

December 2003

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ST DUNSTAN'S Review



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN



December 2003

Cover story:

We shall remember them!

Preparing for the Remembrance Sunday march at Horse Guards Parade, St Dunstaner Thomas Clack, who served in the Northamptonshire Regiment, looks after one of the wreaths to be placed at The Cenotaph in memory of fallen comrades.

Full report on page 12.

Going like a rocket!

Mark Threadgold set a new blind water speed record - then he broke it, and broke it again! But could he do better? **Find out on page 16.**

Peace on Earth?

For a brief moment, goodwill to all men reigned, then in an instant, it was over and the carnage continued.

The story of the Christmas Truce is on page 24.

Restoration!

Expert painting shines new light on St Dunstan's Chapel mural.

Details on page 10.

King Conker!

St Dunstan's Archers join the crowds playing at the World Conker Championship.

Report on page 30.

Plus Balancing the Books, Letters Ten Questions and other favourites!!!

Noticeboard

On Page 4

Seasons Greetings
Review evolution
Credit cards accepted
195 has your number

On Page 5:

What's On 2004

On Page 6:

Calling Ex-POWs
Indoor bowling
Camp at HMS Sultan
Pantos and Plays

On Page 7:

Concessionary passports
Northern Lights
Plastic Brigade
Large print diary

On Page 8:

Copyright Law change
Tapesense offers

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From the President

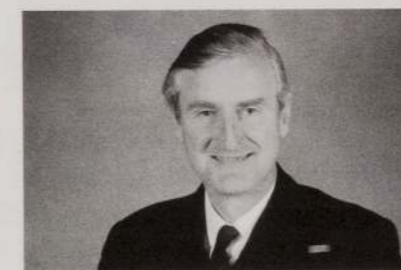
AMONGST THE FIRST Christmas cards which Joyce and I receive are those from the family and St Dunstaners overseas. With such easy travelling most of us have families and friends in far away places, and Christmas cards draw us all closer together.

As in previous years Joyce and I will be spending Christmas with our daughter Felicia, and we send our best wishes that you may all hear from those who are away from home, and spend a very Happy Christmas with your families, and that the New Year will be blessed with peace, good health and happiness.

Colin Beaumont-Edmonds

From the Chairman

ONCE AGAIN, St Dunstan's can look back on a busy and successful 12 months in this, the 88th year of the charity's existence. We have lost a number of old friends and gained many new ones as we continue to extend our services to an ever-widening number of visually impaired ex-Service men and women.



It has been an active year; there have been several high profile events and many more that have not hit the headlines. I hear that some of you feel that too much publicity is given to the high profile events. Think of an iceberg! Without the tip visible above the water, you would not know the mighty iceberg existed at all! This is what inspires our supporters to give as generously as they do; but it is what you all, without sight, achieve independently, that is fulfilling the philosophy envisaged by our Founder. This is creating the perpetuating family atmosphere of achievement that inspires new arrivals to go on and attain the impossible.

I want to thank all of you, St Dunstaners, widows, widowers, family members, volunteer helpers and staff; all who have contributed to make St Dunstan's what it is. I congratulate you and come what may, keep the momentum going!

Jenny joins me in wishing you a Happy Christmas and a successful New Year.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

From the Chief Executive



IN APRIL this year, I sent an open letter to all members of the St Dunstan's family with regard to the formulation of a strategic Service Development plan for the future. I said I would update everyone following the October meeting of the Council.

I gave the meeting a presentation of the challenges that lie ahead and a copy of a first draft plan to read. The Council intend to review the draft and will then discuss the various issues at their newly instituted January meeting. This is likely to lead to revisions and a further draft plan being prepared.

May I take this opportunity to add my very best wishes to you all for the Festive Season.

Robert Leader, Chief Executive

Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information



SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ST DUNSTAN'S

HAVE A JOYFUL CELEBRATION THIS FESTIVE TIME:

All staff at Headquarters, Ovingdean and around the country wish the members of the St Dunstan's family a very Happy Christmas. We trust everyone will enjoy good health and happiness during the coming year.



NEW REVIEW ON HORIZON

SIZING UP FOR LARGE PRINT: The print edition of **ST DUNSTAN'S Review** will take on a bold new appearance when it returns in February 2004. The page size will increase to accommodate a large print approach which we hope will enhance everyone's reading experience.

In the meantime, all comments, suggestions and contributions are extremely welcome. Write to Ray Hazan, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD or e-mail ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.

CD TALKING REVIEW AVAILABLE

VERSATILE READING ON TALKING BOOK STYLE DISC: Easy browsing capabilities and digital sound are just two of the advantages of the new CD version of **ST DUNSTAN'S Talking Review**. The CD is best listened to on the RNIB Victor Talking Book player but can also be played on a PC with soundcard or any MP3 CD player.

To receive the **Review** in this format, please contact Ray Hazan at St Dunstan's Headquarters.

THAT WILL DO NICELY, SIR!

DEBIT OR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED AT OIVINGDEAN: Accommodation charges at Ovingdean can now be paid using debit or credit card facilities available in the Cashiers Office which is open from 9am to 1pm.

It is also possible to pay over the phone reading your card details to Angie Blake (Tel: 01273 391446). This facility is available Mon - Fri, 8am to 4pm.

If you have any questions regarding this system, please phone Angie at Ovingdean or Mike Belton at Headquarters on 020 7723 5021.

195 OUT RUNS ALL 118S

DIRECTORY SERVICES FOR VIPS: While sighted telephone users struggle with a variety of 118 clones, visually impaired people can run ahead. British Telecom's free 195 Directory Enquiry service gives users a personal identification number (PIN) so they can call at any time for access to UK and International numbers. The service will also connect the call if requested. New users can join the service by dialling 195 and asking for registration.

St Dunstan's events, reunions and activities for 2004

WHAT'S ON NEXT YEAR

A SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR: These are just some of the events and activities that make up St Dunstan's 2004 calendar. Details of other meetings will appear in future issues. For some club events participants should note that arrival and departure dates are one day before and after those published. All holiday and club activity bookings should be made via Jackie Castle, Bookings Supervisor on 01273 307811 ext 1422. Those booking in for club activities are reminded that reserved rooms are only held up to one month prior to the commencement of the activity. Provisional dates have been marked (*tbc*) to be confirmed and further information will be published when available.

Historical Week	January 22nd-29th	Archery Club (II)	June 5th-12th
Archery Club (I)	January 30th-February 7th	Chichester Reunion	June 9th
Widows' Week (I)	February 11th-18th	Widows' Week (II)	June 14th-21st
Musical Week	February 19th-26th	Cardiff Reunion	June 15th
Computer Club (I)	March 3rd-4th	Brighton Reunion (III)	June 23rd
Amateur Radio Society	March 5th-11th	Bristol Reunion	June 30th
Bowling Club (I)	March 12th-26th	Ladies' Reunion	July 18th-25th
Derby Reunion	March 24th	Royal Marines Band Concert	July 21st
Masonic Weekend	March 27th-28th	HMS Sultan Camp	July 30th-August 7th
Brighton Reunion (I)	March 31st	Archery Week (III)	August 28th-September 4th
Norwich Reunion	April 14th	Activities Week	September 6th-10th (<i>tbc</i>)
Ex- POW Reunion	April 23rd-26th	Kent Reunion	September 15th
London Reunion	April 28th	Cornwall Reunion	September 22nd
Gardening Week	May 3rd-10th	Physiotherapists Weekend	September 24th-26th
Exeter Reunion	May 5th	Aylesbury Reunion	September 29th
Liverpool Reunion	May 11th	Computer Club (II)	October 6th-7th
Blind and Handless Reunion	May 5th-11th	Amateur Radio Society	October 8th-15th
Blackpool Reunion	May 12th	Widows' Week (III)	October 18th-25th
Exercise Iron Man	May 12th	Bowling Club (II)	October 28th-November 11th
Newcastle Reunion	May 18th	Remembrance Sunday	November 14th
Leeds Reunion	May 19th	St Dunstan's Day	December 9th
Edinburgh Reunion	May 26th	Christmas Week	December 18th-29th
Brighton Reunion (II)	June 2nd	New Year Week	December 30th-January 4th 2005

For events at St Dunstan's Ovingdean, please allow a day either side for travel. Arrangements will be made to maximise use of Ovingdean vehicles. Bookings should be made as indicated in the October **Review** and places will be confirmed two months before the event. Where there is insufficient space to accommodate everybody, decisions on priorities will be made with club officials.

CALLING EX-PRISONERS OF WAR

EX-POW REUNION: I have notice in the recent **Review**'s that a number of new St Dunstaners have been Prisoners of War. Being newcomers to St Dunstan's, you may not be aware of or the reunion of St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War which is held annually at Ovingdean (usually over a weekend in April). The programme for these weekends are as follows - On Friday evening, we hold a "get-together" in the lounge bar (circa 8pm). On this occasion a buffet is provided in the blue room. Saturday morning is the AGM and in the evening is the reunion dinner. On Sunday morning we have a special church service in St Dunstan's Chapel and in the evening we join in with the usual concert.

The next reunion will be held April 23rd-26th 2004.

Anyone wishing to attend this reunion should contact Mr Tom Hart, 15 Whitefriars Meadow, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9AS. Tel: 01304 612771. Please remember to book early as Ovingdean is usually fully booked over this weekend.

Alf Lockhart
Treasurer

INDOOR BOWLING AT BRIGHTON

GAMES HOME AND AWAY: Brighton Club Indoor Bowling continues through the year. Any St Dunstaner visiting Ovingdean who wishes to play should contact Iain Millard on 01273 303451.

Home matches will be held in the McKinley Sports Hall at St Dunstan's Ovingdean at 14:00hrs on the following days: The last two matches of 2003 will be on December 5th and 8th. For 2004, initial matches will be held on January 12th, 16th, 19th, 23rd and 30th, February 20th and 27th, March 5th and 8th, and April 2nd. Away matches will be played on February 18th and April 7th.

REHAB OFFICER

BACK ON BOARD: Vanessa Young has rejoined the Rehabilitation and Training department.

SUMMER CAMP AT HMS SULTAN

NEW ORGANISING SECRETARY: Dave Burrows has taken on the role of Organising secretary for the annual camp at HMS *Sultan*. He succeeds Elspeth Grant, who has decided to stand down having completed over 30 years dedicated service in this role. Elspeth has been persuaded to become the camp Patron and will retain a liaison role within the organisation; she hopes to visit next year.

The HMS *Sultan* Summer Camp 2004 will be held Friday July 30th to Saturday, August 7th.

All correspondence and applications to attend camp should be sent to Mr Dave Burrows, 18 Portsmouth Road, Lee on the Solent, Hampshire PO13 9AG. He can be contacted by telephone on 02392 550532 or by e-mail at DAVEBURROWS808@aol.com. Please contact Dave by April 1st 2004.

PANTOS AND PLAYS DESCRIBED

VOCAL EYES DESCRIBE SEASONAL SHOWS: Audio described performances and touch tours are available for the following pantomime productions: *Rumpelstiltskin* at the Cochrane Theatre, London (020 7269 1606) on December 18th.

Aladdin at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (01242 572573) on December 19th and at The Playhouse, Weston-super-Mare (01934 627457) on January 3rd-4th.

Mother Goose at Greenwich Theatre, London (020 8858 7755) on January 10th.

Cinderella with Julian Clary, Dave Benson Phillips and Henry Luxemburg at the Birmingham Hippodrome (0870 730 1234) on January 20th and 24th.

There are also three adult drama productions receiving audio description and touch tour treatment. *Five Gold Rings* at the Almedia Theatre, London (020 7288 4999) on January 17th, *Revelations* at the Hampstead Theatre (020 7722 9301) on January 24th and *After Miss Julie* at the Donmar Warehouse, London (020 7845 5813) on January 31st.

CONCESSIONARY PASSPORTS FOR VETERANS ATTENDING WWII COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

PASSPORTS FOR PILGRIMAGES:

The Home Office recently announced a scheme for The United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) to provide free one-year passports to veterans wishing to attend 60th Anniversary Commemorative Events in 2004 and 2005.

Applicants must have taken part in the action being commemorated, or be the spouse, widow, widower, or partner of a person who took part. They should also be travelling as part of a group, or to an event, arranged by a veterans' organisation. Free passports will not be issued to persons who already hold British passports which will be valid for the journey being arranged. The applicant must be eligible for British Passport facilities.

Applications should be made on normal passport application forms which are obtainable from Post Offices. Individuals should forward completed application forms to a relevant veterans' association for authentication. The association (who will countersign one of the passport photographs) will forward the authenticated application to UKPS four weeks before the intended date of travel. Under no circumstances should applications be submitted directly to the UKPS. Passports will be posted direct to applicants.

UKPS will not request documentary evidence of eligibility so expired passports or birth certificates will not be required.

Applications should not be submitted too far in advance, as the intention is that so far as possible the passports should cover up to at least the anniversary of VE-Day on May 8th 2005. Nevertheless passports will be available from January 2004.

St Dunstan's will be acting as an authenticator and applications for concessionary passports should be sent to Ray Hazan, St Dunstaner Services Manager, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Please submit applications at least six weeks before travel to allow suitable time for processing.

THE SOUND OF NORTHERN LIGHTS SPARKLES ON CD

EASY LISTENING: Two musical collections crossing the boundaries of folk, Celtic, country, soft rock and blues are available from St Dunstaner Mark Brook of Norway. *Northern Lights* or *Higher than an eagle* can be purchased from St Dunstan's for £10 each. Half of the price will be donated to support the work of St Dunstan's.

To order either CD, send a cheque, made payable to St Dunstan's, to Ray Hazan, St Dunstaner Services Manager, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

THE CHARGE OF THE PLASTIC BRIGADE

TOY SOLDIERS: Any one with an interest in toy soldiers, particularly figures from the Crimean War (1854-1856), may wish to check out a long time supporter of St Dunstan's - The Plastic Brigade. Chatham dealer Mike Easton specialises in Timpo, Britains and Herald figures with series from Romans, Vikings, Cowboys and Indians, Waterloo, WWII, Arabs, Foreign Legion and the American Civil War. He is also manufacturing his own range of 54mm metal kits of the Crimean War. He buys and sells loose boxes and collections from the 1950's to Mid-80's. Call Mike on 01634 671157 between 4pm and 8.30pm.

A BIG DATE FOR 2004

LARGE PRINT DIARIES FOR £6.95: A4 size, large-print diaries are now available from St Dunstan's. Weeks are spaced across two pages giving plenty of space for notes and there are additional sections for useful numbers and notable dates, as well as important information on St Dunstan's.

The ring-bound diaries are priced at £6.95 each. Cheques should be made payable to 'St Dunstan's' and sent to Siân Roberts, Fundraising and Communications, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. If you have any enquiries please contact Siân Roberts on 020 7616 7958.

COPYING IS NOW AN ACCESSIBLE RIGHT

BLIND ENTITLED TO CONVERT PUBLICATIONS TO A USEFUL FORMAT: The Copyright Act came into force on October 31st. This amended existing legislation to enable a person with a sight problem (or somebody on their behalf) to make a single accessible copy of a work which must only be used by the person with a sight problem, without seeking copyright permission. However, you must legally have a copy of the book to begin with and you can't copy it if there is already a commercially available accessible version.

TAPESENSE OFFERS

TAPES, CDS AND OTHER ACCESSORIES FOR SALE: Tapesense is a non-profit making mail order service for blind and visually impaired people offering a range of audio materials and accessories for sale. It is part of the Persula Foundation and subsidised by Hi-Fi retailer Richer Sounds. All items are well-known brands though availability of stocks may vary.

They offer Maxell UR ferric 60 minute at 25p each (RRP £1.29p) or 90 minute cassette tapes for 29p (RRP £1.49). Individuals may order up to a maximum of 60 items on each order. There are no limits to how many times you may order. Payment can be made by cheque, postal order or credit card and sent to The Persula Foundation, Gallery Court, Hankey Place, London SE1 4BB. Telephone: 020 7357 9298. Initial orders should be verified by your local blind society (or contact Ray Hazan, St Dunstan Services Manager at St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD).

Other products from Tapesense include:

Batteries

Fuji AAA 4 pack	49p per pack
Fuji PP3 9 volt	79p each
Duracell AA 4 pack	89p per pack

Cassette Tapes

Maxell UR60 60 minute ferric tapes	25p each
Maxell UR90 90 minute ferric tapes	29p each
TDK SA90 90 minute chrome tapes	49p each

MiniDiscs

TDK MD74 and MD80
74 minute and 80 minute discs 59p each
(please call to confirm stock before ordering).

Blank CDs

Maxell/Verbatim CDR80
80 minute write-once CDs 59p each
Note: these are primarily for use in an audio recorder, not a computer.

Maxell/Verbatim CDRW80
74 minute re-writable CDs 99p each
Note: these are primarily for use in an audio recorder, not a computer.

Interconnects

Atlantic	£6.99 for a 1 metre set
Atlantic 3.5mm	
Has a mini-jack on one end and normal phono/RCA on the other.	£6.99
Arctic	£14.95
Tape Solution	£9.99
SCART-SCART	£4.99

Headphones

Please call for any new offers.
Senheiser MX500
In-ear "Walkman-Style" stereo headphones £7.99

Beyerdynamic DT231
Superbly reviewed headphones £24.95

Special offers

Pure Digital Evoke 1
A Digital Audio Broadcast tuner, in the style of a Roberts Radio. It is compact, very easy to use and has its own built in speaker. Tapesense have secured some of these at a very reasonable price, but ask that you call first so they can check the signal availability in your area.

Vivano EM216
Compact, good quality microphone. The microphone is tiny and clips onto a piece of clothing and operates in stereo. It uses a single "AA" size battery in a little preamplifier and plugs into a portable MiniDisc recorder or tape deck via a 3.5mm mini-jack. £19.95

TALKING CALENDAR WATCH

ENGLISH VOICE FOR TIME AND DATE: The Talking Calendar Watch Mk II (ref CW89) costs £26.99 (exc of VAT) and has a black case and black leather strap. It features a good quality English voice and has a standard size LCD. All functions are announced - these include time, date and hourly time and alarm status announcements, watch functions and setting procedures. It also has a countdown timer mode with spoken settings in 1-minute increments.

To place an order, contact RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023 153 or e-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk.

CELEBRATE WITH A SONG

ACCESSIBLE CAROLS: Sing along to your favourite carols with the *Large Print Carol Book* or the *Popular Carol Book* in braille. The *Large Print Carol Book* (Ref: TC20267, priced £2.90) has the words to 50 popular carols in easy-to-see large print. The *Popular Carol Book* (Ref: 513096, priced £2.34) contains a selection of traditional and new carols and includes notes on each carol's origin and use. To place an order, contact RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023 153.

STAYING IN THE GAME

POPULAR FAMILY GAMES WITH VIP FRIENDLY FEATURES: A range of familiar family games are available from the RNIB. Chess, backgammon and even logic game Connect-4 are available with tactile marking for the visually impaired player. Would-be property magnates can even try their hand at Monopoly which is available with money, community chest and title deeds in large print and braille. For further details, contact RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023 153.

DESCRIBE IT AGAIN, SAM

AUDIO DESCRIBED VIDEO: Recent video releases include *Cassablanca*, *Chicago* and *Singin' in the Rain*. Call RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023 153 for details of these and other releases.

WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

TALKING SCALES: If you feel you have over-indulged on Christmas cheer, then the RNIB's talking personal scales might make it easier manage your health. The slimline design allows anyone to simply stand on the scale (no switching on is required) and if you step off when requested, the scale will speak your weight, before switching off automatically.

The device has adjustable speech volume and speaks your weight in stones and pounds, or kilos, though there is a maximum weight of 19 stones. It is supplied with one PP3 9v alkaline battery.

For more details, contact RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023 153 or e-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk. Overseas customers should contact RNIB Exports on +44 (0) 1733 37 54 00 or e-mail exports@rnib.org.uk.

STORY WRITING COMPETITION

ENTER YOUR TALE: ST DUNSTAN'S Review's story writing competition is open once more. Entries should contain the word 'Record' in the title and the meaning of the word is left to the author's imagination! Submissions may be fiction or non-fiction and should not have been previously published. Manuscripts should be no longer than 1,500 words and submitted under a nom-de-plume with your real name in a sealed envelope. Full rules were published last issue.

Entries must be received by the Editor, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by Monday January 12th, 2004. The winner will receive £50, runner-up £30 and third story selected £20. The winning stories will be published in the **Review**.

George Stanford

WE REGRET TO announce the death on April 6th of George Stanford at the age of 92. George worked for ten years as Head of Reception when Headquarters was located at 191 Old Marylebone Road. We extend our sympathies to his widow Jean, who formerly worked in the Accounts department.

It strikes me ...



with Gog and Magog

Gog is rather disappointed that a Spanish spaceman has spoiled a good joke. An American astronaut proudly announces that NASA spent \$30million developing a pen that can write in zero gravity. His Russian cosmonaut colleague shrugs and says "We use a pencil!" But they don't! A starbound Spaniard has revealed that, while flying with the Americans, he used a hi-tech pressurised pen, but when he joined a Russian space crew they all relied on a device engineered by late St Dunstaner Richard Dufton - the ordinary ballpoint pen!

Magog is fond of *All at Sea* by Jamie Cullum (His *Twentysomething* album is sure to brighten anyone's Christmas stocking this year). In fact, Magog thinks it might be a suitable theme tune for some of the crew supporting Mark Threadgold during his record breaking escapades on Lake Windermere. As Mark was speeding away, St Dunstan's PR Office, with Mark's parents and St Dunstaner Peter Burdon in tow, were setting their own record for the slowest boat on earth. Head of Public Awareness (HPA) Anna Robinson was at the controls. She throttled-up to follow Mark, but evidently didn't check the fuel gauge. Before they knew it, the tank was empty and the RIB came to a halt. They were drifting for an hour before help arrived. This means they failed to beat the current record, but we are sure that Anna and Co will be back next year for a further attempt.

A faithful restoration

St Dunstan's Chapel mural is returned to its full glory

THE MURAL THAT forms the centrepiece of St Dunstan's Chapel at Ovingdean has been lovingly restored after it was damaged by water leaking in through the roof. The painting depicts a dove with outspread wings, superimposed on a circle. At the top of the dove's head is a Celtic cross, and to the back is a cloud from which golden rays of light emanate outward. This is framed by a border made up of four lines in gold and blue.

Originally painted in 1939, the mural suffered when water started to leak through from the roof. Although this problem was rectified sometime ago, the damage was done leaving flaking paint and mis-matching areas from previous decorations and repair work to the structure. Further, candle wax from successive blowing out of altar candles had splattered the lower part of the design and a six concave mirrors had been mysteriously replaced by bottle caps.

The restoration has been carried out by Stig Evans who conducted tests to establish what would be the most suitable reagent for removing surface dirt. Before



cleaning could commence, some areas of loose or flaking and blistering paint had to be consolidated. Some paint was removed, which revealed a surprise coat of gold leaf and a thin white line dividing blue borders. The next stage involved varnishing to separate retouched areas from the original artwork.

The end of an era?

Ray Sheriff of Rottingdean has just laid his trusty computer and associated equipment to rest, despite it being still in working order. So, you will say, people are doing that all the time - but when it's 17 years old? The BBC Master was a popular choice amongst St Dunstaners and time has proved it a faithful companion!

Mayo hammers home the balls with 'Razor' Ruddock

ST DUNSTANER MIKE MAYO was over the moon when he joined footballer Neil 'Razor' Ruddock in a celebrity golf challenge on September 29th. The Saltash St Dunstaner is a long-time fan of West Ham, so he was pleased to be teamed up and teeing off with the former Hammers player.

Mike was playing at Wentworth and also got to chat with another player, five-time Olympic champion Sir Steve Redgrave. "It was fantastic," he said. "It was a tremendous day. I was walking down the 18th thinking about all the players who have been there before."

Having played against sighted golfers at Wentworth, his next challenge is international. He is training to represent the UK in Melbourne, Australia in the World Blind Golf Championship in April next year. "It has been a good year and I'm hoping that with the right support, next year will be better," he added.

Mike has also been nominated as Sports Person of the Year by the *Evening Herald*, Plymouth. However, he isn't too sure about his chances - the last winner of the newspaper award was also a blind golfing St Dunstaner - David Morris!



St Dunstaner Dennis Busby of Willerby, East Yorkshire recently presented the shield of the Normandy Veterans Association (1944) Hull Branch to St Dunstan's. The former Gunner, served with the Royal Artillery during the invasion. It was accepted by Jackie Greer, Head of Care and will be added to the many regimental shields adorning the walls of the lounge at Ovingdean.

Ten questions on...

December happenings

This month Harry Beevers goes through end-of-year events

- 1) In December 1985 the Medway Bears beat the Richmond Raiders 48-1 to establish a record score in the British league of which sport?
- 2) What is the name of the United Kingdom's oldest Sunday newspaper first published in December 1791?
- 3) In 1958, the Preston Bypass, Britain's first section of motorway was officially opened by which Prime Minister?
- 4) In 1877 Thomas Alva Edison recited which children's nursery rhyme into his phonograph making the world's first recording of the human voice?
- 5) In 1904, which play by J.M. Barrie had its first performance at the Duke of York Theatre in London?
- 6) In 1981 Geoffrey Boycott became the then most prolific run-scorer in test cricket beating the previous record of West Indian Garfield Sobers. In which country did Boycott set this record?
- 7) In 1761, Marie Tussaud of waxworks fame was born. What was her nationality?
- 8) What was patented in 1901 by inventor King Camp Gillette?
- 9) In 1927 Ford's Model A went on sale as a successor to which other model?
- 10) What was the name of the American brig found drifting in the Atlantic Ocean in 1872 with her crew missing?

Answers on page 29.



Ray Hazan reports on Remembrance Sunday, November 9th 2003

A moment of recollection

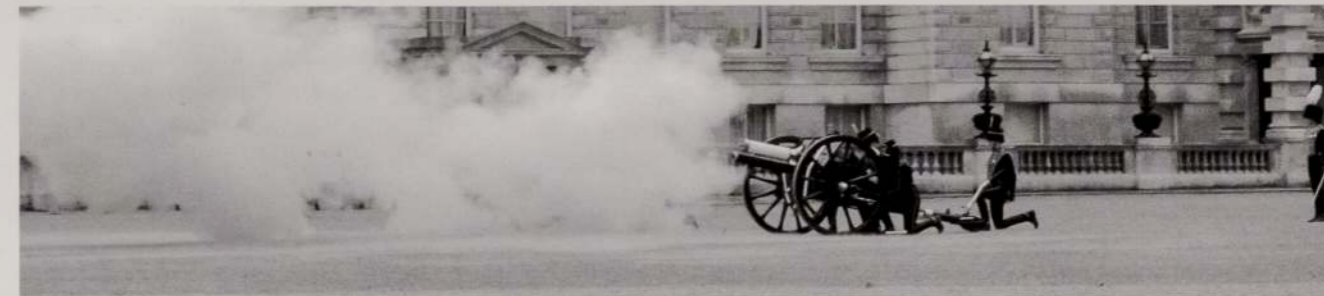


Above: St Dunstan's contingent, with The Chairman, President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds and Billy Baxter at the head, march towards The Duke of York who was taking the salute.

Left: St Dunstaner Paul Walker with a wreath that was laid at the Cenotaph in memory of comrades who are no longer with us.

FROM ALL CORNERS of the United Kingdom, St Dunstaners started gathering in London on the afternoon of November 8th for their annual Act of Remembrance. Arthur Carter and escort Tom Lang spent much of the day rehearsing and then carrying the St Dunstan's Standard during the Festival of Remembrance held at the Royal Albert Hall, attended in the afternoon and evening by several St Dunstaners. The shower of poppy petals at the end of the service is always an emotional moment.

The Holiday Inn, Regents Park slowly filled up during Saturday afternoon and the noise in the bars swelled in sympathy! With welcoming efficiency, Jeremy Hinton, Mike Watson, Barry Porter and their team of helpers from HQ – Angela, Marie, Amanda, Christabel, Carole, Fiona, Niki, Lexie, Claire, Sarah and Ruth,



The loud echoing blast of cannon fire on Horse Guards Parade is the signal for the two-minute silence in memory of those who gave their lives in the service of our country.

were there to welcome guests, distribute room keys, luggage labels, words of encouragement and advice!

A convivial evening meal was enjoyed by everyone, which gave no opportunity to listen to the hour long programme on Radio 4, which covered the work of St Dunstan's through the stories of many individuals, taken from archive sound tracks and current interviews; a great opportunity to profile St Dunstan's.

On Sunday morning, the peace and serenity of the two-minute silence in Whitehall was in deep contrast to the turmoil, which must have been going through the minds of those standing there. Images of comrades we left behind, flashbacks of incidents, of sights, smells, of sad, moving and humorous moments raced in our minds. We gave thanks that we were allowed to return, despite sacrifices.

It was a sharper and more orderly contingent of 96 St Dunstaners, nine widows and their escorts, which stepped off to the beat of the base drum and, as David Dimpleby described in the BBC TV commentary "turned their sightless eyes towards the Cenotaph." The St Dunstan's wreaths were handed over by Elsie Aldred and Paul Walker. Bill Foxley handed a wreath over on

behalf of the Guinea Pig contingent, with whom he was marching. Unfortunately, there was no band to lead us towards Horse Guards, but the applause, led by many very young spectators, ensured a jaunty step as we passed Prince Andrew on the saluting dais. A brief downpour at the latter stage of the march failed to dampen spirits.

Some 270 people sat down to lunch, efficiently served by the hotel staff. The speeches are an important part of the day and we were not to be disappointed. The Chairman rose first to mention our guests; General Sir Peter de la Billière, Major General Dare Wilson, General and Mrs Andrew Keeling (Member of Council), Commodore and Mrs Milne, and



Elsie Aldred and Sue Reynolds on Horse Guards Parade.



In thoughtful mind,
St Dunstaner Joyce Philippon.



St Dunstaner David
Corscadden on parade.



St Dunstan's Widows Christine Stalham, Caroline Bulbrook, Jean Hogg and Gwen Heys.

General Sir David Ramsbotham. The Chairman went on to describe how it had been a momentous year for St Dunstan's with the two world records by Billy Baxter and Mark Threadgold and the status achieved in the archery world by Steve Moseley. Steve Nixon had completed a book called *Recovery from Hell*, which was to go on sale at the beginning of next year with proceeds to St Dunstan's and other charities.

"I also want to recognise the steadfastness and determination of all the St Dunstaners who strive to make their daily lives more independent by overcoming the frustration and hardship of blindness; and to meet a range of goals that most of us take for granted."

The way in which St Dunstan's activities were going from strength to strength was well covered in the Radio 4 programme, he said. The Chairman thanked all those who took part. The International War Blind conference at Ovingdean earlier in the year had been an excellent opportunity for St Dunstan's to play a leading role in international war blinded matters.

Loud applause was given, as well as flowers and a present, to Elspeth Grant, who was

relinquishing the organisation of the annual camp at HMS *Sultan* to Dave Burrows after over 30 years.

The final word was for Admiral Sir Jock Slater, Naval Vice-Patron of St Dunstan's, who had marched with the contingent and who then addressed the gathering:

Sir Jock described how acting as Vice-Chairman of the British Forces Foundation to comedian and Chairman Jim Davidson was 'an art form'. After several amusing anecdotes, Sir Jock went on in more serious vein:

"Eighty-three years ago, people looked back at the 'war to end all wars', but as you know, that was not to be. During the Second World War, the aspirations and lives of millions of people were torn apart by the most destructive global conflict in history. Today, as we march past the Cenotaph, we look back at the two World wars and the many conflicts since. We remember those who died in the service of their country and those who survived and returned home maimed in body and in mind. We remember with gratitude their sacrifice and valour."

The Armed Forces of today were playing an indispensable role in an



George Tytler, General Keeling, Sir Jock Slater, Anthony Rudzki, General Ramsbotham and Paul Walker with a host of St Dunstaners and their escorts on Remembrance Sunday.

uncertain world he added. They are committed to a very high level of activity worldwide. "Yes, it is a day of reminiscence and pride in the past. It's also a day for optimism and hope for the future. For me, Remembrance Sunday is our way of ensuring that those who died are not forgotten. It's also a way of reminding the nation of all those whose lives have been torn apart by strife in all its terrible forms."

Sir Jock paid tribute to the remarkable stoicism and determination of St Dunstaners. He acknowledged all those who

worked within the organisation, and thanked all those, members of the public, companies and Trusts, who contributed and enabled our work to be carried out. "Long may it continue," he concluded!

St Dunstaner Tom Hart responded after an introduction from the Chairman. Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox described how Tom had been blinded at Dunkirk and subsequently taken prisoner. Tom recounted how a promise of repatriation had failed to materialise and the disappointment of being returned to Germany. All the blinded

Allied POW's had been gathered in the one camp, where they had been taught Braille with equipment sent out to them via the Red Cross. After the war, St Dunstan's had, through training and rehabilitation, enabled them to return to the community and earn their living. That philosophy continues today in the case of those still able to work. For the vast majority of those who have retired, St Dunstan's supports and encourages them to lead active and interesting lives. Tom thanked St Dunstan's for all they had done. He expressed further gratitude for having organised the weekend's events. It was a gracious and well-received speech.

Thus ended St Dunstan's act of Remembrance, in gratitude for the fact that we had survived but had not forgotten those who gave the supreme sacrifice for their country.



Photographs: Sue Mannifold

St Dunstaners at Ovingdean took part in a ceremony of Remembrance at Rottingdean War Memorial. Dorothy Wright (pictured right) laid the wreath on behalf of all St Dunstaners.



St Dunstaner **Mark Threadgold** tells how he cut through the water speed barrier with the Bladerunner

Moving like quicksilver



Blind boat driver sets a record not once, not twice, but four times on Lake Windermere

THE TRADITIONAL WEATHER for Cumbria in autumn is not renowned for being crisp and dry, but that is exactly what we had for the annual Powerboat Record Week on Lake Windermere. This was the venue for my attempt at breaking the blind water speed record between October 13th and 17th.

The event has been organised by the Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club since 1970, and this year was graced by the entry of 47 boats attempting to break both national and international speed records. Everyone involved gives up their own time to help and ensure a safe and enjoyable week.

During my record drives I was assisted by Jeremy Watts. Jeremy is a past world powerboat racing champion and is also a director of Ice Marine, the company that manufacture the Bladerunner RS6 powerboat we were to be driving.

Having agreed to let us use the company racing boat he promptly sold it to Blue Ocean Charter in Southampton. As part of the conditions of sale, he requested that we be allowed to use it for the speed record attempt in October, and they very kindly agreed! Jeremy ensured that the boat went back to the factory, was refitted to the offshore racing class safety regulations and had both the 300 horsepower outboard engines properly prepared. He then had the unenviable task of towing the 35 foot long boat behind a transit van from Southampton to Lake

Windermere. His safe arrival on the Monday evening was a good omen for the week's work.

Following driver's briefings and safety scrutinising, we had our first chance at attempting the record on Tuesday afternoon. The course is a single kilometre on the lake which is timed as you drive through the markers at each end. You then turn around and drive the opposite way down the course and your average speed of the two directions is what decides your success. We both got into the rally car-style seat belts and closed the roof entry hatch. With two-way intercoms in the helmets, we could speak to each other above the roar of the engines. This is the method by which Jeremy gave me verbal instructions for my direction and boat control.

The grin is back! Mark hears that he has the record.



Photos: PA



The blind leading the blind! St Dunstan's Mark Threadgold provided a speedy pull for blind water skier Gerald Price.

With safety foremost, Jeremy himself had the first run down the course in the boat to check everything was working properly. All seemed fine so I took the driving seat and strapped myself in. Now the adrenalin started to flow and the anticipation of the year's planning was about to be let loose. We drove round slowly and lined up on the course before... Wow! The roar of the engines resonated through the cockpit of the boat and

the acceleration pushed me firmly into the back of the seat. Concentration on the instructions coming through my helmet earpieces was paramount as we sped faster and faster through the measured course. The buzz was simply indescribable. Then came the slow down and turn around to make the return run. Again the two engines roared into life and powered us into the course. Prior to our run one of

the lake ferryboats had passed nearby. The wash left by it started pushing us from side to side at an alarming rate. We were doing around 90 miles per hour at this point and hence had to slow right down to stop the dangerous corkscrewing effect it was causing on the boat. This was quite a worrying moment and tempered some of the enthusiasm with the realisation that something could go badly wrong. With this heart stopping moment over the throttle was again pushed into the floor and we were off again.

With this being the first attempt I had made we were using it as a practice run. On our arrival back at the shore we were hailed with the news of a new blind speed record! Even considering the slowing we had to make, the old record of 73.06mph had been broken with an average of 83mph. This was fantastic news, but we all knew that there was more to come.

Wednesday dawned bright and crisp once again. By ten past seven, I had already done one radio interview and now found myself doing a live interview on the

Sky News television channel. Other TV crews and numerous radio and newspaper interviews and photograph sessions ensued during the day. When our chance for another attempt came, the same format as the previous day was used. Jeremy ran the boat the first time to check everything and then I got my chance. This attempt was another success. The Bladerunner behaved beautifully this time, and we managed to break the record we set the previous day with 88mph. This is exactly what we had hoped to do, and another run in the afternoon was scheduled. As I had only driven the boat once prior to these attempts we were both on a fairly steep learning curve. For the afternoon run we made some subtle engine trim changes hoping to get more speed from the boat. It worked. The average time for this run was 91.66mph and I was jubilant! The TV crews were at the shore for our return and a bottle of champagne was sprayed over everyone and everything near us! Although we had managed this fabulous speed, I knew the boat was capable of over 100mph and that was the target for the Thursday morning attempt.

With another 46 boats taking their turns, Thursday was to be our last chance to reach that elusive 100mph. The weather was the calmest it had been all week so

things were looking good. All strapped in once again, Jeremy took the boat down the course. He read out the speed as we powered over the water and it was over 100mph much of the time. The boat behaved slightly differently at these higher speeds and I could feel the trim and stability were nothing like the days before. This meant that when I started getting close to 100mph I could tell we were doing that speed and the adrenalin started to flow again. Reading out the speed for me as I held the throttle pedal on the floor, I knew we were going to be close to the 100mph average. The feeling was tremendous as I felt the boat lift out of the water that little bit more and realised just how fast we were going. The final speed? 99.19mph! A whisker below that magic 100! But there was still the afternoon!

Jeremy had another run in the afternoon but decided that the conditions were too dangerous for me to drive. Although this was a disappointment, his decision was proved good when the following three boats had to slow down dramatically at the point he said was too tricky. It did mean that we achieved something with each run we did. My record at 99.19mph was not the only achievement. Jeremy had also set a national class record for the boat at 101.7mph. This made the weeks achievements even more special.

There was just one more thing to do, though. A 70 year-old totally blind water skier had contacted me to organise an event he called "The Blind Leading The Blind!" With myself at the controls of the boat it is the first time a speed record has been set for a totally blind boat driver towing a totally blind skier. With no practice we managed to do both directions of the timed course at 34mph! This was another fabulous achievement for all of us. Gerald Price, the skier, undertook the event to publicise the 10mph speed limit coming into force in 2005 on Lake Windermere. This will see the cessation of all powerboat sports on the lake as well as the record week itself. It would be a great shame for others not to have had the opportunity myself and countless others have had in years to come.

The achievements of the team were exactly that. Having the great privilege of representing St Dunstan's for the second time was only possible due to the hard work of everyone behind the scenes. I must especially thank Rebecca Shadwell and Anna Robinson for their fantastic organisation and dedication. The whole of the fund raising team should not be forgotten, along with Jeremy Watts and Blue Ocean Charter. Without their backing this event would never have been possible. The press coverage achieved for St Dunstan's and our sponsors was quite phenomenal. I feel I achieved my aim of putting something back into the organisation which has helped me so much since the loss of my sight.

And what is next? St Dunstan's now hold the land speed record and the water speed record. Who is going to take the Blind Ambition challenge into the sky?!



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. E-mail ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.

Honoured and embarrassed, but I'm proud for you all



The Chairman presents Elspeth with a small token of our esteem for her work on the Summer camps at HMS Sultan.

The luncheon for St Dunstan's following the Cenotaph Parade was a wonderful occasion. I was greatly honoured to be invited. However, I find it extremely embarrassing to have all these thanks and compliments heaped upon me. Quite honestly I have really only been a figurehead. Over the years I have learnt – eventually – to delegate and without the backing of my excellent and very hardworking camp committee, helpers, dogs and St Dunstaners themselves and also their wives I would have been nothing. Because of them all I have had an enormously happy

life, made so many great friends and received much love. Please may we applaud all those who have been behind me and given me so much support over the years. May I thank them and all of you for everything you have done for me. Which is more than I have ever done for you all.

My beautiful St Dunstan's badge will be worn with great pride and the beautiful flowers are filling all the vases that I own.

God bless you!

**Elspeth Grant,
Saffron Walden, Essex**

Encounter with the castle phantom

During the last war I was convalescing at the hospital at Dunhaven Castle, Southern Down, near Bridgend in South Wales. With me was my friend Walter.

As we talked quietly about what we'd do once we recovered we could hear the crunch of gravel. Someone was approaching. Thinking it was the Commandant we stood to attention expectantly.

To our surprise, instead of the Commandant, we saw a beautiful lady. She had deep blue eyes, a porcelain face and wore a blue

dress and a hat with purple beading around the rim. The place was filled with an all pervading perfume. As she approached she looked very prim and fresh.

It was then that we both noticed that she had no feet. She was gliding not walking. We ran towards her and she disappeared into thin-air. We looked at each other in total bewilderment. "By God, it's another ghost!" exclaimed Walter.

The phantom we saw was just one of many that were seen at that

castle. Everyone including the servants believed that the place was haunted and each had an unnerving story to tell. Some of the young soldiers claimed the recurring phenomena were sapping their strength. One even admitted that he would rather be back at the front line!

**Bernard Cooper,
Street, Somerset**

■ Have you experienced something that seems beyond the ken of mortal minds? if so send your story to The Editor at **ST DUNSTAN'S Review.**

Widows' Week provided the best medicine for us all

I am writing on behalf of all the widows who have just spent a most enjoyable week at Ovingdean, to thank St Dunstan's for making this possible.

We were extremely lucky as far as the weather was concerned and this added to all the interesting and enjoyable trips, which made this a very memorable holiday.

It was really great to meet up with old friends, catch up with their news, and join in the laughter, of which there was plenty. They do say laughter is the best medicine,

in that case everyone must have gone away feeling much better.

One lady said to me, "As soon as I enter the doors at Ovingdean, I feel safe." I completely agree with this statement, for one week in the year, someone else is really taking care of us.

Thanking you again on behalf of all the widows and the widower who were fortunate enough to have been on the October 13th-20th Widows' Week.

**Tanya Tyler,
Hertford, Hertfordshire**

Thameslink live up to their name

I thought you might like to know how good Thameslink train officials are. I caught the train to St Alban's which normally is a through run, but due to the rebuilding of King's Cross as a Euro terminus, the trains stop at weekends, only going as far as London Bridge and recommencing at Kentish Town. Normally, you now have to take the Northern line tube to join up the stations. The guard approached me on the train and said "Because you have a dog and a heavy pack and many escalators are involved I have arranged for a taxi to take you across London at Thameslink's expense." A wonderful service.

**Mike Tetley, St Alban's,
Hertfordshire**

Reflections on the radio

Please allow me to add my thanks and congratulations to the many you must already have received for your superb programme on Radio 4 on November 8th. Interesting and informative as it must certainly have been to the man in the street, it also caused me to reflect how different life would now be without St. Dunstan's. Every one of us has a different tale to tell but we each owe a great debt of gratitude to Arthur Pearson. You were so right to highlight the atmosphere of friendliness, happiness and good humour which we all associate with St Dunstan's and most St Dunstaners. I doubt though if many of us would have much to smile about had not St Dunstan's come to the rescue in our hour of need. Thank you again.

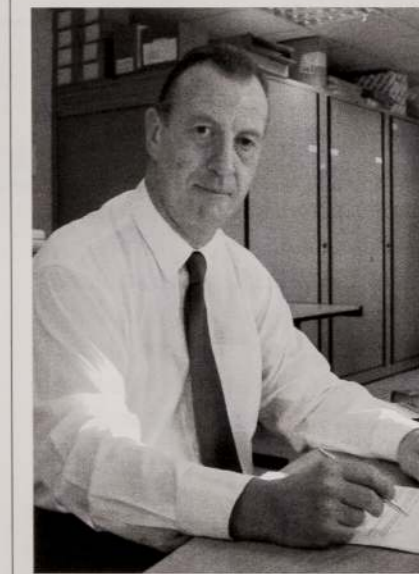
**Ted Bunting,
Scarborough, Yorkshire**

NEW STAFF



Christabel Clifford

Christabel (pictured above with Paul Walker) recently joined St Dunstan's as Head of Pensions, though her initial days have been consumed by preparations for Remembrance Sunday. She comes to us from the Resuscitation Council UK where she was Paediatric Advanced Life Support Course Coordinator.



John Isherwood

John Isherwood (pictured above) has joined St Dunstan's Estate department as Chief Surveyor. He comes to us from the London Metropolitan University where he was an estate manager. Previously he has worked for Arlington and Legal & General and is a Chartered Surveyor.

John hopes to provide a top grade service for St Dunstaners, their widows and widowers.

PENDLETON'S PANTRY

Our blind chef **Stephen Pendleton** rolls out his recipe for bread

EIGHT WHITE BREAD ROLLS

Ingredients:

8oz (200g) of strong white bread flour.

Sachet of dried yeast, 1/4 oz (7g). 1/4 pint or 125ml of warm milk and warm water, half and half mixed together.

1/2 oz (14g) butter.

1/2 teaspoon caster sugar.

Generous pinch of salt.

1 egg.

Method:

Firstly make sure your working area is clean and you know where everything is. Place damp tea towel or Dycem Mat under your mixing bowl. This will stop the bowl from moving around whilst you are mixing the ingredients. Also having a tea towel under your bowl will help to catch any flour or other food debris that may escape from the bowl. All you have to do then is give your tea towel a shake outside, saving a lot of cleaning down.

As you are going to be putting your hands in the mixture, make sure they have been thoroughly cleaned – especially under the fingernails!

Sieve the flour into a medium sized bowl. Add the sachet of dried yeast. Add salt and sugar. Break up the butter and rub into the flour and other ingredients.

Now add the liquid. You will need a quarter of a pint or 125ml of milk and water mixed. To get an accurate measurement, purchase

the set of four measuring cups that are available from the RNIB. The third largest in the set is 125ml. The liquid has to be warm. This is important because, if the liquid is cold, then it will not activate the yeast, therefore the dough will not rise. Take a plastic measuring jug, roughly half fill it with milk and water. Place the jug of liquid in the microwave for one minute, then pour the liquid into the 125ml measuring cup. You then have the correct amount of fluid for the job.

Add the liquid to the other ingredients a bit at a time, working it in thoroughly with your hands. The dough should go to an elastic consistency and there should be no flour left in the bowl. It should be totally clean. You can then remove the dough from the bowl and give it a good pounding and kneading on the work surface. After kneading place the dough back into the bowl and then place the bowl in a dark plastic carrier bag and store it in a warm dry corner of your kitchen for 45 minutes. Now is a good time to clean down your working area, making sure all the flour and other food debris has been cleaned away and your work surface has been thoroughly dried.

After this time the dough should have doubled in size. Once again remove from bowl and knock the dough back by giving it another kneading. Knead the dough for about 4 to 5 minutes.

Roll the dough into a sausage shape and then divide into eight evenly-sized portions. To shape

the rolls take one of the portions, flatten it with the palm of your hand and roll in an anti-clockwise fashion whilst still keeping your hand flat to the work surface. Gently bring the palm of your hand towards your fingers whilst pulling your fingers towards your palm, making sure to keep rolling the dough in an anti-clockwise manner. This should create an arched shape gap between your hand and the work surface.

This motion will cause the dough to shape itself into a nice sized roll. Place rolls on a greased baking tray. Now is the time to decorate the rolls. There are a number of ways to do this but I will talk about them at the end of this article.

Cover the rolls and store once again in a warm dark corner of the kitchen for a further 30 minutes. This will allow the rolls to prove for a second time. While you are waiting for the rolls to prove, pre-heat your oven to 220C or Gas Mark 7 or 425F, then clean down your working area once again.

When rolls have proved, beat up an egg and brush it over the top of the rolls and put them in the oven for 10 minutes. Please note that if you have made your rolls with a view to using them as burger buns, then the above recipe is only good for four buns and the cooking time should be increased to 12 to 15 minutes. When rolls are cooked remove them from the oven. Tapping the bottom of the roll is the recognised method of testing to see if the rolls are cooked, if they sound hollow then they are done.

Brown wholemeal rolls are exactly the same as above, but obviously you will need strong brown wholemeal bread flour. Wholemeal flour absorbs more liquid so you will also need more milk and water. As long as you add the fluid a bit at a time then you should be able to feel when it is at the correct consistency.

When the rolls are on the baking tray, just before they start to prove for the second time, I like to decorate them with a fancy pattern using my apple corer and slicer (which is available from the RNIB). I place it over the top of the roll, pressing it down about one inch.

This leaves a pattern on the top of the roll. When the roll has proved

this opens out the pattern and apparently it looks like a flower -so my wife tells me!

Before putting the rolls in the oven, you can brush them with beaten egg and sprinkle them with sesame or sunflower seeds, which once again gives them the appearance of being made in a professional baker's. Alternatively, you can brush the finished rolls with melted butter. This is my favourite way of garnishing.

Important note: After the first proving of the dough, give it a good sniff. If it smells strongly of alcohol (I would describe it very much like rum) then the bread has over proved. If this has happened to your dough, then sadly it is only

good for the bin. You can avoid over-proving by firstly keeping a good eye on the proving time.

Be sure never to prove the dough in an extremely hot part of your kitchen. Proving dough in too hot an area, for too long a time is not good so avoid this.

I absolutely love baking bread. The aroma of freshly baking bread cannot be beaten, and in my mind beats any aromatherapist! Dough as a whole is a very tactile form of cookery, all you need are your hands and a good nose. With this in mind I believe that it is a great place for the kitchen novice or the newly blind cook to start.

Next month: Basic Pastry.

Right to Read Campaign launches Charter to encourage reading for all

Action on the bookshelves!

THE RIGHT TO READ Campaign launched a Charter in October calling on the Government, publishers, librarians and booksellers to take action to make publications available to visually impaired readers. "The issues remain the same," they say. "Only five per cent of all books, newspapers and magazines ever become available in a format people with sight problems can read.

"We believe that people with sight problems (and people with dyslexia and other print reading disabilities) have the right to read the same book, at the same time and at the same price."

With this in mind they have established The Right to Read Charter and have already had

famous authors such as Joanna Trollope, Frederick Forsyth and Julian Barnes sign on. They are not expecting to deliver the Charter to the Government until next year so there is plenty of time for individuals to sign it and ask others to sign too. You can add your name in braille, tape or by calling the Right to Read Hotline on 020 7391 2123. It is also possible to sign online by visiting www.rnib.org.uk/righttoread or by e-mail on righttoread@rnib.org.uk.

The Charter calls on the Government to establish an Access to Reading Fund to support production of more material in large print, audio, braille and electronic formats; abolish VAT on audio books to bring them into line with print books; ensure that no student is

ever denied the opportunity to learn because they cannot read standard print study materials. It calls on publishers, booksellers and libraries to expand the number of books, magazines and newspapers available in large print, audio and braille.

The Right to Read is an alliance including: British Dyslexia Association, Calibre Cassette Library, ClearVision, Confederation of Transcribed Information Services, LOOK, National Association of Local Societies for Visually Impaired People, National Blind Children's Society, National federation of the Blind, National league of the Blind and Disabled, National Library for the Blind, RNIB, Scottish Braille Press, Share the Vision, and Talking Newspaper Association.

A moment of peace on earth!



British troops meet their German counterparts in the Bridoux-Rouges Bancs sector during the truce.

CHRISTMAS 1914, during the First World War, saw several informal truces occurring at various points along the trench-lines of Northern France and Belgium. It may well be that there were other places where truces took place, but our precise knowledge of events is limited by the few direct eyewitness testimonies available. Nevertheless, there are enough trustworthy reports (and even a few photographs) to convince us that something extraordinary happened that first Christmas of the War, and that it was not entirely an isolated happening.

The image of opposing soldiers, shaking hands with each other on one day and then deliberately trying to kill each other the next, is a powerful one which is part and parcel of remembrance of the Great War. It was, perhaps, a last example of open-handed chivalry before the squalor and horror of the next three years changed the old world forever.

General Headquarters at St Omer, under the command of Sir John French, sent the following message to all British Units in

Kane Griffin and Brian Jones examine the rumour and the reality of the 1914 Christmas Truce

France and Flanders on Christmas Eve, 1914. "It is thought possible that the enemy be contemplating an attack during Xmas or New Year. Special vigilance will be maintained during these periods."

It may be that Sir John should be taken at his word - that there really was the potential for some kind of German attack coming over the Christmas period. However, there may have been a hidden message - that Sir John had considered the possibility of some show of friendliness at Christmas and had taken steps to give advance notice of HQ's disapproval of any such thing.

QUIET ON THE FRONT

Far from wishing to attack, some Germans seemed inclined to make Christmas a quiet period, in which they could enjoy memories of home. The Germans had originated the tradition of bringing Christmas trees

into their houses and decorating them, a practice which was introduced into England by Queen Victoria's Consort, Prince Albert. In 1914 the practice was still not as widespread in the UK as it was in Germany. The Germans, having brought Christmas trees into their trenches and dugouts in various places, had decorated some parts of the parapet. Lieutenant Johannes Niemann, 133rd Royal Saxon Regiment, refers to having a Christmas tree in his dugout, and mentions also that the soldiers had hung little Christmas trees above their trenches, complete with candles.

The Scottish troops opposite him, seeing the lights and being mindful of the general order issued the day before, suspected an imminent attack and began firing. No attack came and things settled down soon afterwards. Gunner Herbert Smith, 5th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, also saw at least one

Christmas tree and coloured Chinese lanterns strung along the parapet on Christmas Eve. It appears that the Germans usually took the lead in making informal contact with their enemies, usually by calling across no-man's-land to attract their attention after which one or two particularly brave men took the courageous step of standing upright on their parapets.

LOCAL RULES

Sometimes the first contacts were made on Christmas Eve, but it was on Christmas Day itself that most of the fraternisation took place, following a particularly cold and misty dawn. There had been a heavy overnight frost in Northern France and Belgium and the surface of the ground was frozen. The actual organisation - the setting up of "rules" - of the truce fell to local officers on the spot and arrangements varied.

Captain Sir Edward Hulse, 2nd Scots Guards, made an early contact himself at about 8am and then went off to report to his HQ. On his arrival back at the front line, he found that there were several large crowds out in no-man's-land and that his trenches were completely empty, contrary to the orders he had left.

Some officers allowed their men to venture out into no-man's-land in small groups of three or four, so that the trenches were always manned.

The Royal Welsh Fusiliers near Ploegsteert Wood appear to have hardly left their trenches at all. Some of their officers met their German counterparts for a polite conversation out in the open and brought back a barrel of beer, courtesy of the Germans, who said

that they had plenty to spare. By and large, the truce was taken as an opportunity to meet, to shake hands, to show family photographs and to exchange small items of food and tobacco. Even the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, ordered to stay in their trenches, joined in the spirit of things, flinging tins of bully beef and jam towards the Germans, with seasonal greetings like, "Here you are, you hungry bastards." For the most part of the day, the opposing armies took advantage of the opportunity to repair and drain their trenches and to bury their dead.

FOOTBALL MATCH

A football match took place in no-man's-land. There are several conflicting stories about the match, with varying versions of the final score. The German officer Lieutenant Niemann is said to have been involved in a football match which took place at the Frelinghein-Houplines Sector, just outside Armentieres. His account gives a final score of 3-2 to the Germans. The duration of the truce seems to have varied according to the location - a few hours in some places and some days in others. The truce often ended just as it had begun, by mutual agreement.

Captain C.I. Stockwell, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, recalled how after a truly "Silent Night", he fired three shots into the air at 8.30am on December 26th and climbed onto his parapet. He then bowed and saluted the German Officer, who returned the compliment, and they both got back into their trenches. The German officer fired two shots into the air - and the War was on again!

Ovingdean Reception staff have adopted the truce as their decoration theme for this year.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Ted Bunting on the **best** and the **worst** of the Talking Books currently available

Liza of Lambeth

Author: W. Somerset Maugham.
Reader: Nigel Carlington
Catalogue Number: TB 11808
Duration: 4 hours 10 minutes

At the end of a long rambling preamble that seems to go round and round the houses in search of a destination, there is only enough time left for a fairly brief short story. How fortunate, then, that the tale is told by Somerset Maugham; possibly the very best short story writer Britain has ever produced.

However, this tale is as tragic as it is masterly nevertheless. Liza, young and attractive, vivacious and popular throughout the neighbourhood, could have had the world at her feet if only she had "played her cards right".

But people don't, do they? We have all had occasion to say of someone, "Why on Earth did he (or she) do that?" Not even the old philosophers can explain why the cat jumps this way or that, or why some of us seem deliberately to choose misery before happiness. And nor can Somerset Maugham, but in *Liza of Lambeth* he shows where unkind fate can lead and he brilliantly uses a drab and sordid parochial setting to shine a light on a universal trait of human nature.

Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

Robert Baillie of Dorking, Surrey served in the Royal Army Service Corps, 22 Armoured Brigade from 1940 to 1946. He served in North Africa, Italy and France. He avoided capture at Tobruk but suffered shrapnel wounds to his foot.

Henry Ellaway of Worthing, West Sussex served in the 53rd Surrey Battalion Home Guard from 1940 to 1944 leaving as a Corporal. In civilian life, he made scientific and industrial glass work.

Walter Fuller of Burgess Hill, West Sussex served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1947. He took part in the D-Day landings, the liberation of France and the allied advance through Germany. In civilian life he was a gardener.

Stanley Hall of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1958, leaving as a Leading Seaman. He served in the UK and West Indies, sailing on HMS *Sheffield*, HMS *Boxer*, HMS *Vincent* and was on HMS *Albion* during the Suez Crisis.

Gerald Lloyd of Birmingham, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946. Based in the UK, he specialised as an armourer.

Gordon MacDonald of Formby, Liverpool served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1943. He served in the UK, India and USA. In civilian life, he worked at Mersey Dock and Harbour Board.

George Messenger of Salterbeck, Workington, Cumbria served in the Royal Military Police

from 1951 to 1953 leaving as a Corporal. He served in Malaysia, Singapore and the Cayman Islands. As a civilian, he was a joiner in a steelworks.

Ivor Mylan of Eastney, Hampshire served in the Royal Corps of Signals in the UK and Germany from 1959 to 1965.

John Parr of Macclesfield, Cheshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946. He served in the UK and Middle East. In civilian life, he worked for the Gas Board.

Arthur Pettifor of Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946. He was a Fitter Armourer and was deployed to Normandy, following the advancing armies as they liberated Europe.

George Plumb of King's Lynn, Norfolk served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1946. He served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Greece, France, Holland and Germany. He was involved with the St Nazaire raid and was later deployed with the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) to attack the German supply chain.

Jack Priest of Mill Hill, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946. He qualified as an engine fitter and left as a Corporal. In civilian life, he worked for the Bank of England and used to enjoy flying a Tobago (TB10).

David Raybould of Tipton, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952. He was a driving instructor before he retired.

Walter Skinner of Boston, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949. He specialised as a telephonist and in civilian life joined the GPO, later British Telecom.

Frederick Smith of Blyth, Northumberland served in the Durham Light Infantry from 1938 to 1947 leaving as a Company Sergeant Major. He later worked for the MOD at Aldermaston.

Margaret Voce of Fareham, Hampshire served with the Women's Royal Naval Service. She trained as an Air Mechanic Engineer and worked on Swordfish, Skua, Blenheim Bombers, Thunderbolts, Hillcats and Wildcats. She served with the Fleet Air Arm from June 1943 to May 1946, leaving as a Leading Wren.

Ben Waters of Puriton, Bridgwater, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946 leaving as a Corporal. He served in the UK, Middle East and Italy. In civilian life he was involved in brickmaking.

William Whitehouse of West Bromwich, West Midlands served in the Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) from 1946 to 1948. Posted to a Prisoner of War camp in Essex, he also spent time with the Polish section of the Pioneer Corps. In civilian life, he conducted research into Free Will and General Philosophy.

Desmond Whitley of Cambridge served in the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1948. He served in the UK, Egypt, Palestine and Kenya. In civilian life, he worked with gas heating appliances.

When is a Computer Quiz like a Game of Football?

by Ray Hazan

IT WAS INTERESTING to learn that a St Dunstaner had recently undergone surgery in Brighton when a slice of his eye tooth had been used to restore a degree of his sight. One of the Computer Club attendees went the whole hog and had a molar extracted whilst attending the two day get-together on October 8th-9th – he remains as blind as a bat!

Those present were pleased to welcome some 'locals' and those attending a computer-handling course. The gathering really is open to everyone and the club has no formal subscription or membership. The only trial is that of piecing together acronyms and jargon, which we strive to limit! We missed a regular, Bill Shea, and look forward to his presence next time. The first day got off to a good start with a long and cherished friend Brad Crawshaw. Questions concerning the relevant merits of one make over another, cheap ink cartridges, broadband, firewalls and viruses, RAM, ROM and Bluetooth were all flung at him, but he flinched not!

A few years ago, St Dunstaner Terry Bullingham demonstrated on BBC TV's *Tomorrow's World*, a high tech navigation system using GPS (Global Positioning System) which gave a spoken indication of where the blind user was to within one metre. It was a pilot project and not even a rough cost could be envisaged. Now, Peter Bradburn of Sight & Sound brought along the Victor Trekker. This is a tiny computer, satellite

receiver, battery pack and speaker, all mounted on a web harness. Lightweight and remarkably unobtrusive, it will tell you where you are. Future versions will enable you to plan a route beforehand either on foot or by car. This is not a comprehensive description of all the functions available. The £1,225 price may sound expensive, but even compared to systems available to sighted people, it is reasonable. The Training and Rehabilitation department is currently evaluating the system.

Later that afternoon, the Elite rubbed shoulders with the Imp. Once again, Iki of CVIP Ltd, accompanied by his wife, Gabrielle joined us. The Elite is a computer, which takes up no more area than a keyboard. It is obviously thicker, but only just, and contains all the usual devices, such as CD drive, modem and connecting ports that you would find on a tower unit. The keys are very positive and it feels a sturdy unit. We have seen the Imp Voice Diary before. This is a must for keeping telephone numbers, diary appointments and general notes. The Voila labeller has also been previously described.

We were so engrossed in chatting after the buffet supper that we only just made it to the bar before closing time! Now anyone willing to forgo drinking time has to be classed an enthusiast!

I am not sure where Thursday morning went, but it was suddenly lunchtime and demonstrations of Word Web, a dictionary, as well as hints on using the spelling checker had whizzed by! We finished off with a quiz organised by the IT training team. Gaye Staff's wholehearted interest in football came through in the questions, which were very difficult but entertaining and instructive; "What is the link between Tottenham Hotspur and Amstrad?" to quote but one question. Our thanks to Janis, Sylvia, Gaye and Donna for all their help and input.

It became clear that everyone has a hint, telephone number, useful web site, best-place-to-buy, etc. There is no better place to advertise this knowledge and help your friends than by posting it on the St Dunstan's mailing list. To join the list, send an e-mail, without any subject or content to:

vi-std-subscribe@topica.com

You will receive an e-mail in reply, which you just return (control-R, followed by alt-S) and you are on the list. To send an e-mail to the list, just write it to the above address omitting the '-subscribe'.

Our thanks to all who attended and helped. Please book in for the next meeting on Wednesday/Thursday March 3rd-4th 2004.

Some useful numbers:
Sight & Sound 0845 634 7979 (local call rate)
CVIP 020 8420 1388
www.mobileaccessibility.com



St Dunstaners Frank Smith, John Hopkins, Iain Millard, Jackie Pryor, Phil Dobson and Eric Church after a dramatic final in the Pairs Bowling Tournament at Ovingdean.

Falls and flu make bowls rough rolling

THE WINTER BOWLING Tournament was held at Ovingdean from October 24th to November 7th, but it was disrupted by falls and flu. We were pleased to welcome Arthur Thomson and his wife Doris, but unfortunately he was unable to participate in all the games as was our old friend Jesse Mills and David Humphrey who had a bad fall and damaged his knee. We wish them well.

We are sorry that a number of players "fell" to the latest virus – including myself – and no one was missed more than our callers Lillian and Brian James who were away the last four days. Once again, Frank Smith was his brilliant self - doing everything except sweeping the carpet and to his first lieutenant (RN!) Jackie Pryor - many thanks! The wives rallied round Marjorie Mills, supplying us with tea and coffee which was greatly appreciated and to the staff who acted as "pushers" on the green. Joan would like to thank you all for being supportive when games had to be altered and for the beautiful flowers she received.

Owing to the number of games which had to be cancelled we were able to devote the last day to fun-fours competition in which the wives played a part.

RESULTS

SINGLES Winner: Syd Wisdom Runner-up: Frank Smith

PAIRS Winners: Eric Church and Phil Dobson
Runners-up: Frank Smith and John Hopkins

TRIPLES Winners: Jackie Pryor, Eric Church and Bert Brantingham. Runners-up: Bob Osborne, Frank Smith and Ted Arnold

FUN-FOURS Cathy Sullivan, Dennis Busby, Mansel Lewis and Bert Brantingham

Looking forward to seeing you in March. So book in at Ovingdean soon. Wishing you all a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. God bless!

Bob Osborne, Chairman

Christmas '39

I crunched along through wintry air,
Beneath the moon's sad lonely stare,
And centured past the silent gun,
Along that field where war had come.
Rallied against the demon Mars,
And held my face against the stars,
Snow clouds blew up from the south,
But I thought of you and your soft warm mouth,
Kick my feet with ache for you,
And gently wondered if you knew.
Shivered 'neath my great coat warm.
And held my heart against the storm,
With duty done across the floor,
I tiptoed to my bed of straw,
And pulled the blankets round my face,
To shut away that barren place,
Heard I then the village bell,
And felt again that magic spell,
Of childhood joy for Christmas morn,
And held my dreams against the dawn.

Frank Tinsley

I like to chat around the world

Ray Hazan, G0PQQ, takes to the air in St Dunstan's radio shack

WHAT IS CHEAPER than the Internet; confirms your message has arrived; copes with all languages; entertains, informs and challenges? Amateur radio does all of that and more!

The Society is grateful for being given the opportunity to make greater use of the 'shack' on the top floor behind the kitchens at Ovingdean. Thanks to many donors and volunteers, the shack contains several radio sets, a superb antenna system and can really be the centre of a worldwide universe, as far as amateur radio is concerned.

Following a committee meeting on the Friday evening (October 10th), members gathered for a general meeting on Saturday morning. We were very sorry that the Chairman, Bill Shea G4AUJ was unable to be present – a rare occurrence.

But the real meat is getting the sets vibrating and humming with either Morse or voice and this continued ceaselessly from then on, including the following week, when Ted John, G3SEJ, who is Club Secretary and Tom Frankland G4INM manned the station so that St Dunstan's callsign G3STD is not forgotten on the airwaves.

A very pleasant dinner was held in the Winter Garden on Saturday evening. The society's President, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN, accompanied by his wife Jenny were present, as well as Dick and Anne Lake. Also in attendance was our faithful trio Freeman, Hardy and Willis (alias Freeman, Hoolihan and Wilson) who maintain arials and anything technical in the shack. The gathering was further enhanced by the presence of widows Rose, Jane, Elsie and Gwen.

At the dinner, the G3MOW Trophy was presented to the person considered to have contributed most to the society during 2003. Ray Castle, Maintenance Supervisor at Ovingdean has had a busy time re-organising doors and walls in and around the shack, and has refurbished cupboards and decoration at the same time and is always willing to help us.

On the Tuesday, Ted and Tom, with Eddie Wilson, visited the Newhaven Fort Museum, which has its own amateur radio station, containing many



The Chairman presents Maintenance Supervisor Ray Castle with the G30MOW Trophy for his support during the last year.

interesting items of radio equipment from the past (military & civilian). This is still under construction by willing members of the Worthing District Amateur Radio Club, and plans are in hand for it to be officially opened next year. Throughout the week, contacts were made with enthusiasts the world over and we are grateful to those who then complete and send off the cards confirming the contact. This can lead to very colourful walls covered with these 'postcards'.

It was a very satisfying few days and we were pleased to have two possible new members, who were just 'listening' around. The requirements for obtaining a transmitting licence have been considerably lowered. So why not join in and widen your conversation to a worldwide audience?

The next meeting of the Society will be held from March 5th-11th 2004.

Ten Answers

Answers from page 11.

- 1) Ice hockey; 2) *The Observer*;
- 3) Harold Macmillan; 4) *Mary had a little lamb*;
- 5) *Peter Pan*; 6) India; 7) Swiss; 8) The safety razor; 9) Model T; 10) *Mary Celeste*.

St Dunstan's Archers polish up their skills at the World Conker Championship

CONKER-ER OF THE WORLD!

On October 12th, four St Dunstan's archers were invited to the World Conker Championships in Ashton near Peterborough. This is an annual event which attracts over 5,000 people and grows every year. Participants came from such countries as Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Norway and America to name but a few. So while the archers were drawing their bows and taking aim, many of those assembled were stringing up their conkers and swinging at their opponents with a 49-er.

The reason for the World Championships inviting the four archers, David Poyner, John Lilley, Nigel Whiteley and Clive Jones, was that all monies raised from the Championships go towards sports for the visually

Clive Jones reports

impaired. St Dunstan's Archery Club, benefited from such donations for the Buggy Fund for which David Poyner has been single-handedly fund-raising.

The day was a huge success not only for the Archers who shot and invited people young and old to try archery and to realise that people who are blind can still do such an activity. Also the name of St Dunstan's was promoted not only by the archers and coaches but by people who had never heard about St Dunstan's. They were amazed by what the archers could do and what St Dunstan's does and stands for.

All thanks go to the Championship Committee for fund-raising, Mrs Dulcie Hornsby and Mr Richard Howard. All Spotters and Coaches of St Dunstan's, Sue Habgood, Colin Dickinson and Sue Lilley and Alan Seager, the driver, who were excellent, not only for the Archers but for the organisation, with their friendly approach and fine attitude they were the core of an excellent working team.

It was mentioned that the Fund-raising committee from the championships, would like St Dunstan's Archers back next year, and I am sure that not only the commitment of the Archery Club, and the Conker Championships, the name and well being of St Dunstan's would be spread worldwide.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Tommi on March 7th. He is the great-grandson of Trevor and Joan Phillips of Paignton, Devon.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Dennis and Olwen Landin of Rhyl, Denbigshire on November 13th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Lawrence and Lillian Wilcox-Howell of Brighton who celebrated 61 years of marriage on October 24th.

George and Ann Taylor who celebrated 63 years of marriage on November 9th.

George and Ada Routledge of Carnforth, Lancashire who celebrated 70 years of marriage on November 11th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Bridget Nolan of Frodsham, Cheshire on May 26th. She was the widow of *George Nolan*.

Bruce Howell of Colindale, London on October 13th. He was the son of late St Dunstaner *Alfred Howell*.

Margaret Templeman of Buckley, Flintshire on October 25th. She was the widow of *Frank Templeman*.

Shiela Claxton of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, widow of *Thomas Claxton*, on October 27th.

Our sympathy goes to their family and friends.

IN MEMORY

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

Victor Thomson

Royal Scots

Victor William Ulster Thomson of Liverpool, Merseyside died on October 11th, aged 87. He enlisted with the Royal Scots in 1933 and served in India from 1935 to 1937. He was then posted to Hong Kong where he was stationed when it fell to the Japanese in 1941. He was held as a POW in Shamshuipo Camp until October 1942 when he and other prisoners were shipped on the *Lisbon Maru* to Japan. Having experienced malnutrition, trauma and brutality, he was liberated in 1945. Promoted to Corporal, he left the Army in 1947. In civilian life, he worked for the Post Office. His interests included boxing, painting, and clay modelling. Our sympathy goes to his widow Alice, sons Victor, Thomas, Andrew and Robin and all members of the family.

Charles Keens

Royal Army Service Corps

Charles William Keens of Broadstairs, Kent died on October 17th, aged 89. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946. Deployed to France, he was evacuated at Dunkirk and then sent to join the 8th Army in North Africa. He was involved with the siege of Tobruk, and El Alamein. After leaving the service he worked for ESSO. A keen sportsman, he enjoyed athletics, tennis, badminton, squash and bowls. Our sympathy goes to his widow Margaret, their son and all of the family.

Kenneth Noble

Royal Navy

Kenneth Edward Noble of Hailsham, East Sussex died on October 19th, aged 76. He served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948 as a Stoker Mechanic. In civilian life, he worked for Prudential Insurance until his sight failed. He then retrained as a telephonist. As a young man he was interested in tennis and cricket and developed a liking for gardening. Our sympathy goes to his sister Beryl and all other members of the family.

Alfred Brewer

Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry

Alfred Percival Brewer of Brighton died on October 30th, aged 84. He served in the 4th Battalion Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry from 1939 to 1946. A member of the TA, he was called up and deployed to France. Taken prisoner during the retreat to Dunkirk, he spent three years as a Prisoner of War in Poland. Having originally worked as a cabinetmaker, he later joined Cowley car factory as a carpenter and maintenance man. He used to play the clarinet and enjoyed classical music. Our sympathy goes to his daughters and all other members of the family.

Major Patrick Burke

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Major Patrick Burke of Stranraer, Wigtownshire, Scotland died on October 31st, aged 72. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1994. He joined the Army in 1946 and later qualified as a Technical Engineer. A Member of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers, he was later commissioned and served throughout the world with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He was invalided out in 1975. Our sympathy goes to his son, daughters and all other members of the family.

Frank Howse

Royal Artillery

Frank Henry Howse of Gravesend, Kent died on November 1st, aged 82. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1944. He worked as a labourer before joining the Royal Artillery in 1940. Posted to the 81st Anti-Tank Regiment, he was blinded by mortar fire in Anzio in 1944. After training at St Dunstan's, he became a capstan operator but later retrained as a telephonist. Our sympathy goes to his son David and all members of the family.

Frederick Broomfield

Royal Armoured Corps

Frederick James Broomfield of Woking, Surrey died on November 7th, aged 87. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1946. Originally a painter and riveter, he joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1939. While serving as a Trooper, he suffered gunshot wounds to his face in Italy in September 1943 and was discharged the following year. He had an interest in carpentry and handicrafts. Our sympathy goes to his daughters and all other members of the family.



Custom Christmas cards carry a crafted message from St Dunstaners

Festive artwork makes a grand exhibition

VISITORS TO THE Annexe at St Dunstan's Ovingdean will find a unique selection of Christmas cards on show during the final month of this year. They arrived on the walls around the Swimming Pool area through the ingenuity and industrious spirit of an artistically-minded group of St Dunstaners rather than through the usual agency of our beleaguered postal services.

The 35 images being exhibited are familiar fare for this time of year - there are reindeer, candles, doves of peace, penguins, holly, Christmas trees, bells, puddings, snowmen, ships, wisemen and stars. Some have been painted, some use montage or mosaic techniques, while others have been crafted from tactile materials such as crushed tissue paper or felt with contrasting textures.

All of them belie the factor that unites the artists who have worked on this project, their blindness. Each card is a unique representation of the artistic skills of the St Dunstaners using the facilities of the Craft Workshop, to say nothing of their determination in persevering with the work.

Like the Thai Elephant project, earlier this year, the Christmas cards have already drawn praise from visitors to St Dunstan's. Of course, tradition dictates that they should remain on the walls for all 12 days of Christmas so there should be ample time to check the display.



From left to right, the cards are by the following St Dunstaners. First Row: Wallace Burnett-Smith, Tony Newland, Norman Perry, and two by Ron Everitt. Second Row: Frank Swindell, Dorothy Wright, Ron Utton, Alice Gimbere, Reg Paxman. Third Row: Patrick Feeney, Maurice Bowley, Michael Lennon, Albert Serdet and Marjorie Ball.



Fourth Row: Dave Humphrey, Alice Gimbere, Bill Mephram, Norman Wagstaff, Dorothy Wright. Fifth Row: Two cards by Frank Tinsley and two by Cliff Ford, Norman Walbridge.



Sixth Row: James Gault, Eddie O'Brien, Harry Bell, Dave Thomas, Ron Tingay. Seventh Row: Alice Gimbere, two by Joyce Charlton, Marjorie Ball and Morris Dixon.