

March 2004

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ST DUNSTAN'S Review



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

March 2004

Cover story:

Steve Nixon books in! To see again!

St Dunstaner Steve Nixon had some help from his old base during a marathon signing session of his autobiography. **Full report on page 14.**



Speaker on ship

Services speaker Nigel Whiteley (pictured left) introduced the work of St Dunstan's to medics on HMS Ark Royal. **Full details are on page 22**, while Gog and Magog were on hand for a reunion with an old shipmate once Nigel got back on dry land **on page 10.**

Noticeboard starting on Page 4:

Dates and diaries, information and advice, challenges and fun suggestions!

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

St Dunstaner Lionel James submitted himself to the surgeon's knife to restore his sight! How did it turn out? **Details on page 23.**

Thrills on the piste!

Ray Hazan was back on his skis in January. **Slide over to page 16 for the full story!**

Also:

Pendleton's Pantry **page 24**

Green Room guide! **page 28**

Scribes united! **page 29**

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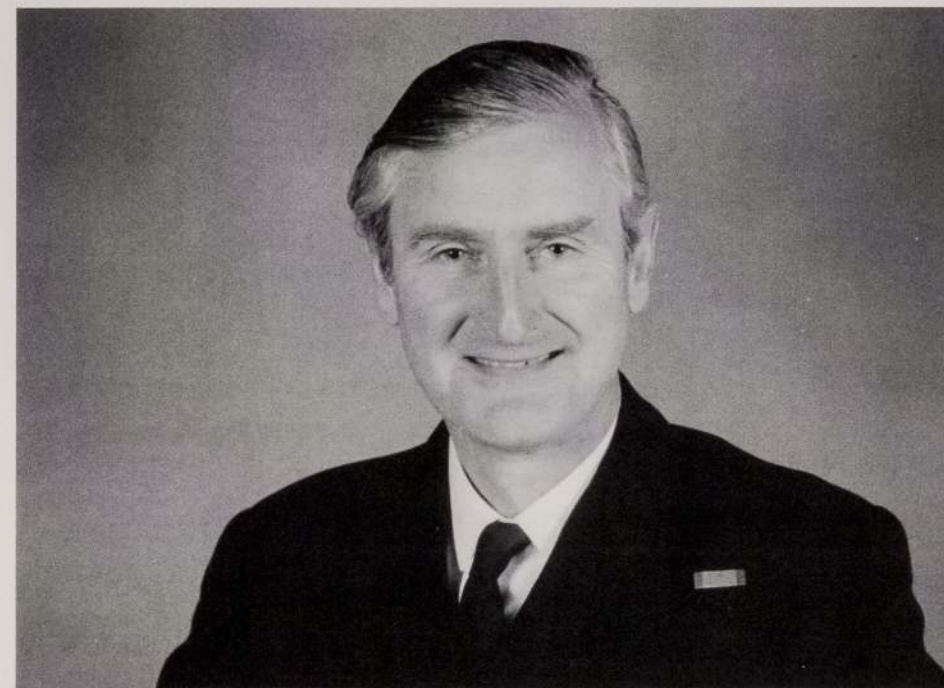
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Editor: Ray Hazan
E-mail: ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk
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From the Chairman



I HAVE EXPRESSED our sincere thanks to Air Chief Marshal Sir John Gingell, GBE, KCB, KCVO who has retired from St Dunstan's Council. Sir John became a Trustee in 1992 and his knowledge, experience, humour and concern for the welfare of St Dunstaners and their widows has been immensely valuable. I am pleased to report that he will remain President of the Blind/Handless and Ex-Prisoners of War groups.

The reunion season starts shortly and I am very glad that attendance is such that two new venues have been created for this year, namely Bristol and Bournemouth. I hope the support that you have given to reunions in the last two years will continue and those attending will take the opportunity to make new friends and renew former acquaintances. There will be a number of staff from Harcourt Street attending on each occasion, so please take the opportunity to meet and get to know them. If you have any queries or problems, do make use of the occasion.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

ST DUNSTAN'S Calendar

Computer Club (I)	March 3rd-4th
Amateur Radio	March 5th-11th
Indoor Bowling	March 5th
Writers' Forum	March 6th
Indoor Bowling	March 8th
Fishing Club (I)	March 8th-10th
Bowling Club (I)	March 12th-26th
Derby Reunion	March 24th
Masonic Weekend	March 27th-28th
Brighton Reunion (I)	March 31st
Indoor Bowling	April 2nd
Writers' Forum	April 3rd
Indoor Bowling	April 7th
Norwich Reunion	April 14th
Fishing Club (II)	April 19th-23rd
Ex-POW Reunion	April 23rd-26th
London Reunion	April 28th
Writers' Forum	May 1st
Football Fundraiser	May 2nd
Gardening Week	May 3rd-10th
Exeter Reunion	May 5th
Handless Reunion	May 5th-11th
Liverpool Reunion	May 11th
Blackpool Reunion	May 12th
Exercise Iron Man	May 12th
Fishing Club (III)	May 17th-19th
Newcastle Reunion	May 18th
Leeds Reunion	May 19th
Bournemouth Reunion	May 26th
Edinburgh Reunion	May 26th
Brighton Reunion (II)	June 2nd

Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

RIB RIDERS WANTED

LOOK TO THE STARS, SPEED ON THE SEA: St Dunstan's is now the proud owner of a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) named *Ad Astra*, purchased with funds raised by RAF Uxbridge.

The boat will be used for activities such as day trips, expeditions, water-skiing and diving, run by the Sports and Recreation department, as well as being used at various public relations and fundraising events.

All being well, we are looking to run our first trips around Easter time. So, if anyone is interested in taking part in any of these activities or just coming along for a ride, please contact Louise Timms (Sports and Recreation Supervisor) at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 01273 307811 for further information.

SUMMER AT HMS SULTAN

CALLING ALL CAMPERS: The 60th Lee on Solent Summer Camp 2004, with its usual mix of activities and a few surprises, will be held at HMS *Sultan* from Friday, July 30th to Saturday, August 7th.

Any St Dunstaner wishing to attend should contact Dave Burrows by May 1st. He can be contacted by letter at 18 Portsmouth Road, Lee on the Solent, Hampshire PO13 9AG, by telephone on 02392 550532, or by e-mail at DAVEBURROWS808@aol.com.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

DRAW ON TICKET ALLOCATION: Trooping the Colour will take place in June. It is possible that St Dunstan's will be allocated tickets. Any St Dunstaner or Gubbay Trust Beneficiary wishing to go should send their name and address to Marion Lurot, St Dunstan's 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by May 10th. A draw will determine the final allocation of tickets. Those attending will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses.

ACTIVITY WEEK 2004

ADVENTURE IN AUGUST: This year's Activities week will be commencing on August 16th and will finish on the 20th. Anyone who may be interested please contact the Sports and Recreation department on 01273 307811 as soon as possible.

A DATE TO REMEMBER

LARGE PRINT DIARIES FOR £5: These A4 size, large-print diaries come with weeks featured across two spacious pages with lots of room for notes. Reduced in price to £5.00, they can be ordered from Siân Roberts, Fundraising and Communications, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's. If you have any queries please contact Siân on 020 7616 7958.

KEEPING UP OUR STANDARDS

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CARE STANDARDS COMMISSION INSPECTION OF ST DUNSTAN'S OIVINGDEAN ON DECEMBER 15TH 2003: We have received the results of St Dunstan's Inspection by the National Care Standards Commission. A brief summary follows, so that St Dunstaners and their families are aware of the findings and the implications of these for St Dunstaners.

Any St Dunstaner who is considering coming into Ovingdean and would like a copy of the report in full should ring myself, Jackie Greer, Head of Care on 01273 307811. I will be pleased to post you a copy or answer any questions. The full report is also available on St Dunstan's website at www.st-dunstans.org.uk under Nursing and Residential Care.

There are a total of 38 standards set by the Commission and Homes are required to meet these standards in order to provide care services in general. The standards cover various areas and activities within the Home.

Standards 1-6 cover all information, documentation etc. that is given to St Dunstaners prior to their permanent admission to Ovingdean. Standards 7-10 cover health and personal care of our service users or St Dunstaners. Standards 12-15 cover daily life and social activities. Standards 16-18 cover complaints, legal rights of St Dunstaners and protection from abuse. Standards 19-26 cover the premises, as in the number of bedrooms, size of rooms, number of toilets available, facilities available, heating, lighting, cleanliness etc. Standards 27-30 cover staffing requirements to meet our clients' needs. Standards 32-38 cover management and administration of the Home.

Scores available are from 1-4. A score of 1 indicates that the standard is not being met. A score of 2 indicates that there are minor shortfalls.

A score of 3 indicates that the standard is being met. A score of 4 indicates that the standard is exceeded and is therefore commendable.

The Inspectors have awarded a total of 24 score 3s therefore stating standards were met. Seven score 4s stating standards were therefore commendable. Two score 2 marks, indicating that there were minor shortfalls.

The areas marked as commendable were:

- the variety of activities that are offered within Ovingdean
- the amount of communal and private space available to St Dunstaners
- the toilet, bathing and washing facilities available
- the equipment that has been made available so that disabled people can easily access and utilise our services
- the high staffing levels that we have
- the high level of training that the staff have been given by the Charity
- the supervision and management of staff and the induction that they receive on commencing employment within the Home.

The minor shortfalls identified were: (a) That we needed to make this report more widely available to St Dunstaners who would be coming to stay on the care floors at Ovingdean. (b) That some clients were not happy with the food on offer. All of our menus are being reviewed by a dietitian who has put forward suggestions for healthy eating and appropriate choices for St Dunstaners.

Thus overall we consider this to be an excellent report and hopefully by addressing the two minor shortfalls the next one will be even better.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jackie Greer, RGN
Head of Care

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE 2004

STARTER'S ORDERS ON THE RACE OF THE YEAR: A record number of horses have been put forward for the 2004 Epsom Derby. How many will actually reach the gates on June 5th? Accordingly, the **Review** is once more opening its annual Derby Sweepstake. The draw is open to all St Dunstaners (be they residents of Ovingdean or hail from Land's End to John O'Groats), beneficiaries of the Diana Gubbay Trust, widows and widowers.

Tickets are 30p each and issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. The closing date is June 1st and the draw will be made that day.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and a stamped addressed envelope, to The Editor, Derby Sweepstake Department, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CYCLING AMONGST THE FLOWERS

TANDEM CHALLENGE: Anyone interested in taking part in the BOLD Tulip Tandem Marathon in Spalding, Lincolnshire on Saturday April 24th should e-mail Mary Clark on Maryeastwood101@aol.com or call 01205 366133 for an entry form and information brief. The 26 mile challenge has been run by Blind Outdoor Leisure Development for over 20 years.

There is also a shorter 10-15 mile event planned for visually impaired riders with additional disabilities. Trophies are presented in the evening and a hot three-course meal organised.

GYM OPENING TIMES

THE RIGHT TIME TO KEEP FIT: The Gymnasium opening hours listed in the February **Review** were half an hour out in one instance. We apologise for any confusion arising. The item should have read:

Gymnasium: Monday-Friday opening hours
9.30am-10.30am
11.00am-12.00pm
3.15pm-4.00pm

ON THE BALL AT BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION

HOLBY DOCS TACKLE RAF ON SEAGULL GROUND: St Dunstan's will be staging a celebrity football fundraiser at Brighton and Hove Albion's homeground, the Withdean Stadium on Sunday May 2nd. The event will be a family fun day with a range of entertainment. The match will see the Royal Air Force recruiting team take on a group of celebrity players that promises to include cast members of *Holby City* and *EastEnders*. For more details contact Anna Robinson, Head of Public Awareness on 020 7616 7927.

A CHANCE TO JOIN THE UPPER CHAMBER

NOMINATE YOUR CHOICE FOR THE HOUSE OF LORDS: Following a historic change to the way in which non-party-political members of the House of Lords are appointed, the Appointments Commission has the key role of recommending to Her Majesty The Queen the names of individuals they thought should be appointed on merit. The Commission encourages members of the public to nominate individuals who they think meet the criteria. A group of 15 peers have already joined the House of Lords in this fashion.

Details of the role of the Appointments Commission, its membership, code of practice and introductory information on the nomination process, criteria, and nomination forms can be found on their Bobby approved website at www.lordsappointments.gov.uk.

SUMMER SCHOOL IN BRISTOL

ART, MUSIC AND ARCHITECTURE: The University of Bristol's Centre for Access and Communication Studies has a series of residential courses for Visually Impaired Adults. Enthusiasm and an interest in the subject is all that is required. All course materials are available in accessible formats and the subjects are delivered by specialists in their field. Each student has their own sighted guide (either someone they know or a trained volunteer).

Subjects include *Form and Function: European Art and Architecture of the 1920s and 30s* (cost £275) from June 3rd to 6th; *The Art of Melody* (£390) from June 26th to July 2nd; and finally *The Influence of Europe? British Art in the 1920s & 30s* (£280) from October 28th to 31st. For more details of these courses, telephone Glynis Williamson at the University of Bristol on 0117 954 5710.

QAC SIGHT VILLAGE IS ON THE MOVE

NEW VENUE FOR VIP TECH SHOW: QAC Sight Village has outgrown its traditional base at Queen Alexandra College in Harborne, Birmingham. The 2004 show on July 13th-15th will find the event moving to the Clarendon Suites, a conference centre at Hagley Road, Birmingham. The event welcomes about 3,000 people each year, bringing together people from all over the world with an interest in technology and services connected to visual impairment. More details can be found at the event website www.qacsightvillage.org.uk or by writing to Ray Piggott, Queen Alexandra College, Court Oak Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 9TG. Tel: 0121 428 5050 or e-mail: ray@qac.ac.uk

ATHLETICS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

RUN FOR THE CUP: The Metro Games Athletics Championships 2004 will take place at Walthamstow Track & Pool, London E17 on Saturday June 26th (11.30am-5.30pm). There will be events for visually impaired athletes of all age groups, male and female. Those with additional disabilities are also welcome.

The Metro Games is organised jointly by the Metropolitan Sports & Social Club for the Visually Impaired and the London Sports Forum for the Disabled. Accommodation is available and there will be a buffet and disco.

There is a dedicated website on www.metroblindsport.org, but details and entry forms are also available from Alan Whetherly, London Sports Forum on 020 7354 8666, via e-mail at Alan@londonsportsforum.org.uk or by writing to him at London Sports Forum for Disabled People, Ground Floor, Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP.

ACCOMMODATION CHARGES

ANNUAL INCREASE: There will be a £1-a-day increase in Board and Accommodation charges at St Dunstan's Ovingdean from April 1st 2004. The new rates are as follows:

Nursing Care	£252.00 per week
Residential Care	£161.00 per week
Hotel Visitors	£154.00 per week.

Odd days will be charged at £36 on Nursing Care, £23 on Residential and £22 for Hotel Visitors. Children will still be free of charge under the age of 3 years, for those aged 3 to 14 years the rate has increased to £11.50 per night (or £80.50 per week).

SEA FISHING TRIPS

DATES TO HOOK ONTO: St Dunstan's Fishing Club has cast a handful of dates for sea-fishing trips this year:

Newhaven	March 8th-9th
Exmouth	April 19th-23rd
Eastbourne	May 17th-19th
Ilfracombe	June 14th-19th

The Fishing Club hope to be staying with the Royal Marines on the Exmouth and Ilfracombe trips, though this may depend on their deployments. Alternative hotel accommodation will be arranged if required. Other trips for the year are still in the planning stage.

There is an annual subscription for the club, £20 to cover hooks, weights, end tackle and other items.

For more details, contact:

Chairman	Fred Bentley	01273 302548
Secretary	Phil Dobson	01273 305352
Treasurer	Cliff Ford	01273 300723
Transport	Stan Bowers	01273 587379.

NEW REUNION DATES

ADDITIONAL ST DUNSTAN'S REUNIONS: Two new reunions have been added to the 2004 schedule. The Bournemouth Reunion will be held on May 26th, while the Bristol Reunion will take place on June 30th. Apart from meeting friends old and new, they will allow St Dunstaners to raise any matters with members of staff.

RADIO STATION FOR THE BLIND

SCOTLAND GAINS UNIQUE SERVICE: The first radio station in Europe aimed at people with sight problems started broadcasting from Glasgow in January. VIP ON AIR broadcasts via an audio internet channel and can be found on www.viponair.com. "VIP ON AIR breaks down the social isolation faced by blind and partially sighted people by providing quick and easy access to information," said Billy Watson, Acting Director of RNIB Scotland.

VIP ON AIR broadcasts are specially produced for listeners with sight problems. The programme schedule includes news and current affairs, discussions and phone-ins. There is a strong emphasis on eye health issues and services for people with sight problems. Magazine programmes, presented by blind presenters, focus on life skills such as cooking and DIY. Other coverage includes business, finance and sport.

The internet broadcasts are just the first step for VIP ON AIR which ultimately plans to broadcast on AM radio. The potential of storing content on digital radio is also being explored. Although it is being established to meet the needs of a Scottish audience it can be listened to anywhere in the world and it promises the opportunity to share the experiences of blind and partially sighted people in other countries.

NEW KEYBOARD AUDIO SOUNDS TUTORIAL

SOUND KNOWLEDGE: A new edition of *Audio Playing, Copying and Sound Editing from the Keyboard*, has been released. Edition 2 covers the new versions of Winamp 5.01, the CDEX 1.51 CD ripper and CD burner and the GoldWave 5.06 audio editing programs. Additionally, there is new and updated information on DVD drives and disks and types of compressed sound files, and a basic tutorial to get people started burning CDs with Nero Burning-ROM 5.5.

The new sounds tutorial costs £20 by e-mail as a plain text file or the same text file can be provided on floppy disk or CD for £22 pounds. A CD version of the tutorial plus copies of all of the main software covered in the tutorial is available for £25. To order, contact John Wilson on 0113 2575957 or e-mail jwjw@onetel.net.uk. Website: <http://web.onetel.net.uk/~fromthekeyboard>

RNIB PALM COURT HOTEL

VI FRIENDLY HOTEL: The RNIB Palm Court Hotel in Eastbourne East Sussex offers the opportunity to take holidays in an environment geared towards people with a visual impairment. Full and half board rates are available, with seasonal variations and special offers available. To check availability or to make a booking, telephone 01323 725811.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

COUNCIL COMPLAINTS: The Local Government Ombudsman operates an advice line on 0845 602 1983 (local rate).

COMMUNICATIONS REGULATOR WANTS AUDIO DESCRIPTION

DRAFT CODE ON PROVIDING 'TELEVISION ACCESS SERVICES': Ofcom, the UK's new communications industry regulator, has proposed a substantial increase in the amount of assistance to people who have difficulty seeing and hearing television programmes. In a draft code, they suggest that about 50 television channels should be required to provide subtitling, signing and audio description - known as television access services - to help people who cannot hear or see, or have difficulty with hearing or seeing, to enjoy television like everyone else.

Ofcom's Code, which has been prepared in accordance with the Communications Act 2003, would require TV channels to provide television access services if they achieve certain audience levels. Exemptions would be permitted if the cost was deemed unaffordable, or if technical difficulties made it impracticable to provide the services. The television channels would be required to meet interim targets rising progressively to meet statutory ten-year targets.

Consultation on the draft code closes on March 12th. Ofcom is seeking views on issues such as the level of audience which should trigger the provision of access services, the way in which affordability is assessed, and how best to ensure that services reach their intended audience.

The draft code is available online at www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current/pro_tv_access. It is also available on request in print, Braille, and audio from the Ofcom Contact Centre by telephoning 0845 456 3000 or e-mailing contact@ofcom.org.uk. Ofcom has replaced the Broadcasting Standards Commission, the Independent Television Commission, Oftel, the Radio Authority and the Radiocommunications Agency.

It strikes me...

with Gog and Magog



Gog hears that St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley left a lasting impression on a former shipmate! Acting Surgeon Lt Michael Farquharson-Roberts recalls being called over to another ship in the flotilla by Medic Whiteley, asking him to sign off some paperwork and perhaps have a beer before the flight back. However, on arrival Medic Whiteley asked him to examine a patient.

"As I did so, it became obvious that this chap was suffering from meningitis. I could see Nigel inch over to the cupboard and break open a pack of penicillin! He took two himself and threw me one! I've never forgotten that."

And, as Magog points out, drinking beer with penicillin is not something to be advised.

Nigel recently had a surprise reunion with his shipmate who is still serving with the Royal Navy. Surgeon Rear Admiral Michael Farquharson-Roberts, CBE, QHS (MA Lond), FRCS is the Senior Service's Medical Director General at HM Naval Base, Portsmouth.

Cliff listens out for the gold target!

Mark Brownlow reports

ON JANUARY 17th, Cliff Ford went to Wolverhampton to shoot in the National British Blind Championships. There were some 40 contestants from all parts of the country, some of whom were very good marksmen and women. This is one sport where both sexes shoot as equals.

Cliff met up with four friends from Chippenham: St Dunstaner Pat Sidnell, who was joined by Mike Curtis, Karen Price and Ian Clothier as their coach. They had a lovely time in the hotel and it was rather late before they retired that evening!

Cliff got up on Sunday to a very cold morning and was taken to the range by Ken Nash,



Cliff is presented with the Eley Cup for his shooting.

to whom he gives a big thank you! He shot in the Eley Cup and took Gold with scores of 95, 91, 93, 95, 94 and 93. Karen of Chippenham took the Bronze. Cliff would like to thank Tony Taylor for his assistance at the range and also to his daughter for taking him to his brother in Wolverhampton where he stayed before returning to Brighton having had a great weekend.

Good service applauded

ST DUNSTANER MORTON WILLIAMS of Llanelli has been honoured once more for his contribution to sport!

Having already been named Carmarthenshire's Sports Volunteer of the Year, he was then presented with the Kelly Evans Shield for Services to Sport at The Brin Isaac

Memorial Fund - Sports Personality of the Year Awards! Morton plays bowls with distinction, but has also encouraged other blind people to participate in fishing and other sports.

A delighted Morton was presented with his award by Boxing legend, John Conteh.

50 YEAR BADGE PRESENTATIONS

ST DUNSTAN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE badges continue to be presented to St Dunstaners whose personal victory over blindness has continued over 50 years or more. Recent badges have been issued to Royal Air Force St Dunstaner Joseph Harris of Tavistock, Devon who became a St Dunstaner in January 1954 and Sapper Allan Davis of Forestville, South Australia who became a St Dunstaner in February 1954. Details of further presentations will appear in future issues of **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**.

Well done, Julia!

Recently Commissioned at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Julia Symons is the granddaughter of Caroline Bulbrook of Downham Market, Norfolk and late St Dunstaner George Bulbrook. She joined the Royal Logistic Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant in January. After Welbeck, the Army's



Technical Sixth Form College, Julia gained an honours degree in Civil Engineering at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham. She has captained hockey and football teams at Welbeck and Sandhurst and has represented the Army at hockey tournaments at home and abroad playing for both the Army Ladies and Combined Services teams.

While studying with the Army she much travelled 24 year old has frequently backpacked around the globe. More recent trips have taken her up the Amazon and trekking in the Grand Canyon.

"I have been very lucky and had some wonderful opportunities to pursue my love of sport and travel," said Julia. Her next expedition promises to offer an insight into the people and culture of India.

Ten questions on...

Man's Best Friend

Harry Beevers takes us on a canine canter

- 1) Which is the smallest breed of dog in the world and gets its name from a state in Mexico?
- 2) In which famous book and subsequent 1939 film does the character Dorothy Gale have a pet dog named Toto?
- 3) Descended from the camp dogs which followed Roman armies, which muscular working dog with short black hair and tan markings on the head, chest and legs, takes its name from a small town in South-West Germany?
- 4) In a famous song, who had dogs named Ruby, Ranter, Ringwood, Bellman and True?
- 5) Which breed is said to have the most sensitive nose for tracking scent?
- 6) Which is the national dog of France?
- 7) In which city did the dog known as Greyfriars Bobby keep his legendary vigil over his master's grave?
- 8) Originally bred by a Devonshire clergyman, which dog was recognised by the Kennel Club in 1990 and shares its name with a current Gloucestershire and former England cricket test match wicket-keeper?
- 9) What have the following breeds of dog particularly in common, Pekinese, Standard Poodle, Basenji, Irish Setter, Welsh Terrier, Yorkshire Terrier and Cocker Spaniel?
- 10) How did Susan become a canine first on April 21st 1944?

Answers on page 30.

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.

Lake break was just the ticket!

Recently Lindsay and I stayed at the Windermere Manor Hotel in the Lake District. This hotel is run by Action for Blind People. The first impression is of a very grand place set in luxurious grounds. Inside we were not disappointed. The rooms had an information pack in print, Braille or audio tape, a portable radio/CD/tape player and also a liquid level indicator. Each room had a TV, but also there was a TV and video with audio described films available.

The lounge had tactile games like Monopoly, Cluedo, playing cards, cribbage and dominoes. The hotel also had a swimming pool, gym, sauna

and solarium. For guide dogs, there are spending areas, a run and grooming room. Beds are available and food for the dog can be ordered in advance. The staff were very helpful and the food for us was superb, with menus in Braille as well as print.

The hotel organise activities such as tandem cycling, walking, sailing, canoeing and theme breaks. If a group fancy a self-catering break there is a four-bedroom lodge in the grounds for hire.

For those wishing to travel by train, they will arrange to pick you up. As to price, very

reasonable, £33 per person for dinner, bed and breakfast. This rate is for visually impaired people and their guests. We will certainly go again.

**David Poyner,
Sale, Manchester**

■ Anyone wishing to follow David and Lindsay's example can contact Windermere Manor Hotel on 0845 6030051 (local call rate for reservations and information), fax them on 01539 448397, write to Windermere Manor, Rayrigg Road, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1ES or check details on the Action for Blind People website on www.afbp.org/hotels/windermere.

CD works a treat

I have just received my first CD **Review** and have been overjoyed at the convenience. The readers must be congratulated on the clarity and diction which made it so enjoyable. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this extra treat.

**Doris Ward-Best,
Totnes, Devon**

Thank you all for best wishes on anniversary

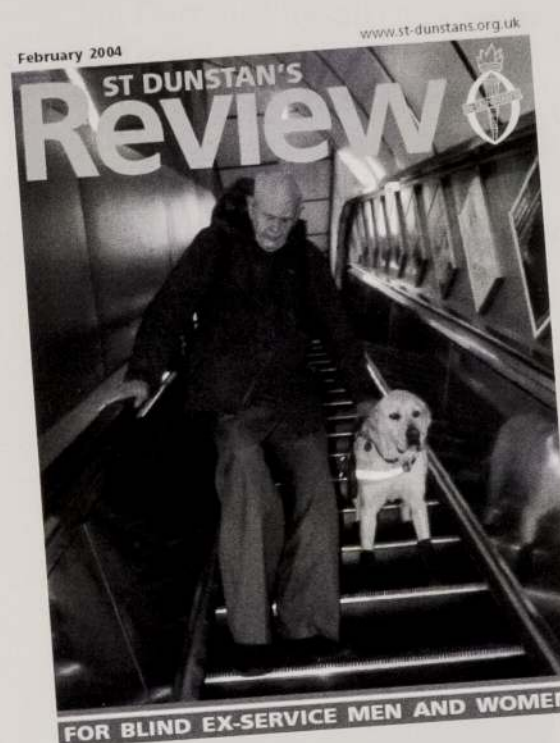
Dorothy and I would like to say thank you all for the lovely bouquet of flowers sent to celebrate our 62nd wedding anniversary. Also thank you for the letter of congratulations from the Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN which we appreciate very much.

**Bernard and Dorothy Pitcher,
Bridgwater, Somerset**

We would like to thank the Chairman and members of St Dunstan's for their congratulations, good wishes and the beautiful bouquet of flowers sent to us on our recent Diamond anniversary. It was a day made very special for us by family and good friends.

**Veronica and Maurice Mathe,
Bognor Regis, West Sussex**

Wot! No name tag for Chad

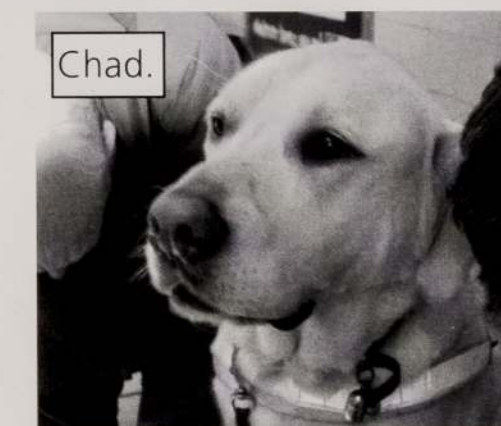


It's a fair collar, guv! Chad was Mike's guiding influence on the escalator.

How could you do this to me? We have been introduced on more than one occasion. This was almost my moment of glory, pictured with my mate Mike on Underground escalator on the cover of the February edition of the **Review** wearing my new boots. However, all the written content refers to a guide called 'Teddy' who is completely unknown in guides' circles. My name is CHAD and I am proud to be the friend and companion of Mike Tetley. I am a very modest guide, but any chance of a two-page spread just on me in the next edition?

**Chad,
St Albans, Herts**

■ Sorry Chad! We seem to have experienced a moment of deaf reporter syndrome last issue. While we can't manage a double page spread we are happy to acknowledge that you were the pioneering "dog-in-boots" and like another fellow known for treading the streets of London, it is your turn again!



Hoping for a change of attitude

Dennis and myself were staying at Ovingdean recently, as he was playing in the bowl's tournament. I had occasion to travel into Brighton on the St Dunstan's bus and was quite appalled by the behaviour of several youths who thought that it was hilarious to bang on the bus window, covering their eyes, mocking the people inside.

The driver Keith was very angry and upset. He told me later that he felt like getting out and hitting them, but of course he couldn't, although he had spent a restless night thinking about the incident.

I remonstrated with the youths, and they had the grace to apologise and looked very shameful. Probably it was just a thoughtless incident which I trust won't be repeated. This inspired me to write this small piece of poetry.

THOUGHTLESS

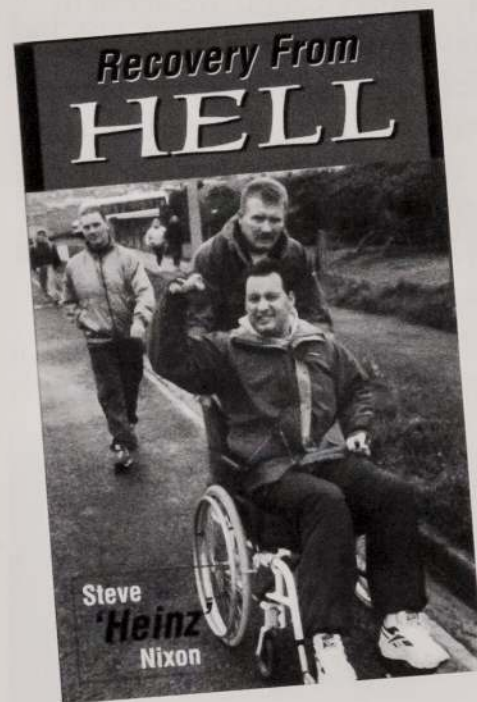
I'm not known as being weak,
So I just had to speak,
For I thought that it was really unkind,
When youths banged on the bus,
And mocked at people inside who were blind.

I was walking away,
Near the end of the day,
But went back and made a great fuss,
In anger, just spoke my mind
To those youths, who had banged on the bus.

They fought in a war, for you to be free,
So I do trust that blind, you never will be,
Hope your attitudes changed,
For you should be ashamed,
And feel proud of those men on the bus.

**Betty Carroll-Busby,
Willerby, East Yorkshire**

The long road back!



His body smashed by a speeding truck, Steve Nixon was not expected to live – but 13 years later he has told the tale of his own victory over blindness and the horrific injuries that befell him

Simon Rogers reports

book. The project has taken Steve over two years to complete as he painstakingly persevered in typing the manuscript with one finger.



Steve Nixon with SSgt James Moody who performed the life-saving emergency tracheotomy in 1991.

Watson and Ray Hazan. Messages of support came from another two Steves, Pendleton and Sparkes.

An ebullient Steve found himself much in demand. After a few words and a glass of champagne, it was two-and-a-half hours before he could stop

Steve tells his own story, his time in the Royal Marines and the fate that befell him. He also includes interviews with fellow St Dunstaners who have advised or inspired him during his recovery. The foreword is written by St Dunstan's Trustee Major General Keeling who has followed Steve's welfare since he was injured.

Welfare Officer Sue Prior was at the launch, as were St Dunstaners Tom Roddy, Colin Williamson, Tony

ANYONE WHO WAS in Spring's Gym on January 24th would have to agree, St Dunstaner Steve Nixon was the man of the moment! He was celebrating the launch of his autobiography - an achievement as demanding as anything he has attempted since becoming a St Dunstaner.

A crowd of supporters surrendered their Saturday afternoon to meet our Sunderland St Dunstaner at his local health club and buy a copy of his self-published



Just the start of the queue! St Dunstaner Steve Nixon was signing for two-and-a-half hours!

signing books and relax. The people just kept coming and Unit Sgt Mjr Simon Driver and Sgt Darren Whysall (who came up from Steve's old unit, RMR Tyne) kept a steady flow of books running under his pen.

Back in 1991, Steve's expectations looked grim! He was serving with 3 Commando Brigade in Northern Iraq during Operation Safe Haven. They were helping Kurds return home after the turmoil of the invasion of Kuwait.

Stepping out of a Land-Rover, Steve was hit by a speeding four-tonne truck. Thrown into the air, he landed 200 yards away in a broken heap. His Oppo flagged down an ambulance and its driver SSgt Jimmy Moody took the decision to carry out an emergency tracheotomy, an action that saved Steve's life!

Steve still wasn't out of the woods. It took several attempts to find proper medical care and once evacuated to an American Hospital in Germany, he was not expected to survive. For 14-weeks he lay in a coma! When he woke, the prognosis had not changed by much. Like a rag doll, he couldn't walk and head injuries had all but robbed him of the power of speech. Doctors predicted that he would be like a vegetable for the rest of his life.

However, this wasn't the end. Steve became a St Dunstaner in 1992 and his rehabilitation began in earnest. Anyone who recalls the shattered 21-year-



Steve Nixon during the launch of his autobiography.

old who arrived at Ovingdean will realise how many obstacles he has overcome. It has been a long haul, but Steve has carried the battle with him, determined to break through all barriers. First, he defied the prediction that he would be confined to a wheelchair. He might need a cane for support, but Steve walks again!

He has taken on several demanding challenges over the years. He joined other Royal Marine St Dunstaners for an epic "wheelchair push" and has twice taken part in the London to Brighton Bicycle Ride, cycling in tandem with St Dunstan's staff members.

Steve also strives to improve his speech and has taken classes to learn Spanish, Greek and Sign Language.

He remains proud of his time in the Marines, his Commando training, and relishes the support of family and friends. These are significant factors,

he feels, in his success at overcoming his injuries.

Finally, convinced that his personal struggle was a saga that needed to be told to a wider audience, he set about writing a biography and interviewing those who had helped in his recovery. Planning its publication has been a struggle in itself.

Steve's book has also made an impression on the internet. Over one weekend, it moved 90,000 places up the Amazon.co.uk sales rank - hitting a high spot of 8,829. The book can be ordered via the online retailer. Copies are also available through St Dunstan's HQ. Send a check to Greville Malet for £7.95 (£6.95 plus £1 p&p).

Recovery from Hell by Steve Nixon (ISBN 1843940787) costs £6.95. Profits from the sale will be split between St Dunstan's, Sunderland FC Disabled Supporters Club and Macmillan Nurses.

Veni, Vidi, We Ski!

Ray Hazan has a dynamite time in the Dolomites

THE FLOOR ROCKED GENTLY to and fro and then started vibrating violently up and down. This was followed once more by a gentle humming and the rocking motion. Was it a boat? Was it an earthquake? No, it was a gondola taking us 7,100ft up into the Italian Dolomites for our day's skiing. The cabin swayed over the open spaces and 'jumped' where it passed over the pylons. As we exited the cable station, we were met by the exotic grandeur of the mountains and their frequent companion – a noble peace and tranquillity.

Had it been only the previous morning that we had met, bleary eyed at four am at Gatwick Airport? Had 12 months really gone by since we had done the same, shaking hands and greeting old friends, St Dunstaners, guides and family members? After a short flight, it seemed no time at all before the plane was flying up a valley between two mountainous ranges to settle onto the tarmac at Innsbruck Airport. After a welcome by an American/Italian accented rep, complete with fur hat, the coach lapsed into a deep breathing 'dormitory' for the

three-hour ride to Canazei. A detour of an extra hour saved the driver having to stop and put chains on the wheels to cross the high pass – too much snow – a good omen!

It was almost like a homecoming to be greeted by the familiar voices of the hotel staff, to lean against a familiar bar, not to have to be shown around an already familiar bedroom. Our only point of sadness was the passing of the hotel owner, Walter, since our previous stay. Another well-known greeting was that of Anna-Lisa at the ski hire shop as she bustled round fetching boots and skis. Whatever language (and I don't mean inappropriate words!) was thrown at her, back came the reply in the same tongue! All we needed were the ski lift passes next day, and we were away!

That evening gave us the chance to meet the four new St Dunstaners on the trip; the slim 18-stone frame of Carl



Ray and Eddie!



The gang's all here!



Carl and Mick!



Colin and Mark!



Cam and Marjorie!



Carl Williams on the move!

A peak performance from Charlie Daly!



Williams was exceeded only by his laugh. The Geordie accent and wit of Colin Williamson was unbeatable! Former Guardsman Kevin Alderton added a rich blend of East London in contrast to the Scouse of Joe Cousineau. We were pleased to welcome Royal Marine Sgt Si Wright on his first trip with us and after their absence on duty last year, it was good to have Emma Covell and Eddie Edwards back again. Rick Jones, who had become a civilian since we had last met, was prepared, as were Peter Zamudio, Bill McDougal and Vince Stone, to give up a week of their own holiday time to be with us, such is their loyalty. We are grateful to the Commanding Officers of Neil Graham, Mick Shepley, Nathan Jones, Vicky Caress, Cam Cameron, and

Martin Blank for giving them time off. Equally, we give thanks to the wives, husbands, partners or mothers who allowed their loved ones (in addition to the 'new boys') to get away – Gerry Jones, Charlie Daly, Peter Walker, Marjorie Scott, Steve Sparkes, Stephen Menary, Billy Baxter, Mark Brewin and Ray Hazan. We totalled 13 St Dunstaners and 13 guides, excluding Jessie, Kellie, Dan and friend Jim, of the Daly clan, plus Stewart Walker. This was the largest ever St Dunstan's party. Apart from Joe, who did not take to skiing, the other beginners took well to the habit of launching themselves down a slope with long planks of wood attached to their feet. One of the hardest items to get used to are the boots. These

are large, made of unpliant fibreglass and extend well above the ankle in a forward sloping direction. This means you can never stand up straight but always have to bend your knees! Walking around with 5lb weights attached to your ankles before you depart on a skiing holiday, would be a good form of training!

The snow this year was in excellent condition – there was plenty of it and it was neither too hard and icy nor soft and mushy. The air temperature was rarely above freezing except when the sun made occasional appearances. On our penultimate day, the wind blew so strongly that we were brought to a stop on flat areas, let alone suffer the wind chill factor or the noise of it in our ears making

the commands of our guides difficult to hear.

On the first day, everyone travelled up to the easier slopes of Cambach to re-discover their ski legs and to remind themselves of what glüwein tasted like! Thereafter, the party split, with the more experienced skiers using the slopes above Canazei itself.

It is not easy to describe the sensation of skiing down a mountain slope; speed, direction, steepness all become a blur. Thirty miles an hour is probably three, left is right and vertical is horizontal - but in the stories related afterwards this all magnified in the telling!

There is one fixed point upon which you concentrate – either the outline of your guide's back, if you are partially sighted, or his or her voice! In my case, over a radio earpiece, Eddie's calm and confident commands, "Left – now, right – wait for it (as I pre-empted!) – Now!" belies the challenge that they so readily overcome, without complaint or fuss. For they must not only look after our safety, but keep an eye on others, sometimes very out-of-control beginners who will suddenly stop or turn in our path for no apparent reason! To witness a St Dunstaner and his guide making their way unimpeded down the slope is both a fascinating and impressive experience to watch or hear. Occasionally, other skiers would actually notice the warning bibs we wore (akin to carrying a white cane in the street) and would express their admiration.

What the St Dunstaner gets out of such a week is the buzz, the scare and above all, a sense of achievement. There was more than one occasion when tears were shed at the relief of succeeding. These were brought to an abrupt end on one occasion, when a St Dunstaner, having completed a black run, nearly demolished a sign with 'finish' written on it – it nearly did for him! The triplets, Sparkie, Peter Walker and Kevin successfully completed the Sellaronda, a 26-mile course around the valley. I am pleased to report that the author did not attempt any off-piste adventures this year!

Although I have been skiing on and off with St Dunstan's for several years, it struck me forcibly this year, just how much we owe our guides. The fact they are prepared to give up private time and, in many cases, have been with us for some 20 years, indicates their devotion. To hear the banter, the comradeship, the challenges, the mutual respect and admiration, both on and off the slopes, is quite something to witness and is possibly not replicated in any other of the St Dunstan's clubs or activities, except, perhaps, for the summer camp? If anyone wanted to witness a true partnership between blind and sighted, here is a fine example. We really are indebted to our guides and friends.

A skiing trip is not a simple matter of exercising on the snow from 9am to 4pm. The following 12 hours may be

even more strenuous! They may start with a post-piste beer at the SO bar, to replace the moisture and stress expended on the slope, of course. You could relax in the sauna and steam room located in the basement of the hotel, followed by 40 or more winks relaxation before going down to the bar for a pre-dinner drink. The sauna and winks are, naturally, optional! One afternoon, several St Dunstaners and their guides visited a neighbouring hotel where a modern version of the Roman baths were to be found. A large marble hall, filled with towel bedecked male and female bodies, glowing with health and sweat, wandered from sauna to Turkish bath, from Jacuzzi to 're-vitalising shower', from loungers to swimming pool. Age and an energetic day on the slopes came to the rescue on being told about the youthful, naked and attractive bodies which surrounded us!



Did Sparkie and Cam realise their friend forgot his kilt?



St Dunstaners Carl and Gerry enjoy a swift pint with two of the loyal volunteers who kept them safe on the slopes!

Dinner in the hotel El Caisel is an experience in itself. A salad buffet followed by the inevitable pasta starter would be sufficient unto itself, but a delicious main course awaits the unwary. Order a pizza instead and you are a dead duck, incapable of any further action for a while. Now, if you really are brave, insensitive or foolish, you can go for the highly calorific dessert! We celebrated with our now usual gala dinner night on the Wednesday. A pre-dinner 'champagne' cocktail was followed by Cam (in kilt, as were Neil and even Sparkie!) piping us into a candle-lit dinner, with just one extra course over the usual fare, in case we were looking peckish! Two accordionists yodelled their Tyrolean songs interspersed with some more familiar tunes, in which all joined. It was interesting to sit back and just listen to the chatter, laughter and general

conviviality. The voice-overs of the waitresses sorting out the orders in broken English or Italian added to the hubbub.

The nightly Stavely Award ceremony has become an integral part of the St Dunstan's skiing trip. Initiated some 20 years ago, it is presented to the greatest 'wally' of the day. The Stavely Committee must gather potential misdemeanours and these are announced to the amusement of all. The best of the bunch is then nominated and he or she must down a drink and then wear the Stavely hat for the next 24 hours. I am pleased to say that this latter has been changed from an elephantine obscenity with a two-foot long proboscis to a more demure woolly duck! Falling asleep, falling off lifts, swimming ice cold rivers at night, failing to wear the hat, being tricked into thinking a shower-head was a mobile

phone are just some of the qualifications. It is all good humoured and great fun though I was relieved not to have deserved a 'Monkey Brains' drink – a Baileys and lemonade and I leave the rest to the reader's imagination!

Several birthdays took place – the Daly twins, who seemed to celebrate their 24th birthday yet again – but they actually were! Eddie and Billy Baxter might have wished they were 24 again and all were outstripped by Marjorie who enjoyed her Ruby wedding anniversary. There was clubbing and pubbing, there were early and late nights, but always, with minor exceptions, the pairs were on the slopes the next morning, when icy air and altitude proved an unsurpassable 'hair of the dog!'

All too quickly, the second half of the week had passed and the final day confronted us. We cheered Vicky and Si who, as new guides, were 'persuaded' to try a slope under blindfold. Vicky acquitted herself with typical female efficiency, while the snowplough effected by Si was a miracle of human contortion! It was then a matter of stopping after the run before the last one and, as a result, there were no sprains, broken bones or visible injuries – just some stiff muscles which seemed to have been recently invented as some had never encountered them before!

As departures were starting at 3.30 the next morning, with the main bulk at 4.30, bed seemed

an unnecessary waste of time. The bar was manned on both sides of the counter all night – now would that have happened in England? Revellers returned to welcome cups of coffee. At the allotted time, we were off with sad farewells, happy memories and the knowledge that we hopefully had it all before us next year once more!

Besides being gluttons for punishment, we are indebted to St Dunstan's, to Babs and Brian Druce for their support and to Gerry Jones who remarkably still has a head of hair after the frustrations of organising such a trip! We are grateful to the Italian ski lift operators who generously gave us free and half price passes. Finally, and without whom the trip would not be possible, are our guides and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their daring, caring, their time and devotion to our cause. On our last evening, after the presentation of the Alpine Cowbell to Stephen Menary for the best-improved skier of the week, they presented each St Dunstaner with a mug bearing a reminder of Canazei. We raise it to them all – "cheers everyone!"

There is likely to be a repeat trip to Italy next year for a week commencing either 8th or 15th January 2005. The cost will be around £450 (including flights, half board, insurance, passes and equipment). Would any St Dunstaner interested please contact either Gerry Jones on 01872 552520 or Ray Hazan at HQ on 020 7616 7930.

It is stressed that the week is a skiing trip and is not suited to non-skiers.

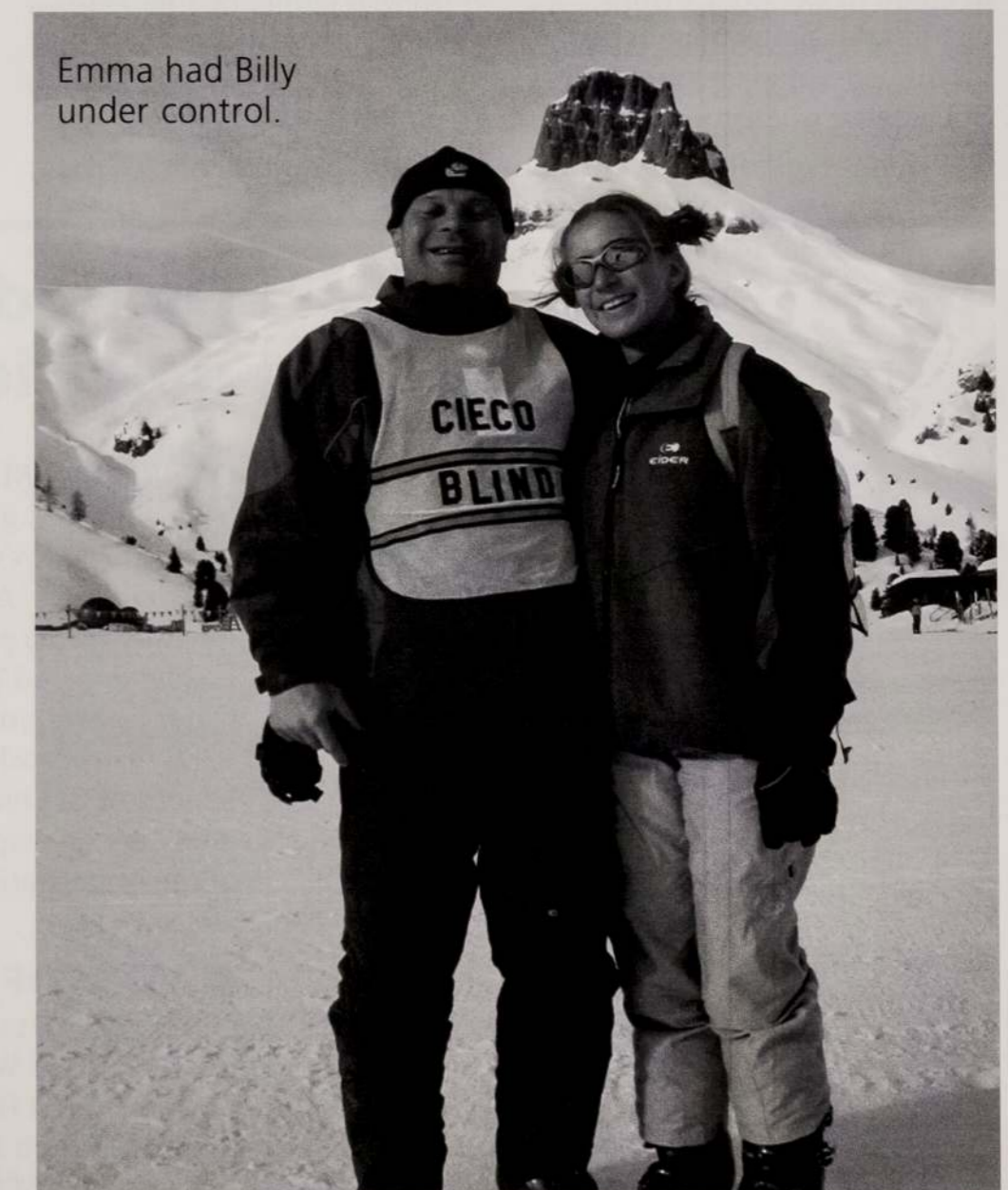
Billy Baxter writes:

Yet again the skiing trip to Italy has weaved its magic on me. I want to thank Gerry and Ray for their hard work in organising the venture. A heart felt thanks to all the guides; without their help we St Dunstaners would not be able to experience the freedom of skiing and doing what sighted people take for granted. The atmosphere is a true family and team feeling and brings out the magic of the St Dunstan's

spirit, which takes the person into realms that most people dream about. What a way to start a New Year!

Ski Guide Emma Covell, sums up the feelings of many of our escorts:

Thank you so much for what was, once again, a truly brilliant week with St Dunstan's. When people ask if I have had fun whilst away, it's so hard to put it all into context and express how moving the week is. For all the guides, it is the most rewarding week of our year.



Emma had Billy under control.

Ark Royal is no resting place in Nigel's zeal to spread the word



St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley was back on deck to spread the word about St Dunstan's on January 22nd. He visited the medical crew members of HMS *Ark Royal* to talk about the way in which it is possible to adapt to life after losing one's sight. Some members of his audience had encountered St Dunstan's before - one medic had an indelible memory



of meeting HMS *Sultan* campers at *Haslar*! Nigel took the opportunity to present a St Dunstan's shield to the crew, which was accepted by Surgeon Commander David Campbell. In return CPOMA Bosworth presented an *Ark Royal* crest which will be displayed at Ovingdean.



Robert drops in on St Dunstan's SA



ST DUNSTAN'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE Robert Leader broke a November holiday to meet up with colleagues from St Dunstan's South Africa. He met Chief Executive Charles Dickson (below)



in Cape Town to discuss how to help overseas St Dunstaners, particularly in Zimbabwe, more effectively. He later made a two-hour journey to meet with Chairman Lorraine Jones (above) to discuss the role of trustees.

Ovingdean staff are qualified success!

OVER 30 MEMBERS of St Dunstan's staff have achieved great success with their studies for degrees, NVQs and other qualifications in recent months. A group of 23 Ovingdean staff members were presented with their Institute of Leadership and Management Certificates by Chief Executive Robert Leader on February 13th. "Ultimately, everything we do is for the benefit of St Dunstaners and those people here today are an inspiration and example to the rest of the organisation," he said.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Our thanks go to David Poyner, Maurice Bowley, Sally Westlake, Greville Malet, Fiona Sawyer, Sarah Bedding, Lexie Nichol and Maureen Smith for their assistance in producing recent issues of **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**.

LIONEL'S JOY AT SEEING HIS GRANDDAUGHTER

LIONEL JAMES IS overjoyed at seeing his granddaughter for the first time since her birth. "It was a shock," he says. "But a pleasant shock to see her!"

Lionel is one of the few St Dunstaners who has had his sight restored and recent months have seen him learning to see once more. "My brain is a bit like a baby's brain, it is learning to take in the image again. When I came back to Ovingdean it was very strange trying to remember people I had been talking to for years. I would see a person one day and the next I would walk straight past them - until they spoke and then I would recognise the voice. I think I am getting past that now."

This new vision has been enabled by a piece of Lionel's eye tooth, a shard of bone and a scrap of flesh. Back in 1982, Lionel, who served in the Royal Armoured Corps for over 20 years, started to experience problems with his sight. He was diagnosed as suffering from glaucoma and seven years ago, he suffered an allergic reaction to the treatment for that condition. Instead of alleviating the problem, the treatment caused his total loss of vision. In 2001, he became a St Dunstaner. However, while

Unique eye tooth operation restores sight for St Dunstaner

Lionel studied daily living skills and computer techniques at Ovingdean, doctors at Bristol Eye Hospital began to suspect that there might be other options for treatment.

They carried out a series of tests establishing that while Lionel's left eye had been damaged on the surface, the retina was intact. The doctors referred him to the Sussex Eye Hospital in Brighton where yet more tests awaited.

"It is stressful," said Lionel. "But I think more for other people than for me. I was in for a penny, in for a pound! I thought if everything went wrong what had I got to lose. I did get a bit worried as it got closer - after all they are taking a piece of bone out, a tooth and flesh from inside the mouth. That was very sore, so you don't feel like eating for a while."

The procedure is called Osteo-Odonto-Keratoprosthesis (OOKP) and involves two operations. In the first stage, scar tissue over the cornea is removed, and the whole eye surface covered with thick mucous membrane from the inside of the cheek.

A single rooted tooth, usually a canine, is removed from the jaw together with a small block of jaw bone. The root and surrounding bone is then fashioned into a rectangular plate. A hole is drilled through the dentine of the tooth root creating a custom made optical cylinder. Called the OOKP lamina, this is placed under the muscle of the lower eyelid of the other eye for up to four months, when tissues invest into the substance of the lamina.

In the second operation, the OOKP lamina is retrieved and inserted through a hole drilled in the cornea.

"Unlike a corneal graft, it's my own body being used, so there is no chance of rejection. I don't have to take immune suppressants. I take every day as it comes, because I don't know how long it will last," adds Lionel. "So far, it is very good, it is a bit limited on peripheral vision and I can't see in colour at the centre."

For the moment, even with another operation due, Lionel feels blessed and is happy to see his wife again - and that shocking six-year-old!

PENDLETON'S PANTRY

Blind chef **Stephen Pendleton** mixes up a classic cake!

THE GOOD OLD Victoria Sandwich Cake was named after Queen Victoria, following the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861. She spent a lot of time in retreat at Osborne House, her residence on the Isle of Wight. Here she was encouraged to hold many tea parties. "One thinks to cheer her up." During these afternoon teas, the Victoria Sandwich, a sponge cake filled with jam, was thus named. Judging by the pictures taken of her many years after his death, I do not think the parties or the cake worked. But I am sure you will all enjoy this recipe, as it is one of my favourites and comes very highly recommended.

This cake is in my opinion the great granddaddy of all sponge-based cakes. The amount of other sponge-based products that derive from the basic Victoria Sponge recipe is only limited by one's imagination.

Ingredients:

8oz (200g) butter.

8oz (200g) caster sugar.

4 large eggs.

Vanilla essence.

8oz (200g) self raising flour.

Strawberry jam.

Icing sugar.

Hot water if required.

Method:

Firstly make sure your working area is clean and all your equipment is ready to hand. Then place a damp tea towel under the mixing bowl. This is firstly to stop the bowl from moving whilst mixing the ingredients and also to catch any escaping flour or other food debris. This is to help you to keep as clean a working area as possible. All you have to do is to take the tea towel outside and give it a shake, therefore keeping your working area clean and tidy.

Add caster sugar and butter into mixing bowl (butter should be at room temperature, this is to aid creaming). Using either a wooden spoon or a hand electric whisk, cream the butter and sugar together. The electric whisk is best as the faster motion of the whisk will allow more air into the mixture. The secret to a light and fluffy sponge is to keep the cake mix as well aerated as possible. Once creaming is complete you should be left with thick creamy consistency.

Beat up four eggs in a measuring jug. It is a good idea to check the liquid with your finger, just to be sure that there is no egg shell in the mixture. One would not be amused upon finding egg shell in your lovely sponge cake! Add the egg a little at a time to the cream. If you add too much it will

curdle whilst you are mixing. If it does curdle, just add a bit of the flour to bring the mixture back on course.

When all the egg has been added you should be left with a lovely smooth cream. As a point of reference the consistency should be a bit thicker than unwhipped double cream.

Now add a teaspoon of vanilla essence to the mix. Going on the reasonable assumption that a very heaped tablespoon of flour weighs 2oz (50g), lightly sieve one heaped tablespoon of flour over the mixture, folding it in with the whisk, which you have reset to a medium speed for folding. When you sieve the flour into the bowl, hold the sieve a good few inches above the top of the bowl. This is once again to aid aeration. The importance of having plenty of air in the mixture cannot be over-emphasised.

Repeat this another three times making sure each tablespoon of flour has been thoroughly folded into the mixture, just check it with your finger. When all the ingredients have been thoroughly mixed together you should be left with a thick creamy sponge mix. If the mix is in any way stiff or dry, add hot water a bit at a time until you get a thick creamy texture. This consistency should feel

looser than the original butter and sugar cream in the first part of this recipe. Grease two 7 inch sponge tins and cover bottoms with greaseproof paper. Pre-heat oven to 180C (350F) or gas mark 4.

Spoon the mixture into the sponge tins, taking care not to disturb the greaseproof paper. The mixture should be moist enough so that when you have filled the tins three quarters full, you should be able to give the tin a few gentle shakes from side to side.

This will enable the sponge mix to even itself out in the tin and find its own level. Place in oven at the above temperature for 25 minutes. Now is a good time to clean down your working area and do the washing up.

Remove from oven and check that sponges are cooked by inserting a sharp knife. If the knife comes out clean they are done. You can easily check this by using your finger. Then turn them out onto a wire cooling rack. Remember to turn out the sponges when they are still hot from the oven, if you leave it until they are cool you could damage them when you remove the grease proof paper.

When sponges are cool, spread the jam thickly onto one of the sponges, making sure not to go right to the edge. If you do, the jam will run all down the sides of the cake when you lay the other half of the cake on top. To decorate the top of the sponge, get a paper doily and

place it on top of the cake. Next sprinkle icing sugar over the top and remove the doily. You should then have a nice pattern on the top of your cake.

The above recipe will give you quite a big sponge. This is because I am a big boy, so therefore it goes without saying that I like big cakes. If you like your Victoria sponge a bit daintier then you can half the above recipe and correct the cooking time accordingly.

The variations to this basic sponge mix are only restricted by your own imagination. By adding a tablespoon of cocoa powder to the above you will end up with chocolate sponge cake. A tablespoon of coffee can be just as delicious. Instead of using strawberry jam, use different flavours. Substitute vanilla essence for lemon or lime juice, or use them both at the same time. The opportunities are endless!

My favourite sponge cake is the above recipe, substituting the vanilla essence for lemon juice. I then make up some butter icing. The ingredients for this are 2oz (50g) butter and 2oz (50g) icing sugar.

Whisk these items together until they become creamy and then add a teaspoon of lemon juice. Use this in place of jam and you will have a nice lemon sponge. The amount of different flavours and colours you can achieve with regards to the butter icing is also extremely varied. Just let your imagination run wild!

BALANCING THE BOOKS

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

Prescription For Murder

Author: Brian Whittle

Reader: David Banks

Duration: 12 hours.

Catalogue Number: TB 12232

This book describes the life and crimes of Dr Harold Frederick Shipman, Britain's (and possibly the World's) worst serial killer. By a quirk of coincidence I finished it the day before he hung himself in Wakefield Gaol; a fitting conclusion, I thought, because I am now convinced that Shipman was one of the most evil people in history. There have been other notorious murderers of course, Fred West and Peter Sutcliffe to mention just two, but Shipman knew all his victims, they trusted him absolutely as their family doctor and he treacherously betrayed that trust. After a long trial and due consideration given by the jury Shipman was unanimously convicted on 15 counts of murder, though the true total is probably over 200. To anyone who may nevertheless still think the man was innocent, I strongly recommend this excellent book. It is true we don't know actually why Dr Shipman killed his patients, but we don't really know why Judas betrayed Jesus either.

Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

Thomas Craig of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear served in the General Service Corps in 1946, then the Black Watch until 1948, and the Royal Engineers until 1952. He served in the UK, India, France and Germany.

Robert Crossan of Alexandria, Scotland served in the Royal Military Police from 1963 to 1972 leaving as a Corporal. He served in the UK, Singapore and Germany. In civilian life, he joined the City of Glasgow Police.

Colin Denton of Andover, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1977 leaving as a Squadron Leader. He served in the UK, Middle East and the Far East.

Dr Henry George of Oxford, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946 leaving as an Acting Lieutenant. He spent most of the war on the North Atlantic convoys.

Leonard Harper of Gosport, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1958. He served at RAF Cardington, RAF Bridgeworth and RAF Netheravon.

Keith Harrison of Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire served in the Merchant Navy from 1945 to 1953. He started as a junior engineer and left as a 1st Engineer in the Union Castle

Line. He served in Australia, New Zealand, India, Trinidad and throughout the world.

Mary Kirk of Selsey, Chichester, West Sussex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1946. Initially posted to the Port of London Authority, she also served abroad in India, Sri Lanka and Singapore.

Leonard Langhorn of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Army from 1941 to 1947. After training, he was initially posted to the Royal Sussex Regiment, but later joined the Royal Signals. He served in the UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Egypt.

Duncan MacIver of Studham, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1972 leaving as a Wing Commander. He served at home as well as in Canada, Australia and Europe.

Ernest Phillips of Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands served in the Merchant Navy from 1943 to 1949 leaving as a 4th Engineer. He served in the Atlantic and the Adriatic.

Maria Pikulski of Leyland, Preston, Lancashire served in the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1980 and the Territorial Army from 1991 to 2002. She was stationed at Aldershot, Preston and Manchester.

Eric Powell of Northam, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1952. He was stationed at Padgate, West Kirby, Catterick where he joined the RAF Regiment before being posted to RAF Hereford and Bushey Park.

John Powell of Woodingdean, Brighton served in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment from 1945 to 1953. He served in Northern Ireland, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, the Suez Canal and Ismalia.

Harry Taylor of Haywards Heath, West Sussex served with the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946 in the UK and India.

Mansel Vaughan of Wantage, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1933 to 1973 leaving as an Air Commodore. He served in Malta, Italy, Germany and UK.

Leonard Verrier of Ruislip, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948. He served in Burma and the UK.

Maud Williams of Wokingham, Berkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Leslie Yates of Fareham, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946. When war broke out he joined the Home Guard until he was old enough to sign up for the Navy and train as a Telegraphist.

Thomas Durrett of Fleet, Hampshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946. He served in the UK, North Africa, Greece, Sicily, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Cyril Edwards of Nuneaton, Warwickshire served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946. He served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Eric Fisher of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946. He served alongside the Arctic convoys.

Kenneth Goulding of New Moston, Manchester served in the signals branch of the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946. He served in the UK.

Charles Hanaway of Brighton served in the Middlesex Regiment from 1941 to 1943 when he was transferred to the Royal Scots Fusiliers until 1946.

Edward Jones of Wolverhampton, West Midlands served in the Lancers (Cavalry of the Line) from 1936 to 1945. He served in India, Egypt and the Western Desert.

Douglas McLean of Croshills, West Yorkshire served in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry from 1929 to 1954 leaving as a Captain. He served in the UK, India, Europe and West Africa.

Ronald Parsons of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1944 to 1947.

Cupid calls from the coast



SOME FORLORN lovers had their bacon saved by the artistic intervention of a handful of St Dunstaners last month. Faced with the usual rush to find a token of affection to send to their beloved on Valentine's Day, they found salvation in a limited edition selection of cards produced in the Craft Workshop at St Dunstan's Ovingdean.



Heart felt and crafted with care!

A mix of skills, collage, mosaic, patchwork, montage, papier mâché, cane work and weaving were used to create a series of heart shaped cards that Cupid could let fly with pride! The heart above was assembled by instructor Mary Scourfield from hearts made by all the Workshop chaps.

The cards were completed by a verse from lyrically minded St Dunstaner Frank Tinsley:

I gazed upon your lovely face
And felt the stars move out in space
I heard sweet music from above
Which told me this was really love

Blind physio on World Service

A DISABLED CHARACTER created by a blind listener from Singapore has just joined BBC World Service radio soap, *Westway*. Ron Chandran-Dudley, 69, won a competition to create a new character for the drama serial, and came up with Zoe Chan Li-Fen. The character, played by actress Wendy Kweh, is a 27-year-old Chinese-Singaporean blind physiotherapist who also practises traditional Yi-Ching reflexology and massage.

Archers take aim on the Continent

FIVE ST DUNSTANERS will be drawing their bows for Britain at a three-day European contest in June. Archers Steve Moseley, Nigel Whiteley, David Poyner, Derek Hagger and Terry Ottewell will be heading across the Channel to Orly, France as part of the British Blind Sports Archery team. Our St Dunstaners and their team-mates have been selected to represent Great Britain against blind archers from France, Italy and Belgium.

Rehab & Training's **Alex Dugard** takes us on a tour of the equipment and resources in Ovingdean's Green Room

A resourceful centre



AS YOU ENTER the Green Room, the area to the right has a selection of equipment, resources and information for you to use. It is an area that you may be able to utilise whether you're a resident, on nursing, here for respite, holiday or training. By appointment, a member of the Rehab & Training department can demonstrate the different pieces of equipment mentioned in this feature.

For talking books, there are lists of titles held on both nursing floors, at the Lounge Desk and in the Green Room. If you need any help choosing a title, just ask.

There are two PCs with access software, scanner and printer, often used by conscientious trainees practising their new skills, or those wishing to write a letter or maybe scan their mail. For the non-PC user, there is a standalone

scanner that will scan printed documents, whether that is a letter, magazine or newspaper, and read it back to you. For those of you who have some useful vision, the electronic magnifiers (CCTVs) may be of use. They can magnify and alter the colours of whatever it is you wish to read or look at and can also be used for writing under, or indeed many other close-up tasks.

There is also a Perkins Braille machine, electronic typewriter and task lamp over some clear desk space for you to use as you wish.

If it's information you're after, there are a range of catalogues and information leaflets, from RNIB catalogues, leaflets on different eye conditions and details about different services available, all of which are duplicated on tape for anyone unable to read print.

The television in the Green Room now has a set-top box that receives ten different channels, all of which have approximately ten hours of programmes audio described each week. Programmes that are audio described include *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street* and *Neighbours*, as

well as the occasional film. You can find out which programmes are audio described by checking out the Braille TV guide or the large print list that will be displayed on the wall by the TV.

There is a large range of talking books available both on audiocassette and on CD, there for you to borrow during your stay here. We have a few large print and Braille books too.

If you have any questions regarding anything in the Green Room, speak to Rehab & Training's Alex Dugard who will be happy to help or refer you to someone who can.

We hope you enjoy the facilities provided for you in the Green Room and appreciate your feedback to ensure that we can provide the sort of things you would find most useful in continuing to maintain an appropriate level of independence.



Write up our alley!



Peter Hammond presents author Peter James with a lighthouse lampstand - but is it haunted we wonder?

THE WRITERS' FORUM is proud to announce that it is now an official St Dunstan's Club and as such it has now elected a Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary and an honorary President. The first three members are now responsible for running the club.

The club has been operating for over six months and in that short time has grown in numbers from three to more than 30 people regularly contributing stories and advice to the group.

Our successes have included an offer of publication for one of the writers and visits from the best-selling author, Peter James, and from Joan Stanley from the publisher's Red 'n' Ritten. Another best selling author, Elvi Rhodes has expressed interest in the group and has recently donated a

Donna Vaughan on our growing Writers' Circle

copy of each of her novels on audiotape to St Dunstan's.

The Writers' Weekend held in November last year was the perfect opportunity to get together with many of the members who live outside Ovingdean, including Yorkshire in the North and Bristol in the West. At that meeting we were also fortunate to have Peter James as a guest speaker. His books include *Denial*, *Possession*, and *The Truth*. The *Sunday Express* said he was "Britain's answer to Stephen King and Michael Crichton. Brilliant." The description of his experiences and how he finds the inspiration for his work had us riveted to our seats for more than two hours. Most of his books are about paranormal activities and they delve into the psychology of the individual. Peter has also



St Dunstaner George Childs discusses writing with local author Peter James.

worked with many famous actors including Jeremy Irons and Sharon Stone. He was also the first novelist to produce his work on the floppy disc. His novel, *Host* was published in 1995 by Penguin as the world's first electronic novel.

The publisher, Joan Stanley, who visited St Dunstan's before Christmas, requested short stories written by our members to be sent to her offices so she could give us her opinion of each.

Interest in the group grows each week with more St Dunstaners expressing an interest in writing and since most of our members live outside the Ovingdean area, we keep in touch either by e-mail, letter, telephone or when they happen to be in house.

The writing continues with group members undertaking their first novels, writing their autobiographies and producing everything from Quiz questions to short stories.

The Writers' Forum Committee is made up of Chairman Peter Hammond, Secretary George Oliver and Membership Secretary Dorothy Wright. Over the coming months we hope to get together a basic guide to help St Dunstaners improve their writing skills and this will be available to members of the group.

POET'S CORNER

Woodland Visit

I heard the cuckoo distant call
Amongst those trees so green and tall
It hung upon the morning air
I thought of woods when we were there
I yearned again for you in spring
With all the joy your love would bring
To lay between the singing trees
And kiss away the gentle breeze

Frank Tinsley

Ten Answers

From page 11, the answers to this month's quiz.

1) Chihuahua; 2) *The Wizard of Oz*;
3) Rottweiler; 4) John Peel in the song *Do you ken John Peel*; 5) Bloodhound; 6) Poodle;
7) Edinburgh; 8) Jack Russell; 9) They are all recent winners of the Supreme Championship at the annual Crufts show; 10) Susan was the first corgi presented to Princess Elizabeth on her 18th birthday.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Jack on November 20th. He is the first great-grandson of Ethel Fone of Enfield, Middlesex and the late *George Fone*.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Kelly Anne and Adrian who married on January 28th. Kelly Anne is the daughter of *Peter Burdon* of Blackpool, Lancashire.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Bill and Norma Burrows of Luton, Bedfordshire on February 6th.

Sylvia and Eric Garbutt of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne & Wear on February 20th

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Joseph and Louise Weeks of St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex on February 10th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Bernard and Dorothy Pitcher of Bridgwater, Somerset who celebrated 62 years of marriage on January 26th.

Andrew and Sylvia Newman of Coventry, West Midlands who celebrated 64 years of marriage on January 27th.

William and Ivy Hain of Weymouth, Dorset who celebrated 68 years of marriage on February 6th.

Thomas and Peggy Lukes of Old Colwyn, Clwyd who celebrated 61 years of marriage on February 8th.

William and Gladys Reid of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on February 12th.

Gerald and Joan Cluley of Leicester, Leicestershire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on February 15th.

Charles and Peggy Blockley of Sileby, Leicestershire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on February 19th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Queenie Williams on December 20th. She was the wife of St Dunstaner *Samuel Williams* of Old Colwyn, Clwyd.

Edward Smith of North Wembley, London on January 29th. He was the twin brother of *Frank Smith* of Sutton, Surrey.

Elsie Scales of Reigate, Surrey on January 20th. She was the widow of *Leonard Scales*.

Rosemary, Lady Twiss of Reigate, Surrey on January 27th. She was the widow of *Admiral Sir Frank Twiss, KCG, DSC*.

Rose Tanner of West Molesey, Surrey on January 27th. She was the widow of St Dunstaner *Leslie Tanner*.

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.

George Collins

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment
George Collins of Frinton-on-Sea, Colchester died on January 25th, aged 90. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1942. Originally an export packer for a book company, he joined the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment in 1940, serving with their 9th Battalion. He was blinded by an exploding bomb while on exercise. Initially he trained as a Capstan hand but later turned to market gardening, poultry-keeping and rug making. His interests included gardening, braille, handicrafts, walking and radio. Our sympathy goes to his daughters Frances and Kathleen and all of the family.

John Bailey, MM

Royal Armoured Corps
John Bengry Bailey, MM of Kidderminster, Worcestershire died on January 31st. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1969. He joined the Territorials in 1939 and on the outbreak of hostilities was called up to the Royal Armoured Corps. He was wounded at El Alemein in 1942 suffering the loss of his right eye. Discharged in 1946, he worked as a herdsman until he started to lose vision in his remaining eye. He retrained

as a machine operator and also worked for the GPO. His interests included canework and gardening. Our sympathy goes to his daughters Janice and Jean and all members of the family.

Edward Gepheart

Gordon Highlanders

Edward Sydney Gepheart of Brandon, Suffolk died on February 1st, aged 78. He joined the Gordon Highlanders in 1943 and was wounded in Normandy. He was demobbed in 1947. In civilian life, he was a docker, warehouseman and storekeeper. He enjoyed woodwork, model-making and writing. Our sympathy goes to his sisters and all members of the family.

William Medhurst

Royal Signals

William Francis Medhurst of Whitstable, Kent died on February 2nd, aged 87. He served in the Royal Signals from 1934 to 1946. A member of the TA, he transferred to the Signals and was commissioned in 1941. He took part in the Sicily landings and moved through Italy to the Alpine Borders. After the war he taught history before becoming a solicitor. His interests included opera and collecting books. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joyce, their son and daughters and all members of the family.

Charles Coston

Royal Norfolk Regiment

Charles Thomas Coston of Elm, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire died on February 8th, aged 84. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1995. Originally a plasterer, he enlisted with the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1940 and was posted to their 5th Battalion which was under order to go to the Far East. He arrived in Singapore and was captured by the Japanese, spending the rest of the war in captivity. During his time as a Far East Prisoner of War, he suffered from malaria and other conditions resulting from the privations he experienced. Discharged in 1946, he returned to his original trade as a plasterer, until deteriorating sight forced his retirement. His interests included gardening, dancing and yoga. Our sympathy goes to his widow, Eva, their son and daughters and all other members of the family.



97 Cadet Battery RA set off in the rain.



Billy says well done!



Which way now?

YOUNG GUNNERS MARCH PROUD!

A CADRE OF Army cadets were feted for their perseverance by St Dunstaner Billy Baxter. Billy attended a special presentation at Woolwich Barracks where members of 97 Cadet Battery, Royal Artillery were congratulated on completing a

Simon Rogers reports

12-mile sponsored hike through the Kent countryside to raise funds for St Dunstan's.

While most of the UK was glued to the box watching the

England Rugby team win the World Cup on November 22nd, 42 cadets were walking through a torrent of rain on the North Weald Way. Their route through Mereworth Woods took them along streams, canals, roads and woodland. The end result of this hike raised a fantastic £1,360 to support the work of St Dunstan's. One Cadet Gunner, Natasha Yates, raised an outstanding £240!

A former Gunner himself, Billy expressed his pride in the manner in which the cadets conducted themselves on the walk and on the presentation evening when they were issued with certificates of achievement (and St Dunstan's pins). "It really is something special," he said. "Well done everyone and keep at it!"



Above: By the left! SSgt Baxter joins the cadets on parade.
Below: The cadets show their support for St Dunstan's.

