2 hours 28 minutes.



Clive and Tasha.

American Express supporters do nicely

A GROUP OF American Express employees gained a little insight into life as a St Dunstaner through a series of team challenges at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on September 14th. About 25 people from the American Express European Risk Management department tackled obstacle courses while wearing blindfolds or glasses that simulate visual impairment such as tunnel vision.

Several participants commented that the activities were, "no pun intended, an eye-opener." St Dunstaners Ted Yeaman, Arthur Lowe, Derek Hagger, Ron Cattell and Nigel Whiteley added their own experience to the mix, underlining the serious theme behind the frivolity. A popular feature was a quick archery lesson in the Sports Hall.

The day cemented the relationship between St Dunstan's and American Express as their European Risk Management department officially adopted St Dunstan's as one of their local charities. As such they are committing to ongoing support of St Dunstan's through a number of community relations projects including volunteer assistance and fundraising events.

"As one of Brighton's largest employers, we are committed to bringing about a community where everyone can achieve their potential, whatever their circumstances," said Ian Wood, Director of European Risk Management at American Express. "My department is delighted to focus our community activities towards supporting the invaluable work St Dunstan's undertakes with blind ex-Service people."



Above: Sarah, guided by Clare, tries to maintain her poise with tunnel-vision sim specs.



Where's it gone? Jenny loses the ball.



Ian Wood of American Express accepts a certificate commemorating the day.

What does a St Dunstan's Welfare visitor do on her day off?
Angela Neath explains why she has a motorcycle in her dining room

The Italian Job



AT 8.30AM the temperature was approaching 40°C. Wearing leathers and a full face helmet, I wheeled my motorbike towards the start of the last stage of the Motogiro 2002. Butterflies were tumbling in my stomach... would the bike break down? Would the battery hold up? Would I fall off? Would an Italian driver finally wipe me off the road? An elderly woman stepped out of the crowd and gently tapped me on my arm, "Complimenti," she said and the butterflies disappeared.

The publicity leaflets for the 'Giro state - "The Legend Returns" and that is exactly how the atmosphere felt. It is the oldest vintage timed road race, widely loved for its open road excitement and competitive spirit. It began in 1914 reaching its heyday in the '50's when it was seen as a showcase for Italian motorcycle manufacturers. The race died out 45 years ago but was reborn in 2001 with original riders such as Giuliano Maoggi, Remo Venturi and Bruno Spaggiari still riding with grace and charisma.

The bikes being ridden were original too. Some of the best from Italy's glory years by manufacturers such as Ducati, Morini, Moto Guzzi, Benelli, MV Augusta, Bianchi and Parilla. A Tourist Class was also introduced for people who wanted to join in the fun but hadn't a vintage bike at their disposal.

The 2002 event was an exhilarating ride exploring varied terrain through central and southern Italy, over twisting country roads, challenging mountain passes and through stunning panorama. This

year an additional class was added, the Taglioni Memorial class commemorating the creator of some of Ducati's most legendary machines who died at the beginning of this year. This was the class that my bike, a Ducati Mark 3 from 1968, a narrowcase with a 250cc engine was entered. But, perhaps I should explain how I came to be in the event at all?

There has always been something about bikes that will make me stop and turn. Maybe it's the noise, maybe it's the raw power or maybe it's just the riders in their leathers! Whatever the reason, 2001 saw me learn to ride a bike and pass my full test. This was not as easy as it sounds as I learned in January when even four layers of clothes failed to stop my knees from shaking, or perhaps that was just nerves? After passing I bought a model Honda Hornet 250 and enjoyed tootling around the Derbyshire countryside in a sedate manner (honest M'lud!).

Then in October a friend gave me the log book to a vintage bike, the Ducati Mark 3. My excitement faded when I saw what I was being given. The rusty frame looked like a badly abused rotavator and the engine looked like a pile of scrap metal. However, I was assured that it would eventually be a beautiful, shiny bike and so the adventure began. Parcels containing strange objects arrived from all over the world, Australia, America and Liverpool. Gradually the bike took shape - in my dining room underneath the window that looks out on the street. Progress was monitored by all who passed by. When time came to take the bike outside and start it up there was no shortage of volunteers. Have you heard a Ducati engine? There is no sound like it on earth, especially when it is rumbling

between three storey buildings on a narrow street. Not the best way to impress your neighbours!

The true test for the bike would be the 'Giro. Having only ridden the bike for about 20 miles, I had no idea how it would behave. In England its performance resembled that of an adolescent with attitude, so anything could happen.

The total mileage for the 'Giro was 1,000 miles starting at Riccione, a pretty seaside town just south of Rimini on the East coast. In a very festive atmosphere, we were led out of Riccione by Damon Hill on a vintage Benelli towards the race track at Misano. Unfortunately, no-one appeared to have informed the local council and the stately procession became a debacle as we fought our way around trucks loading refuse. However, at Misano we completed a lap of honour around the race track in front of a sizeable crowd who were there for the World Ducati Week. And then we were off! And what a shock I got! I had dreamily thought

of a leisurely amble around the Italian countryside. How wrong can you get? We started at a breakneck pace which never let up. I discovered that the maximum speed I get out of my bike was 85 mph as long as I lay flat to the tank.

The first day took us southwest through rural Italy to Terni. At least it did for most people. I got as far as Spoleto (160 miles) after coping with a wobbly tank (lost a bolt), a steering damper that kept sticking and the battery that finally gave up. Disconsolately, I waved goodbye to the two riders I had ridden with and waited for the back-up truck. In true Italian style this took two hours. Sadly, there was not enough time to fix the bike that night and the second day saw me ensconced on the tourist bus pursuing the race. I was lucky enough to meet a group of Australian women who were following their husbands. They were generous enough to adopt me as an honorary Aussie which later changed to being one of the famous Gelato Girls due to their quest to find the finest ice cream in Italy.



Dining room mechanic Angela works on her next bike. Another two rest in her garage awaiting restoration.



Angela's bike in Italy.

The third day started at Gaeta on the West coast and took us through two hair-raising mountain passes. My bike had now finally decided that it quite liked being back in Italy and behaved impeccably. Just one stop to change over the battery which was still causing problems and the rest was plain sailing - apart from the Italian drivers and the hairpin bends. It was one of those days where you stand to the side and watch yourself

and wonder "Is that really me?" A true experience of a lifetime. I finally understood why there were no other women in the Taglioni Class and only one American in the Vintage Class. This was hard work. Riding the bike alone took fierce concentration but the heat was tremendous, on one day topping 42°C. However, the exhilaration of completing that stage more than made up for the hardship.

The fourth day was one of mixed emotions, This leg ran from Tivoli, east of Rome up to Chianciara a pretty spa town. A member of our group, John, had failed to complete even the first day owing to bike problems. He had been devastated but was trying to make the best of it by becoming the second honorary Aussie, although he drew the line at being part of the Gelato Girls! I offered John the fourth day on my bike and, although I was sad to miss that leg of the journey, it was well

worth it to see John's face when he came in at the end of the day.

And so, to the final day; from Chianciara back to Riccione, and that morning of nervous excitement. Well, I'm happy to say that we both arrived safe and sound at the finish line which was as satisfying and marvellous as it had promised to be. And yes, the final cavalcade back into Riccione was every bit as chaotic as the ride out back when we started. The event reached its climax that evening at a gala dinner held at an impressive chateau where certificates and prizes were given to those who had ridden hardest, fastest and most accurately (presumably they never got lost!). I still feel that I won the greatest prize of all and will always remember the Italian woman who stepped out of the crowd.

And so, for next year ...

50 YEARS AGO

St Dunstaner Gerry Brereton featured in the *Radio Times* as he appeared on *What's My Line* and *Television Music Hall*. Meanwhile physiotherapist Des Coupe was heard on Radio Luxembourg's *It's a Goal*. A Christmas episode of *Have a Go* was broadcast in New Zealand prompting several people to contact their St Dunstaner relatives.

Albert Hobson had a place of honour when the Queen Mother unveiled a memorial at Inverness-shire to all Commandos who gave their lives in WWII.

St Dunstaner Colonel Mike Ansell was widely feted for his role in Britain's horse-jumping triumph in the Olympic games at Helsinki, Finland.

St Dunstan's Chairman Ian Fraser spent four hours in a New York Court explaining that St Dunstan's had not been nationalised. A £60,000 legacy was being contested on the ground that St Dunstan's had been nationalised. Lord Fraser added that in his opinion the National Health Act did not give the Minister the power to nationalise it.

FAMILY NEWS

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mark and Elizabeth Maddock of Lancaster, Lancashire who married on August 31st.

RUBY ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Brian and Doreen Moon of Uckfield, East Sussex on August 25th.

Nicholas and Shelagh Chambers of Pinner, Middlesex on September 1st.

Gerald and Marian Jones of St Agnes, Cornwall on September 5th.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to:

John and Dorothy Cooper of Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Clwyd on August 29th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Joseph and Amy Harris of Tavistock, Devon who celebrated 65 years of marriage on September 4th.

Ernest and Eunice Johnson of Cherry Hinton, Cambridge on September 6th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Gwendoline Hannant of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire on September 3rd. She was the widow of *Ernest Hannant*.

Alice Dennis of Enfield, Middlesex on September 4th. She was the widow of *George Dennis*.

Julia Davies of Llanelli, Dyfed on September 9th. She was the widow of *Harry Davies*.

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.

Dorothy Featherstone

Royal Air Force

Dorothy Featherstone of Kenilworth, Warwickshire died on July 3rd, aged 86. She served as a nursing orderly in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946, completing her service with the rank of Sergeant. She then worked as a shop assistant before becoming a NAAFI manager. She used to enjoy playing tennis and her other interests included sewing, tapestry and reading.

Kenneth Fricker

Royal Engineers

Kenneth Royston Fricker of Bristol, Avon died on August 13th, aged 76. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1948. As a Sapper he was involved in clearing minefields in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. When the war ended he was posted to Egypt and Palestine. After leaving the army he became a lorry driver and later became a TV

repair man. Our sympathy goes to his widow Betty and all other members of the family.

Herbert Jessey

Sherwood Foresters

Herbert Jessey of Finchley, London died on August 17th, aged 88. He served in the Sherwood Foresters as a signaller from 1943 to 1946 in the Middle East and North Africa. In civilian life he worked as a carpenter before joining the Royal Mint and then the Health and Safety Executive. His interests included bowling. Our sympathy goes to his widow Doris, their sons and all other members of the family.

Kenneth Walker

Royal Air Force VR

Kenneth Walker of Sutton Scotney, Winchester, Hampshire died on August 18th, aged 86. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1979. He joined the Royal Air Force VR in 1941 and served as an engineer on air/sea rescue launches. He was captured by the Japanese and held in Singapore. Along with thousands of other FEPOWs, he was herded into the 'Infamous Square' at Selarang to stand in the sun without food, water or cover for six days until they signed "No Escape" forms. The malnutrition and privation he experienced as a prisoner would ultimately claim his sight. In civilian life he worked as an engineer but later joined his wife Mary running the Riverside Tea Garden. Keen on sailing, in 1983 he joined the crew of a 145ft Brigantine, the Soren Larsen. He travelled from Southampton to St Malo, the Channel Islands and the Britany Coast. Other interests included gardening and music. Our sympathy goes to his widow Mary, daughter Judy, son Michael and all other members of the family.

Peter Toms

Royal Air Force

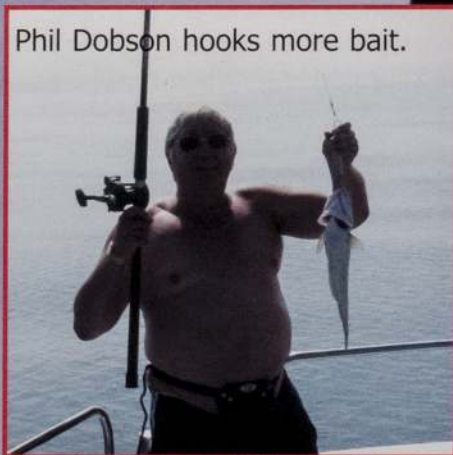
Peter Kenneth Toms of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire died on August 26th, aged 74. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956. As a Ground Flight Mechanic he was posted to 110 Squadron in Changi and served in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. He later joined 111 Squadron and supported the aerobatic squadron, the Black Arrows. In civilian life he worked at Heathrow Airport and as chauffeur. His interests included gardening and most sports. Our sympathy goes to his widow Christine and all other members of the family.

HOOKED ON FISHING

Fred lands a tripple catch.



Phil Dobson hooks more bait.



A double mackerel for Cliff.



Gary casts off.

ST DUNSTAN'S FISHING Club were all at sea on August 19th. They sailed 26 miles off the Newhaven Coast to lower their rods on shipwrecks. Fred Bentley, Phil Dobson, Cliff Ford and Gary Ogden were carried out on the waves by John Edwards, skipper of the *Sea Leopard*.

Recent expeditions by St Dunstan's Fishing Club have been dogged by bad weather, but this time the sun shone benignly on a near-flat ocean. The catch was mild but included a variety of whiting and mackerel which was re-cycled as bait. Fred hooked an impressive bream which seemed to be a sure winner for the "Biggest Catch of the Day". However, Cliff Ford then pulled a six-pound pollock from the deep.

The Fishing Club have recently concluded a sea fishing expedition to Ilfracombe and we hope to have a full report in next month's *Review*.