

# ST DUNSTAN'S Review



**FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN**

# November 2004

**Cover story:**

## We were just a bunch of Guinea Pigs!

It was a defining moment in the manner in which the casualties of war were cared for. St Dunstaner Bill Foxley explains why life under the surgeon's knife was really "a jolly good time."

**Full story on 16.**

## Happy birthday, Ernie!

FEPOW St Dunstaner Ernie Walker celebrates his 100th birthday with family and friends.

**We wish him many happy returns on page 9.**

## London Eye flight marks World Sight Day!

Campaigning charity Vision 2020 launch "UK Framework for action" as supporters of St Dunstan's celebrate at the popular London landmark.

**Take a flight to page 14 for more details.**

Plus Noticeboard, Balancing the Books, Ten Questions, Letters to the Editor, Poet's Corner, Pendleton's Pantry and more!!!

Published by **ST DUNSTAN'S**  
an independent future for blind  
ex-Service men and women  
Service Delivery Directorate  
12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.  
Charity Reg. no 216227.

Printed by Maund & Irvine Limited

Tel: 020 7723 5021

Fax: 020 7262 6199

Editor: Ray Hazan

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

**PUBLISHED MONTHLY**

The Review is also available in braille, on MP3CD, on audio cassette, floppy disk and via e-mail.

## From the Chairman



Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox chats with Paul and Phyllis Walker at St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

THIS YEAR HAS been a period of 60th anniversary commemorations. Our gathering at the Cenotaph later this month will mark a half-way point between the beginning of these anniversaries and on July 10th next year, when we commemorate VE and VJ Days. Whether you are at the Cenotaph, at memorial services or parades locally, or at home, we will remember those who did not return home and give thanks for those who were spared.

I much enjoyed reading the article by Ray and Jean Thomas on their participation in an archaeological dig. It demonstrated that, with some imagination by the organisers, and the willingness by participants to 'have a go', anything can be achieved. St Dunstaners have proved this throughout the history of the organisation and I very much hope that trend will continue. Age should be no barrier!

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

## ST DUNSTAN'S Calendar

Bowling Club(II)	Oct 28th-Nov 11th
Writers' Forum	Nov 7th(tbc)
Remembrance Sunday	Nov 14th
Indoor Bowling	Nov 19th
Indoor Bowling	Nov 22nd
St Dunstan's Day	Dec 9th
Christmas Week	Dec 19th-30th
Writers' Forum	Dec 4th
New Year Week	Dec 30th- Jan 8th

### 2005

Indoor Bowling	Jan 10th
Indoor Bowling	Jan 14th
Skiing (Italy)	Jan 15th-22nd
Amateur Radio (I)	Jan 16th-22nd
Indoor Bowling	Jan 17th
Indoor Bowling	Jan 21st
Indoor Bowling	Jan 28th
Archery Club (I)	Jan 28th-Feb 6th
Writers' Forum	Feb 5th
Indoor Bowling	Feb 16th
Indoor Bowling	Feb 18th
Music 'Week'	Feb 20th-25th
Indoor Bowling	Feb 25th
Bowling (I)	Feb 25th-Mar 12th
Writers' Forum	Mar 5th
Indoor Bowling	Mar 7th
Computer Club(I)	Mar 22nd-23rd
Amateur Radio(II)	Mar 24th-31st
Indoor Bowling	Apr 6th
Ex-POW Reunion	Apr 8th-11th
Historical 'Week'	Apr 17th-22nd
Indoor Bowling	Apr 18th
Masons	Apr 22nd-24th
Gardening 'Week'	May 1st-7th
Indoor Bowling	May 9th
Exercise Ironman	May 11th
Handless Reunion	May 11th-17th
Archery(II)	May 27th-June 6th
Widow's 'Week'(I)	June 6th-11th

# Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

## ST DUNSTAN'S DAY

**IN MEMORY OF SIR ARTHUR:** St Dunstan's Day on December 9th will mark 83 years since the death of our founder Sir Arthur Pearson, Bart. It was his determination and inspiration that laid the foundation for the organisation that we know today. After losing his sight, he defied the conventions of the day and encouraged other blind men and women to reclaim productive roles in society.

## STAFF CHANGES

**ANGELA JONES:** Congratulations are in order to St Dunstan's Welfare Officer Angela Neath who, following her recent marriage, is now Angela Jones.

## ENTER YOUR STORY NOW

**DEADLINE LOOMS FOR CONTEST:** There is just one month left to enter your story for the **ST DUNSTAN'S Review** story writing competition. Each story entered must involve an anniversary of some kind - the who, why, what and where is up to our budding authors. Full contest rules and details of the winning prizes were published in the September issue. Typewritten entries, not exceeding 1,500 words, should be sent under a nom-de-plume to the Editor, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by Wednesday, December 1st 2004.

## FIND OUT WHAT'S ON?

**TALKING LISTINGS:** A reminder that those visiting St Dunstan's Ovingdean can hear a recorded weekly programme of events. The speaker is chest height on the left of wall between the door to the lounge on your right and the dining room on your left. It has a prominent button to initiate the recording.

## HELPING THE HEROES RETURN

**APPLY BY MARCH 31ST:** Applications for funding under the Heroes Return scheme need to be made by March 31st 2005. The initiative aims to enable Second World War veterans and widows commemorate the 60th anniversary of the events that led to the end of that conflict.

UK residents who saw active service overseas with, or alongside, the British and Allied Armed Forces in the Second World War can apply for a grant. Widows and widowers of veterans are also eligible in most cases, as are merchant service veterans. Conflicts, such as Suez, Malaya, Aden and Korea are not eligible for this programme.

As a first step, call the Veterans Agency free helpline on 0800 169 2277. They will provide detailed information on eligibility and advice on how to submit an application. Should you require further advice please contact St Dunstan Services Manager Ray Hazan at St Dunstan's HQ on 020 7723 5021.

## WINGED FELLOWSHIP TRUST FLIES ON AS VITALISE

**NEW NAME FOR HOLIDAY CHARITY:** The Winged Fellowship Trust took on a new name from November 1st. Re-dubbed Vitalise, they remain dedicated, as they have been for over 40 years, to providing essential breaks for disabled people and carers. It is often difficult, if not impossible, for disabled or visually impaired people to go on holiday because they either live on their own, or cannot afford to pay for a guide or escort. The organisation enables disabled or visually impaired people to participate in their holidays by providing guides and escorts and also helps to give carers a break.

There is an annual charge of £15 to become a member of the Vitalise trust. For this, you receive a brochure twice a year advertising their holidays. All air holidays are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority, land by IPP Insurance. Each holiday is graded from A to D. 'A' denotes a break, such as a beach holiday, where no physical fitness is required. 'B' is for beginners to learn the rudiments of sailing, for instance. This requires a degree of coordination and fitness. 'C' is for those with some previous experience. The 'D' grade demands skilled knowledge and fitness and may require pre-activity training.

Ovingdean resident Dorothy Wright recently went on holiday to Portugal with the Trust. "The escorts were very helpful. We changed round every day so they all shared looking after the more demanding participants. It gave me the chance to enjoy a wonderful holiday offering a change of surroundings and people."

Contact details for them are as follows:

Vitalise, Shap Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 6NZ. Tel: 0845 345 1970. Fax: 01539 735567. E-mail: [admin@vitalise.org.uk](mailto:admin@vitalise.org.uk) and website on [www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk).

## CHRISTMAS CARDS CREATED BY ST DUNSTANERS ON SALE

**HANDICRAFT CREATIONS LEAD THIS YEAR'S FESTIVE CARD SELECTION:** The festive artwork produced by a dozen blind ex-Servicemen and women takes pride of place amongst the Christmas cards and other items being marketed for St Dunstan's this year (full details were distributed last month). The cards feature a mix of mosaic, montage and painting with 12 images on two cards.

They are being sold in a pack of ten (five of each design) with envelopes. They measure four and three-quarter inches by six and three-quarter inches (121mm x 171mm) for £3.50. The Craft Workshop card set is coded SD11.

Postage and packaging is on a sliding scale of 1-3 items £1.75, 4-6 items £2.75, 7-10 items £3.75 and 11-25 items £4.75. Over 25 items and P&P is free of charge.

Orders can be made by credit or debit card by telephone on 01736 787 787. Orders can also be placed by writing to Cape-ability Ltd, St Dunstan's, Unit 1B Trewellard Industrial Estate, Pendeen, Penzance TR19 7TF and also online at [www.st-dunstans.org.uk](http://www.st-dunstans.org.uk). Please make cheques payable to St Dunstan's and write your name and address on the reverse. Final orders will be taken on December 10th. Packs will also be available at Ovingdean and Headquarters.

## 2005 CALENDAR ON SALE

**BUY ONE NOW:** A limited edition 2005 calendar with each month illustrated by handicraft techniques used daily by St Dunstaners can be ordered from the Craft Workshop, St Dunstan's Ovingdean, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton BN2 7BS. The cost is £8.50 plus £1.50 for P&P. Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's.

# 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.

## St Dunstan's gives you so much courage!

I have only been a member of St Dunstan's for just over a year and in April of this year I spent five days at Ovingdean, my first visit, not knowing what to expect. When I arrived and walked into the entrance hall I thought 'Gosh! Just like a hotel!' When I was shown to my room I was even more impressed – en suite, everything you needed in your room, beautifully furnished. The meals and the service, the carers, everybody was so, so helpful. Then I met people and realised that St Dunstan's is not just an organisation, it is a great big family really. I met so many lovely people, some very sad cases but St Dunstan's gives you so much courage and so much encouragement. This is what I found on my first visit.

Then I started my assessment and training. I was assessed on an electric typewriter. Now I had never touched an electric typewriter in my life and so I was told that I was going to learn to touch type. That was a bit daunting but with Sylvia's help I mastered the home keys and then she tested me on the computer and decided that yes ok, they could teach me. So at the end of that week when I arrived home I brought with me

a new typewriter with an instruction tape which was given to me on permanent loan. I couldn't believe that so much was given. The car, door to door, the week with accommodation and meals, the typewriter. I just couldn't believe the generosity. And so I started my touch typing and by the end of July I had mastered it. OK, I still make mistakes – the 'i' and the 'o' are close together and sometimes I put an 'i' instead of an 'o' or I put an 'e' instead of an 'r' – but I can touch type and I'm quite pleased with myself since I'm 81 years of age.

I was given the opportunity to go to Ovingdean in September. This time I had training on the computer with Teresa and for the last two days with Sylvia. They were so helpful and so patient and I hoped I had done well. I really, really enjoyed it. It was a challenge that I intend to meet and I really enjoyed their training. I also went into the craft room and Mary suggested that I make ceramic coasters the first time, which I did, managing to finish them before I came home. I was quite proud of them but what a messy job with all the grouting, so I did say to Mary could I try basket work next time.

I then I had a phone call from Janis to say they thought I had done so well that they thought I should come back fairly soon so that I could bring a computer home to practise on. I was delighted by that message.

I'm going to London on the Remembrance Weekend to join in the Remembrance Day Service with St Dunstan's. I shall march down Whitehall very proudly. I did this two years ago with the Wrens.

I shall be returning to Ovingdean for further training. I'm really looking forward to it. I would just like to say, thank you so very much.

**Audrey Brooks,  
Frinton-on-Sea, Essex**

## Made for each other?

Re: "Right names for the game", Page 9, October 2004 **Review**: During the 1940s, my father employed the services of an accountant, a Mr Swindells, whose Chief Clerk was a Mr Twist. In the 1970s, I worked with an engineer whose name was John Cuff; his wife's name was Ann.

**John Lappin,  
Wakefield, West Yorkshire**

## In Memory of a most innovative person

After trying to contact Don and Chris Tacon in Canada we discovered that they have both passed away. We have kept in touch with them since Don used to help Wally Rayner with our stock taking twice a year. Don and Chris both worked for St Dunstan's. Don worked for

'the firm' from 1937 when he was making patterns for St Dunstaners to make toys at home. Don was a most innovative person and a joy to know. He saw Chris working in the office and very soon after married her. Don took charge of rehabilitating the blind lads in

industry especially those using lathes. He made all kinds of gadgets to help them. He enlisted with Air Sea Rescue but rejoined St Dunstan's after the war. He and Chris moved to Canada in 1952.

**Doreen Thompson,  
Tenerife, Canarias**

## Sally sparkles on Selsey lifeboat

I would also like to thank everyone for an enjoyable second visit I recently had at Ovingdean. It was wonderful to meet up with one or two people I had met on previous visit, to find new friends, to

have further knowledge of all that is going at St Dunstan's in the way of training and social events.

Our local VIP club were recently invited to have a trip aboard a lifeboat that we have in Selsey. It was a wonderful experience and as a St Dunstaner when the coxon asked "If anybody would like to take the wheel please do so" I volunteered. To feel the surge and speed of the boat as we went forth, to feel the spray of the sea either side of us was most exhilarating. So thank you St Dunstan's for giving me that confidence.

**Sally Diamond,  
Selsey, West Sussex**

## Building stones of history

I was most interested to hear about the British Antarctic Survey (October **Review**) as I worked in the Export Sales Division at Kodak who supplied films at that time. The item on Canada was also of interest as I have visited nine times. I wonder if your correspondent noted that Buchart Gardens, Vancouver Island was formerly used for brickmaking and the chimney had been left standing to show people? The first time I went, when sighted, I carefully avoided including it in any photographs as I did not know the history.

**Joyce Graham,  
Hemel Hempstead,  
Hertfordshire**

## Care Assistant sorted out my hearing aid

I was recently staying at Ovingdean on holiday. I have very poor hearing and wear two hearing aids. They were giving me problems, which were quickly and efficiently sorted out by a Care Assistant. How good it was to be able to hear again and not feel cut off. I cannot express how grateful I was and the knowledge that the staff are so helpful, understanding and supportive makes Ovingdean a very special 'home' to us St Dunstaners. Thank you all.

**Ken Lane,  
Birmingham,  
West Midlands**

## Down to earth with a bump

I am writing to thank all at St Dunstan's Ovingdean for a most happy and informative induction week. I don't think I can highlight any one incident or occasion during our stay, other than the first meeting with Martin and realising that he is totally blind, yet there he was "showing" us to our room and telling us of its facilities. It brought me down to earth with a bump, as did some of the stories of the other "inductees" we met.

**Ernie and Kathleen Bignell,  
Lancing, West Sussex**

# SHEFFIELD UPDATE

**A**T THE TIME of writing, we are still on track to take possession of the building in mid-October from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, the previous owner, and to invite the first trainees into the centre in January. Ray Hazan is part of the Project Group and will be visiting the site along with other St Dunstaners. We have already engaged one member of staff and are well into recruiting the IT and Rehabilitation specialists who will form the core of the training work at Sheffield. Plans have been prepared for the alterations that we think are necessary to create a ten-bedroom unit and builders are tendering for the works so that we can start as soon as possible. Works include replacing the old lift and creating teaching rooms and a



Soon to be St Dunstan's Sheffield - our new training centre.

training kitchen. As we develop the plans, it is becoming even clearer that Sheffield will be very different from Ovingdean as it will focus solely on meeting the IT and ROVI (mobility, independent living skills etc) training needs

identified at earlier assessment at Ovingdean (the Introduction Course etc) or home visits. It will be open only from Monday to Friday and cater for St Dunstaners in the more northern half of England. Unlike Ovingdean which is a registered care home, it will not provide dedicated care though there will always be staff on duty through the day and night during the week. In effect, it can be considered as catering more on a hotel basis than providing the sort of programme that Ovingdean does. The decision to offer a place at Sheffield will be discussed with the St Dunstaner and their Welfare Officer and will depend upon a combination of factors. Hopefully, it will soon have an effect on the training waiting list and reduce travelling times for trainees.

**Dick Lake,  
Ovingdean Manager**



# MANY HAPPY RETURNS ERNIE!

Family salute century old St Dunstaner who survived horrors of Far East Prisoner of War camps

**S**T DUNSTANER ERNIE WALKER of Horsham, West Sussex celebrated an exceptional birthday with a close group of his family and friends on October 15th. There was also a very special message of congratulation sent from Her Majesty The Queen wishing him the very best of health on his 100th birthday.

by Simon Rogers

Over his ten decades, Ernie has witnessed the best and worst of mankind, though the joys of family life provide a caring focus to his daily routine. Living with his son Christopher, Ernie now has ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren living on both sides of the Atlantic.

Recalling his teenage years, Ernie said "I went to school at St Clements in Notting Hill. The vicar there got me a job which I started a few weeks before my 14th birthday." When he started work as an office boy, making tea at a stockbrokers in Lombard Street, horse-drawn carriages were still a regular sight in the city, while St Dunstan's had only been running for three and a half years.

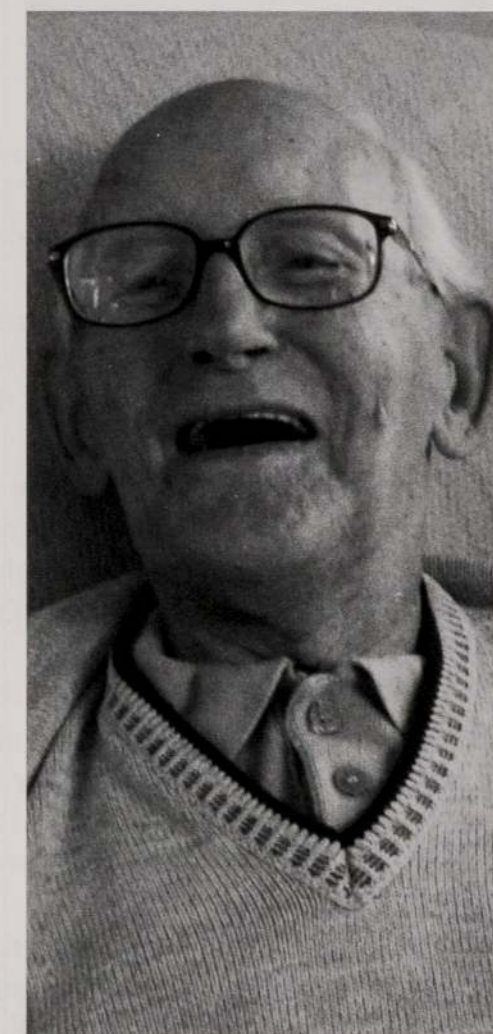
At 25, Ernie married his childhood sweetheart Annie, and they started raising a family. This routine was broken by the onset of World War II. Ernie joined the Royal Army Service Corps in April 1941 and was posted to Malaya and then Java – just in time to be caught by

the Japanese. For the next four years he was moved around labour camps, suffering illness, malnutrition and privation. He was eventually liberated (on his daughter-in-law's birthday) by Australian Forces although he did not get back to the UK until 1946.

The camps are a distant memory, though Ernie recalls being hospitalised on the ship that brought him home. "We had it tough. We didn't tell people what we had been through. It's a wonder we survived. I don't know how we did – there was nothing of me when I came home."

Ernie weighed about six stone when liberated and after a period of recovery resumed life as a stockbroker. He stayed with the same firm becoming their manager.

He holds advances in air travel and telephone technology in some awe, though with family in Texas, New York and Idaho,



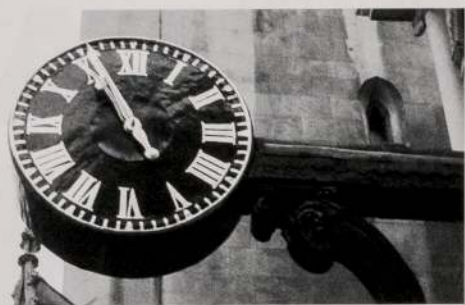
St Dunstaner Ernie Walker has good cause to celebrate.

they have proved most advantageous over the years. He and his late wife regularly visited family in the USA for many years.

The privations of Ernie's time as a FEPOW eventually caused a deterioration of his sight and he became a St Dunstaner in 1997. However, those days rest in the past and we wish Ernie many happy returns for the future!

## It strikes me...

with Gog and Magog



Gog and Magog hear that shoppers are being challenged to ditch consumer culture and stay away from the tills for a day on November 27th.

On Buy Nothing Day, the call is to try simple living for a day, spend time with family and friends, rather than spend money on them. Buy Nothing Day also exposes the environmental and ethical consequences of consumerism. Developed countries such as the UK, with only 20 per cent of the world population are consuming over 80 per cent of the earth's natural resources, causing a disproportionate level of environmental damage. Apparently if everyone was to live like one St Dunstan's employee, we would require seven earths to sustain them.

The organisers hope the public carry this principle beyond a single day and will make a commitment to consuming less, recycling more and challenging companies to clean up and be fair. More can be found online at [www.buynothingday.co.uk](http://www.buynothingday.co.uk) or if you are already fed up with tinsel, check out a seasonal companion website [www.buynothingchristmas.org](http://www.buynothingchristmas.org).

## ARCHERS TARGET THE WORLD CONKER KINGS

SEVERAL MEMBERS OF St Dunstan's Archery Club visited the 40th World Conker Championships in Ashton, near Oundle, Northamptonshire to promote St Dunstan's and visually impaired archery over the weekend of October 9th-10th.

All proceeds from the World Conker Championships go to visually impaired projects. It was through the conkers that part of the funding was found for the Archery Club Buggy, and for Great Britain fleeces for the British Blind Sport (BBS) International Squad.

The event, held on the village green started in 1965 when a group of pub regulars decided to play conkers instead of going fishing. Since then over £245,000 has been raised for blind causes.

Competitors are not allowed to use their own chestnuts. Around 1,000 chestnuts were stored to be drilled and strung for the contest. The lace between knuckle and nut must measure eight inches. The striker must not deliberately miss the conker and tangling of laces is noted (three snags and you're out). Each competitor has three

### David Poyner reports

shots and the game continues until a conker is smashed.

St Dunstan's were invited back to raise the awareness of what visually impaired people can achieve. Their demonstration was witnessed by around 5,000 people from across the world, from such countries as Sweden, America, Norway and Canada.

The St Dunstan's group, demonstrated how visually impaired people can shoot archery and participate in a sport along side sighted people. There was also a "have a go" for adults and children, so that they could see for themselves how to shoot.

A lot of time was spent explaining to people what the role of St Dunstan's was and how they introduced their members to visually impaired archery. The whole day was extremely busy and hard work.

Thanks to Sue Habgood, Lindsay Poyner, Colin Dickinson, Phil Varden, Brian Muggridge, Clive Jones, Nigel Whiteley and Dave Poyner for their tireless efforts.

## 50 YEAR BADGE PRESENTATION

St Dunstaner Phil Duffee of Seaford, East Sussex was presented with his Golden Jubilee badge in October. Phil, who served in the North Staffordshire Regiment, is renowned for his canework and other handicrafts as well as teaching braille and computer skills.

## Fast cars, fast girls and the world's fastest blindman

BILLY 'THE WHIZZ' BAXTER was bombing through the bikes and babes on satellite television channel Men and Motors last month. The channel which is known for its mix of high octane motoring programmes and glamour girls added a motorbiking blind man to the mix. There were four broadcasts of a television documentary, *Riding Blind*, which told how St Dunstaner Billy smashed the Solo World Land Speed Record for the blind and blindfolded on a motorcycle. The film follows Billy from the very first time he got back on a bike after losing his sight, through the trials and tribulations leading up to the World record attempt, and his reaction after smashing the record with an unmatched 164.8mph. It was on August 2nd 2003 that he made his historic solo ride on a Kawasaki Ninja ZX-12R at MOD Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. "It's tough having lost your sight, as even the simplest of tasks can initially seem impossible," said Billy. "That's why I wanted to break this record and give hope to other disabled and blind people and to raise awareness of the Charity that quite literally saved my life."



Squadron Leader Rich Evans, MILT, RAF and Flight Officer Kate Dudman of the Defence Movements School at RAF Brize Norton presented St Dunstan's with £2,000 on September 27th. It was accepted by St Dunstaner Peter Hammond who described his own experience of rehabilitation at St Dunstan's. The donation was raised by RAF families at a Party in the Park event on June 5th.

## Ten questions on...

The subject of Birds

Harry Beevers ruffles our feathers!

- 1) The Grass Parakeet or Budgerigar is native to which country?
- 2) What colour are canaries in the wild?
- 3) What was the name of Long John Silver's parrot in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*?
- 4) The emblem of the Prince of Wales consists of three feathers from which bird?
- 5) What was the suggestion of the Duke of Wellington to Queen Victoria when she complained of the number of sparrows nesting in the Crystal Palace in 1851?
- 6) Which New Zealand bird with sporting connections has whiskers like a cat, a very good sense of smell with nostrils at the end of its beak and burrows in the ground like a mole?
- 7) Which current Championship League Football Club is nicknamed "The Seagulls"?
- 8) According to legend, which bird could not enter Noah's Ark but had to perch on its roof because of its incessant chattering?
- 9) Which bird is known in various parts of this country as a Bobby, a Cutty, a Scutty or a Stumpy probably arising from its short cut of tail?
- 10) What is the name of the bird who has been pursued by Sylvester the Cat for over 50 years in Warner Brothers' cartoons and the popular song *I Tawt I Taw a Puddy Tat*?

Answers can be found on page 29.

# Northern Ireland Veterans Remember



Pictures courtesy of Graham Wright

Ray Peart and his escort with Ray Hazan and Graham Wright at the National Memorial Arboretum.

**O**N THURSDAY September 23rd, members of the Northern Ireland Veterans Association (NIVA) held a Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. St Dunstaners Ray Peart and Ray Hazan, both of whom were injured in Northern Ireland in 1973, attended.

The Arboretum is on a 150-acre site and stands as a national memorial to those who have lost their life in the service of their country. St Dunstan's contributed towards the construction of a path, lined with scented bushes, which leads to the Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness.

Some 180 veterans and families gathered in the Chapel

by Ray Hazan

to remember fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, colleagues and friends in the armed forces, police and emergency services who had lost their lives during the



St Dunstan's Path.

troubles in Northern Ireland or in Irish related terrorism. It was a very moving service during which there was a presentation and dedication of the NIVA Standard.

The Chaplain General of HM Land Forces gave an address. Standard bearers, military personnel, families and friends then walked to the Ulster Grove where wreaths were laid, to the lament of bagpipes.

We then wandered round the site visiting, in my case, trees and plaques planted in memory of Royal Anglians killed in Northern Ireland. Besides my wife Robbie, I was accompanied by Graham Wright, a former platoon sergeant, who had saved my life when I was injured.

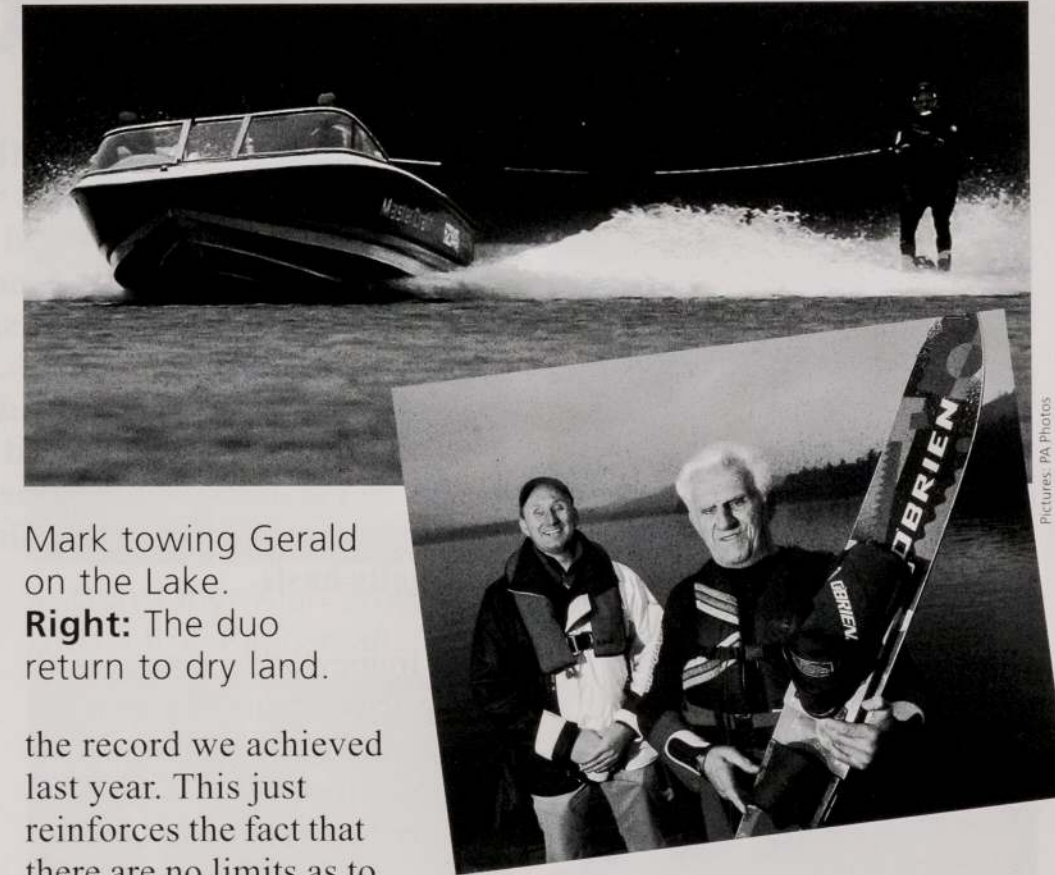
The Arboretum is still in its infancy in terms of tree growth, but overall, it is a fitting memorial and well worth a visit.

# BLIND DUO CAUGHT SPEEDING

Rebecca Shadwell reports

ST DUNSTANER AND Blind Water Speed Record Holder Mark Threadgold teamed up with 71-year-old legendary blind water-skier Gerald Price to set a new speed record for the blind on October 14th, World Sight Day. The attempt, comically referred to as the "blind leading the blind" by the duo, achieved a record speed today of 46.26 mph.

Accompanied by a sighted driver, Mark was at the controls of the boat that towed Gerald to a new top speed, breaking their previous record of 34 mph. Shortly after breaking the record, Mark said "It's a privilege to be part of what could potentially be the very last Windermere Records Week and being able to raise the bar on



Mark towing Gerald on the Lake.

**Right:** The duo return to dry land.

the record we achieved last year. This just reinforces the fact that there are no limits as to what blind people can achieve."

Mark served for 15 years as a Telecommunications and Electronics Engineer in the Royal Corps of Signals before

he became a St Dunstaner after suffering a head injury in 1999.

Also out on the Lake was Janet Salt who has set Women's Records for Blind waterskiing.

# Bless this balloon!

Simon Rogers reports

THE DEAN OF ST PAUL'S Cathedral blessed the St Dunstan's-Royal Artillery Hot Air Balloon on the steps of the London landmark on October 14th. In a brief ceremony that brought together representatives of St Dunstan's, the Royal Artillery and the City of London, Dr John Moses read a prayer wishing the best to the craft and safe passage to St Dunstaner pilot Jamie Weller. He added that he

thought it was a first for St Paul's. Jamie was present with colleagues from Deloitte where he works as a tax consultant. The ceremony concluded with a powerful burst of flame from the balloon's burner, lighting up the early morning streets.

Jonathan Dyer, Dr John Moses and Jamie at St Paul's.



# ST DUNSTAN'S MARKS WORLD SIGHT DAY AT LONDON EYE



**S**T DUNSTAN'S BECAME THE first major organisation to endorse Vision 2020's "UK Framework for action" on October 14th – World Sight Day – during a gala evening at British Airways London Eye. Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN said that he was delighted to be the first to sign the framework. "It is a terrible but all too true fact that every five seconds someone in the world goes blind," he added. "World Sight Day allows us not just raise awareness of avoidable blindness worldwide but also to focus on the issues the visually impaired community in the UK face on a daily basis."

"The framework encourages all parties to communicate, plan and work together to achieve the very best results for visually impaired people in the UK."

As an organisation, Vision 2020 is dedicated to preventing avoidable sight loss. The 'framework' seeks to draw service users, professionals and organisations such as health, public and non-profit groups together to identify opportunities, challenges and appropriate actions. They hope

## Simon Rogers reports

to be a powerful representative voice influencing the government and "articulating key issues" to institutions, organisations and the public. They also hope to encourage research into preventing sight loss and improving services for visually impaired people.

Over 300 people attended the event, St Dunstaners, supporters, members of the Armed Forces and representatives of the UK's major sight loss organisations. Captain Gordon-Lennox charted St Dunstan's history from the First World War to today. "Following the change in our Constitution in 2000, St Dunstan's has been able to extend the care we offer to ex-Service men and women who have lost their sight due to age, accident or illness.

"This change has meant a busy time for St Dunstan's with this

year marking our highest annual intake of new St Dunstaners since World War II, and the imminent purchase of a new centre in Sheffield which will meet the increased need for rehabilitation training."

The Chairman paid tribute to the achievements of several St Dunstaners, some of whom were present, and thanked supporters for their help in enabling the charity to promote independence for blind ex-Service men and women.

The guests were piped aboard the London Eye by RAF Bandsmen. As it turns on the South Bank of the Thames, each capsule is taken up 140m allowing a 25-mile view on a clear day. The night-time ride highlights London as an endless sea of sodium yellow dots. "It's very smooth," said one St Dunstaner. "You are almost unaware that it is moving." For some it brought back memories of sights before blindness, but most revelled in the company of friends celebrating around them.



St Dunstaner Alan Brown with a RAF Bandsman.



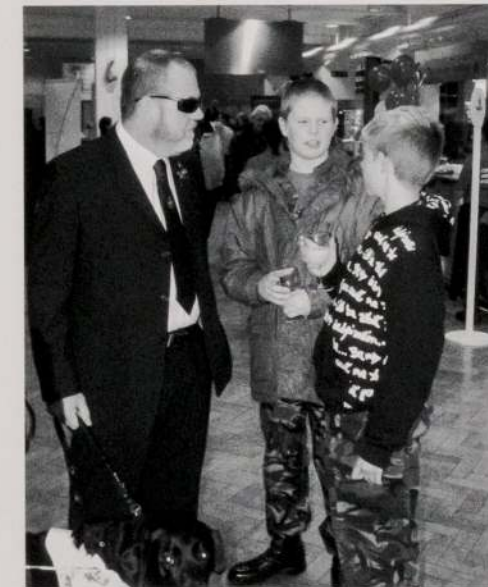
Eve Lucas disembarks with help from her escort.



The Chairman announces the launch of the UK Framework for action.



Eye flight at night.



Peter chats with the cadets.



The event had sax appeal.



Minister for Veterans Ivor Caplin with St Dunstan's Chief Executive Robert Leader and Head of Fundraising Sarah Tait.



St Dunstaner Tom Arnold in the Eye with Big Ben and the Palace of Westminster on the north bank of the Thames.



# Heroic reconstruction

**T**here is a lot of history in Bill Foxley's wedding day photograph. Not just because it was a special day for Bill and his bride Catherine, but because it features a group of people who had ensured that the groom was able to be there. "I cannot think of another photograph that shows them all together," says Bill.

by Simon Rogers

Three years before, Bill had been severely burnt when a bomber on which he was navigator crashed. He suffered severe burns to his face and hands. In previous wars, such injuries would have been considered fatal and the few survivors would have been hidden away from public contact. The people with Bill in his wedding picture changed that status quo. Surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe, anaesthetist John

Hunter and the others turned the medical world - and the manner in which Service casualties were treated - on its head. Their burns unit at East Grinstead developed new techniques - both surgical and psychological - to rebuild faces, hands, to restore function where it had been lost and keep spirits high when conventional sense said otherwise.

McIndoe's legacy continues to bring hope to burns victims and Bill points out that the methods used on him and 648 other airmen have led to methods for growing new skin grafts, spray-on cell cultures, and cartilage replacements.

Cosmetic, plastic, or reconstructive surgery came to life with a ubiquitous group of Royal Air Force men who dubbed themselves - The Guinea Pig Club.

"In 1939, the Government anticipated that there would be quite a number of burns patients because of the fuel aboard the aircraft. They set up four hospitals, one of which was at the Queen Victoria's Hospital," said Bill. "It was only a cottage hospital and they erected four huts - Wards Three and Four were for the RAF, Ward One was for the Army and Navy and Ward Two was for civilian casualties.

"Archibald McIndoe, a New Zealander by birth, was selected to be the Consultant Plastic Surgeon to the RAF. He stayed as a civilian because he was not keen on rules and regulations and he hated bureaucracy. He set about getting medical staff ready for the influx to start. The first

people he had in were the Battle of Britain lads. They were boys who formed the Guinea Pig Club on July 20th 1941 outside Ward Three.

"They were going to form a drinking club, and at that time they were going to call it The Maximilion Club but somebody came up and said 'Well, we're nothing but a bunch of guinea pigs, why not call it The Guinea Pig Club'. And that's how it all started.

"True to the type of humour they had, they appointed the secretary as one of the chaps whose hands were bound and he couldn't hold a pen, the treasurer was a chap whose legs had been damaged and he was in a wheelchair, so he couldn't abscond with whatever funds were there."

At the end of the war there were 649 Guinea Pigs. "The great majority were British lads, but there were Australians and Canadians. Airmen from 16 nations in all."

Bill had volunteered for the Royal Air Force on his 18th birthday in 1941, training as a navigator the following year.

"I became a member of The Guinea Pig Club on the night of March 16th 1944, when I was



William Foxley's Wedding Day, June 28th 1947. From the left: John Hunter, Archie McIndoe, Bill's parents, RAF Surgeon Squadron Leader Jerry Moore (who was best man and had worked on Bill's face and hands) unknown bridesmaid, Bill and Catherine Foxley, little sister Pat, the Bride's parents, Matron Caroline Hall, and Theattre Sister Jill Mullins.



Bill Foxley at home today. "We wear our scars with pride," he says.



Bill and other Guinea Pig patients had to endure pedicals. Skin was raised on an arm, cut loose, shaped into a tube and then attached to the face. Painful and protracted it allowed the East Grinstead surgeons to rebuild the nose for many of the injured airmen.

one of a crew of six," said Bill. "We were taking off from RAF Wymesfold in Leicestershire when we had a malfunction on the elevators which caused us lose height and speed and we crashed about three miles from the airfield. I escaped down through the astrodome and when I got onto the fuselage I noticed that the wireless operator calling, screaming for help. So I went back inside and he was trapped behind his table. I managed to free him and we got out but by this time the aircraft was a blazing inferno. Getting back out through the astrodome again, the metal was red hot and that was the reason that my hands were damaged there."

The wireless operator died soon after Bill had got him out. Another two crew mates also perished in the blaze. A fourth would also spend four years at

East Grinstead undergoing reconstructive surgery.

"When I got out of the aircraft I couldn't see at all but the bomber led me away and we got in a ditch before the plane exploded," added Bill. He was moved to a hospital in the Midlands and was then moved to East Grinstead on McIndoe's orders.

"While I was down there I met another St Dunstaner who became a friend of mine, Jimmy Wright. We were in adjacent beds. He came back from Italy. And in 1945, another lad who became a St Dunstaner joined us, Dickie Richardson who used to work on the switchboard at Ovingdean.

"Jimmy Wright and I were in Ward Four, Ian Fraser as he was then came to see us and discuss

a one of two things. Fortunately for me, after a few months I got some sight back in my left eye, I lost my right eye, but because I got some sight back I didn't become a St Dunstaner right away. I was in the borderline and eventually became a St Dunstaner in 1989 when I was then registered as blind."

Bill speaks of Sir Archibald McIndoe with great affection. "He was tremendous fellow, he was a leader, a brilliant surgeon, humanitarian and also a great psychologist.

"He knew that because of the reconstructive surgery we were going to have it was a long term in the hospital. He hated regulations. In the early days, in Service hospitals, patients if they went out had to wear hospital blues which was a horrible uniform." McIndoe insisted on allowing the airmen to keep their RAF uniform. He also campaigned for a change in the law which allowed the injured airmen to remain in service. As long as McIndoe had treatment to give, his patients would remain a part of the Royal Air Force.

"He went into East Grinstead and asked the people to accept the chaps when they came into town, not staring at them, but if they did converse with them, look at them, not away from them, so it would give them the confidence to get out," continued Bill.

"And that was part of his psychology to get us out and about and in the public eye as quickly as possible.

"Four years in the hospital sounds a long time, but because of the way he arranged things, we enjoyed our life there. We had a marvellous social life. We used to go up to London pretty regularly during the week to see all the shows and been entertained afterwards, taken out to night clubs, restaurants and dinners. Life was damned good!

"That's why the camaraderie is so much greater than any other sort of organisation. McIndoe's famous saying was 'We are the trustees of each other. So long as you keep together you will be able to overcome any difficulty that arises.' Not a truer word was spoken."

Bill puts it in perspective. "I had 35 reconstructive operations there - when I crashed, I lost my eyelids, my nose, my lips, my chin and of course my hands. It's a long term job trying build that back up and not only that, the confidence of people to go out. My first hurdle was going home. In the early days you were not a very pretty picture. You were thinking 'what will the neighbours say'? Of course when you got up there you were still Bill Foxley. Your personality comes out whatever your appearance.

"We were young, high spirited, wanted to go out with the girls, go for a drink. Of course, when I was flying I didn't drink at all but McIndoe's idea was to get you out in the public eye and where better to go than to a pub.

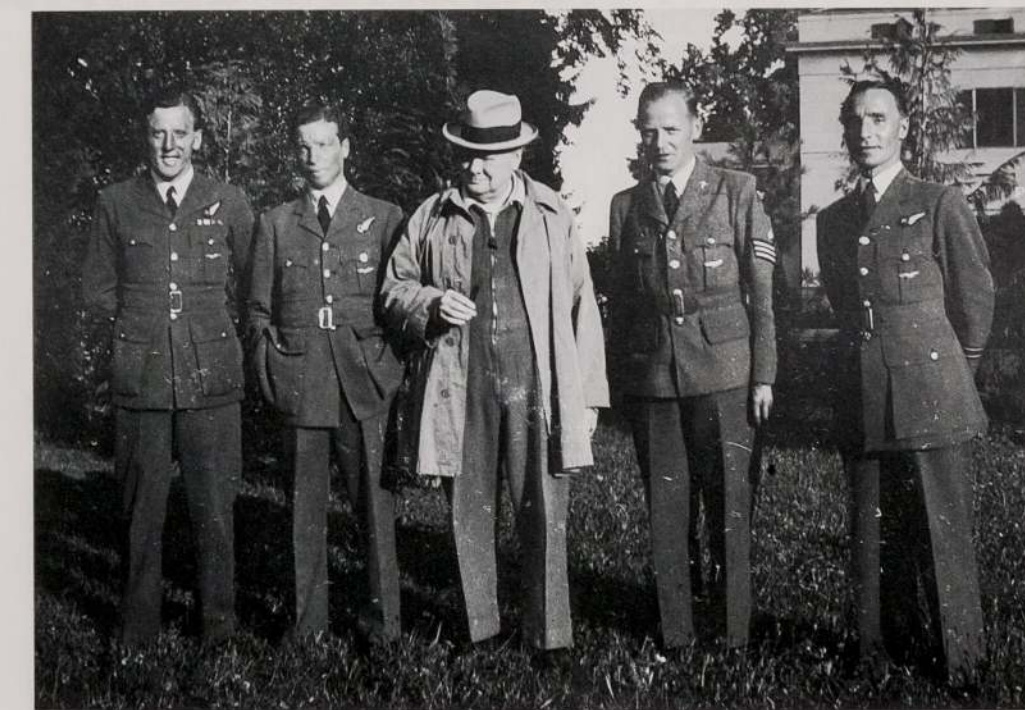
"People are inquisitive. It's

seeing something different. Children in particular will ask questions. I know that from my own grandchildren. Actually, not so much from them because they have grown up with me, but they will ask why I have short fingers."

McIndoe died in 1960, aged 59. "His daughter says he wore himself out," said Bill. "Some days he was operating more than 12 hours a day."

However, his legacy continues in the form of several trusts which promote new forms of plastic and reconstructive surgery. There is a special emphasis on the treatment of burn injuries, wound healing, corneal restoration and cartilage repair.

"At Queen Victoria Hospital, there is the McIndoe Surgical Centre and I'm a trustee of the McIndoe's Guinea Pigs Memorial Trust Fund," added



Guinea Pigs Jack Allaway, Bill Foxley, Claude Allen and Ricky Rix with Winston Churchill in August 1946.

Bill. Like St Dunstan's the work is supported entirely by public donation and has developed many cutting-edge technologies. "All the Guinea Pigs are interested because if these techniques had been available in our day, then we wouldn't have spent so long in hospital. For some operations, we would be strapped down or supported by sandbags for a couple of weeks because they didn't want you to move and put pressure on where they had operated. Now people can be up within hours."

More information can be found on [www.blondmcindoe.com](http://www.blondmcindoe.com) and [www.gpigs.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.gpigs.fsnet.co.uk).

A two-disc DVD of *The Battle of Britain*, starring Laurence Olivier, Curt Jurgens, Susannah York, Bill Foxley and others is available. The film has also been packaged with *A Bridge Too Far* and *The Great Escape* as MGM's *Essential War Epic Collection*. Prices may vary.

## RAF took modern approach to care



Military historian Emily Mayhew was inspired by her Grandmother's stories of McIndoe and the Guinea Pigs.

**E**MILY MAYHEW grew up with stories about the men of The Guinea Pig Club. Her grandmother worked at Sir Archibald McIndoe's revolutionary unit at East Grinstead as a VAD. "She was doing something that would probably require four years training in counselling now, but back then she was thrown in at the deep end." A simple offer to write a letter could put the VADs in the position of having to negotiate reunions between disfigured airmen and uncertain family members.

Recently, those stories have inspired her to examine McIndoe's work more closely, touching on the lives of those he operated on. Her book, *The Reconstruction of Warriors – Archibald McIndoe, the Royal Air Force and the Guinea Pig*

Club, charts efforts to reduce the likelihood of injury from fire, the realisation that some injury was inevitable and the decision to restore those who were injured to as normal a life as possible.

"The RAF intended to set themselves apart, to show that they were the modern Service quite deliberately," said Emily. "Up to then those who had been severely wounded had been put away in institutions. From before the war, the RAF had looked at the type of injuries airmen would suffer - it was a fact that sometimes fuel tanks would explode. They were sure that research would overcome this, but they didn't just say 'you were stupid for getting in there with a tank full of petrol' they took ownership of the injury. McIndoe is often

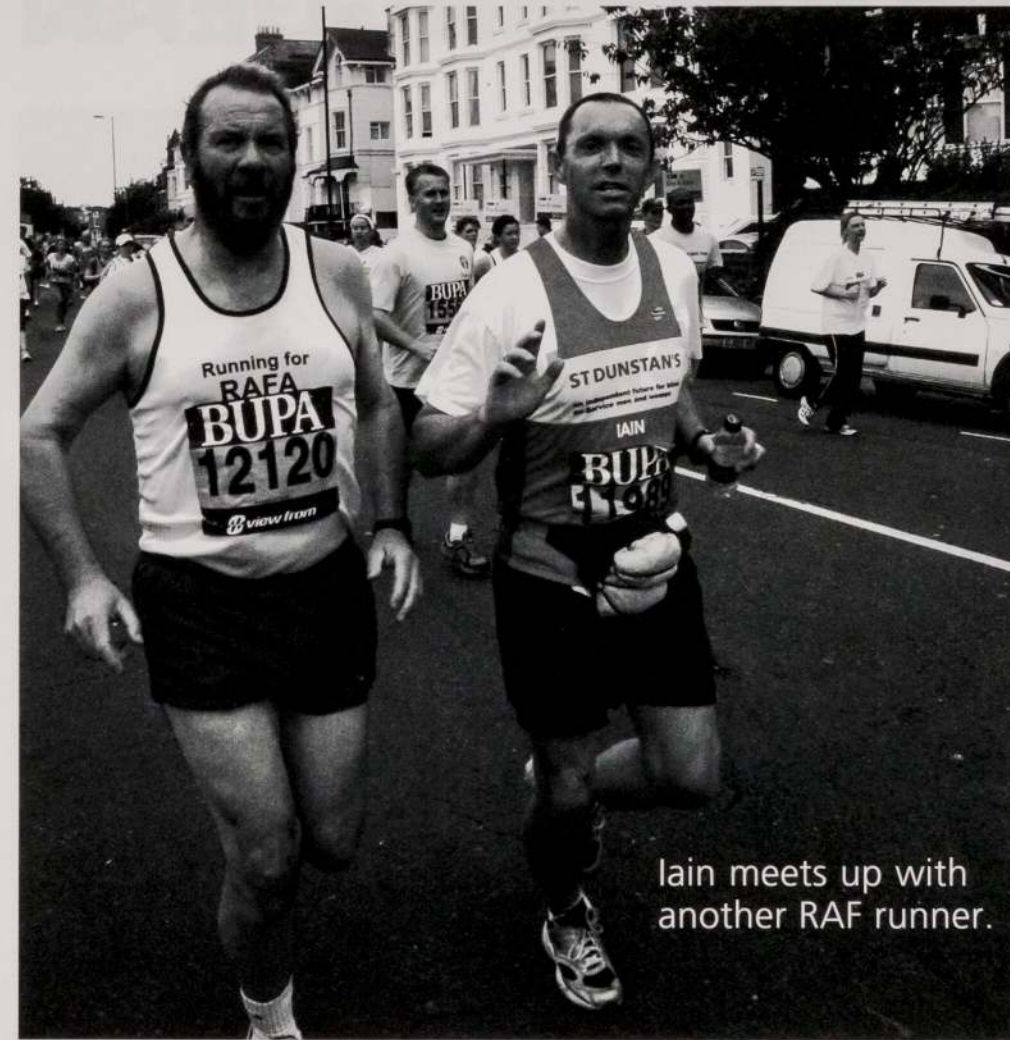
seen as a maverick fighting against authority, but he had a most powerful ally on his side at the time - the most powerful ally you could have in Britain at that time - and that was the RAF!"

St Dunstan's Bill Foxley and the late Dickie Richardson and Jimmy Wright are featured in the book. Emily also has particular praise for a figure who will be familiar to pupils of Lord Normanby's POW Blind School at Kloster Haina and Bad Soden - Major David Charters. "He really was the unsung hero. He had trained as an ophthalmologist, but had to carry out reconstructive surgery on burns victims. He replaced eyelids for several people, often under appalling conditions, being marched to the room where he would operate under armed guard. It seems he was a born surgeon and performed exceptional work on his patients."

*The Reconstruction of Warriors* by E.R. Mayhew (Published by Greenhill Books, ISBN 1-85367-610-1) is available from all good bookshops and Amazon.co.uk.

Emily's research also features in a documentary, *The Guinea Pig Club*. Digital and cable users will be able to tune in to a broadcast on BBC4 (Freeview 10, Sky 116, NTL 127/12, Telewest 107) at 19:00 on Monday November 8th. It will be repeated on BBC2 at a later date.

## SPARKY AND IAIN RUN GREAT SOUTH



Iain meets up with another RAF runner.

ST DUNSTANERS Iain Millard and Steve Sparkes were flying the flag for St Dunstan's in historic Portsmouth on October 10th. They were amongst the 15,000 people taking part in the BUPA Great South Run, arguably Britain's most popular road race. There was an Arctic nip in the wind, but the morning was mercifully dry. Steve Sparkes crossed the finish line in 1hr, 27mins while Iain ran it in 1hr, 38mins. Several members of St Dunstan's staff also ran. The Gym's Mark Brownlow came in with 1hr, 16mins, followed by Andy Alliston a minute later. ROVI Supervisor Ian Hebborn came in at 1hr, 22mins as did ROVI Grant Smith. Sports Coordinator Louise Timms finished in 1hr, 34mins and Lynda Stringer in 1hr, 52mins.

## Panty flight brings donation from Gulf

A RAF crew from 504 Squadron raised funds for St Dunstan's while stationed in the Gulf on Op Telic. Lady members of the crew hung their undergarments on a washing line for a "guess whose?" game and pilots (including one seconded from the USAAF) were challenged to wear them while flying missions. The games raised £350 which was presented by Flight Sgt Paddy Caffrey and WO1 Thompson to St Dunstaners Billy Baxter and Bill Kennedy. While at their home base of RAF Cottesmore they were presented with a St Dunstan's shield.



Picture: Crown Copyright

## Ray Hazan tunes into the latest St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society meeting

# ON THE AIR AT OIVINGDEAN

IT WAS A week of coincidences! You never know who you are going to meet over the airwaves? A small gathering; Bill Shea, Ted John, Tom Frankland, Mike Tetley and Ray Hazan accompanied by Beryl John, Jane Taylor, Joyce Morgan, Rose Shed, Audrey Gaygen and Elsie Cole met for the week long meeting of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society which ran October 8th-14th. An excellent lunch was held at which the Society's President, St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, and several of the Society's friends were present. All had contributed to the Club in some way. The President thanked the members for their contribution in spreading the word about St Dunstan's over the air waves to an international audience.

The shortest contact was made to Kemp Town, some three miles away! Many more were made to distant and far-flung



Alec Higgins tells his fellow radio enthusiasts Tom Frankland and Ray Hazan that he made contact with the station before becoming a St Dunstaner.

countries. A conversation with Tenerife revealed the caller to be a former student colleague of St Dunstaner Jamie Cuthbertson and the former was most interested to catch up with news about Jamie.

Jane's nephew, David from Canada, needed no radio to

speak to his aunt when he paid a visit to Ovingdean. The society had last spoken to his father, Jane's brother VE3FA, Frank Green in Canada in 1987.

The Secretary, Ted John explained that he had applied for a special callsign for the Society to mark St Dunstan's 90th anniversary next year. As a result the callsign GB90STD has been allocated for the station. To mark the event, the Society was planning to hold four meetings next year, the first taking place from January 16th-22nd. It was agreed that the AGM would be moved from the March meeting to October next year. In all, it was a week of conviviality, conversations, callsigns and coincidences. Thank you to all who made it possible.

## Ladies up and adam on RIB

TWO LADY St Dunstaners have tested their mettle on Ad Astra. Maria Pikulski and Moira Meekins went out on the RIB from Brighton Marina, braving choppy 15ft waves with glee (a mood not shared by Sports Coordinator Louise Timms who was with them). Another voyage saw Master Mariner Ted John sail out with Mike Tetley. Mike apparently carried a pedometer with him, converting the journey into steps. Meanwhile, Ted, who declares himself to be on a low salt diet, was somewhat perturbed by the manner in which the driver spun round and smashed through the boat's own wake. "I don't think I've ever had so much salt in me in a lifetime," he said.

## BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE COMPUTER CLUB

by Ray Hazan

Although it was not a very riveting programme on the surface, much varied ground was covered in the general sessions of the Computer Club on October 6th-7th. Bill Shea, Mike Tetley, Harry Beevers, Bob Alty, Walter Briggs, Tom Frankland, Lin Stephens, Mark Threadgold and Ray Hazan exchanged ideas and experiences, picked up tips and knowledge and were thoroughly tested in a quiz written by Sylvia, Donna and Theresa from Training and Rehabilitation. These latter put a great deal of effort into devising these amusing, brain teasing and challenging tests. Harry Beevers has volunteered himself as quiz master next year, so it will be worth booking in just for that!

We enjoyed two regular visitors. Brad was his usual fount of knowledge and Iki of CVIP Ltd showed a relatively new device, the TADI or Talking Diary. This has the

regular features of an organiser, but uses a very small keypad. He also showed us an extensive range of speakers, which can be connected to smaller devices, such as portable CD or cassette players. These speakers have their own battery and produce a really good sound. They vary in price from £5 to £25.

The gathering is not all about silicon chips. PBK, as always, provided a really scrumptious buffet, which very adequately complemented the relaxed and happy pre, during and after-dinner chat.

The Club next meets on Tuesday/Wednesday March 22nd-23rd 2005 and please note that it is a day earlier than usual.

CVIP can be contacted on 020 8420 1338.

## CHINA WIN 141 MEDALS IN THE PARALYMPICS

China emerged as the winners in the 11-day Paralympics in Athens during September. Their team won 141 medals in all. Team GB returned to the UK with 94 medals – 35 gold, 30 silver and 29 bronze – and some disappointment at not winning a bronze in Boccia.

Some visually impaired athletes found their expectations dashed during the games but Ian Rose won silver in judo. There are hopes that it will be possible to include archery in the next games, assuming enough countries can muster a team of blind bowmen.

## BALANCING THE BOOKS

Ted Bunting on talking books

### Army Wives

Author: Catherine Jones

Reader: Anne White

Duration: 11 hours, 3 minutes

Catalogue Number: TB 11478

My mother-in-law was an army wife for 37 years, serving ubiquitously around the world, but I doubt if she ever encountered such naughty behaviour that occurs in this anti army book! But then, the events of this book are purely fictitious; crested by the author's feverish imagination. Her army wives live in an unpleasant fantasy world, a never-never land in which all Colonels could be Colonel Blimp and a Major's wife can reach the threshold of a fortune by designing wooden bookends. It's a pity really, because Catherine Jones clearly knows something about the subject. And I'm sure in the real world there are many aspects of the lives of army wives that could be very interesting indeed. Quite why she dislikes the army so much is difficult to tell (perhaps she saw something nasty in the sergeants' mess) but as my mother-in-law would inform her, there is no point in opposing the system. So regrettably, (for it is tolerably well written) all we are left with is a book you can safely ignore without detriment to either your education or enjoyment.

# PENDLETON'S PANTRY

Blind chef **Stephen Pendleton** cooks up a flan-tastic treat!

## Apple Flan

This recipe incorporates Pastry Cream and will fill an eight inch Flan Tin.

First make the Sweet Pastry.

### Ingredients:

**8oz (200g) plain flour.**  
**5oz (125g) butter.**  
**2oz (50g) caster sugar.**  
**1 to 2 eggs.**

### Method for the pastry:

Sieve the flour into a medium sized mixing bowl. Break the butter up into small chunks and rub into the flour. When making sweet pastry it is worth noting that the texture of the pastry at this stage will be a lot stickier than when making short crust pastry, so therefore it will not have the fine crumbly texture to it. Add the sugar and rub in well. Beat up one of the eggs in a mixing jug and add to the mixture a bit at a time. Rub in well until all the ingredients have bound together and the bowl will come clean. The pastry should come out of the bowl in one lump. Add the second egg if required. When the pastry has bound itself together and comes cleanly out of the bowl, put it back in the clean bowl and cover with cling film and put into the fridge to relax.

Whilst the pastry is relaxing you can now make the pastry cream.

### Ingredients:

**2 eggs.**  
**4oz (100g) caster sugar.**  
**2oz (50g) of plain flour.**  
**1/2 oz (10g) custard powder.**  
**1 pint or 600mls of milk.**  
**A few drops of vanilla essence.**

### Method:

Please note that the measurements must be precise when making this recipe.

Put the milk into a thick-bottomed pan and bring to the boil, making sure to give it an occasional stir to stop the milk from burning. Listen out for bubbles bursting on the surface of the liquid, to guide you when it is boiling.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a bowl until almost white. If you use a hand held electric whisk for this task, it should only take a couple of minutes to do this. Then, mix in the flour and custard powder.

When the milk is boiling, gradually whisk the milk onto the eggs, flour, sugar and custard powder. Remember the milk will be hot, so ladle the milk into a jug and then pour gradually into the mixture. Doing it this way will reduce the risk of splashes.

Return the cream to a clean pan and reboil, stirring all the time. Add a few drops of vanilla essence to the cream.

When boiled, remove from the heat and pour the cream into a clean bowl. Leave the cream to cool. Please note, sprinkle the cream with a bit of caster sugar, this will stop the cream from developing a skin.

For the apples. Using your apple corer and segmenter, which is available from the RNIB, core and segment five apples. Do not peel the apples as the skin will give an extra bit of colour to the finished flan.

Take the pastry out of the fridge and roll to the size of the flan tin. Please note, sweet pastry is quite sticky and you will have to check the pastry after every roll of the pin. Roll the pastry around the rolling pin and roll over your flan tin, tearing off a bit of excess pastry, with this press the pastry gently into the tin making sure to press out any air bubbles that may have formed. Once this is done, prick the bottom of the pastry case all over with a fork.

Cover the inside of the pastry case with grease proof paper, making sure to leave some outside of the tin, this is so you can lift the paper out of the case after you have baked the pastry case. Fill the pastry case with the greaseproof paper inside with dried haricot beans or dry pasta shells. This is to weigh down the pastry

and stop air bubbles from forming and also to stop the sides of the pastry case from falling down to the bottom of the case whilst baking.

Bake the pastry case for ten minutes at 170C. Remove from the oven. Lifting out the greaseproof paper, remove the baking beans or pasta shells. When the pastry case has cooled, you can pour in the pastry cream, smoothing it over with a wooden spoon. Alternatively, you can give the pastry case a very gentle shake from side to side, this will allow the cream to find its own level.

Cover the top of the flan with the segmented apples. Make sure to completely cover the cream with the apples.

To give your flan a glossy shine, you can brush it with apricot glaze.

### Ingredients:

**1/2 pint of water.**  
**1 tbls of apricot jam.**  
**1 teaspoon corn flour.**

### Method:

Bring the water to the boil, you will hear the bubbles bursting rapidly on the surface of the liquid. Add the apricot jam and stir in until it has combined with the water.

Mix the corn flour with a small amount of water and pour into the glaze. Boil for about five minutes stirring all the time. Remove from the heat and brush the hot glaze over the flan.

Serve with double cream.

# LET'S GET PHYSIO!

by **Mike Tetley**

WHEN PAUL JAMES first started catering for the St Dunstan's Physiotherapy Conference there was about 100 working physiotherapists from both world wars. But this weekend, September 24th and 25th, only eight graced the Winter Garden. They were Tom Hart, Fred Collingwood, Bill Morris, Alan Wortley, Norman Perry, Barbara Bell, Alice Gimbrere and Mike Tetley. Tom asked for a list of those still alive but could not come and they would include Bill Shea, Colin Fraser, Norman Hopkins, John Harris, Jack Fulling, Ted Bunting, Herbert Downward, Peter Harry, Eric Foster and from Australia Colin Johnstone and in South Africa Roy French. We were joined by our wives, escorts and widows of former physiotherapists making a party of 17 in all. We are all grateful to St Dunstan's for enabling us to be trained as physios. The

occupation enabled us to be financially independent and travel all over the world to conferences. We wonder why today there are no St Dunstaners training to be physios? It is an interesting varied occupation which keeps you fit and at the age of 74, I am still working full time by choice.

My sympathy goes out to members of the armed services who suddenly become totally blind. Meeting old soldiers who have been blind for some time in the lounge or at the bar can often teach the newly blind some of the tricks in getting about successfully. It takes time to build up their confidence but after all they have been toughened up in the services and taught to use their initiative, unlike most of the civilian blind.



Former Sapper William Hain and his wife, Ivy, of Weymouth, Dorset participated in a parade to mark the 21st anniversary of the Freedom of the Borough of Weymouth and Portland being granted to the Royal Engineers.

St Dunstaner **Ray Sheriff** declares that the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem was his last ever parachute jump

# Back to the Bridge!

**O**NCE AGAIN, for the last time! This phrase has proved my opening sentence for the past 14 years. It was at the ripe old age of 70 in September 1990 that I recommenced parachuting in tandem as a totally blind person. I joined 3rd Parachute Battalion as a founder member in 1941. After the North African Campaign, The Paras returned to Spalding, Lincolnshire. Here we were reinforced and prepared for the second front. Thus, we were flown to Arnhem, Holland. The intention was to capture the bridge over the River Rhine on Sunday, September 17th 1944 which proved *The Bridge Too Far*.

Having lost my sight during that battle, I was hospitalised for eye treatment and a leg wound. Unfortunately, eye treatment proved unsuccessful. So, my next abode was a POW camp in Germany - Stalag 11B. Fortunately, this was only for a short period.

After my liberation I came home to the UK and joined St Dunstan's who at the time had three wards at Stoke Mandelville Hospital. A real blessing being taken under their wing. At that time, I don't know how I would have coped with life. However, once



Ray prepares to jump from the Dakota 3.

trained and happily married etc life became enjoyable.

During the Fifties, I began to think of parachuting, wondering if it would be feasible or practicable. It took me 40 years to accomplish this urge to jump from an Aircraft again.

Finally, with the approval of Major Bob Card, IC, Air Field Camp, Netheravon, Wiltshire. I jumped in tandem from an Islander from 10,000ft. Having satisfied my urge I was content to drop the idea of further para-activities. So, 14 years, 14 jumps later, each one intended to be the last. Two of my tandem masters have been

Dutch, perhaps I can count these as, Doubles?

The weather for the jump on Saturday September 18th proved ideal para conditions. Warm and sunny and sufficient wind. Quite similar to what I experienced way back in 44. Also, likewise the aircraft was a Dakota 3.

The conditions were rather packed - 49 Bodies. Fortunately, as per usual I have the privilege of leaving the aircraft first - the others like to get me out of the way! I had my usual tandem master, Dick Kalinski. We were in the air for around half an hour. I had a

good exit and a fair landing in the same wartime dropping zone called, Ginkel Heath.

We really received a tumultuous welcome. I understand there were around 50,000 people. It was a fantastic atmosphere to hear the shouting and clapping. I have never shaken hands or received so many slaps on the back, and so many kisses! I hope they were all from females? Many young children were seeking autographs from the jumpers. Many British and Dutch friends came to greet me. To name but two- a Dutch friend, Lawrence de Vreeze, an ex-Resistance member, who tried to aid an escape from hospital in Utrecht to prevent me from being sent into a German POW camp. Unfortunately, this attempt failed. Since that time we remained good friends. I received another pat on the back from Ben, a friend who had travelled from Brighton to witness my skydive. We have a weekly tandem ride together.

It was not too long, after my touchdown, before Betty embraced me with a hug and

kiss of relief. On that Saturday evening at the conclusion of our annual Para Dinner. Major Card, our Para organiser, informed the remaining eight Arnhem Vets that there would be no further jumping. Betty clapped and breathed a big sigh of relief. To be quite honest, I feel it is the right decision. I feel the other seven members of the Vets' Team will also agree.

On Sunday, September 19th, Betty and I joined the vast congregation at the Airborne Cemetery, Oosterbeek. This occasion is a very moving and emotional occasion, as the Dutch children are very much involved at the conclusion of the Service. At a given signal they place their tribute of flowers upon the graves of the fallen Airborne Soldiers to which they have been standing.

The VIP's present included Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, HRH Prince Charles and the Polish Ambassador. Following the Service, we were invited to join the Glider Pilots Association for lunch, at a

nearby hotel. Our Dutch friend, Lawrence, was also invited. So, back Monday morning to Blighty, which resulted in a rough crossing over the North Sea. Fortunately, we had our very faithful friend, Danny, in our company to lend a helping hand when necessary. So, Goodbye to yet another Anniversary.

## POET'S CORNER

### AUTUMN REMEMBERED

I loved you in the autumn  
When brown leaves fell  
beneath the marching feet  
And the pale sunlight warmed  
the dark and busy street  
Yet in my heart the silver lark  
It's first sweet song had sung  
And all the world had gone  
For you and I were young  
We strolled along together  
Your body close to mine  
I felt the warmth of springtime  
And all the summer time  
I thought about the time we met  
The sudden thrill I can't forget  
And if you felt the same  
As I, before I knew your name

Frank Tinsley

## ST DUNSTAN'S SWEEP CHAMPIONSHIPS

THE BRITISH BLIND Sports National Outdoor Archery Championships took place at The National Sports Centre Lilleshall Hall near Telford, Shropshire on September 11th. Eleven members of St Dunstan's Archery Club participated with some great personal achievements.

In the Male B1 Recurve, Tony Parkinson came first - setting a new Games record. Clive Jones came second, while Harry Doherty came third on his first attendance. For the Male B1 Compound, Peter Hammond came second and Norman Perry third. Terry Ottewell came second in the

Male B2/3 Recurve, while Nigel Whiteley came first in the Male B2/3 Compound with David Poyner second. The Male VI Open Recurve was won by Steve Moseley, followed by Tom Roddy. Attending for the first time, Marjorie Scott took third place in the Female B2/3 Recurve.

# Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

**Richard Aston** of Buckingham, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

**Thomas Atkinson** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

**Ronald Ballard** of Horley, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1946.

**Francis Beard** of West Molesey, Surrey served in the Coldstream Guards from 1939 to 1946.

**Joseph Boddice** of Rhayader, Powys served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Albert Burns** of Gillingham, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1937 to 1961.

**Joseph Cornish** of Hitchin, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Artillery and then the Royal Engineers between 1940 and 1942.

**Agnes Cree** of Uddington, Glasgow served in the Women's Royal Naval Service 1942 to 1947.

**Robert Dunn** of Forsbrook, Stoke-on-Trent served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1967.

**William Figures** of Olton, Solihull, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Charles Freeman** of Bowthorpe, Norwich served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946.

**Anthony Godfrey** of Rainham, Kent joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in 1951, then served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1954.

**George King** of Skelmersdale, Lancashire served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

**Frederick Loveridge** of Smethwick, West Midlands served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1946.

**Eric Marchant** of Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex served in the Royal Army Dental Corps from 1953 to 1955.

**Jack Middleton** of Farnborough, Hampshire served in the General Service Corps, Manchester Regiment, Cheshire Regiment and Small Arms School Corps between 1944 and 1970.

**Lesley Milne** of Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1959 to 1961.

**John Nunney** of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955

**Joseph Ponting** of Stroud, Gloucestershire served in the 70th Battalion Gloucestershire

Regiment, the Royal Artillery, the Army Air Corps (Parachute Regiment) and Wessex Brigade between 1941 and 1965. He left as a Colour Sergeant.

**John Reedy** of Portsmouth, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1953 to 1978.

**John Ridley** of St Austell, Cornwall served in the Royal Corps of Signals from 1938 to 1946.

**Douglas Rowsell** of Gillingham, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1935 to 1959.

**Jack Stead** of Grimsargh, Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1966.

**Robert Stewart** of Downham Market, Norfolk served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

**Ralph Still** of Rochester, Kent served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and then the Royal Artillery between 1933 and 1940.

**Philip Teacher** of Northwood, Middlesex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946.

**Richard Tippett** of Mount Ambrose, Redruth served first in the Royal Artillery from 1951 to 1953, then with the Royal Army Medical Corps until 1956.

**John Trenchard** of Swanpool, Falmouth, Cornwall served in the RAF during 1939.

**Julia Waters** of Burgess Hill, West Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

**Albert Watson** of Tooting, London served in the East Surrey Regiment and Royal Artillery between 1939 and 1946.

**George Watt** of Dingwell, Rosshire joined the General Service Corps in 1942, and then transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps until 1947.

## COUNTDOWN TO DARKNESS

In November 1914, the need to protect oil supplies drove the Indian Army and Royal Navy's Gulf Division to the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab. When the Turkish Ottoman Empire declared war on November 5th, they moved to take control of Basra. Meanwhile, in Britain, newspaper publisher Cyril Arthur Pearson had been moved by the plight of a blinded Belgian soldier ...

## REUNION ROUND-UP

There were ten St Dunstaners and four widows reunited at the Cornwall Reunion on September 22nd. Major General Andrew Keeling, RM was the member of St Dunstan's Council presiding at the Queen's Hotel, Penzance.

The 2005 reunion season closed in fine form with the Aylesbury Reunion on September 29th. It united 19 St Dunstaners and seven widows at the Holiday Inn, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. St Dunstan's President Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, MC was the member of St Dunstan's Council presiding, while George Powell made the reply during the speeches.

## Ten answers ... from page 11.

1) Australia; 2) Green; 3) Cap'n or Captain Flint; 4) Ostrich; 5) "Sparrowhawks Ma'am."; 6) Kiwi; 7) Brighton and Hove Albion; 8) Magpie; 9) Wren; 10) Tweety (Strangely, the cartoon canary was called Orson in his 1942 debut and while Sylvester the Cat was called Sylvester in his 1945 debut, he was re-dubbed Thomas for *Tweetie Pie*, the 1947 animation that linked the two characters forever. "Thufferin' thucotash" indeed!).

## FAMILY NEWS

### SILVER ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

*John and Dorrie Rose* of Tadworth, Surrey on September 29th.

### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

*Gordon and Lucy Hulme* of Stafford, Staffordshire on October 2nd.

*Benjamin and Audrey Temple* of Mintlaw, nr Peterhead, Aberdeenshire on October 2nd.

### DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

*Dennis and Beth Parrish* of Woking Surrey on October 7th.

Special events and personal news from members of St Dunstan's Family

### SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

*Leonard and Joyce Hassam* of Warminster, Wiltshire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on September 26th.

*Derick and Valerie Simon* of Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex who celebrated 65 years of marriage on September 26th.

*Dennis and Joan Brown* of Linden Village, Buckinghamshire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on October 4th.

*Charles and Anthea Booth-Jones* of Templecombe, Somerset who celebrated 62 years of marriage on October 17th.

## DEATHS

**We regret to announce the death of:**

**Millie Mullins** on October 6th. She was the wife of *William Mullins* of Royton, Oldham, Lancashire.

**Pat Middleton** on October 7th. She was the wife of *Stuart Middleton* of Beaminster, Dorset.

**Doris Johnson** of Derry Hill, Wiltshire on September 13th. She was the widow of *St Dunstaner Philip Johnson*.

**Helen Perry** of Corsham, Wiltshire on September 22nd. She was the widow of *William Perry*.

**Winifred Earwaker** of Fareham, Hampshire on September 29th. She was the widow of *St Dunstaner Alfred Earwaker*.

**Loda Ryszka** of Saltdean, Brighton on October 1st. She was the widow of *Josef Ryszka*.

**Patricia Watt** of Oakwood, Derbyshire on October 3rd. She was the widow of *St Dunstaner George Watt*.

**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.**

### **Peter Smith**

Suffolk Home Guard

Peter Kenneth Smith of Caister-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk died on September 20th, aged 80. He was an apprentice carpenter and then a farm labourer before joining the Suffolk Home Guard in 1940. He was blinded in 1941 by an exploding incendiary device and spent seven months rehabilitating with St Dunstan's at Church Stretton. He then studied braille and typing with the RNIB. He then joined Norwich Workshop for the Blind, making mats on a loom until retiring 47 years later. He used to enjoy

playing the accordion. Our sympathy goes to his daughters Glenis and Marie, sons David and Philip and all other members of the family.

### **John Peckham**

Royal Air Force

John Charles Gildersleeve Peckham of Mayfield, East Sussex died on September 22nd, aged 73. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2001. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1949 and trained as an aircraft engine mechanic at St Athans, South Wales then joined the crew maintaining the Lincoln flight. He was also a member of the Mountain Rescue Team. Discharged in 1951, he then worked in farming before switching to selling farming engineering equipment. In 1973, he and his wife set up a paints and coatings business which they ran for over 20 years. A car enthusiast, he used to build special cars for competitions, including a car built over seven years from Morris spare parts. He was chairman of his local bowling club and a keen gardener. Our sympathy goes to his widow Janet, their daughters and all other members of the family.

### **John Thompson**

Royal Artillery

John Thompson of Bradwell, Great Yarmouth died on September 26th, aged 88. He completed his apprenticeship and was working as a carpenter before joining the Royal Artillery in 1942. He served in the UK and went in on Juno Beach on D-Day, moving on through France, Belgium, Germany and Holland. Discharged in 1945, he returned to the building trade. His interests included gardening and audio books. Our sympathy goes to his son John, daughter Maureen and all other members of the family.

### **Winifred Bishop**

Auxiliary Territorial Service

Winifred Bishop of Lewes, East Sussex died on September 27th, aged 88. She had been a St Dunstaner since 2002. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941 serving with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Hereford and Swansea. She was a Lance Corporal when demobbed in 1946. She maintained an interest in craftwork, sports and talking books. Our sympathy goes to her nephew David and all members of the family.

### **William Evans**

Irish Guards

William Evans of Alverstoke, Gosport, Hampshire died on October 4th, aged 89. He originally worked as an insurance agent before joining the police in 1939. He joined the Irish Guards in 1943 and was serving with them when wounded in Holland the following year. He spent the remainder of the war as an instructor and was discharged as Lance Corporal in 1945. He returned to police duties, rising to the rank of Sergeant with the Hampshire force before retiring in 1964. He then worked for the Gosport Ferry Company, Havant Warrant Office and Fareham Magistrates' Clerks Office. Our sympathy goes to his widow Elizabeth, their son Graham and all members of the family.

### **Ben Waters**

Royal Air Force

Ben Waters of Puriton, Bridgwater, Somerset died on October 5th, aged 84. He started his working life as an errand boy for a greengrocer but later joined a brickworks as a moulder. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940, training at Morecambe, before being posted to the Middle East via Durban to Egypt and Tunisia. From there he went to Malta, Sicily and Italy. He left the Service as a Corporal in 1946 and returned to brick making but later moved to the Post Office. After retiring, he ran an Over-60's club and was a keen campanologist. He also enjoyed bowling. Our sympathy goes to his widow Pat, son Trevor, daughters Virginia and Pauline and all other members of the family.

### **Charles Hix**

Royal Tank Corps

Charles Samuel Hix of Norton, Stourbridge, West Midlands died on October 6th, aged 90. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2000. He joined the Royal Tank Corps in 1933 and was posted to India where he served on the North Frontier, fighting skirmishes with the Pathans. In 1939, he left the Army and joined the Metropolitan Police but was called up later that year and posted to France with the Royal Military Police. After being evacuated from Dunkirk, he was selected for commission and joined the Hampshire Regiment in 1942 as they

left for North Africa. He fought through the African and Italian campaigns, including Solerno before being stationed in Vienna. Discharged as Captain in 1946, he returned to the Metropolitan Police where he served for 30 years in the Criminal Investigations department before retiring as a Detective Sergeant in 1968. In his younger years, he played cricket, tennis and hockey, though he remained a keen walker. Our sympathy goes to his widow Alexina, their daughters and all other members of the family.

### **Alfred Callaghan**

Royal Engineers

Alfred Callaghan of Gravesend, Kent died on October 7th, aged 85. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2000. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1938 and was subsequently deployed to France with 11 Field Company. They became responsible for blowing up bridges as they withdrew from Brussels to Dunkirk. During the retreat, he and another Sapper rowed a dinghy to and from the beach evacuating non-swimmers. Back in the UK, he volunteered for India where he served in various posts including Bombay. Discharged as Sergeant in 1946, he became a bus driver but later turned to mechanical maintenance and welding, eventually becoming a maintenance engineer for a dairy. His interests included bowls, woodwork, football and snooker. Our sympathy goes to his widow Doris, their daughters and all other members of the family.

### **John Langridge**

Royal Army Service Corps

John Langridge of Berkeley, Gloucestershire died on October 7th, aged 69. He worked in farming before joining the Royal Army Service Corps in 1952. Posted to the Canal Zone, Egypt he trained as an Ambulance Driver before returning to the UK to man dropping zones during parachute exercises. Discharged in 1955, he returned to farming but later turned to HGV repairs. A keen radio ham, callsign GØSCB, he passed his City & Guilds and also enjoyed gardening and music. Our sympathy goes to his widow Connie and all members of the family.



# BOCCIA AND BOWL!



The game heats up as Ted Burtonshaw takes his shot.

Simon Rogers meets some St Dunstaners who are trying out Italian bowling

**B**OCCIA PROVED TO be one of the hot sports of the recent Paralympics with Team GB missing a medal by a hairs-breadth. The game has recently caught the imagination of some St Dunstaners who have been

playing friendly games at Ovingdean. One such game saw Stephen Blake, Lawrence Abbot, Ted Burtenshaw, Dorothy Wright, Barbara Bell and Leslie Hampson play as the Blues and the Reds.

So what is Boccia? "It's Italian bowling," says Dorothy Wright. "It's competitive and fun. It's very satisfactory." Leslie Hampson is in agreement. "It's a good way to spend an afternoon. I hadn't tried it before I came down here."

The game can be played one-on-one, in pairs or in teams of three. It is played in a court, roughly 30 by 15 ft with closest 36sq ft regarded as a "non-valid" area. The aim of the game is for the players to

Leslie Hampson throws his ball at the target.

throw or bowl their balls at a special target ball.

All the players are seated at the end of the court, creating an equal environment for all. The game can be played indoor or outdoors - the last match at Ovingdean was held in the lounge, but the ballroom proved a popular venue.

The balls are soft enough to hold, but hard enough to roll, made from a soft leather with hexagonal sides. A player throws the target ball into the court and then everyone takes turn to throw, hoping to get their ball closest to the target. The playing area has a set section in which scoring can occur so short throws can result in a nil score. When the balls have been thrown, a referee determines the points to be awarded according to how close they are to the target.

