

May 2005

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ST DUNSTON'S Review



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN



Cover story:

It was the greatest day

Sixty years ago, St Dunstaner Evelyn Lucas was amongst the heady revellers euphorically celebrating the end of the Second World War. She and other St Dunstaners recall the elation of Victory in Europe - VE Day - that was declared on May 8th 1945.

VE Day recollections start on page 18.

Small world!

Two Marathon runners have a surprise encounter.

Reports on page 17 and back page.

Stalag memories

Para Ray Sheriff remembers the legendary RSM JC Lord.

His recollections start on page 32.

Adventure on the seas of Antigua

Sit back and relax on holiday? St Dunstaner Norman Perry was swabbing the deck and raising the sails on a tall ship.

Up anchor and ride the tide on page 24.

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

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on audio cassette, floppy disk and via e-mail.

Art and music

The art and craft of St Dunstaners takes pride of place in a May exhibition.

Details on page 5.

Braille no more!

Could the tactile language soon be scrap?

Consider the future on page 28.

True courage

Sir Peter de la Billiere considered the nature of courage when he spoke to the Ex-POWs at their Reunion.

Turn to page 30.

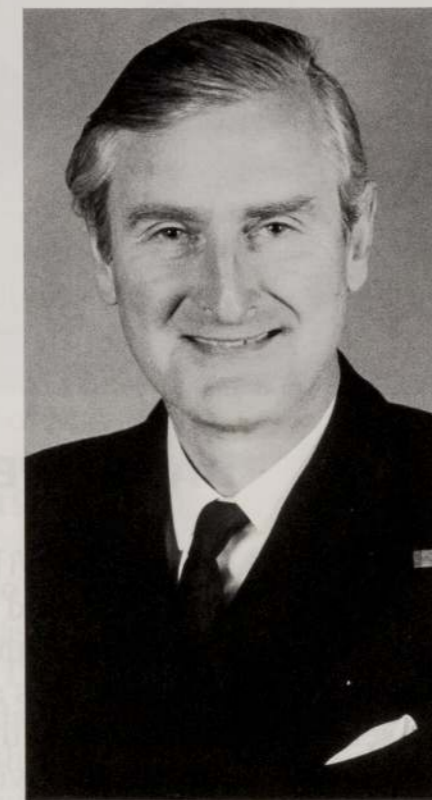
Life as a wife!

Are there more downs than ups when your husband is blind?

Opinion on page 36.

From the Chairman

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM had a successful meeting with the Charity Commission at Ovingdean on 31st March. The Commission was represented by Peter Garrard who had last visited us in 1998. Peter was accompanied by Sue Morley. The Trustees were represented by myself, Tim Bacon and Ray Hazan.



The Commission has recently restructured. The Chairman is Geraldine Peacock, formerly CEO of Guide Dogs. Their message was clear that "as the regulator we will regulate organisations that need regulating but for those that don't we will advise, support and help" and this was very much what we had expected from other sources and the previous visit. Before their visit, the Commission had the opportunity to read a mass of documentation including policies, brochures, leaflets and minutes, which we had sent them, at their request!

Discussion was open and I am glad to report their conclusions that St Dunstan's was clearly well organised and well managed; they particularly commended our example of having St Dunstaner trustees as an example of best practice. We felt that they had read and understood our Strategic Development Plan and from this knew that we were a thriving and developing organisation that was using its money appropriately and not just adding to our reserves year on year.

We came away confident that we had their support and genuine interest and concern.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

ST DUNSTAN'S Calendar

Gardening 'Week'	May 1st-7th
Sportsboat/RIB Show	May 6th-8th
Army v Navy Rugby	May 7th
Writers' Forum	May 7th
VE Day	May 8th
Outdoor Bowling	May 9th
Sailability	May 14th
Arts Weekend	May 19th-22nd
Writers' Forum Day	May 21st
Archery(II)	May 27th-June 6th
Sailability	May 28th
Writers' Forum	June 4th
Fishing Club	June 6th-9th
Widows' 'Week' (I)	June 6th-11th
Outdoor Bowling	June 9th
Outdoor Bowling	June 13th
L-B Bike Ride	June 19th
Outdoor Bowling	June 20th
Festival of the Sea	June 24th-27th
Writers' Forum	July 2nd
Veterans Awareness	July 3rd-10th
Walking Week	July 4th-8th
Amateur Radio (III)	July 9th-16th
VE/VJ celebrations	July 10th
Outdoor Bowling	July 15th
Ladies Reunion	July 17th-23rd
Fishing Club	July 18th-21st
Indoor Bowling	July 18th
Royal Marines Band	July 20th
Outdoor Bowling	July 20th
Sailability	July 23rd
HMS Sultan	July 29th-Aug 6th
Writers' Forum	August 6th
Sailability	August 6th
VJ Day	August 15th

Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

DUTY ROVI TAKES POINT

STREAMLINING FOR REHAB & TRAINING ENQUIRES: With the increase in trainees has come an increase in enquiries and questions coming into St Dunstan's Rehabilitation and Training department. We have decided to set up a Duty ROVI system. It will receive enquiries by phone, e-mail and in person, dealing with many questions and requests there and then if possible, or passing them onto the relevant ROVI or other member of staff.

So, if you wish to contact one of the ROVIs, these are the contact details:

By phone: call 01273 39 1447 or if you're in-house, simply dial 1447. This phone has voicemail, so the Duty ROVI will call you back if they are busy on another enquiry, or it is their turn to make the coffee!

By e-mail: rovianduty@st-dunstans.org.uk

In person: If you're at Ovingdean, phone through on ext 1447 to speak to the Duty ROVI and make an appointment. If you're at the Sheffield Centre, the ROVIs there will be happy to help you.

We hope that this system will ensure a speedier service and response to your enquiries.

Ian Hebborn
ROVI Supervisor,
St Dunstan's Ovingdean

DARTS WEEKEND

THROW IN WITH US: We will be holding a Darts Weekend at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on September 17th-18th. The weekend will be run on a trial basis and should be good fun with a small competition on the second day. If you are not local to Ovingdean, you will need to arrive on the Friday night and leave on the Monday morning. You should book accommodation through Bookings Coordinator, Jackie Castle (01273 391422) or your Welfare Officer if you require a care bed, in the normal way.

For more information on the weekend and the darts itself, contact Tom at the Sports and Recreation department on 01273 391463.

BALLROOM DANCING AND SOCIAL CLUB

COME DANCING AT OIVINGDEAN: St Dunstaner David Schofield invites those who are interested in spending a week enjoying a social experience and learning to dance at the same time, to book in for the above being held at St Dunstan's Ovingdean from October 24th-29th.

"Everyone will have learnt one dance by the end of the week," said David. "I only took up ballroom dancing a few years ago. Blindness is no handicap." So please contact Bookings Coordinator Jackie Castle (01273 391422) and book yourself in for a week of fun, exercise and chat.

A MIX OF MUSIC AND ART FOR MAY FESTIVAL

ST DUNSTAN'S CRAFT EXHIBITION 2005: The Craft Workshop will be staging an exhibition of St Dunstaners' work later this month. This exhibition will be part of the nationally renowned annual Brighton Fringe Festival which runs throughout the month of May, and it will take place in house for one week from the Private View on Thursday, May 19th.

Our exhibition will consist of two elements, an internal gallery in the Ballroom as well as a sculpture trail around the grounds. During the first weekend (Friday, May 20th-Sunday, May 22nd) the whole show will be open to the public as well as those in house. For the remaining part of the week the exhibition will be exclusively for in house residents, staff and visitors.

As many will know, the Craft Workshop produced a high quality, unique and innovative Calendar for 2005. The gallery show will enable people to see the actual projects that were produced first hand, and will allow everyone to appreciate the magnitude, quality and skill of all the work involved in this project.

The sculpture trail will consist of over a dozen pieces inspired by a variety of themes, from the stars to the sea, and made from an array of materials, much of which has been recycled. All of the pieces in both elements of the show will be tactile and easily accessible to those who are visually impaired, totally blind or sighted.

As well as promoting the artistic skills of St Dunstaners, the exhibition will also aim to build visitors understanding of visual impairment by educating them about some of the difficulties faced when creating art whilst blind. There will be information on techniques, a video, and puzzles for everyone to try. Even for St Dunstaners it will be a great opportunity to learn how accessible art and craft skills can



be. We very much hope you will support the department by attending our exhibition.

During the first weekend, there will also be music concerts in the Inner Garden and the Chapel. Admission is free for residents and holiday-makers, otherwise there is a charge for entry tickets. Tickets can be purchased from Reception at St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

Good Shepherd Choir:

Friday May 20th, 19:30-21:30 in the Chapel (tickets £3 each). A church choir from Mile Oak with adult and child singers and brass band will be playing a mixture of church and secular music.

Ian Price Quartet:

Saturday May 21st, 13:00-16:00 in the Inner Garden (tickets £5 each including ploughman's lunch and glass of wine/beer). This well known, talented, Brighton based, jazz quartet will be returning to play after a successful visit last year. They will be playing a mixture of traditional and easy listening jazz.

The Other Band:

Sunday May 22nd, 15:00-16:00 in the Inner Garden (tickets £5 each including cream tea and glass of wine/beer). This band mixes vocals, harmonica, duet concertina, accordion and a double bass. They will be playing traditional folk classics as well as their own blues compositions.

CAST OFF ON THE COAST

FISHING CLUB DATES: St Dunstan's Fishing Club is planning trips for June 6th-9th in Ilfracombe, July 18th-21st in Newhaven, September 5th-8th in Poole, and November 7th-10th in Newhaven. For details call Club Secretary Phil Dobson on 01273 305352.

MEAL CHARGES INCREASE FOR DAY VISITORS TO O VingDEAN

SOME ITEMS RISE IN PRICE: From April, there was a rise in the price of some items on the Ovingdean menu for those who visit as a daily. The charge for those staying at Ovingdean is all inclusive. Day visitors who require meals are reminded that they must book that requirement with the Lounge Desk by 18:00 the previous day. On some occasions, the house will be so busy that it will not be possible to provide meals for all the day visitors but we will continue to do our best.

STAY ON TRACK WITH METRO

ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN NORTH LONDON: The 28th annual Metro/LSF Athletics Championships will be held at Waltham Forest Track, North London on June 25th.

The programme is open to blind and visually impaired males and females of all ages. Every competitor will receive either a medal or a performance certificate. Guide Runners may be arranged with advance notice. There will also be a Fun Run. The closing date for entries, evening event places and accommodation is June 1st.

For more details and entry forms, contact Alan Whetherly, LSF, Ground Floor, Leroy House, 436 Essex Rd, London N1 3QP. Tel: 020 7354 8666. Fax: 020 7354 8787. E-mail: alan@londonsportsforum.org.uk

OUR ANNIVERSARY IN AUDIO

COLLECTION OF COMMEMORATIVE RECORDINGS: For the past 90 years, St Dunstan's has continued to fulfil the vision of our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson. His 'blind ambition' was to enable blind ex-Service men and women to regain their lives through independence, rehabilitation, training and employment. This was a novel concept in 1915.

To celebrate these past years, we have gathered on CD and cassette, a collection of archive recordings – from the recollections of a First World War St Dunstaner of his first meeting with Sir Arthur, via the 1927 dance band to events in 2004. The narrator is Sir Donald Sinden, CBE.

Those who receive the **ST DUNSTAN'S Review** on CD or cassette will find that they automatically receive a copy with this issue. Anyone else wanting a copy should please apply to either Ray Hazan or Simon Rogers on 020 7723 5021 or write to: Commemorative Collections, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

PEDESTRIAN & TRAFFIC SAFETY AT ST DUNSTAN'S O VingDEAN

PLEASE STAY ON THE PATH: Visitors to St Dunstan's Ovingdean are reminded that there is a 10mph speed limit on all routes within the grounds. Visitors are expected to use the pedestrian routes to reach the main entrance. These routes are either the paths or pavements, or the designated 'protected' pedestrian route marked on the main driveway, adjacent to the parking bays. Pedestrians must not walk on the traffic routes and should use the crossing points and walkways when entering or leaving the building. Car users are expected to drive within the speed limit and be extra careful when turning or reversing and must comply with all road markings and signs.

RE-JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY

BACK ON DECK: It has been suggested that there may be some former Royal Navy St Dunstaners who would like to go back to sea again. This would be in the form of a day's outing aboard a Royal Navy vessel. It is only an idea at the moment and arrangements cannot be investigated until we see how many are interested. If you would like to be considered, would you please contact Services Awareness Coordinator Graham Footer on 020 7616 7938.

GUIDE DOGS CAN FLY IN CABIN

NEW ARRANGEMENTS: Guide Dogs can now fly with their owners in the cabin on some flights. The new arrangements are valid on certain long haul flights into Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester where they have approval to carry animals under the Pet Passport scheme. The Pet Passport scheme, managed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) states that travelling dogs must be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies, blood tested and treated against ticks and tapeworms. Owners will have to carry car safety-style harnesses for securing their dog during the flight. UK airlines which have signed up to take part are Britannia Airways, British Airways, EasyJet, First Choice Airways and Virgin Atlantic.

RBL WWII 60th ANNIVERSARY PARADE IN ORPINGTON

THANKSGIVING IN PRIORY GARDENS: Orpington and District Royal British Legion have extended an invitation to St Dunstaners to join them on Sunday, June 26th at 10:30am for a Parade which will march through the town to Priory Gardens for a Thanksgiving Service. For details contact Barry George on 01689 820162 or e-mail him on barrypgeorge@hotmail.com.

BRAILLE LABELS FOR MEDICINE

PATIENT INFORMATION IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS: All new medicines licensed after November 1st 2005 will by law have to have braille on their packaging. The move follows heavy lobbying by the RNIB during a European Union review of pharmaceutical legislation. Patient Information Leaflets explaining dosage and side effects will also be covered by the new law and be made available in alternative formats. The RNIB has pledged to campaign for existing medicines to be covered and have already received support from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

ROLL OUT THE BARREL AT IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

VE DAY CELEBRATIONS: To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of VE Day on May 7th-8th, the Imperial War Museum London will be staging a packed weekend of events for all ages, including art, singing, dance, wartime food, films and talks. They promise something for all the family. Details can be obtained on 020 7416 5000.

MUSICAL PRODUCTION CELEBRATES END OF WAR

AUDIO DESCRIPTION FOR SIDMOUTH SHOW: Sidmouth will be marking the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II with *We'll Meet Again*. The show will include material from *ITMA*. With a cast of nearly 50, the first performance at the Manor Pavilion, will be a Charity show for St Dunstan's on June 12th at 4pm. Director Pamela Harrison promises to make people laugh, cry and sing! The show runs from June 12th to 18th with an audio assisted commentary at the St Dunstan's benefit performance on June 12th. Tickets at £7 each can be obtained on 01395 514413.

MOUNTAINEERING COURSE WILL PUT YOU ON TOP

CLIMB IN THE CAIRNGORMS: For the sixth year running, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland will be holding a course for visually impaired people. This five-day residential course will run September 11th-16th at Glenmore Lodge, the National Outdoor Training Centre near Aviemore. Run by highly qualified and experienced instructors, participants are encouraged to extend their abilities and try new activities to the level they feel most comfortable with.

The week includes a full day's walk in the Cairngorms, an introduction to rock climbing and abseiling, and Canadian canoeing. The highlight of the week is an overnight expedition using one of these activities.

The full cost of the week is £350 including accommodation in twin rooms, cooked breakfast, evening meals and packed lunches. Glenmore Lodge will supply all equipment required for the activities.

For more details contact Coordinator Norma Davidson on 01356 660242, e-mail her on norma@mountaineering-scotland.org.uk or write care of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP.

DINNER AND DANCE IN LONDON

SPORTS CLUB CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY:

The London Sports Club For The Blind is celebrating its 75th Anniversary by holding a Dinner/Dance on Saturday, July 2nd at the Kensington Close Hotel, Wrights Lane, Kensington, London, W4. The evening will include a three-course dinner with wine, After Dinner Speaker, raffle and live music. Tickets are £25 per person. Tickets must be bought in advance. For more information and tickets please call Lea Ryan on 020 8864 7455.

BLIND GARDENER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

READY STEADY GROW: A new competition to find the UK's blind or partially sighted gardeners of the year opened last month. Thrive and the RNIB are running the competition, and BBC television's Monty Don will be one of a panel of judges.

The competition is open to blind and partially sighted people of all ages, experience and skills. You don't have to be an expert gardener to enter. Three categories will be judged: people with less than two years' experience, people with more than two years' experience, and younger people up to 18.

The competition is being co-ordinated by Lucy Morrell of Thrive, who has been running the practical gardening activity days at Ovingdean in recent years. The award recognises the enthusiasm, achievement and skills of gardeners, young and old. The competition is open to anyone who is blind or partially sighted and loves to garden, whether they maintain a wonderful window box, beautiful borders or an abundant allotment.

To register your interest, ring Lucy Morrell at Thrive on 0118 988 5677, or e-mail bgoty@thrive.org.uk. The first 1,000 entrants will receive a starter pack containing a Suttons Seeds catalogue with a £5 voucher, a pack of taped seeds and a sample issue of *Come Gardening*, Thrive's unique quarterly magazine for gardeners with sight problems.

The closing date is August 15th, and winners will be announced in October. Also on the panel of judges will be St Dunstaner Vincent Robins who is Vice-Chairman of The Advisory Committee of Blind Gardeners. Prizes include greenhouses, a raised bed kit, compost tidy tray and Suttons Seeds vouchers. Trophies are being woodturned by St Dunstaners in the Craft Workshop at Ovingdean.

EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR THE HEROES RETURN

APPLICATIONS CAN NOW BE PLACED UP TO MAY 31ST: Applications for funding under the Heroes Return scheme can now be made up to May 31st 2005. The Heroes Return 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. 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 Dunstaner Services Manager Ray Hazan at St Dunstan's HQ on 020 7723 5021.

LAST CALL FOR THE DERBY SWEEPSTAKE

TICKETS ON SALE TO MAY 31ST:

The **Review's** annual Derby Sweepstake is open to all St Dunstaners, 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 May 31st 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 Simon Rogers, Derby Sweepstake Department, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Details of prize distribution were published last issue. No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold.

DIGITAL IS ONLY TV IN THE VILLAGE

WELSH VILLAGES TURN OFF ANALOGUE: Two villages in Wales were the first to become digital-only areas for television broadcasts in March. The move has taken place in part of Carmarthenshire which had poor analogue reception to begin with.

However, the acceptance of digital services has affirmed the Government's commitment to switch off analogue broadcasts by 2012. In order, by ITV region, HTV Wales, Border and West Country are expected to switch off analogue broadcasts by 2008; Granada, HTV West, Grampian and Scottish TV will change over during 2009, Central, Yorkshire and Anglia will follow in 2010; then Meridian, Carlton/LWT, Tyne Tees and Ulster will do likewise in 2011. Finally, Channel will be the last station to close its analogue broadcasts in 2012. A firm called SwitchCo was launched in April to oversee the change.

A spokesman for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) told the **Review** that currently the Government has no policy for an analogue switch off for radio broadcasters. However, some commercial radio broadcasters have been lobbying for a fixed date. In December last year, the BBC published a report saying it did not feel the current market would support such a move. They cite three conditions - accessibility, affordability and take-up - that should be fulfilled before a switch-off is considered and suggest the issue should be reviewed again in three years time. This is echoed by Ofcom - the Office of Communication - who say that they do not currently see a case for a radio switch off.

"We are broadly in agreement with the BBC's and Ofcom's recommendations and will work with all the main stakeholders to overcome the remaining potential barriers to digital radio take-up and to identify the conditions which need to be satisfied before a switch over date can be considered," says the DCMS on its website.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT RECEIVES ROYAL ASSENT

TRANSPORT, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, GOODS AND SERVICES NOW COME UNDER THE LAW: The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) received Royal Assent on April 7th. The Act amends the existing Disability Discrimination Act to introduce a new positive duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

The DDA, and Regulations made under it, already provides extensive protection for disabled people against discrimination in areas such as employment, education, transport and access to goods and services. New provisions which came into force on October 1st 2004 increased protection for disabled people in employment and in access to goods and services. They brought small businesses, with fewer than 15 employees, and previously excluded occupations such as police officers, partners in business partnerships, within the scope of the employment provisions for the first time. This extended coverage to an additional one million employers, and seven million more jobs, including 600,000 in which disabled people already work.

The amendments now ensure that all functions of public authorities, such as issuing licences, are covered by the DDA and not just services. It also provides a power to apply the DDA duties on other service providers to the provision of transport vehicles and allows an "end date", no later than 2020, by which all rail vehicles will have to comply with accessibility regulations, and apply those regulations to vehicles which are being refurbished

It also makes provisions enabling disabled people to get reasonable adjustments, other than to physical features, when dealing with landlords and managers of rented premises.

ULTRACANE OPEN DAY

TRY OUT THE BATCANE: Sound Foresight is offering blind and visually impaired people an opportunity to sample its Ultracane at its headquarters in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Harnessing the echolocation system used for guidance by bats and dolphins, the Ultracane, is nicknamed the batcane. It bounces signals off objects in the immediate environment and feeds the information back via vibrating buttons on the cane's handle. The vibrations give a detailed warning of obstacles up to four metres ahead and, crucially, at head height. The open days will take place at Sound Foresight's headquarters at the Barnsley Business Innovation Centre, Innovation Way, Barnsley, South Yorkshire on May 18th and June 15th between 10am and 12noon. Anyone interested needs to book a place by e-mailing info@soundforesight.co.uk or calling 01226 201666. Further information is available at www.ultracane.com.

TALKING VOICE ORGANISER

POCKET SIZE DEVICE: Dubbed "The Ultimate Talking Personal Organizer", the TADI Talking Voice Organizer combines calculator, clock, notepad, diary, phone dialler, address book, reminders, talking tutorials, space for over 900 phonebook contacts and storage capacity for five hours digital recording in one compact device. The qwerty keypad has raised guided points for sight free data entry. Voiced feedback accompanies every action.

Priced £140, it is available from Force 10 Assistive Technology Solutions. For more details, contact them on 01372 450887 or e-mail sales@forcetenco.co.uk. Their website can be accessed at www.forcetenco.co.uk. The TADI uses three "MA" batteries or power supply (power adapter included).

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.

Bugles at Menin Gate bring remarkable men and women of WWI to mind

When I received my CD copy of the April **Review**, I inadvertently placed it in my Hi-Fi player. Of course, it wouldn't play so I immediately thought it was faulty and contacted Ray Hazan. He asked if I had tried the 'Daisy' and the penny dropped.

On the Daisy, I heard the article on the World War One trip and was greatly moved by the sound of the bugles at the Menin Gate. It is even more remarkable because I am just listening to a talking book from RNIB (No 012623) entitled

Veterans, which is a collection of WWI recollections by a number of Veterans and was written in 1998, when all were in their hundreds. That's remarkable in itself.

The stories from both men and women, were in the main, both sad and harrowing. The **Review** brought their stories to life for that time. I am sure that 'We will remember them'.

**Ernie Bignell,
Lancing, West Sussex**

Memories of being beaten by blind darts players

The 90th Anniversary supplement brought back a memory from some 40 years ago. At the time I was a voluntary welfare worker in AJEX - the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women. We dealt jointly and successfully with the problems of one of our members. St Dunstan's invited some of us to visit your premises off Marylebone Road. There was a Club there and I well recall meeting the members, who challenged us to a darts match. We were soundly beaten!

I have another memory, of Sir Ian Fraser - as he then was. He

addressed a British Legion Conference, at which I happened to be seated behind the speakers. Sir Ian spoke brilliantly, and apparently without notes. Except that he had his hands behind his back and I saw him reading from a small number of braille cards! A great man.

Congratulations on your Anniversary.

**Dennis Milstone,
Northwood, Middlesex**

■ **Is Braille becoming a thing of the past? Stephen Pendleton considers the possibility on page 28.**

That was no lady, that was my wife

Leaving school in the 1930s, I got a job as a junior porter in a hotel and was very embarrassed to find a lady in the shower one morning. I was very apologetic and told my boss what had happened. He said that I had done well but could have done better if I had said "I beg your pardon Sir." That way she would assume I had not seen her. The next day, I took a breakfast tray to a room and there was a man and his wife in bed. I remembered what the boss told me, so I said "I beg your pardon gentleman."

Believe that if you like.

**Tom Gray,
Gloucester, Gloucestershire**

It strikes me...

with Gog and Magog



Gog welcomes the newest member of the Rehabilitation and Training department at Ovingdean, one Edward Bear. Ted is a Support Assistant, but rumour has it he is not very good at making the tea or coffee.



Magog is fascinated by some new targets on the wall of the McKinley Sports Hall at St Dunstan's Ovingdean. With something so close, he wonders why the archers still insist on shooting towards the far end? (Dart players can rest easy, St George has dispatched our miscreant monster before he could suggest using the dart board for archery practise).

St Dunstan's ARS go on air for anniversary

GOOD FRIDAY heralded the re-opening of the Radio Shack to gain more contacts using the special call-sign GB90STD. St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society has been spreading the word about St Dunstan's for nearly 30 years and this anniversary year is no exception.

St Dunstaners Bill Shea, Tom Frankland and Ted John were the operators, joined by our potential new member, Alec Higgins, G8GF, for a day and did some excellent work on the key, and gaining some good contacts. Ray Hazan also joined us for a short period and he also made some useful contacts, for which we are most grateful.

On Saturday March 26th, the date on which St. Dunstan's was founded in 1915, many more contacts were made, the highlight being a contact on Ascension Island. The other notable contacts on that day were Togo and Kenya - a day

Ted John reports

to remember as such contacts are rare. A married couple are the only amateur radio licensed operators in Togo.

During the rest of the week contacts were made in Canada, America, Cuba, Brazil, Russia, India, Africa, and many European countries - making a total of approximately 200 contacts during the week.

Our gratitude goes out once again to Brian Freeman, Eddie Wilson and John Houlihan for maintaining the Station to a very high standard, without which the equipment could not be operated. The special QSL card (which confirms a contact) designed and printed by Brian, is in great demand.

The next full week we shall be operating from Ovingdean is July 9th-16th, when we hope to have another successful time.

Will St Dunstan's lead Cross London Flight this year?

As winter recedes, plans are afoot to get the Cross London Flight by balloon back in the air. The organisers have decided to associate the event with St Dunstan's, making it the St Dunstan's Cross London Balloon Flight. "We are proud to associate ourselves with

St Dunstan's," say organisers Philip Saunders and Paul Sachs. Last year's attempt was bedevilled by poor weather conditions, but this year it is hoped that a few balloons will make the attempt, leading to a general invitation to hot air aviators later in the year.



Picture: Linda Barley

St Dunstaner Ray Sheriff and his wife Betty laid a bouquet of tulips on the Dutch Memorial in Ovingdean's Inner Garden on April 11th. The statue pays tribute to those involved with the liberation of Holland during the Second World War.

Ray recalls the RSM who kept him going on page 32.

Port Hall comes en suite



All rooms have en suite facilities.

PORT HALL which opened this month, offers all the comforts of a home away from home. This new house, a short stroll from St Dunstan's Ovingdean provides additional rooms with en suite facilities during popular events and the high season.



Ten questions on...

The subject of Songs

Harry Beevers has a song in his heart

- 1) In the lyrics of a Scottish song popularised by Sir Harry Lauder, on the banks of which river does he go "Roaming in the gloaming"?
- 2) Which song from the musical *South Pacific* begins "We got sunlight on the sand, we got moonlight on the sea"?
- 3) The words of the traditional song *Land of Hope and Glory* were written by A.C. Benson but which famous English composer wrote the music?
- 4) Art Garfunkel's 1979 UK hit single *Brighteyes* was the theme song for which animated film based on a book by author Richard Adams?
- 5) Which Music Hall comedian sang the theme song for the television series *Dad's Army*?
- 6) Which Vera Lynn song was featured on the soundtrack of the 1964 Stanley Kubrick film *Dr Strangelove*?
- 7) In the song *Bless 'em all*, from which port is the troopship said to be leaving?
- 8) *Come on you Reds* was a number one pop hit for which Premier League football club in 1994?
- 9) According to the song made popular by the singer Burl Ives, where do all the bulldogs have rubber teeth and the hens lay soft-boiled eggs?
- 10) Written by American Sunday School teachers Patti and Mildred Hill in 1893, which song is said to be the most sung song in the English speaking world?

Answers on page 43.

ST DUNSTAN'S IS A GROWING AND DEVELOPING ORGANISATION

ST DUNSTAN'S IS GOING from strength to strength and staff can take pride in being part of a dynamic and developing organisation said Chief Executive Robert Leader, at a General Staff meeting in April. He was addressing staff at Headquarters and Ovingdean, outlining commitments for the future and a continuing dedication to respond to the needs of St Dunstaners.

He said "It is almost 12 months since the Trustees accepted the Strategic Development Plan. They accepted the principle that with increasing numbers of beneficiaries we need to develop our services to keep pace with them.

"We've seen the implementation of things like the Introduction Weeks, for new beneficiaries who want to take advantage of them, down at Ovingdean and we've also seen the opening of Sheffield as our new Training Centre. With the increasing numbers and the continuing pressure on Rehabilitation and Training, this is just the beginning!"

"I suppose the really good news for all of us who work for the Organisation, is that about six years ago the number of applications from people wishing to become St Dunstaners was about 40 per annum. In the financial year that has just



Robert Leader sees bright future for St Dunstan's.

finished we admitted about 400 new St Dunstaners and we expect the numbers to continue to grow. It is a really exciting time for us all to be part of the continuing growth of St Dunstan's.

"It is a very salutary thought, that if the Trustees hadn't taken the decision in 2000 to change the constitution to help those who have gone blind in later life for reasons unrelated to their military service, St Dunstan's would no longer exist.

"I wouldn't be standing here and you wouldn't be sitting here now. Ovingdean would have been closed because we wouldn't have been able to recruit or keep staff and St Dunstan's would have been gradually winding itself down.

"The fact that we all work for a growing and developing organisation means that we have a level of job security that others

would envy. There is only one rider I would add to this, which is that we must never forget that St Dunstan's doesn't run for the benefit of the staff. Everything we do must be for the benefit of the St Dunstaners and all our actions must be guided by what is best for them."

Mr Leader went on to say that recently senior management had identified three streams of work which would be led by St Dunstan's three Directors.

He said that Service Delivery Director Jeremy Hinton would be considering options to further develop Rehabilitation and Training services. Following on from the opening of the Sheffield Centre, he said there was an ongoing commitment to provide training for St Dunstaners which would help them to regain independence. Director of Resource Management Charles Scott has

been charged with reviewing the future of St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

"Ovingdean will always be part of St Dunstan's," said Mr Leader. "We have always maintained that it is the flagship of St Dunstan's and it will continue to be so, but there is a conflict of view between those who want to go there to spend the latter years of their life in a nursing and residential home and those who want to go there for rehabilitation and training. There is a further conflict between those who want to go there for rehabilitation and training and those who have been used to going there for clubs and activities such as archery, gardening or bowls. Ovingdean is bursting at the seams – again great news but it brings some difficult choices! Five years ago, we were offering two weeks for the price of one and we were wondering what else we could do to increase the occupancy, which was then running at 50 to 60 per cent as opposed to 90 to 95 per cent today. Ovingdean is full. So what do we do about Ovingdean? How do we make sure that we can provide the services that St Dunstaners want?"

Finally, he said that Director of External Affairs, Nick Ward would be leading on the medium term future for the Organisation. "Where is St Dunstan's going to go in the next five years?" asked Mr Leader. "What is the impact of those increasing numbers going to be on the Organisation? What services do the St Dunstaners want us to provide? It seems to me that it is about trying to make sure that we are not just providing the things that we think should be provided, but are providing what the beneficiaries actually want."

Champion five stay on target at Lilleshall

Clive Jones reports

ON APRIL 2nd, St Dunstaners from all over the country descended on Lilleshall in Shropshire. The town is near Newport and is the home of the National Sports Centre. This visit was to shoot the British Blind Sport National Indoor Championships. It proved to be an enjoyable weekend with some very good shooting, with St Dunstan's Archers winning the majority of categories, not only winning the title of National Champion, some National records were broken as well.

The results of St Dunstaners at the National Championships:

B1 Compound
British National Champion
Peter Hammond

B1 Recurve British
National Champion
Tony Parkinson

B1 Recurve
3rd Harry Docherty

B1 Recurve
4th Clive Jones

B2/3 Compound British
National Champion
David Poyner

B2/3 Recurve
British National Champion
Terry Ottewell



In March, Peter Hammond shot this double gold - a foretaste of his National Championship win?

B2/3(Ladies)
4th Marjorie Scott

VI Open
2nd Steve Moseley
3rd Tom Roddy.

VI Open Compound
British National Champion
Cliff Ford
(New National Record)

All St Dunstaners would like to thank their spotters and Coaches Wyn Docherty, June Dyer, Sue Hapgood, Avril Ottewell, Jenny Wall, David Hapgood, Malcolm Higman and Ian Muskett. Also a very big thank you to our driver Brian Muggridge.

We also would like to wish St Dunstaners Nigel Whiteley and Norman Perry and driver Colin Dickinson a quick recovery from the illness that caused them to not attend.

Singled out on the spring green

WE WERE PLEASED to welcome two new members St Dunstaners Cliff Ford and Lionel James to our March bowling tournament where 21 bowlers met. Again, we must thank our callers Lillian, Jack and Roger together with Dave Humphrey and Iain Millard who did a great job.

Although Marjorie Mills had been very poorly and had broken her wrist, she proved very good at 'delegating' mainly to Joan Arnold, Betty Busby and wives overseeing the tea-breaks. Joan would like to thank Doreen Humphrey for her support in the 'office'

I hope I haven't forgotten to thank anyone but we do appreciate all the help we are

given, especially from the staff. Joan was pleased to arrange a token Totally Blind Singles competition which has not been possible for a number of tournaments. She would like to thank everyone for their generous gift.

The winners are as follows:

SINGLES TB

Winner: Robert Osborne
Runner up: Norman Perry

SINGLES PS

Winner: Syd Wisdom
Runner up: Graham Johnson

PAIRS

Winners: Alan Mitchell
and Mansel Lewis
Runners up: Phil Dobson
and Norman Perry

TRIPLES

Winners: Phil Dobson,
Graham Johnson
and Norman Perry
Runners up: Ted Arnold,
John Powell
and Robert Osborne

During the tournament, Mansel Lewis had cakes and drink to celebrate his approaching 90th birthday (which was about three weeks ago as you read this). We wish him well and many happy returns.

The next bowls tournament will be October 27th to November 10th so please make sure you book your accommodation in good time.

Best wishes,
Bob Osborne, Chairman

St Dunstan's new ophthalmologist

ST DUNSTAN'S PRINCIPLE Consultant Ophthalmologist is Mr William Dinning, FRCS, MRCP, FRCOPhth (pictured right at Headquarters).

Originally a graduate of the University of Sydney, Mr Dinning has retired from several consultant posts in London. For many years he directed the Uveitis Service of Moorfields Eye Hospital. In the mid 1980s, he was a Visiting Scientist at the National Institutes of Health, Washington DC, and later was Assistant Professor of

Ophthalmology at Washington University, St Louis, Missouri. In semi-retirement, he is now able to develop his other career as a portrait sculptor. He is also enjoying a deepening involvement in French language and arts, while looking forward to his future with St Dunstan's.

A profile of Mr Dinning's colleague Graham Duguid appeared in the March **Review** and the third member of the team, Veronica Fergusson, will be featured next issue.



It's a small world for runners

With over 30,000 people running the London Marathon, what are the odds of meeting someone you know?

Simon Rogers reports

TWO RUNNERS SUPPORTING St Dunstan's in the London Marathon had a surprise reunion on April 17th, not knowing that they each had a connection to the organisation. Joe Davies, son of late St Dunstaner John Davies who served in the Royal Tank Regiment as Lieutenant, determined to run the 26.2 mile route in memory of his father. Headmaster of Sutton Valence School in Maidstone, Kent, he was reunited with a former pupil after completing the run from Greenwich Park to the Mall in 4 hours, 14 minutes and 3 seconds.

Currently looking forward to a career in the Royal Anglian Regiment, Will Willdridge was equally surprised to see his former Headmaster in St Dunstan's colours. Will, who ran an impressive 3 hours, 55 minutes and 20 seconds, is the grandson of St Dunstaner Joan Willdridge. To add a further connection, his father served in the Royal Anglian Regiment with St Dunstan's President Ray Hazan.

Joan and her husband Allen expressed their pride in their grandson's achievement.



Joe Davies by the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

Proud grandparents, Allan and Joan.

Will Willdridge stays on track in South Quay



Steve Lloyd Brennan of RAF Uxbridge stood out from the crowd. He put himself in a St Dunstaners shoes using a gauze blindfold to obscure his vision. "I could see very little," he said. "My vision was down to about ten per cent." On top of that, he ran with a weighty backpack and flag, crossing the finish line in 5 hours 55 minutes and 12 seconds.

Four St Dunstaners took part in the 25th London Marathon. News of their progress can be found on the back page.



Courtesy of the Daily Mirror

Diamond Anniversary for a jewel of a day

VICTORY WAS THE SWEETEST TASTE

MARY MARSDEN RECALLS VICTORY DAY IN CHURCH STRETTON, WHERE ST DUNSTAN'S HAD MOVED ITS TRAINING FACILITIES

IT'S NOT AS if it was unexpected, the tide of war had turned in favour of the Allies in 1944 and as 1945 began there was a sense that it was only a matter of time before the war was over. After Hitler committed suicide, and with the Allied Forces approaching Berlin, the Germany Generals capitulated and after four days of negotiation (some amongst the Allies) surrender was finally signed on May 7th.

In Britain, Churchill declared the next day a public holiday - VE Day or Victory in Europe Day. On May 8th, the nation flooded out onto the streets to celebrate. Over 50,000 people were reckoned to have streamed into Whitehall where Churchill made his famous V for Victory sign. Over the next six pages, we have a handful of recollections and impressions of that day - from celebratory dances in a Church Stretton occupied by St Dunstan's to endless crowds singing in Piccadilly Circus, from the Cardiff to Bombay. For many it was an unforgettable day!

IN STRETTON WE had early notice of the invasion of Europe in 1944 when hundreds of army lorries, complete with their invasion stripes, moved off during the night. Now almost another year had passed and the end must be near - the excitement changed to exasperation. The Western Allies and the Russians moved towards each other in the midst of Germany, as inexorably as they moved away from each other, ideologically, afterwards. And then VE Day was here, the 8th of May. St Laurence's tower rocked with the clamour of the victory peal. That evening there were dances held at the Silvester Horne Institute and at the tumbledown Parish Hall - everyone noisy and happy.

Very much later, and dawn comes early in our hills, having danced our happy way along High Street and The Square and attended both dances, Sheila, Enid and I seated ourselves on the little church gate near to the wire leading down from The Longmynd Hotel, then St Dunstan's, as it had been for five years. Laughter and the voices of young men... and

down the wire came three St Dunstaners. The leader had a hand on the wire but the lad following had a stump resting on the one in front as they came down to join in the celebrations.

The three girls sat motionless and watched the little procession count their steps carefully so as to pick up the wire along the church wall and go on their merry way down to the Square.

We sat silently on our gate for some time.

Sheila jumped down, "I'm going home", she said.

We followed walking home in silence - The light was growing in the hills, but those young men would not see the sunrise as they strode so valiantly into the future and the sunlit uplands, which had been promised.

It was a wonderful day in Church Stretton - the War was Over! Time has told of the great victories of St Dunstaners, men, women and children some of them so close to the Strettonians all these years, but just then THE WAR WAS OVER.

Evelyn Lucas recalls events leading her to London on VE Day

It's a long way to Piccadilly

A FEW WEEKS AGO I was having a turn out of hoarded treasures when I came across a tiny diary - for 1945.

Although I have always been able to recall exactly where I was on VE Day (May 8th 1945) it was a huge thrill to be able to read in my own writing what I had experienced at that time 60 years ago.

There I was so unexpectedly in a place I'd never been to before, but a place I'd once been obsessed with and longing to visit. As a child I had attended Sunday school, so thought that miracles only happened in Biblical times. My



Picture: Getty

Evelyn was among the revellers in Piccadilly Circus on VE Day.

diary was my own miracle and on a truly historic day, fate had been unbelievably good to me.

distance where we held hands with our latest boyfriend. Life seemed likely to continue like that and I was content.

Prior to this day (for several reasons) I'd dreamed of getting to London. I had grown up in a delightful village and gone daily to a wonderful school in a nearby town. It was a far cry from London. When I left school, I quickly found an interesting job with a fair amount of responsibility. I had lots of friends, my social life was happy - tennis matches, boating on our pretty little waterway, a monthly 'Hop' in our village institute, with a Big Band (well a five-piece group) and a choice of four cinemas in nearby towns within cycling

One sunny Sunday, WWII was declared. A group of us young people gathered outside the village pub to talk about it. At that time we did not realise how much our lives would change or that in less than a year all the boys in our group would have been called up and two of them killed in action overseas.

We got used to the menacing throb-throb of German aircraft overhead at night, scrambling to get away after bombing nearby cities. Incendiaries dropped harmless in our fields,



Evelyn Lucas in her days as an ATS Corporal.

evacuees from Ramsgate seemed to take over the village school and the area was surrounded by troops either in training or waiting to be posted overseas. I felt that I too should get involved. One cousin joined the WRENS and another the WAAF. I began investigating whether to volunteer for the ATS (ie the Army) just to even things up.

Then fate took a hand, at a dance I met a gorgeous blond soldier wearing the dark green uniform of The Queen's Westminsters, he was so different even from the poshest of our local lads! He made me laugh, had an infectious adventurous spirit with all kinds of plans to "Get at Hitler"; and a lovely speaking voice which made each word sound as if it had been dipped in molten gold. He was loving and kind and our romance was the sweetest ever.

Then overnight the London Scottish, London Rifle Brigade and (yes, you've guessed it) the Queen's Westminsters disappeared. There were many broken hearts, including mine. I became obsessed with the idea of getting to London where most of our heroes originated. I decided to volunteer for the ATS. Girls were not conscripted at this time, so it was quite an undertaking for an unsophisticated country girl from a comfortable home. I told my father, thinking he'd be proud of me, but he forbade me to go. He'd been badly wounded in the Great War, but never talked about it. He absolutely forbade me to go,

telling me I would be in the trenches, up to my waist in mud, with rats running over and probably be killed. And it was only a few years ago, when I read *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks, that I realised what hell my father had survived and I wished I had understood him better – my poor dear father!

I defied him and joined the ATS, partly thinking I might single-handedly defeat Hitler, partly for an adventure and partly to get to London and track down my lost love.

I certainly found adventures. I was bombed and even worse I was frozen to death in icy cold Nissen huts, sleeping on three stone-hard biscuits (most of you should know what they were, if not just try it for the ultimate adventure).

Usually one's interests veer between the arts or the sciences, the latter was anathema to me, so imagine my horror when I had to learn all about electricity and magnetism. Because we were working in Signals, we had to know how the teleprinter worked, how the telephones worked. This was not at all the sort of adventure I was seeking! This is why, being keen on sport, I volunteered to get to the least scientific course I could find – to train as a part-time PTI in addition to my own job. I found it meant, for 30 minutes early each morning, I became the object of mass hatred in my unit, at 7am come rain or shine I had to take all the girls out to do obligatory PT. I remember one fat cook, who couldn't

bend down to fasten her shoelaces, snarling at me "You'll pay for this later!"

Another more successful adventure was learning how to sweet-talk our bullying male drill Sergeant into being a pussycat. He might have succeeded in teaching us how to "right about turn" but we had him eventually eating out of our hands.

One quite nerve racking escapade was successfully supplementing the meagre ration for our hut's pathetic combustion stove in the dead of night armed with a battered shovel and sack, we would burrow under the coke dumps, surrounded by a 6ft wire fence, fill our sack, and steal triumphantly back.

As well as a thief I became an accomplished tailor and alteration hand the uniforms that were thrown at us after a cursory glance, fitted only where they touched, we became a dab hand at transforming them. A three penny khaki dye totally changed a pale cream tie so that together with a collar bleached by courtesy of any Chinese laundry we could find, tarted up our appearance no end. We produced a nifty little outfit (all totally forbidden) and I don't know how we escaped being punished for sabotage.

I became an intrepid traveller too. Imagine this, the roads were practically empty the only way to get about from our isolated camps was to hitch-hike any form of transport which appeared mainly trucks or

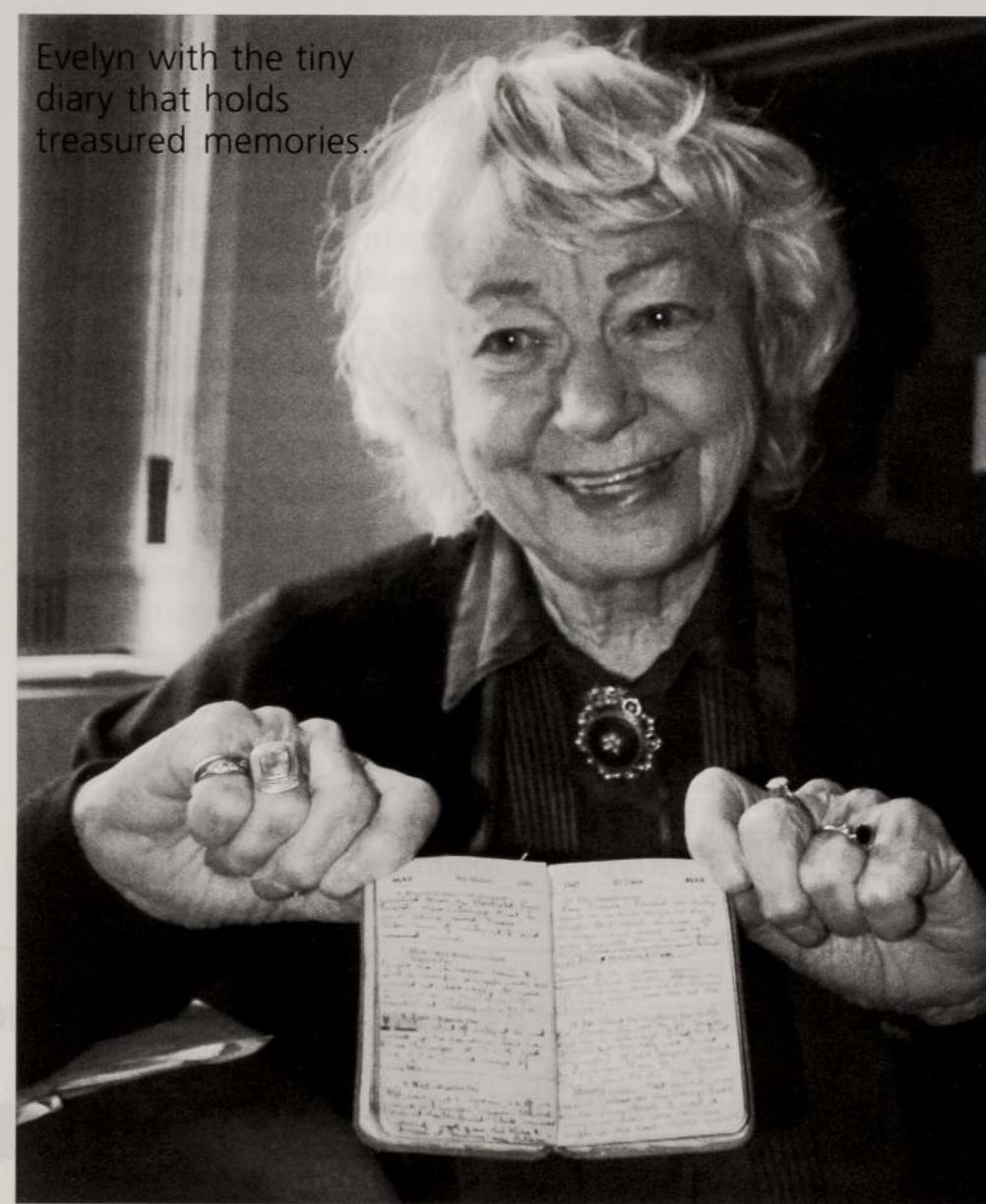
lorries. In these lawless peacetime days, it is ironic that we were totally safe hitching a lift with perfect strangers.

I loved every moment of this far from comfy life, particularly meeting and making countless friends from all walks of life. I honestly cannot recall any petty rows or personality clashes maybe because we were so dependent on each other to survive. We certainly laughed a lot (those who hated it all usually took a drastic way out – ie para eleven (which briefly means 'pregnant')).

I must not forget that I was able to do my bit to defeat Hitler throughout the war. Serving in Ack-Ack Signals meant periods of plotting enemy aircraft from a gun operations room. Directing our anti-aircraft guns when to fire and when the Germans were overhead was occasionally quite heart-stopping.

A quieter but thrilling part of my signals duties meant learning secret codes in which we sent and received messages to our units by telephone and teleprinter.

If you've read this far, you'll understand that life was too full to even think of my desire to get to London and as for tracking down my lost love, this too ceased to be a priority. There were boundless opportunities to find a new love, particularly when "the Yanks" arrived overnight and an American Naval construction battalion built a



camp all around us. Some army big wigs moved in with our officers so there was never any shortage of nylons and perfume!

Although I still craved a life of adventure I did find it a little unsettling to be posted somewhere new without warning and I had my fair share of moves: Warrington, Chester, Wolverhampton, Coventry (I was glad to leave here and Coombe Abbey not because of the bombing but because Timothy the mad monk was said to have haunted the grounds!), Cardiff, Cheltenham, Dunblane, Stirling, Exeter, Plymouth and Bristol – which brings me to my diary excerpt:

Bristol May 6th 1945

Walked back to Horfield from Bristol. Was informed that I was being posted, yippee. Came off duty and packed

Monday May 7th

Caught the 12 o'clock train. Had a terrific struggle with kit, arrived at Uxbridge. At night I heard that VE Day was to be tomorrow

Tuesday May 8th

Went off duty at 10am and went up to London. Saw the Prime Minister at MOH. Had one of the finest days of my life

Wednesday May 9th

Off duty at 1 again, so off we went to London again. We had tea at Nuffield Club, wandered around and saw the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace

Although my teeny weeny diary does not go into detail about VE Day, it is still crystal clear in my memory as a day of sheer joy.

We danced, cheered, waved, laughed, cried and sang our hearts out, between Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square – hugging and being hugged, kissing and being kissed over and over again. I don't remember how or when we got back to Uxbridge – but my

diary says I was on duty – and the next day we were back again in Piccadilly Circus. I also remember we went down the Mall to Buckingham Palace – dancing all the way. As for seeing Winston Churchill that was so moving and unforgettable. If this was the stuff of romantic fiction, I would go on to say that, dancing around the statue of Eros the God of Love I fell into the arms of my lost love. But this is not fiction – but fact. “If you have tears prepared to shed them now”! I never met him again.

When we met in 1940, his buddies had told me he was already a popular young actor

when he joined the army. So it was not difficult after the end of the war to find out what happened to him. He had been wounded in a commando raid over Norway. Invalided out of the Army, he had rescued his acting career and became well-known as a stage and film actor and a TV personality. He married (twice) and then sadly died in the early 1970s. I shall forever be grateful to him, for the laughter he brought into my life and for lighting the spark that eventually brought me to that momentous day, May 1945, and to be able to dance on VE Day in Piccadilly Circus and my diary written at the time, states it was the finest day of my life – it still is!

Aubery Jones found fate followed euphoria of VE Day

A climate of devil-may-care

VE DAY SAW me in Secunderabad, in the state of Hyderabad, India, sharing a Junior NCO's Course with another lad from our small Welsh village. In the evening we went into town for a few beers.

Back at the Camp entrance a combination of alcohol and euphoria created a climate of reckless devil-may-care, a potted plant was hurled through the Guardroom window, and we disappeared into the darkness of the area surrounding the Assault Course, with a few swings on dangling ropes to help us on our way. Circling around the outskirts, we reached our hut

from the further side, inside we giggled helplessly until the sound of voices and heavy boots were heard in the adjacent hut. Instant sobriety. Into bed fully clothed, sheet pulled up, mosquito net pulled down, slow controlled breathing as the pair of Service Police came in, shining torches on each bed. Both were sufficiently unobservant, (or soft hearted?) to note that there were no boots beneath two occupied beds.

Fate took its revenge after my name appeared on a Repat List on July 16th. Due to a series of unfortunate events, including the loss of my Movement

Order by Calcutta Transit Camp, it was August before I reached Bombay. A sympathetic Senior NCO promised to pull strings provided I was on instant call in the dormitory block. Inured from world events, the days were spent in reading a discarded copy of Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* and murdering an endless family of bed-bugs in the charpoy bed. I boarded a ship on the morning it sailed. As it nosed out of its berth, there was a cacophony of sound as all the guns in the Harbour went off; I dived for cover. Not the Japanese attacking, merely the exuberance of August 15th.

Merry time landed me in cell

MY VE DAY started on patrol at sea. On the morning, we entered Swansea Harbour, fully expecting to be allowed ashore to join in celebrations, but our Skipper decided to cancel all shore leave, saying our emotions would be too high. On the same day there was a big race, and the Skipper agreed to allow one crew member to go ashore to place our bets. In those days there were no betting shops, and you had to meet the bookie in the local pub. When I entered, everybody was in a jolly mood. I was quite enjoying myself, when a shipmate walked in, he had jumped ship, was improperly dressed and by closing time we were quite merry. When we left the pub there were two naval policemen waiting outside. They arrested my shipmate and escorted me back to my ship. The first lieutenant started to question me about the whereabouts of my shipmate. I denied all knowledge, so he ordered me to the cells.

I fell asleep in my cell and I was awakened by the sound of my shipmate singing *With someone like you a pal good and true*. We both had a jolly good laugh, not knowing what the consequences were going to be. Later, my cell door was opened. They told me that the officer had made a mistake by questioning me while under the influence of drink, so all charges were dropped. My friend was sentenced to four weeks stoppage of leave and pay. It was a day to remember.

Chris Spellacy

A normal working day

I WAS STATIONED in Brussels and we had been assembled two days previously at our headquarters when a letter was read out from Field Marshal Montgomery stating that the war was over and would be celebrated on May 8th. We later discovered that VE day was to be a normal working day for us. After six years of war and all that had happened I must admit I felt a bit cheated but as soon as we were free in the evening we all scarpered off to the City Centre. And what a welcome we received.

There was music everywhere, bands playing, crowds dancing, the pavement cafes were crowded, streamers and balloons everywhere and the hospitality was absolutely overwhelming. It was just like a huge carnival. The celebrations were in full swing when we had a ride round the city on the back of a Canadian Transport vehicle and were showered with drinks and refreshments of all kinds.

The celebrations were still unabated when we finally made our way back to the 'Gare Du Nord' for our transport back to the billets. There is a large square in front of the station and -this area was packed with a brass band and entertainments competing with each other.

Whilst we stood waiting, we were approached by a Red Cross worker who asked for volunteers to help inside the

Mabel Haynes saw pain that would not easily heal

station. She explained that two-trains had just arrived from Germany loaded with returning Belgians who had been deported to Germany for forced labour during the occupation of Brussels. Naturally, there was no shortage of volunteers, but as soon as we stepped inside the station the contrast to the noise outside was unbelievable. There was almost dead silence. There was one long column of male humanity waiting quietly and submissively. They all looked tired, dishevelled, bewildered and unkempt. They had apparently had a very long journey and most appeared to be carrying pathetic little bundles of possessions and they made a pathetic sight.

However, a very long trestle table had been erected so that each person could receive a bowl of soup and a bread roll before joining a silent queue of relatives who waited behind a barrier at the opposite side of the station entrance. It was very moving and I remember one young man particularly)as he had a very dirty bandage on one hand which he was obviously unable to use. I broke his bread roll into bite size portions and as I helped him he whispered in an almost broken voice 'merci' - but the look in his eyes as I helped him hold the dish mirrored the agony of his soul.

It was another side of war and I have never forgotten it.

Ian Perry follows his father Norman on a new nautical adventure, signing up as crew on a square-rigged sailing ship!

Rigged for adventure



Norman and Darren start climbing up the rigging.



Norman needed a sou'wester for protection against tropical rain during the stop-over on the island of Dominica.

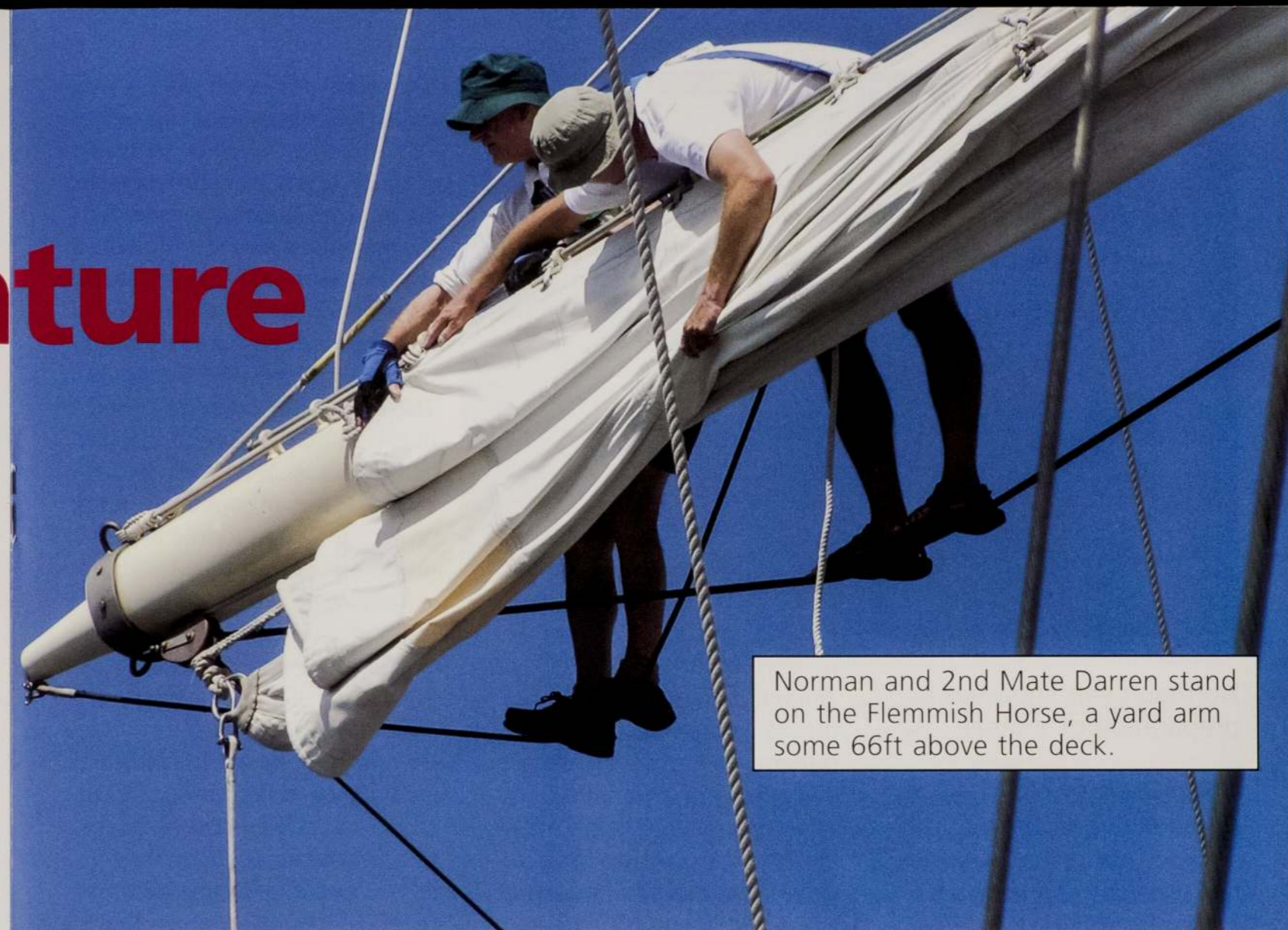
ST DUNSTANER NORMAN PERRY joined up with members of his family to have another adventure on the high seas, sailing from the island of Antigua to Dominica.

He was accompanied by his son, Ian and daughter-in-law, Deirdre. All three met up with Norman's nephew, Paul, from South Africa at Gatwick Airport. They then flew out to Antigua to sign up as crew on a square rigged vessel *Tenacious*, which was alongside at Nelson's Dock Yard in English Harbour on Antigua's southern coast. Everything was picture perfect for the tourists - a square-rigged ship in such an historic setting, therefore we must feature on thousands of holiday snaps.

The *Tenacious* is run by the Jubilee Sailing Trust, whose motto is "to enable the disabled" and takes people of all physical disabilities on a nautical experience. The ship has extensive facilities to enable everyone, whatever their problems, to take part in every aspect of ship's life - steering, pulling ropes, working in the galley and doing watches.

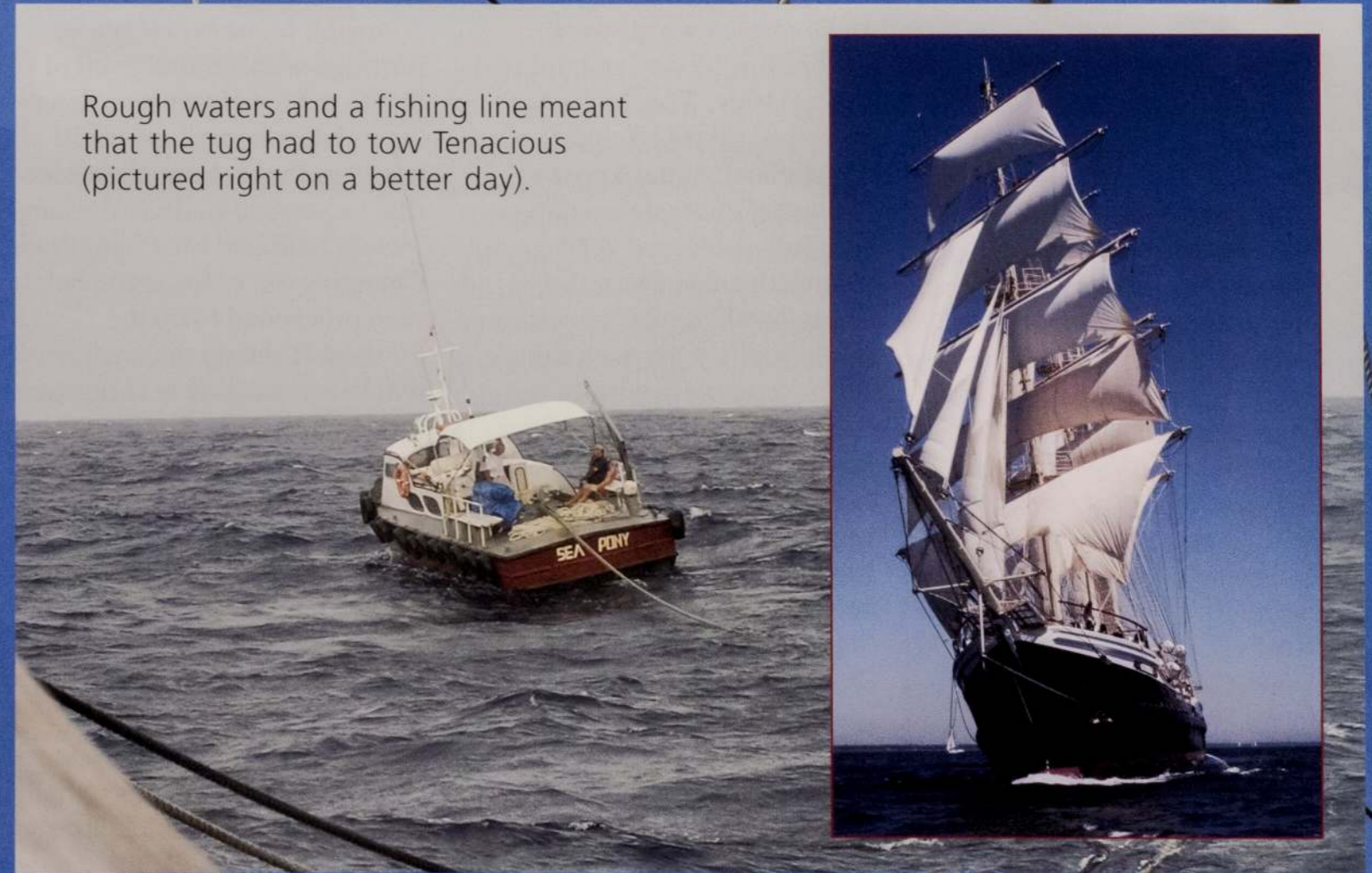
After initial safety procedures being explained, emergency evacuation of wheelchair

occupants being practised and a general donning of life jackets we set sail towards the south. The conditions were not ideal and a significant number lost their breakfasts and some had to take to their bunks through seasickness. Then to add to the problems the ship collected a very long fishing line around its propeller (even though we were not under motor). It was too rough for the ship's divers (the cook and engineer) to go down and cut it away. So we sailed back to sheltered waters and then finally had to be towed by a "tug" - this was a "Caribbean tug" which was only a general



Norman and 2nd Mate Darren stand on the Flemish Horse, a yard arm some 66ft above the deck.

Rough waters and a fishing line meant that the tug had to tow *Tenacious* (pictured right on a better day).





Norman peels squashes in preparation of a meal.

work boat, about one third the size of our vessel. So the last stages of going into a sheltered bay was long and laborious, lasting into the night.

The next day started with a "Happy Hour" – when the whole ship's company is involved in all the chores – scrubbing decks, polishing brass work, cleaning the accommodation below and favourite of all, cleaning the "heads" – the toilets.

During this time the divers cleared the ropes and we set sail again – more heaving and hauling on miles of ropes. Therefore, although we were eating three very good cooked meals a day and cake with "smoko" (old nautical term for elevenses and afternoon tea – no compulsion to have a cigarette) we worked them off with lots of physical effort.

Having sailed through the night, working the ship in watches, with Norman taking his spell on the wheel with the assistance of "a Talking Compass". This has a woman's voice which, if he keeps it on track, repeats the same number endlessly and drives the rest of the watch crazy.

We arrived in Plymouth, Dominica and had to anchor for a while and wait for the berth to be cleared by *Sea Cloud*, a 357ft square rigged vessel which was originally built for Barbara Hutton, the Woolworth heiress in 1931. We, on *Tenacious*, pulled her design to pieces because it has two rather ugly funnels and some deck housing in the middle, which although of beautiful varnished wood and brass, spoils the overall appearance.

In Dominica we all went ashore for the day and did two guided trips. The first was to be rowed up the "Indian" river by Michael, better know as "Buddha", a Rastafarian who was full of fun and very knowledgeable about the "flora" and "fauna" as we went up through the tropical rain forest (complete with downpour). At the end of the navigable part of the river (that is when both oar tips touch opposite banks) we had a break in a "Rum Shack" which served wonderful drinks called "Dynamite" and the Trades Description Act was not required – very potent stuff.

The second trip started by having a snack at the

University "eatery" – a collection of outdoor establishments (sheds) offering a wide variety of eating styles. These were situated just outside the perimeter fence, which the students came through for their refreshments. We, as tourists had access from the main road.

The rest of the excursion was in a vehicle for several hours but culminated at a "Carib" village – the only one left and protected. These are the original inhabitants of the island and are of South American origin rather than the general Afro-Caribbean and seem to be very good at gardening!!

By going on these trips Norman actually missed assisting at one meal of his "Mess duty". In the morning he had to make up for it by operating the food lift from galley to the mess – there seemed a lot of bowls of porridge with a thumbprint in them - but food is energy, so we ate it. Later he was given the task of peeling butternut squashes that he seemed to do with flair.

Changing out of his apron he then proceeded to do the assisted climb up the mast – which he has done before – but this time there were very few other actual climbers who wished to go up, so he was able to realise another ambition, that of going out on the yard-arm on the single foot rope. He was accompanied by the 2nd Mate, Darren, who assisted him to the very end and onto a separate footrope called "the Flemish Horse" which is the position that the

person who stows the "clew" of the sail has to attain. On his return to the deck the rest of the crew gave him a great ovation – even the Americans who thought that it was marvellous that a blind, 85 year old could do that – mainly because they were 30 years his junior and did not even attempt it. Whilst this was happening on the main mast, the foremast team were hoisting the wheelchair occupants up to the "first tops". Equally courageous because they have no control of their own ascent or descent and are totally reliant upon the team work of the people on deck pulling the line.

The rest of the voyage consisted of a further night sailing over to a French Dependency, "Isle de Saintes" and to the specific island called "Terre de Haute". When we went ashore it was novel to be in the West Indies speaking French and spending "Euros". On this island we went to a beach and found quite large Iguanas (4ft long) running about, and wild beanlike plants in the dunes.

During a night watch, it was reported, that Norman had a sudden rush of enthusiasm for his old profession of physiotherapy – doing a tactile examination of his watch leader's knee as she had fairly recently under gone surgery upon it.

After this we sailed back to Antigua and clocked up, 278 nautical miles for the trip. There was a final evening meal at a restaurant with disco,



No barriers to participation! A wheelchair bound sailor follows Norman's route up to the second yard arm.

on a pontoon over English Harbour which was "air-conditioned" - no sides to the building, just railings. Even after this event, Harbour watches had to be kept, so some people were up during the night to keep safety rounds etc.

The final morning was taken up with packing, taking linen off the bunks, returning wet weather gear, safety harnesses and cleaning the ship. After this we were free to relax before the taxis came to take us to the airport at 18:30.

In this time we examined the fortifications of the harbour by walking to the fort on the very end. Norman went back into "Artillery" mode, examining cast iron cannons of George the fifth vintage and a powder building that was capable of holding 300 barrels of

gunpowder when fully operational. All the defences around the harbour were never used in earnest and the death of soldiers was due mainly to fevers, not active service. The Perry clan then had a final lunch at the *Admiral's Inn*.

Everyone had a great trip, on the kind of holiday that is capable of stretching anyone whatever the age, disability or outlook on life – the sea has always something unexpected to throw at you to challenge you.



An Iguana on Terre de Haute

Is Braille going to be part of the 21st century?

IN 1827 AN event happened that would change the lives of blind and partially sighted people the world over. This event, was the publication of the first ever book in Braille. That was over 170 years ago, since then blind and partially sighted people have been able to read and write as effectively as the fully sighted. However, something has happened over the last few years to tarnish Louis Braille's invention!

The gift of Braille is that any blind or partially sighted person can read and write. Anyone who cannot is clearly at a disadvantage in today's society. This is clearly shown by the government campaigns to encourage adults back into education. So why don't organisations responsible for the rehabilitation of blind and partially sighted people encourage them in the learning of Braille?

Research has shown that blind children are not being encouraged to learn Braille! So in about ten years this country will inherit a generation of blind illiterates! No, I do not in any way think this is an exaggeration. I think that if Braille is substituted by Voice Output, then this could be the future.

However, it is not hard to see

St Dunstaner **Stephen Pendleton** asks if a simple gift that emancipated the blind could soon be lost to history



Braille lessons at St Dunstan's Regent's Park.

things from the relevant organisations' point of view. With computer technology and the most wonderful synthetic speech output which enables the blind and partially sighted to access typed print through the voice on a scanning machine, also to store documents onto your PC, such as telephone numbers, shopping lists, work etc, it is not really hard to understand certain organisations' apathy towards the use of Braille in today's computer literate society. Everybody knows that computers are the way ahead. Or are they?

I do not want anybody to think that I am in any way against Synthetic Voice Output! I myself use a PC with voice synthesis, I also use a document reader that works through the voice on my computer and I find these mediums invaluable to me in both my personal and professional life. But with Braille as the icing on the cake, so to speak, I feel that I have led a more independent and full life. If your only effective medium is speech output, how do you access information 'discreetly' when you are in a classroom or a noisy working environment?

If you are giving a talk or lecture, or otherwise talking to a large group of people, do you have to keep pressing your Dictaphone to your ear to remind yourself of your notes?

Do you have to ask a friend or relative for assistance when trying to locate your favourite CD, or when you need to find that particular herb or spice from your spice rack?

Have you spent a fortune on your talking microwave oven or your membership to the Talking Book Library? Have you spent money on talking label readers and watches, etc? If the answer is yes to all of the above, why?

Why should the blind community be pushed into purchasing expensive microwave ovens and labelling devices, when by simply learning Braille, you can mark your CD's and herbs and spices and any other item you wish? By simply marking your microwave oven with Braille labels, you can save two thirds of the price of a talking microwave. By learning Braille at any grade, you can access your own personal notes quickly and discreetly, without having to embarrass yourself by having all the gathered audience hear your notes.

As I said earlier, I am not against Synthetic Speech Output and this is all much of a muchness but the points are there in black and white. We need Braille just as much now, as we did in the 19th Century! This is a fact. Braille should not be pushed out in favour of soulless synthetic voices. It should be reinstated

as the premier medium for the blind and visually impaired.

Another point worth mentioning is that studies have shown that Brailleists are more likely to gain employment than non-Brailleists. So this point alone should make these organisations who promote themselves as 'helping the blind with their independence' and 'helping them become useful members of their communities' and 'Helping them to gain employment' should hang their heads in shame. At the end of the day, if you have not been given the tools to do the job, then how are you supposed to do the job in the first place.

I would consider myself to be someone who has a grasp of the English language, but I am forced to ask myself, if it was not for Braille, would this be possible? I believe the answer is no, because the printed word reproduced in Braille can never be replaced by Voice Synthesis! When you read a book either by sight or touch, you take in all the spelling, punctuation and general structure associated with your language. When listening to a document either through voice synthesis or a talking book, then I believe that all the nuances of the language are lost, you cannot visualise the words or the punctuation. Put on top of this, a soulless computer synthesised voice, then the marvellous language that we call English is totally lost to the blind and partially sighted. Where will it end, young blind people talking in a computer voice! Hopefully it won't come to that! But who knows what the future holds?

BALANCING THE BOOKS

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

It's A Vet's Life

Author: Alex Duncan.

Reader: John Curle

Duration: 6 hours, 15 minutes

Catalogue Number: TB 913

IT IS NOT TRUE that when you've read one book about veterinary practice you've read them all. Not a hundred per cent true anyway, though few, I think, would deny a dreary sameness, a predictability which robs the word "novel" of its sense or originality. There are always clients reluctant to pay their bills, for instance, a pampered lapdog grown fat and flatulent from eating chocolates and maybe also a frustrated Chihuahua with amorous intentions toward a Great Dane.

So what is special about *It's a Vet's Life*? What characteristic elevates it above the common place and mundane? Well nothing really, one of the patients is an eight foot long king cobra, and one client is a crooked racehorse trainer, but apart from that it's the usual sort of thing; good enough to lighten a wet Wednesday in Wolverhampton, but a million miles from being a classic.

A question of courage?

THE GET-TOGETHER in the Blue Room at the start of the St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion on the Friday evening of April 8th was a little quieter than our previous get-togethers in as much as we had lost some of our old friends, like Bill Marsh and Percy Walker who used the Bar with their families. Even so, we moved between the Bar and Blue Room all evening. This year we were pleased to have two new chaps with us, Bill Routledge with his wife Maggie and Harry Fenton who settled down with us and gave us bits and pieces to talk about.

Billy Griffiths, our Chairman, welcomed everybody and the evening was a great success, especially the buffet supplied to us by PBK.

On Saturday, April 9th, our AGM was held in the Ballroom, guided by our

President Sir John Gingell. Unfortunately, our Treasurer Alf Lockhart was taken ill and was not able to take part in any of the events over the weekend.

The reports of Billy Griffiths, the Treasurer Alf Lockhart and Secretary Tom Hart were read by our Assistant Secretary Beryl Gardener and approved by the members. The Committee was re-elected en bloc. Mary Firth, acting on behalf of Treasurer Alf Lockhart collected quite a sum of money which members donated to the funds.

Our Reunion Dinner was held in the Winter Garden that evening. Billy, Alice, Mary and I greeted all the members and their guests as they arrived allowing our President, Sir John to mingle with the members and look after our principal guest Sir Peter de la Billiere and Lady de la Billiere. The

dinner was a great success (again provided by PBK) and was appreciated by all.

After dinner, the President Sir John warmly welcomed all the guests to which Sir Peter responded. His speech focussed on the nature of courage, both moral and physical to which we all listened with interest.

"It is a great privilege for me and Bridget, my wife to be here tonight. We've had regular contact with St Dunstan's and we are great admirers of it, particularly of the people who make it up. Of course, St Dunstan's as with so many other organisations is a reflection of the people in it – and that's you here tonight," said Sir Peter. "I'm very grateful and honoured that you have asked me to come and talk to you tonight after this very special dinner of war heroes, if I may describe you as that. You are special people."

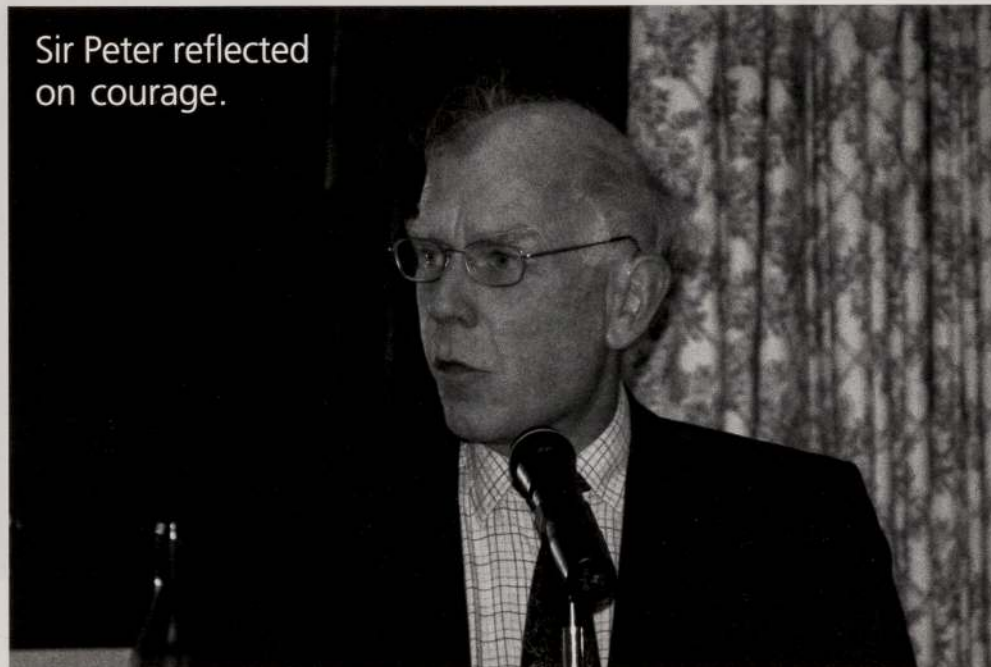
He went on to share a few reflections on courage and the Victoria Cross which was first issued 150 years ago and recited its charter. "It is only to those officers and men who have served us in the presence of the enemy and shall they have performed some civil act of valour or devotion to their country." He added that it was the first time a medal had been struck which would be awarded regardless of rank or Service.

"There are three double VCs and it is notable that two of them are issued to Medical Officers who never fired a shot in anger."

Sir Peter said that with medals came courage and he felt there were two types, moral and physical. "Moral courage is probably of the higher order," he said. "It is something all of us are faced with, even when we are children at school. Every day of our lives! Do you take a stand for the underdog? Do you take a stand for the belief that is out of fashion? Do you take a stand for a principle whether it be in your family or at your place of work. Very easy to talk about, but as you know, in all walks of life it is a damn sight more difficult to do.

"If you think about it, about people you know who have a high level of moral courage, not many of them would let you down on the physical side, so I suggest that physical courage perhaps comes second. Physical courage, as you well know, comes in two brands, hot courage and cold courage."

For hot courage, Sir Peter cited the example of Bill Speakman who was awarded the VC in Korea, repelling a superior force. "But courage is a bank balance, you know this better than any other audience I've spoken to, we've all got so much, some more than others and we spend it and it runs down and like a bank balance when it goes in the red, you've got problems." He cited the tragic actions of a platoon member in Korea who shot two



Sir Peter reflected on courage.

of his colleagues on patrol. "He had been there longer than I had, he was burnt out. I should have recognised that and got him away from the front, then he would have built his bank balance back up and no doubt would have returned."

Apart from sacrifice and selflessness, luck played a role in the characteristics of any VC holder and this created a modesty, acknowledging that for many, death removed them from the battlefield before there was any hope of being awarded a medal.

He closed with the story of Theodore Harvey, a padre in WWI, serving with the Somersets, who ministered to soldiers on the Front, tending to wounded in shell-holes. He was killed a week after being awarded the VC.

After the dinner we adjourned to the Bar, where we were able to meet up with our friends and have a good chat ending a lovely evening.

On Sunday, the Ex-POWs were joined by other St Dunstaners

for the Church Service conducted by St Dunstan's Chaplain Father Terry Otterwell. The lesson was read by Sir John and a most appropriate address was given by the Reverend Donald Whittion, CE, Ex-Royal Navy.

The Ex-Prisoners of War who had passed away during the last year were remembered in the salutation by Tom Hart and this was followed by *The Last Post*.

Our Reunion ended that evening with the choir from St Paul's Church, West Street, Brighton. It was excellent, consisting of Church and Modern music which was much appreciated by the audience. Billy Griffiths thanked the choir and wished all the EX-POWs a safe journey home and god willing would see them all next year.

We would like to thank Dick Lake and Jackie Greer and staff for their hospitality shown to us whilst we were in Ovingdean and to PBK and staff for looking after our needs.



St Dunstaners and their guests enjoy pre-dinner drinks.

Ray Hazan reports on a tribute to an RSM who kept his men going in the darkest hour of captivity before the dawn

RSM raised morale with a friendly voice in Stalag

AMONGST THE VARIOUS 60th anniversary commemorations of the end of World War II is a personal memory for Ray Sheriff. Like many other St Dunstaners, it meant the end of his incarceration as a prisoner of war. Ray parachuted into Arnhem in September 1944, was blinded and taken prisoner. His camp, Stalag IIB near Fallingbossel in North Germany, was liberated 60 years ago.

On April 16th, Ray commemorated this anniversary at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst by the graveside of RSM John Clifford Lord, MVO, MBE, who played no small part in Ray's military life both before and after being taken prisoner. Both served with 3 Para, with J.C. having transferred from the Grenadier Guards.

The first encounter with J.C., which Ray relates, occurs during the North African campaign in 1942. Suffering a severe chest wound, Ray rolled himself down into a ravine, which led to the Battalion First Aid Post. Having checked his field dressing, for he was bleeding pretty badly, he got up and started staggering towards his destination, when he heard a stentorian parade ground voice shout, "Corporal Sheriff, if you can't walk properly, lie down!"

"This I did, and to attention, for such was the respect I had for him!" says Ray.

"What's wrong with you, Corporal Sheriff?"

"Bullet in the chest, Sir."

After a moment's pause, "You haven't shaved," said the RSM.

"No, Sir, the Germans attacked and I didn't have time."

"No excuse," and with a smile he produced a packet of cigarettes, lit one and gave it to Ray saying that he would get a stretcher bearer to him.

The story now jumps two years to the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944. A mortar bomb deprived Ray of his sight. There followed days of being moved with the help of the Dutch Resistance, from house to house, cellar to cellar as there was no movement possible outside the battle zone. "I was finally examined by a world famous eye specialist who used me to

instruct his medical students. He said I would never see again and that I was lucky, which had me somewhat confused."

"You could be totally deaf," which most blind people feel is worse than sight loss.

It was at Utrecht hospital, taken over by the Germans where Ray was eventually 'taken prisoner' together with Mike Dauncey, a famous glider pilot who received the DSO for his bravery. "He was in the next bed to me and used to look after me. He used to say, 'What are you doing, Ray?'"

"'I'm having a shave.'"

"'What, at three in the morning!'"

Mike eventually made an escape attempt, which Ray, not only blinded but suffering from a leg wound, was not able to join. But although Mike left Ray his flying jacket, it was 'taken' by someone else.

In late December, Ray was transported to Fallingbossel in Northern Germany, where on de-training, he was carried to a reception hut in Stalag IIB



At the graveside of RSM JC Lord, MVO, MBE, Ray Sheriff paid tribute to his wartime leader, laying a wreath and saluting. The ceremony concluded with the sounding of the Last Post.

POW camp and dumped on a concrete floor. "I sat there amongst what must have been some 100 POW's. I didn't know anyone, where I was or what was going to happen to me. I was cold and hungry. Suddenly, there was a hush. I heard the door close and footsteps making their way towards me. A voice then said, 'How are you feeling, Corporal Sheriff?' It was J.C. Lord."

There then followed an event which can only be described as 'the typical British Tommy'. Despite his leg wound and general condition, Ray staggered to his feet and at attention replied "Nice to hear your voice, Sir." In what other army would that have happened?

During his conversation with J.C., Ray learned that there were some 17,000 POW's in the camp. Most thought that discipline no longer mattered. But J.C. had other ideas and instigated a regime of good personal turnout, cleanliness of

both the individual and of the camp, which were essential for the maintenance of morale. J.C. fixed Ray up with warm clothing, a beret and someone to look after him. With assistance, he was able to walk around the compound until he learned his way and was able to look after himself.

J.C. Lord was a power house in the camp. He took part in entertainment shows, ensured there was a smartly turned out party of Guardsmen at the funerals of any POW and one of his greatest pleasures was to hoist the union flag at the camp gate at the time of their liberation.

But it was the day of the liberation that nearly cost Ray his life! "The 8th Hussars came with their tanks and my escorts took me to watch and cheer with everyone else. The Hussars were throwing biscuits and tins of food to us and I was hit on the head by a tin of jam! I was taken to the German doctor to have a few

stitches and he said to me 'this is de vorst vound you haf during the var!'

"I don't remember feeling any particular elation at being liberated. It was a matter of living from day to day and this was just one more. I didn't know what lay ahead. I thought St Dunstan's was a hospital and I really didn't want anything to do with white sticks." But he did eventually come to St Dunstan's to train.

To Ray Sheriff, RSM J.C. Lord was an icon and a person worthy of great respect. They remained in touch over the years when J.C. was Academy Sergeant Major at Sandhurst.

There can be no more fitting tribute as Ray paid his respect at the graveside of a true friend in honour of the liberation of camp Stalag IIB on April 16th. He was joined by members of J.C. Lord's family and representatives of the Parachute Regiment.

Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

Eric Barwell, DFC of Toft, Cambridge served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1945.

Bertram Bedford of Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham served in the 16th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery from 1930 to 1946.

Charles Bewick of Chislehurst, Kent served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals between 1945 and 1948.

Thomas Boal of Silverton, Dumbarton served in the Royal Navy from 1988 to 1991.

Clifford Booroff of Kingsbury, London served in the Royal Signals from 1950 to 1952.

James Bowles of Evanton, Ross-shire served in the General Service Corps, Seaforth Highlanders, London Scottish Regiment and Royal Signals between 1940 and 1947.

Ronald Brimblecombe of Toftwood, Dereham, Norfolk served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and then the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1937 and 1946.

Ann Carse of Fittleworth, West Sussex served in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry from 1938 to 1945.

Ronald Cooper of Hove, East Sussex served in the

Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Ruby Corner of Stokesley, Middlesbrough served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Anthony Cotterell of Willersley, Broadway, Worcestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Walter Denington of Norwich, Norfolk served in the Royal Tank Regiment from 1939 to 1946.

Ronald Dovey of Quedgeley, Gloucester served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment from 1954 to 1956 and later in the Catering Corps (TA).

Ernest Edgington of Bidford-on-Avon, Alcester served in the Wiltshire Regiment and Royal Engineers between 1939 and 1946.

Eric Grainger of Havercrift, Wakefield served in the East Yorkshire Regiment (The Duke of York's Own) from 1944 to 1946.

Robert Green of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Army Catering Corps and Royal Engineers between from 1939 and 1946.

Douglas Grimwood of Brantham, nr Manningtree served in the Royal Navy from 1946 to 1954.

Charles Hines of Luton, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1946.

Bryan Ives of Mayland, Chelmsford, Essex served in the Middlesex Regiment and Parachute Regiment between 1952 and 1956.

Ray Khan of Marlow, Buckinghamshire served as Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1984.

John Lea of Tetbury, Gloucestershire served in the 1st Royal Dragoons as Lance Corporal from 1955 to 1957.

Raymond Le Page of Painswick, Gloucestershire served in the Parachute Regiment from 1944 to 1948.

Sylvia Lindfield of Codmore Hill, Pulborough served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1943.

Margaret Loader of Wherstead, Suffolk served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1939 to 1942.

Richard Molloy of Dunkeswell, nr Honiton, Devon served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1946.

Olive Montgomery of Crossens, Southport served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1947 to 1948.

Vincent Moore of Rotherham, South Yorkshire

served in the Royal Horse Artillery from 1939 to 1945.

Samuel Munkley of Linthorpe, Middlesbrough served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Peter Murray of Rustington, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

Ronald Powell of Brighton served in first, the Royal Sussex Regiment, and then the Corps of Military Police between 1940 and 1942.

Ted Priest of Cawston, Rugby, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

James Pritchard of Llanbder-Y-Cennin, Conwy served as Sergeant in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve from 1943 to 1948.

Edward Purvis of Ayr, Ayrshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1954 to 1956.

James Roden of Romford, Essex served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1949 to 1951.

Alfred Sandiford of Fulwood, Preston served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

Richard Sellers of Whitestake, Preston Lancashire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1946 to 1948.

Percy Taylor of West Derby, Liverpool served in first, the King's Regiment and then the Royal Army Ordnance Corps between 1945 and 1948.

Cyril Thomas of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Welch

Regiment and Royal Artillery between 1938 and 1946.

John Walker of Pitlochry, Perthshire served in the Fleet Air Arm.

Alfred Wicks of Barnham Broom, Norfolk, Norwich served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1959.

Graham Wood of Lindfield, West Sussex served in the West Kent Regiment from 1950 to 1952.

Peter Wood of Thornely, Durham served in the Light Training Regiment (RAC) and then the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars between 1941 and 1946.

Peggy Young of Brighton served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1945.

New look for the Inner Garden



PHASE TWO OF the redevelopment of the Inner Garden has been completed. The lawn is now divided into four by a path, improving wheelchair access and a stage

has been constructed in the far corner (beneath the Ballroom). The Dutch Memorial has been moved behind the trellis which shields the raised flower beds over by the greenhouse.

With some decent weather, the garden should provide a cheery and welcoming ambience for the music concerts on May 21st-22nd that form part of the Arts Weekend.

St Dunstaners' Wives!

OK, being a "St Dunstaner's wife" may not be as glamorous as being a "footballer's wife", nor as lucrative, but I really don't fancy being called Chardonnay, and being a St Dunstaner's wife can be quite rewarding.

I'm not sure how things would have been different if we'd got married when he was already blind, but I suppose that at least I would have known what I was taking on. With the sudden traumatic change of circumstances things have been an upheaval for us both.

In some ways, it's just as traumatic for the partner when someone suddenly loses their sight. So much more is now on your shoulders, and you have to learn to handle the mood swings, and realise that the selfishness and anger is directed at the condition and isn't really aimed at you; it just seems that way! There seems to be quite a bit of help out there for the blind person, and thank heaven (and St Dunstan's) for that, but minimal or no support for their partners, so we need to help ourselves and each other.

We all cope in our different ways, some of us don't do enough to help, others do far too much, making a rod, not only for their own backs, but for the rest of us as well. If he

One St Dunstaner's better half shares some of the ups and downs of life



Do you fancy being called Chardonnay?

can do it for himself, even if it takes him four times as long as us, we have to learn to step back and let him do it. Help by all means, but don't take over, let them keep their independence if they can.

Of course, we have to learn to do the things he can't do anymore – like wiring up a plug, or unblocking the washing machine. I'm getting quite good at dealing with bugged up vacuum cleaners! I didn't sign up to be a chiro-podist, but I'm learning.

Driving a newly blind passenger is unnerving for both, I found that to start with I was driving much more slowly and carefully, and of course you have to remember to tell them when you are going over sleeping policemen or level crossings, and actually

crashing the car with a blind passenger is an absolute nightmare, especially when it's not your fault.

It's useful meeting up at the various functions, from reunion lunches to the Cenotaph weekend. Mainly because it's so nice to know that I'm not alone, and it's great to learn from your experiences, it's also useful to swap phone numbers. That way, when it all gets too much you know that there is someone on the other end of the phone, who can empathise and advise.

It's good to be able to share the funny things as well. Like the time I took two St Dunstaners out to a restaurant for a Chinese meal – have you ever seen two blind guys sword fighting with chopsticks?!

Hearing some of the tales about shopping expeditions where tins of paint went flying in B&Q or pyramids of beans were sent rolling in Asda made my own horror story of a Spanish mini market, where the entire display of potato crisps collapsed into a heap, pale into insignificance. Mind you, every time we went back into that store we got served ever so quickly!

Yes, he does infuriate me at times, for example when he misses the loo again, or leaves the shower curtain outside the bath! We buy individual sachets of food for the cat – but he still gets it all over the worktop. If he fills their water bowl most of it goes on the floor. If he tries to peel the spuds before I get home from work, I usually have to do them again; but at least he tries!!

Sometimes, I wish he wouldn't try, but then I really think about it, and realise how proud I am of him and his achievements.

From the early days, when he put the liquid level indicator in the cup the wrong way round, then soaked it with the boiling water – the poor thing was still whimpering hours later, and it took me ages to get the battery out.

Or the time he went out for "a" pint with some sighted, supposedly responsible, chums, blind drunk is one thing – but drunk blind is a whole new ball game isn't it?

Now he copes quite well, and mostly I am very grateful for his help.

Recently, when I had had some hospital treatment, he looked after me brilliantly. Mind you, after two days I had to get up and going again as I was getting fed up with microwaved scrambled eggs and toast.

When I have a bad day, it brings me up short to remember the occasions when I have tried "Simispecs" which mimic the various types of blindness. Usually I last for just a few minutes, before I have to take them off, but he can't do that. He's stuck with his condition...
AND HE'S STUCK WITH ME!

PENDLETON'S PANTRY

Blind chef **Stephen Pendleton** gives his chumps a long dip

Chump of Lamb Marinated with Red Wine and Orange

This recipe will serve four portions.

Ingredients:

Four 8oz chumps of lamb rolled and tied.
1oz of lard.

Ingredients for the marinade:

½ bottle of red wine.
1 onion, finely chopped.
2 sliced cloves of garlic.
1 zest of an orange.
Sprig of fresh thyme.
Sprig of fresh rosemary.
Sprig of fresh tarragon.
A few black pepper corns, crushed.

Method:

In a mixing bowl that is big enough to hold all the lamb chumps, mix all the marinade ingredients together.

Lay the lamb chumps in the mixing bowl with the marinade. Cover the bowl with cling-film and place in the fridge. For best results I like to leave my chumps in the marinade for anything up to five days. No, I am not joking! After this time you will find that the chumps are a deep red colour. 'So my wife tells me.'

Pre-heat your oven to 220C (425F) or gas mark 7. Heat up a roasting tray and fry the chumps until almost burnt and crisp.

Place the tray in the pre-heated oven and roast for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 5 minutes.

While the lamb is resting, boil the marinade and reduce by three-quarters.

Pass this sauce through a sieve and place the liquid back on the hob to simmer.

The lamb chumps can now be sliced and served with the sauce.

Please note, your butcher can roll and tie the lamb chumps for you.

**Next Month:
Fruit Cheesecake.**



Joan and Harry at Menin Gate.

SECOND PRIZE IN the Review's Annual Story competition went to Joan Beevers, wife of St Dunstaner Harry Beevers of Castleford, West Yorkshire. She wrote under the name Annie Versary. "Surprise is a neat piece of social commentary dealing with reality rather than violent crime," said our judge, crime and travel author Gwen Moffat. "Creativity is demonstrated by the decision to tell a story wholly by way of telephone conversations. The action, for action can be depicted as effectively in dialogue as in narrative, is so plausible as to strike a chord in many readers, a careful build-up leading to the climactic final paragraph."

SURPRISE!

April 9th

BRING-BRING.....
BRING-BRING

Hello Mum, it's Michelle.

I know dear, I can recognise my own daughter's voice even if I don't hear it very often.

Oh Mum, I'm sorry! I ought to ring you and Dad more often, I know, but between the kids and my job I don't know whether I'm coming or going.

So what are Emma and William doing to keep you so busy?

Emma's dance class is doing Latin American. They've got some competitions coming up, so I have to take her to extra classes and rehearsals. I'm making her costumes myself - it saves loads of money.

What about young William?

William is doing fine. He is in all the school teams for his age

**by Annie Versary
(Joan Beevers)**

group. I have to take him to practices and matches after school and at weekends.

You sound as if you are trying to do too much. Can't Alan help sometimes?

Not really. He's hoping for promotion at work so he is doing overtime most days. At weekends he does the garden and helps me with the shopping. Honestly Mum, the weeks seem to spin by and then I suddenly realise how long it is since I rang you.

Wait until you are my age and then you will know how fast time goes. It doesn't seem like 40 years since your Dad and I were getting ready for our wedding.

Forty years! Isn't that a special anniversary?

Yes. It will be our Ruby Wedding on 6th November.

Great. What are you doing to celebrate?

We haven't planned anything yet. We like a quiet life. We just want to celebrate between ourselves.

Oh Mum, you can't do that! Don't you want a party?

Not really. We'll think of something nice and quiet just for the two of us.

Hmm. We'll see. Sorry Mum I'll have to go. Will is standing here with his dirty sports kit. I'd better get the washer started. Speak to you soon.

Bye, love.

April 23rd

BRR-ING-BRR-ING...
BRR-ING-BRR-ING

Hi. My name is Richard, how may I help you?

Stop fooling about, big brother, it's Michelle here.

Hi, little sister, is something wrong?

No Richard. I can ring you without anything being wrong, can't I? Listen, have you spoken to Mum and Dad recently?

No, but they are OK aren't they?

Yes, but the point is that it will be their Ruby Wedding anniversary on 6th November.

Crikey! How many years is that?

Forty, and they are not even planning to have a party.

Good for them! You know what Dad's like - gardening and bowls and he's a happy man.

I'm sure Mum would like something a bit more than taking cream cakes to their ballroom dancing club.

Leave them alone, they can do what they want.

It's up to us Richard. I think we should have a party for them. Your Jenny and I can do the food and we can have it here. If we don't tell Mum and Dad until the day arrives they won't have time to get worried about it. It will be a nice surprise.

I don't know, I'm not sure at all. It seems a lot of trouble to go to.

Listen to you! It will be Jenny and I who do all the work. Ask her what she thinks and ring me back.

May 7th

BRR-BRRR... BRR-BRRR
Hello, Michelle speaking.

Hi little sister. I've talked to Jenny about this party for Mum and Dad and she thinks it's a good idea. I'm still not too sure but I know when I'm beaten. We had better start working the whole thing out. Uncle David and Auntie Christine will be put out if we don't invite them and all their clan, and if we invite them we have to ask Uncle Michael and Auntie Brenda and their lot, as well as Uncle Graham and Auntie Marion's side of the family. With this number of people how are you and Jenny going to manage to do all the food? You both have full-time jobs as well as families to look after.

You're right, we'd better get caterers. Anything else you've thought of?

Yes, Jenny and I and our two kids will have to stay overnight somewhere, and so will most of the others. Is it worth the hassle?

Of course it is. I suppose we'll need proper invitations as well. Leave it all with me and I'll get back to you.

June 4th

BRR-ING-BRR-ING...
BRR-ING-BRR-ING
Hello, Richard spea...

It's Michelle. I've got it all sorted out. You, Jenny and the kids can stay here with us, I've booked a caterer and since there's too many now to have it

here I've booked the Village Hall near Mum's place. We'll send out half the invitations each and include addresses for B and B's and then everyone can please themselves.

Well done, sis.

Can you think of anything else we have to do?

Well, the kids are not too keen on the idea, they could do with some sort of entertainment.

Aren't they all a bit too old for clowns or Punch and Judy?

I'll think about it and let you know if I come up with anything. Is that OK?

Yes, fine, and I'll do the same. Bye.

July 23rd

BRR-BRRR...BRR-BRRR

Hello.

Big brother speaking. I've been busy. I hope I've done the right thing.

Hi Richard, what have you been up to?

I've booked a disco for the Ruby Wedding! Darren and Katy can't wait to get there now. It's a friend of a friend who does it. He has loads of rock and pop for the youngsters and 60's music for the old folk. He will even play *The Anniversary Waltz* if we want it.

Good, now you're getting into the spirit of the thing.

There's something else as well. The DJ's friend can run a bar for us so I told him to come too. All the uncles are going to want more than cups of tea.

You're right, I hadn't thought of that.

We'll have to keep an eye on Uncle Graham though. Remember what happened at Auntie Christine's Silver Wedding?

I'd rather not think about that, thank you. It will be all right, though. You have sent out your share of invitations haven't you, Richard?

Of course I have. You told me to, so I did.

Very funny, I hope they all accept. We'll talk about numbers later. Bye.

September 24th

BRR-ING-BRR-ING...
BRR-ING-BRR-ING
Battersea Dogs Home.

What a comedian you are Richard. I got your letter with the acceptances. It comes to a lot doesn't it?

I know. It's grown a good bit since you thought of tea and cakes at your house, hasn't it? It's going to cost an arm and a leg. We'll probably have to re-mortgage the house.

Don't grumble, Richard. It will be worth it to see Mum and Dad's faces when they get there.

I suppose so. I've confirmed

with the DJ and barman.

I'll send the final numbers to the caterers when I get them.

OK, call me if anything crops up.

October 15th

BRING-BRING...
BRING-BRING

Hello.

Hello Mum. Just thought I'd catch up with you a bit. How are you both?

Hello Michelle, we're both doing well, thanks.

Good. Have you done anything exciting recently.

Not really, but I've had something on my mind

Oh, what's that?

Nothing for you to worry about.

You would tell me if there was anything, er, well, you know, to worry about?

Yes Michelle, I would, but there isn't anything.

OK then, speak to you soon. Love you.

October 29th

BRR-BRRR...BRR-BRRR

Hello, Michelle here.

Hi little sister. Just ringing to see if you are all set for next weekend.

Yes, I think so. I've checked

the bookings for the Hall, the caterers, the disco and the bar. Emma and William are in charge of decorations so your two can help them to blow up the balloons when they get here.

Good idea! Keep them all busy.

I thought we'd better ring Mum and Dad on the day, before we set off. We'll tell them we are taking them out for a celebratory drink, then she can get Dad out of those awful gardening trousers and into something decent.

Another good idea. See you next week, then.

November 6th

The guests are assembled, everything is in place when Richard and Michelle go to telephone their parents from Michelle's house and notice there is a message on the answerphone. This is what they hear:-

Hello Michelle, it's Mum and Dad It's the middle of the night and we are just setting off to the airport. We decided to treat ourselves for our Ruby Wedding and we've booked six weeks in a hotel in Spain. They have tea-dances every afternoon and entertainment three nights a week. It should be just right for us. Will you let Richard know where we are please. We'll be back in nice time for Christmas.

Love you all, bye.

**Next issue: My Best Friend
by Ken Waugh**

REUNION ROUND-UP

THE 2005 REUNION season started on March 23rd when 44

St Dunstaners and 11 Widows gathered for the Derby Reunion at The Midland Hotel in Derby, Derbyshire. St Dunstan's President Ray Hazan was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding and St Dunstaner David Schofield gave a vote of thanks in response, extending an invitation to October's Ballroom Dancing Week to all attending. Guests included Mary Brailsford, MBE, Ex-Chairman of the War Widows Association and BLESMA Welfare Officer Keith Meakin.

There were 30 St Dunstaners, and four Widows at the

Brighton (I) Reunion held at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on March 30th. David Knowles was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding and St Dunstaner Paul Walker gave the response to his speech. Council Member Air Vice Marshal Richard Kyle joined St Dunstaners for the first time at a reunion. There was also a round of applause for 97-year-old St Dunstaner Bernard Holden who worked on the Bluebell Railway, a familiar excursion for many who visit Ovingdean.

The Norwich Reunion held at the Swallow Nelson Hotel, Norwich on April 13th united 24 St Dunstaners and nine Widows. Chairman Captain

Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided on behalf of St Dunstan's Council and a vote of thanks was voiced by St Dunstaner Robert Simpson. As guest speaker, television newsreader Laurie Mayer, accompanied by his wife Jill, offered an entertaining and amusing version of the Battle of Trafalgar as it might have been with a dash of Political Correctness. Other guests included John Child, Director of the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind. Margaret Durrant said a few words, which summed up the feelings of many of those attending, regarding her husband Walter who passed away in March. He had been a St Dunstaner for over 50 years.

Can you recognise the Northgate children?

IN THE LAST ISSUE, Margaret Heffernan asked if anyone recalled St Dunstan's homes from bygone days. The children of St Dunstaners are pictured, right, playing at Northgate House, Bazehill Road, Rottingdean Sussex. Funded by a gift from the Royal Air Force in 1946, it provided accommodation for children between three and 14 and nursery facilities for day visits. The service ceased in 1961. It was last used by St Dunstan's in the early 70s for nursing care. If you are one of the children pictured (or know who they might be) contact Roberta Hazan on 020 7723 5021.



Picture courtesy of Argus Newspapers

Thomas and Edith McLoughlin of Spital, Wirral, Merseyside who celebrated 62 years of marriage on April 10th.

Hildegard and Sydney Spring of Little Chalfont, Amersham, Buckinghamshire who celebrated 65 years of marriage on April 16th.

Charles and Gladys Pay of Maidstone, Kent who celebrated 62 years of marriage on April 17th.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Iain Millard of Saltdean, Brighton on passing a Level-3 Certificate in Reflexology Techniques. Find out how Iain held up in the London Marathon on page 48.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Imogene Gregg on March 15th. She was the wife of *Frederick Gregg* of Birmingham, West Midlands.

Mary Lloyd on March 16th. She was the wife of *Colwyn Lloyd* of Llanelli, Carmarthenshire.

Arthur Storey on April 1st. He was the husband of *Annie Storey* of Consett, County Durham.

Irene Carter on April 7th. She was the wife of *Arthur Carter* of Bolton, Lancashire.

Jane Hollingsworth on April 7th. She was the wife of *Richard Hollingsworth* of St Leonards, East Sussex.

Ettie Fletcher of Tooting, London on March 18th. She was the widow of *Stanley Fletcher*.

May Flynn of Horley, Surrey in March. She was the widow of *Ernest Flynn*.

Kath Harding of Fleetwood, Lancashire on March 25th. She was the widow of *Henry Harding*.

Hilda Knight of New Parks, Leicestershire on April 6th. She was the widow of *Charles Knight*.

Hilda Sutton of Deal, Kent on April 11th. She was the widow of *Richard Sutton*.

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.

John Smith

Grenadier Guards

John Smith of Islington, London died on December 26th 2004, aged 67. Having worked in the textile industry, he joined the Grenadier Guards in 1955. After training at Pirbright and Caterham, he was posted to Cyprus and then Suez. After discharge in 1958, he worked in the steel industry before returning to textiles. Later, he joined Prudential Assurance.

Frank Sheridan

Royal Navy

Frank Sheridan of Liverpool, Merseyside died on March 14th, aged 77. He was a porter at a children's hospital before joining the Royal Navy in 1945. Initially training on submarines, he transferred to the frigate HMS *Leopard* but was then attached to the Army and Marines in Germany before completing a tour of duty on HMS *Lindisfarne*. After discharge in 1947, he returned to the hospital but later joined Plessey on their telephone exchange. He was a keen Liverpool supporter. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

George Childs

Royal Air Force

George William Childs of Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire died on March 15th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2002. As a Civil Servant, he worked in the duty room next to the War Room but had to wait 18 months

before he could join the Royal Air Force and begin flying training in 1941. He was sent to Alabama in the USA to train with the American Air Force. Returning to the UK, he converted to Wellingtons before joining Transport Command. He then flew Liberators from the UK to North Africa until the end of the War. He left as Flying Officer in 1946 and joined Scottish Aviation, becoming Chief Pilot in Luxembourg, Greece and Belgium. He flew aircraft such as Vanguard, Comets and Trident, working for BEA, British Airways and other companies. Interests included watersports, diving, sailing, and trekking. He also acted as a refugee coordinator for Amnesty International and was a member of Mensa. A keen story writer, he was a member of St Dunstan's Writers' Forum. Our sympathy goes to his widow Lucienne, their son and daughters and all of the family.

Robert Pepperell

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

Robert Charles Pepperell of Tamworth, Staffordshire died on March 15th, aged 87. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2002. He was working in Paris as a Civil Servant with the Admiralty when war broke out. He volunteered for the Royal Navy, joining the home fleet in 1940. After training as a signalman, he was posted to mine sweepers operating in home waters. In 1943, he became an Acting Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and assisted in training for D-Day operations. At the end of the war, he was posted to the Far East clearing mines from harbour areas such as Singapore. After his discharge in 1946, he returned to the Admiralty but later joined the Atomic Energy Authority. Our sympathy goes to his sons, daughter and all other members of the family.

Francis Cargin

Royal Air Force

Francis Cargin of Dromore, County Down died on March 16th, aged 84. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1980. Having joined the Royal Air Force as an 18-year-old in 1938, he was posted to the Far East. He was taken

prisoner when Hong Kong fell to the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941. The malnutrition and privation suffered over the next four years would eventually cause his loss of sight. Back in the UK, he was discharged in 1946 and worked as a weaver until 1967. His interests included archery, football and snooker. Our sympathy goes to his brother William and all members of the family.

Frank Welsh, MM

Parachute Regiment

Frank Moir Welsh, MM of Aldershot, Hampshire died on March 18th, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2001. He joined the Gordon Highlanders in 1940 and was tasked to escort prisoners captured during a Commando raid on Norway. This prompted him to volunteer for special army service and he was posted to 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment. He took part in the Bruneval raid in France where radio intercept equipment was captured. Then his unit moved to North Africa where he was awarded the Military Medal for his actions during a raid on a German airfield near Tunis. He dropped on Sicily and with two others took 72 Italian prisoners. He was wounded shortly after landing on D-Day and casevaced back to the UK, but rejoined his unit in time to jump at Arnhem. They reached the bridge but were taken prisoner. Demobbed in 1946, he found he could not settle and rejoined the Parachute Regiment serving in Germany, Cyprus, Egypt and the UK. He was Colour Sergeant when he left the service in 1967. He then worked as an inventory clerk and later for a security firm. His interests included golf. Our sympathy goes to his son Chris, daughter Lana and all the family.

Percival Barnard

Royal Engineers

Percival Christopher Barnard of Maida Vale, London died on March 20th, aged 88. He worked in a boot and shoe factory before joining the Merchant Navy and sailing to Japan, America and China amongst other countries. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1940 in a

Stevadore Battalion and was posted to Freetown in Africa where he supervised the construction of cranes in docks. Discharged in 1946, he worked at Surrey Docks then became a timber measurer and grader. Our sympathy goes to his son and daughter and all of the family.

Harry Taylor

Royal Artillery

Harry Arthur Charles Taylor of Haywards Heath, West Sussex died on March 23rd, aged 93. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1940 and served with them as an Armourer in India and the UK. He was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to his family and friends.

Alan Watson

Royal Air Force

Alan Cecil Watson of Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent died on March 26th, aged 83. When war broke out, he abandoned plans to train as a doctor and subsequently joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. Initially serving in the UK, Egypt and Malta, he was involved in the invasion of Sicily, Sardinia and Italy. Discharged as Corporal in 1946, he joined the British Electrical Authority but later founded his own company building switch gear and generating plants. Our sympathy goes to all of the family.

Lt Col Allan Beaumont

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Lt Col Allan Montague Beaumont of Wokingham, Berkshire died on March 28th, aged 76. After studying electrical engineering, he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1950. Training at Honiton, Devon and at Eaton Hall, Arbofield as an instructor, he was subsequently posted to Malaya where he was involved with the Emergency. A variety of UK postings followed, along with a return to Malaya and then Brunei, followed by four years in BAOR in Hameln and Düsseldorf. He retired as Lieutenant Colonel in 1979 and became a maths teacher. His interests included gardening, badminton, swimming and walking. Our sympathy goes to his son Richard, daughters

Lorraine and Amanda and all of the family.

Rita Culmer

Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Rita Mary Culmer of Horsham, West Sussex died aged 85. She had been a St Dunstaner since 2002. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and after training was posted to the Meteorological Unit in Cranwell. Later she was posted to Tangmere in Sussex. She left the Service as Sergeant in 1946 and returned to her old job with the Post Office. Later she worked for the RSPCA and the Horsham local authority. Our sympathy goes to her daughters and all members of the family.

Roy Waltho

Royal Air Force

Roy Fred Waltho of Eaton, nr Congleton, Cheshire died on April 1st, aged 83. He worked in a textile company before joining the Royal Air Force in 1941. He served in the UK and India as an airframe fitter, leaving the service as Leading Aircraftman in 1946. He returned to the textile industry. Our sympathy goes to his widow Mary, their sons, daughter and all of the family.

Ernest Firth, MM

Royal Corps of Signals

Ernest Firth, MM of Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland died on April 2nd, aged 82. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2001. When war broke, he was in a reserved occupation laying telephone lines for Royal Air Force airfields but subsequently joined the Royal Corps of Signals in 1942. After training in Yorkshire, he was posted to Harrogate in support of 8th Artillery Group (AGRA). He was deployed to Normandy on D+1 and fought through Europe ending up in Neimunster where he had to construct a telephone exchange. While serving as Lance Corporal, he was feted for his actions during an attack on an enemy detachment resulting in 47 prisoners being taken. He was awarded the Military Medal in 1945. Discharged in 1947, he resumed work with the GPO in telecommunications. An active member

of the Post Office Engineering Union for over 20 years, he was chairman and then secretary for the Darlington branch and a member of their National Executive Council. His interests included golf and masonics. Our sympathy goes to his widow Gladys and all of the family.

John Askew

Royal Artillery

John Askew of Effingham, Surrey died on April 5th, aged 68. He was an apprentice electrical engineer when called up to join the Royal Artillery in 1955. Serving with 36 Heavy Ack-Ack Regiment, he was posted to Malta and the Middle East. Discharged in 1957 as Lance Bombardier, he became a heavy goods vehicle driver and then a builder. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jean, his sons and daughters and all other members of the family.

Dennis Foster

Royal Engineers

Dennis William Foster of Plumbley, Cheshire has died, aged 90. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2000. A civil engineer, he was called up for a commission in the Royal Engineers in 1940 but had to complete six months in the ranks before training. During that time, he was serving in Greece and was taken prisoner on the frontline in April 1941. After six months as a prisoner of war in Greece, he was transferred to Germany where he was held in several camps before being repatriated in May 1945. Discharged as Lance Corporal in 1945, he became a Borough Surveyor in Northumberland and Whitely Bay. His interests included stamp collecting, caravanning and music, at one time he played piano and accordion. Our sympathy goes to his son Paul, daughter Mary and all members of the family.

Vincent Garner

King's Royal Rifle Corps

Vincent Charles Garner of Ovingdean, Brighton died on April 11th, aged 89. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1989. He enlisted with the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1939. Serving as a

Rifleman, he went into Europe on D+2, subsequently losing his left eye as a result of gunshot wounds suffered in Belgium during September 1944. He also served in the Mid-East before being discharged in 1945. In civilian life, he ran a garage and service station in Sutton. His interests included bowls and music. Our sympathy goes to his niece Jane and all other members of the family.

Tom Adams

Royal Navy

Thomas John George Adams of Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot, Devon died on April 12th, aged 96. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1997. He joined the Royal Navy in 1924, a month before his 16th birthday and served worldwide. He became a Gunnery Instructor at Dartmouth and amongst his pupils was a future Chairman of St Dunstan's, Sir Henry Leach. He also sailed on HMS *Exeter* with late St Dunstaner Admiral Sir Frank Twiss. In March 1942, he was captured by the Japanese. Apart from suffering with malaria, dysentery and beri-beri, the malnutrition he endured during his years as a prisoner would eventually cause his loss of sight. Liberated in 1945, he was discharged in 1947 as Chief Petty Officer and entered the motor trade. He was President of the Torbay FEPOW Association and an active member of the HMS *Exeter* Ship's Company Association. Our sympathy goes to his widow Doris and all of the family.

Conrad Slade

Royal Navy

Conrad Crispin Cyril Slade of Weymouth, Dorset died on April 13th, aged 97. He joined the Royal Navy in 1923 and served on ships around the world as an Able Seaman. He became a noted boxer and boxed in United Service Devonport on several occasions. He was wounded in the Mediterranean in 1941 but returned to duty. He was discharged in 1947 and became a civilian Coxswain at HM Dockyard Portland. His interests included gardening, sports and cards. Our sympathy goes to his widow Janet, their son and daughters and all other members of the family.

RUNNERS SHINE ON SILVER STREETS OF LONDON

Simon Rogers reports

THE STREETS OF London might not be made of gold, but there was pure silver running through 26.2 miles of the capital on April 17th when over 30,000 people took part in the 25th London Marathon. Four St Dunstaners and their guides went the distance. Steve Sparkes and his brother tied on 4 hours, 16 minutes and 18 seconds; Iain Millard and Andy Alliston crossed the line in 5 hours, 26 minutes and 52 seconds while Mark Maddock and Joe Delaney were close behind on 5 hours, 27 minutes and 48 seconds. Running his 16th marathon (13th in London) Don Planner and his son Stuart (there for the first time) completed the run in 5 hours, 58 minutes and 10 seconds.



St Dunstaner Don Planner and his son Stuart run along Marsh Wall towards Canary Wharf in London.



Mark and Joe keep up the pace through Docklands.



Vell done for Iain and Andy as they cross the finish.



Steve and his brother after 17 miles of running.