

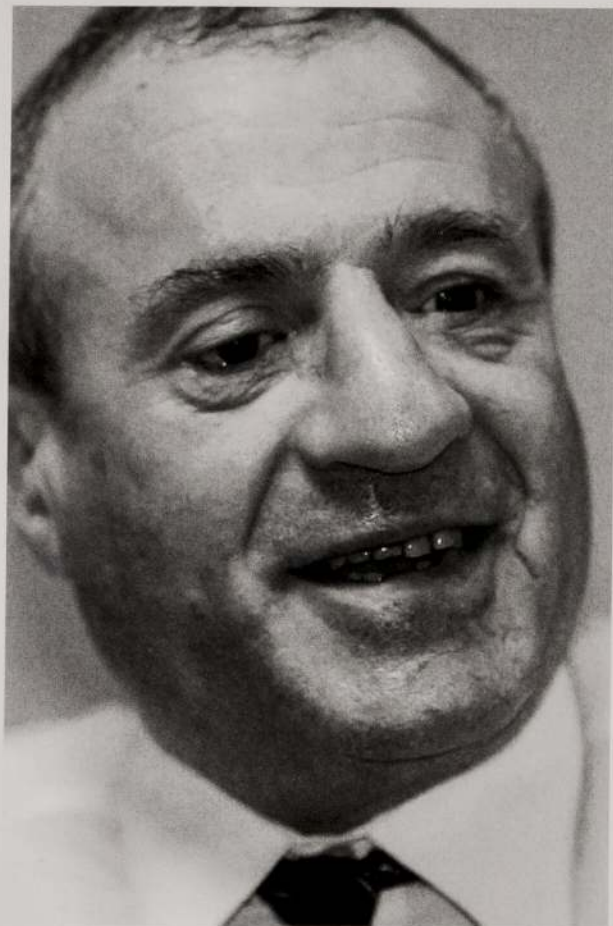
December 2005

www.st-dunstans.org.uk

ST DUNSTAN'S Review



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN



From the President

THERE HAS BEEN much 'looking back' this year, a prerogative of older generations! In the forefront of our minds might have been the time when we served our country and all the experiences that involved. It might have been the enormous change to our lives when we became St Dunstaners? It might have been the legacy left to us by those St Dunstaners who have preceded us during the past 90 years? Whichever it is or was, let us be grateful for what we have today and hope that we may do the same in leaving hope, encouragement, and an example to those who will inevitably follow in our footsteps.

My wife Robbie joins me in wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a fulfilling New Year.

Ray Hazan
Raymond Hazan

From the Chairman

AT OUR Annual General Meeting on November 2nd, two new Trustees were elected. Lady Walker (Tor), wife of General Sir Michael Walker, Chief of the General Staff is well acquainted with service family welfare matters and people problems. Mrs Ainslie (Catherine) has much experience in the fields of National Health, HR and management. It is high time we had ladies on the Council to look after the interests of the female St Dunstaners and the large numbers of female staff. They are both very welcome members of the governing body.

It has been a busy year of memories for all those who served during the Second World War and for St Dunstan's. On December 9th, we commemorate the death of our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson 84 years ago. Where would you all be without his vision, imagination and vibrant energy?

My wife Jenny joins me in wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and may 2006 be a successful and fruitful year for us all.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN



Michael Gordon-Lennox

Christmas message from the Chief Executive

OFTEN, WHEN THE founder of an organisation dies, the feeling of belonging that he or she created dies with them. For St Dunstan's, however, the 'family' feeling created by Sir Arthur Pearson still lives on, ninety years later.

Christmas tends to be a family time. For some it will be spent with close family and friends, for others it will be spent with other members of the St Dunstan's family. I think we are all, however, very fortunate to be part of this special and unique 'family'.

It has been another hugely successful year and I send my very sincere thanks to you all, St Dunstaners, other beneficiaries, my staff colleagues and volunteers, for the part you have played in this and for keeping the flag of 'family' flying over St Dunstan's this Christmas.

A very happy and blessed Christmas to you all.

Robert Leader

Robert Leader



Front cover story: In remembering we rise again!

St Dunstan's contingent, all 200 of them, marches onto Whitehall, around the bronze statue of Earl Haig on horseback and towards the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Full report on page 20.

Back cover story: Like Fred and Ginger!

St Dunstaner Alan Wortley and his wife Joan set the pace during the Dance Week at Ovingdean. More on details on page 26.

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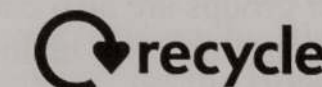
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Noticeboard

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ST DUNSTAN'S



HAVE A JOYFUL CELEBRATION
THIS FESTIVE MONTH:

All staff at Headquarters, Ovingdean, Sheffield and working around the country wish the members of the St Dunstan's family a very Happy Christmas. We trust everyone will enjoy good health and happiness during the coming year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

HOW TO GET YOUR VETERANS LAPEL BADGE

VETERANS BADGE NOW AVAILABLE FROM ST DUNSTAN'S: In May 2004, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs launched the Veterans Lapel Badge, scheme. The badge was originally intended for those Second World War veterans who, under the Heroes Return Scheme, travelled back to the countries in which they had fought.

Because the badge was so popular, in January 2005, the scheme was extended include men and women who served in the UK Armed Forces in the First and Second World Wars. Other groups are also entitled to a Veterans Badge currently include the Cyprus Regiment, Merchant Navy Seamen, Home Guard, Polish Forces under UK Command and War Widows and Widowers who are getting a War Widows Pension qualify.

If you would like a badge and you have served during the First or Second World War you can now make an easy application by contacting St Dunstan's Headquarters in London. Telephone Barbara Sweeney on 020 7616 7922.

Direct applications to the Veterans Agency must still be made via a form which can be downloaded from their website, www.veteransagency.mod.uk.

You can also telephone the Veterans Agency for an application form on 0800 169 22 77. Complete the application form, sign and date it, then either fax it back or return it by post.

All completed application forms for the Veterans Lapel Badge must be returned to the Veterans Agency, Veterans Service Team, Room 6108, Tomlinson House, Thornton Cleveleys FY5 3WP.

WINDOW REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE AT OIVINGDEAN

SCAFFOLDING UP AT ST DUNSTAN'S: Many of those who have visited or stayed at Ovingdean recently on a stormy day, and even when it isn't, may have noticed the wind whistling through some of the windows. This has been a growing problem for some time now and inspections carried out at the beginning of the year confirmed that a part inside of the windows on the wings (but not the fuselage) has worn out and that they will need to be replaced.

A specialist company carried out further tests, including the replacement of two of the windows as a trial, to make sure that all the requirements were clear. This enabled a schedule of works for the project to be sent to a number of contractors for pricing during the summer. CEP and Dew Construction were successful and have been appointed to carry out the works which will start in February 2006.

The works will require that a scaffold is erected around the 'wings' of the building which will be in place for most of next year, the Pearson wing on the south being scaffolded from February to June, the Fraser wing on the north from June to October. The scaffold will have to be covered in plastic panels for safety reasons and this will reduce the daylight which can get into the building to an extent.

Whilst the scaffold is in place, all of the other outstanding maintenance items to the outside of the building will be carried out. This will include replacing sections of the brickwork where the surface of the bricks have been worn away by the weather, replacing or cleaning the metal sills and panels above the windows, and some roof works including making them safer for maintenance in the future. We also have

some repairs to do on the staircases at the end of each wing and at the back of the house but not on the main staircase itself.

The contractors have held a meeting with managers at Ovingdean and Residents' representatives where they explained what would be necessary to successfully complete these works. The contractors responded very positively to the suggestions of those present and gave a very positive feeling of professionalism and understanding.

The project is being carefully planned and every precaution is being taken to ensure its smooth running. However, as this is a major building project it will be noisy at times during the working day (Monday-Friday 08:00-17:30) mainly due to the brick replacement element and may cause a degree of disruption for much of the period. The window replacement is actually relatively straight forward with each room, when its turn comes, only being vacated during the working day as the windows are out and in within a few hours – no overnight voids! Ovingdean will seek to maintain its full schedule are far as possible though there may be a small reduction in room capacity for part of the time. Overall, it will be business as usual.

BLUE IRIS FOCUS ON NEWS

COMPUTER BROADCASTING FROM BLACKPOOL: BlueIRIS (Interactive Radio Information Services) is a subscription based service that 'streams' news, information and entertainment to users on a broadband internet connection. It is run by Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Society for the Blind. Up to four hours of material, including books such as *The Da Vinci Code*, is broadcast each day. Details can be found on www.blueiris.info.

WHAT'S ON IN THE FORTHCOMING YEAR

A WIDE CHOICE OF ACTIVITIES: These are just some of the events and activities that make up St Dunstan's 2006 calendar. Details of other meetings will appear in future issues. For some club events at Ovingdean participants should note that arrival and departure dates may be one day before and after those published. All holiday and club activity bookings should be made via Jackie Castle, Bookings Coordinator on 01273 307811 ext 1422 or e-mail jackie.castle@st-dunstans.org.uk. Those booking in for club activities are reminded that reserved rooms are only held up to one month prior to the commencement of the activity. Provisional dates have been marked (tbc) to be confirmed and further information will be published when available.

DECEMBER 2005

Writers' Forum December 3rd
 St Dunstan's Day December 9th
 Christmas 'Week' December 18th-28th
 New Year 'Week' December 29th - January 7th

**2006
 JANUARY**

Indoor Bowling January 9th
 Indoor Bowling January 13th
 Skiing (Italy) January 14th-21st
 Indoor Bowling January 16th
 Archery Club (I) January 20th-28th

FEBRUARY

Indoor Bowling February 3rd
 Writers' Forum February 4th
 Fishing Club (I) February 7th-9th
 Music Week February 12th-18th
 Indoor Bowling February 15th
 Indoor Bowling February 17th
 Computer Club (I) February 22nd-23rd
 Indoor Bowling February 24th
 Amateur Radio (I) February 24th-March 3rd

MARCH

Writers' Forum March 4th
 History Week March 5th-11th
 Indoor Bowling March 6th
 Bowling (I) March 19th-April 1st
 Derby Reunion March 23rd
 Brighton Reunion March 29th

APRIL

Writers' Forum April 1st
 Indoor Bowling April 5th
 Middlesbrough Reunion April 5th
 Ex-POWs Reunion April 7th-9th
 East Anglia Reunion April 13th
 Easter Day April 16th
 Indoor Bowling April 17th
 Eastbourne Reunion (I) April 19th
 Masonic Weekend April 21st-23rd
 London Marathon April 23rd
 Anzac Day April 25th
 Fishing Club (II) April 25th-27th
 London Reunion April 26th
 Gardening Week April 30th-May 6th

MAY

Newcastle Reunion May 2nd
 Leeds Reunion May 3rd
 Writers' Forum May 6th
 VE Day May 8th
 Outdoor Bowling May 8th
 Burley Reunion May 10th
 Blind & Handless Reunion May 10th-16th (tbc)
 Blackpool Reunion May 16th
 Liverpool Reunion May 17th
 Feast of St Dunstan May 19th
 Bisley Clay Pigeon Shoot May 25th
 Archery Club (II) May 26th-June 3rd
 Edinburgh Reunion May 31st

JUNE

Writers' Forum June 3rd
 Fishing Club (III) June 5th-9th

Chichester Reunion June 7th
 Outdoor Bowling June 8th
 50 Year Badge Holders Reunion June 9th-12th
 Outdoor Bowling June 12th
 Exeter Reunion June 15th
 Widows' Week (I) June 18th-24th
 Outdoor Bowling June 19th
 Surrey Reunion June 21st
 Bristol Reunion June 28th

JULY

Writers' Forum July 1st
 British 10K Run July 2nd
 Eastbourne Reunion (II) July 6th
 Fishing Club (IV) July 11th-13th
 Cardiff Reunion July 12th
 Outdoor Bowling July 14th
 Ladies Reunion July 16th-22nd
 Indoor Bowling July 17th
 Band of the Royal Marines Concert July 19th
 HMS Sultan July 28th-August 5th

AUGUST

Outdoor Bowling August 4th
 Writers' Forum August 5th
 Racing Week August 6th-12th
 Outdoor Bowling August 14th
 VJ Day August 15th
 Archery Club (III) August 25th-September 2nd
 Outdoor Bowling August 29th

SEPTEMBER

Writers' Forum September 2nd

Activities Week September 3rd-9th
 Fishing Club (V) September 11th-15th
 Outdoor Bowling September 21st
 Physiotherapist Weekend September 22nd-25th
 Aylesbury Reunion September 27th

OCTOBER

St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge October
 Widows' Week (II) October 1st-7th
 Worcester Reunion October 3rd
 Writers' Forum October 7th
 Kent Reunion October 11th
 Computer Club (II) October 11th-12th
 World Sight Day October 12th
 Amateur Radio (II) October 13th-20th
 Commando Challenge October 14th-15th
 Cornwall Reunion October 18th
 IKK 2006 -International Congress of War Blind Organisations October 21st-25th
 Great South Run October 22nd
 Bowling (II) October 26th-November 9th

NOVEMBER

Writers' Forum November 4th
 Remembrance Sunday November 12th
 Dancing Week November 12th-18th
 Fishing Club (VI) November 21st-23rd

DECEMBER

Writers' Forum December 2nd
 Christmas Craft Week December 3rd-9th
 St Dunstan's Day December 9th
 Christmas 'Week' December 17th-27th
 New Year 'Week' December 28th-January 6th 2007

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

Visitors to Ovingdean can hear a recorded weekly programme of events. The speaker is on the left of wall between the door to the lounge on your right and the dining room on your left. It has a prominent button to initiate the recording.

MAKING SENSE OF DIRECTORY ENQUIRIES

WHAT'S FREE AND WHAT'S NOT!: In a recent issue of *New Beacon*, RNIB Campaigns Officer David Mann highlighted confusion over the free directory enquiry service.

The RNIB Helpline regularly receives calls from people uncertain or unhappy about different aspects of the free directory enquiry service. With the assistance of BT Age and Disability Action, he compiled the following overview in an attempt to clarify the situation.

If you can't use a print directory due to sight loss or certain other disabilities, you are entitled to access a free directory enquiry (DQ) service. This forms part of the universal service regulations laid down by OFCOM, the communications regulator. It doesn't matter if you get your telephone service from BT, a cable company, a mobile operator or one of the indirect access companies. Indeed, many of us have both a fixed and a mobile service, and we are usually eligible for the free enquiry service from both.

Many telephone companies choose to use the long-established BT service, although some may choose to set up their own system. Most are accessed by dialling 195, though they don't have to be.

BT's 195 service not only offers access to all UK, Irish, Channel Island and Isle of Man numbers, but also carries a comprehensive classified service. This enables callers to obtain numbers for the type of service they need without needing to know the name of a particular business eg "I want a plumber in Plumstead." BT offers this service over and above its regulatory obligations.

The free DQ service is, however, not all you are entitled to. The regulations set down by OFCOM also require the free enquiry service to be complemented by an entitlement to be put through to the number you want once the operator has located it for you. This can be very helpful if you have difficulty remembering numbers or writing them down.

While the enquiry service is free, the call completion service, as it is called is of course not. You have to pay for this call like any other.

To be more accurate, you may have to pay for this call unlike you pay for others. Most fixed telephone companies offer inclusive packages where, in return for a higher line rental, all or certain calls are "free". Similarly, mobile telephone accounts usually include an allocation of free minutes.

Generally, these packages exclude certain calls, such as those to 0870 and 0845 numbers, or calls from one mobile network to another.

Similarly, they often if not always exclude calls completed for you by the 195 operator. Users have sometimes complained that this exclusion has not been pointed out when they took out a particular package, although BT does now make this explicit on its application form.

So you do need to be aware that a call completed for you by the free directory enquiry service is unlikely to be free itself. The operator will not be able to tell you what it might cost, as this will depend on which company you are with and what tariff you are on, and they will not have access to this information. If you do require more information about the cost of these calls you should contact your telephone service provider.

Operators on the 195 service should not put you through to the number you want unless you specifically ask them to. They may offer the service if you appear to be having difficulties noting a number.

If you are not already registered for this service, and want to be, dial 195 and ask to join. Dialling 195 should connect you automatically to the free DQ service provided by your telephony service provider.

Ask for the registration team, who will take contact details and send out a form. The form will need to be completed, signed, countersigned by a suitable person (details are on the form) and stamped with an official stamp before being returned to BT. If you qualify to use the service, you will be given a PIN. If you are rejected, you do have the right to appeal against the decision.

BT does not routinely offer to help complete forms over the phone, and I cannot guarantee that other companies would either.

THE TRUTH ABOUT CARROTS

EAT VEG FOR HEALTHY EYES: Professor Ian Grierson, PhD, FRCPath, Head of Liverpool University's Department of Ophthalmology, has written a cookery book with an emphasis on eye health and nutrition. *Vegetables for Vision - Nature's Supplements for Eye Health* encourages healthy eating of vegetables. Published in large print, the 134 page volume costs £14.50 (plus £2.50 post and packing) and can be ordered from the Macular Disease Society, PO Box 1870 Andover, Hampshire SP10 9AD. Cheques should be made payable to the Macular Disease Society and you should allow 28 days for delivery.

SAIL GRAN CANARIA WITH JST

SPECIAL RATE FOR ST DUNSTANER AND ESCORT: Jubilee Sailing Trust are offering St Dunstaners and guides the opportunity to sail onboard one of their tall ships at a discounted rate. They cater for people of all ages, abilities and experience. Currently, the offer extends to voyages on these dates:

January 9th-16th
January 16th-23rd
January 28th-February 4th
February 4th-11th
February 13th-20th
February 20th-27th

Basic costs are £325 each for a St Dunstaner and guide for an eight day voyage in Gran Canaria (half price). This includes all food and soft drinks, safety gear and bedding, etc. It excludes travel, however return flights to the Canaries are fairly cheap and manageable. Jubilee Sailing Trust are unable to supply guides for the voyages. Any St Dunstaners interested in taking part in a voyage can contact Jubilee Sailing Trust directly on 0870 4435781. Anyone who would like advice on fundraising ideas please contact Lynsey Coles at St Dunstan's Fundraising department on 020 7616 7966.

HOLIDAY CHALET IN IRELAND

SHARE CENTRE: The Blind Centre in Northern Ireland operates a holiday chalet in the SHARE Holiday Village at Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. Full board and self catering options are available. For a brochure and application form (available in print, tape and braille) contact the Leisure Officer, The Blind Centre for Northern Ireland, 10 James Street, Omagh BT78 1DW or telephone 028 8225 0220.

INHERITANCE TAX CONCESSIONS AVAILABLE FOR EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

EXEMPTION APPLIES FOR SERVICE RELATED CAUSE OF DEATH: Tax advisers often neglect to consider the exemption from Inheritance Tax for thousands of Service veterans and their families who might otherwise suffer the impact of this tax on their death.

Under the provisions of Section 154 of the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 the estate of a member of the Armed Forces is totally exempt from Inheritance Tax if he or she dies from a wound, an accident or a disease contracted when on active service or service of a war-like nature.

Many war veterans survive for years after a conflict but provided the injury or disease plays some part in their death, even if the cause of death may have no direct connection with the original wound, then exemption will be granted.

For example, in one case a veteran died of bronchopneumonia. He was susceptible to this complaint because of his limited mobility and poor circulation since, as a result of injuries sustained on active service, one leg had been amputated at mid-thigh and another below the knee. He was 22 when he returned from the theatre of war after D-Day but did not die until 1996. Exemption was granted in his estate. This exemption has been in place since 1984 and consideration should always be given to its availability even though the death certificate may not necessarily cite war injuries as the cause of death.

There is no limit on claims, so if you feel a relative who has already died could have qualified it is still possible to claim.

In November 2000, the Government announced that where FEPOW (Far Eastern Prisoners of War) received the ex gratia lump payment of £10,000 a concession would be given. This sum is given full relief from Inheritance Tax regardless of how the recipient may have chosen to use these monies. There is no special action called for by the executor claiming FEPOW relief. It would however be helpful at that stage to provide a copy of the letter from the War Pensions Agency (now the Veterans Agency) confirming the award, should proof be needed.

Further information can be obtained from the Capital Taxes Office Helpline on 0845 302 0900. They are open Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00. Downloadable forms and information can also be found on their website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/cto.

STRONGYLOIDES STUDY

HELP WANTED: Dr Geoff Gill of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine is starting a project examining death caused by Strongyloides infection. Strongyloides, known in America as threadworm, is a parasitical worm and infection is one of the health problems that have afflicted Far East Prisoners of War and others who have served in Asiatic regions. Infection usually causes bowel disturbance and rashes. On occasions when the body's immune system is suppressed infection can become severe and even fatal. Dr Gill would like to contact anyone who is aware of friends or relatives who have died because of Strongyloides infection. He can be contacted at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5QA. Tel: 0151 708 9393. E-mail: g.gill@liv.ac.uk.

AUDIO DESCRIBED SHOWS

Bristol Hippodrome

Scrooge on January 11th and My Fair Lady on February 15th. Contact Trish Hodson on 0117 302 3222 for details.

Bromley Churchill

Cinderella on December 17th. For details call 0870 060 6620 or e-mail bromleyaccessbookings@thembassadors.com.

Cheltenham Everyman

Jack and the Beanstalk on December 21st. Call 01242 572573 for details.

CONDOLENCES TO VIVIAN JACKSON

We extend our deepest sympathy to former Welfare Officer Vivian Jackson on the death of her husband Michael on October 17th. They had been married for 43 years and were both well known to St Dunstaners in the Southern Counties area.

BRENDA DOUGLAS

Brenda Douglas nee Kenchington of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire passed away on May 8th, aged 80. Some St Dunstaners will recall her as secretary to St Dunstan's Welfare Superintendent Alex McKay, MA. She also assisted Chief Accountant Douglas Wills before leaving to marry in the mid-1950s.

ST DUNSTAN'S REVIEW GOES INTO HIBERNATION

NEXT ISSUE OUT AT START OF FEBRUARY: There will be no edition of **ST DUNSTAN'S Review** published during the month of January. Tape, CD and disk readers are asked to return their wallets before January 20th so that we can send the next issue out. The **Review** will be back, in all formats, in February 2006 with more news, features and information. In the meantime, all comments, suggestions and contributions are extremely welcome. Write to Ray Hazan, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD or e-mail ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.



MIKE ROBINSON

Area Surveyor Mike Robinson retired in October after 12 years with St Dunstan's – though he has been involved with the organisation for nearly 30 years.

He joined St Dunstan's in May 1993, part of a team based at Pearson House, which later moved to Ovingdean and more recently to Peacehaven. Mike previously had his own building company and worked on St Dunstan's properties for many years. He therefore got to know many St Dunstaners and widows over a 28 year period. His sympathetic approach and sense of humour has assisted in enhancing the lives of St Dunstaners and their families. Many regard him as a valued friend and have great respect for the dedication he applied to his profession. His quick wit and cutting humour will be greatly missed - a hard act to follow - every St Dunstaner and widow who knows him are very sad to see him go.

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.

Did the Chairman misquote Nelson's words?

I listen avidly to the **Review** and find it a real life line. Before World War II when I was working for an arts and crafts firm in Old Portsmouth calendars depicting the HMS *Victory* were produced. The flag signal given at the Battle of Trafalgar was shown as "England expects that every man this day will do his duty". When the Chairman wrote about Nelson in the September **Review**, were two words inadvertently left out of his dictation?

**Joyce Graham,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire**

• Did St Dunstan's Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN, misquote Lord Nelson in September? We are glad to say that he did not. However, it allows us to relate a curious chain of events related to the message.

Nelson's original declaration of confidence in his men was "England confides that every man will do his duty." The *Victory's* signalman Lt John Pasco, who would later captain the ship, recorded the following exchange when ordered to hoist the message: "If your Lordship will permit

me to substitute the 'confides' for 'expects' the signal will soon be completed, because the word 'expects' is in the vocabulary, and 'confides' must be spelt." The Admiral responded "That will do, Pasco, make it directly."

So it was that the 48-flag message "England expects that every man will do his duty" was flown, followed by a final order to engage the enemy more closely. This version is recorded in the logs of the various ships moving to engage the combined fleets of France and Spain. The signal is still flown on the *Victory* every October

21st and has been copied by Napoleon and Count Togo amongst others.

However, six years after the Battle, tenor John Braham enjoyed considerable success with a song entitled *The Death of Nelson*. The signal formed part of the song's refrain and in fitting words to music, Branham changed the words to "England expects that every man this day will do his duty." It is a version of the Admiral's words that has proved equally enduring.

We have more Trafalgar related features on pages 16 and 17.

Getting back on the dance floor was very refreshing

I feel I must write to say that both my wife and I really enjoyed ourselves at the Dancing Week at Ovingdean. It has been such a long time since we last danced, it has been so very refreshing to be even attempting to dance again. It was delightful to see enthusiasm from some totally blind people and some people hardly able to walk

attempting to do the basic steps of the dances being taught by David and his very able partner. We both hope that this will become a regular event and I am sure that many of the others will too.

**Basil and Audrey Gibson,
Guisborough, Cleveland**

• A full report on the Dancing Week starts on page 26.

A pleasure to come dancing at St Dunstan's

My husband Charles and myself wish to thank all at St Dunstan's for the lovely Dance Week at Ovingdean in October. We have been dancing for many years but now due to health reasons only go to our club once a week. This is mainly for the

social life we have become accustomed to as well as a trip round the dance floor. It was lovely to see the sighted people helping out the blind people to have a go and I know they really enjoyed it having danced with some myself. David and Glynis were

very good teaching the inexperienced dancers. The chap on the keyboard was superb, the music great to dance to, not forgetting the sailors 1940s jive display the night before.

**Peggy and Charles Blockley,
Sileby, Leicestershire**

Saffa St Dunstaners were at poultry farm

In answer to Beti Chappell's letter in the **Review**, I remember my late husband Danny Watkins and his friend Buller Hodgson who were both South Africans (not Australians) and I remember Jack Chappell.

They were all poultry farming under the supervision of Mr Ferguson. I stayed at a B&B in the village. This was the spring and summer of 1947. Danny and I had married in 1946.

On another subject, does anyone still play bridge? I remember the weekend we were all coached at Ovingdean. I would love to hear from anyone who recalls those days. I would also like to congratulate Roy and Kath Armstrong on their Golden Anniversary. Roy was a brilliant bridge coach. I still play and win. I play at the club three times a week and other times on the internet.

**Anne Watkins, (anne.danny@xtra.co.nz)
Cambridge, New Zealand**

Veterans Agency remembers all year round

When the country fell silent on November 11th and Remembrance Sunday, we remembered those who have suffered bereavement, disability and pain as a result of armed conflict.

Veterans Agency is here for those people all year round. We provide free help, guidance and advice to anyone who has served in HM Armed Forces and their families – estimated to be some 13 million people in total.

Services can be accessed

via a free helpline service – 0800 169 2277, the website www.veteransagency.mod.uk or via our network of 25 War Pensioners' Welfare Service offices throughout the UK and Ireland (see phone book for details). Advice is available on any issue affecting veterans' lives – from health to housing, finances to benefits.

For those bereaved or disabled as a result of Service, a range of pension and lump sum payments (£1,000 to £285,000) are available

through the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation schemes. Call the free helpline for more information.

At this time of year, we pause to remember those who have been killed or injured in defence of the nation and what they did for us all. I would encourage veterans and their families to contact us and see what we can now do for them.

**Alan Burnham,
Chief Executive,
Veterans Agency, Norcross,
Blackpool, Lancashire**

St Dunstaners are made Freemen of London on World Sight Day



St Dunstaners Jamie Weller, Ray Hazan and Mark Threadgold are now Freemen of London.

THE TRUMPET FANFARE by the buglers of the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery sounded as the party processed into the ballroom of the Mansion House, official residence of the Lord Mayor of the City of London. It was led by the Sword Bearer, The Chief Commoner, Aldermen, and the Clerk to the Chamberlain, all in their red robes with ermine collars. In turn, they were followed by three St Dunstaners and members of their close family. Outside were a tethered hot air balloon hanging vertically and a 55ft speed boat on its side on dry land. No, this is not an alcohol induced hallucination, but the bestowing of the Freedom of the City of London on October 13th, World Sight Day.

The aim was to mark the day by acknowledging the achievements of Jamie Weller, a St Dunstaner Trustee and hot air balloon pilot; Mark Threadgold, holder of the world blind water endurance and speed records; and Ray Hazan, President of St Dunstan's.

They join the 1,800 people a year who become Freemen, and follow in the footsteps of several St Dunstaners.

The ceremony usually takes place at the Guildhall, but a last minute change of venue had to be arranged when someone realised the Queen was going to the Guildhall that evening, with all the security provisions that entails. A nightmare task for the Public Awareness team, in view of the many invitations that had been sent out.

The oldest surviving traditional ceremony still in

existence today is the granting of the Freedom of the City of London. It is believed that the first Freedom was presented in 1237.

All Freemen receive the book of *Rules for the Conduct of Life*, written by the Lord Mayor, 1737-1738. A number of ancient privileges are associated with the Freedom, although they are more a product of collective memory than of documented evidence. It would be a very unwise Freeman who tried to exert some of these privileges today! They include the right to herd sheep over London Bridge (particularly unpopular with the Police!); to go about the City with a drawn sword; and if convicted of a capital offence to be hung with a silken rope. Other advantages are said to have included the right to

avoid being press ganged, to be married in St Paul's Cathedral, buried in the City, to be drunk and disorderly without fear of arrest, and to relieve himself in public without fear of arrest providing a warning of intent is first shouted.

Freemen used to be given a casket in which to keep their Freedom certificate, and it was carried around as we would carry a driving licence today.

The Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court opened the ceremony by reading aloud the 'Declaration of a Freeman', to which all three St Dunstaners replied with the words "I so declare," and proceeded to sign the Declaration Book. Each St Dunstaner was then presented with their Freedom Certificate, sterling silver cufflinks and the Rules book.

The three new Freemen agreed to the declaration: "I do solemnly declare that I will be good and true to our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth II; that I will be obedient to the Mayor of this City; that I will maintain the Franchises and Customs thereof, and will keep this City harmless, in that which in me is; that I will also keep the Queen's Peace in my own person; that I will know no Gatherings nor Conspiracies made against the Queen's Peace, but I will warn the

Mayor thereof, or hinder it to my power; and that all these points and articles I will well and truly keep, according to the Laws and Customs of this City, to my power."

After warning against the use of certain privileges, Mr Murray Craig proposed a toast to the three new and youngest (in time, one hastens to add) Freemen.

Ray made a short speech in which he thanked the Aldermen, dignitaries, and the Corporation of London. "Achievement is the very essence of life for a St Dunstaner. We may not travel as high as Jamie or as fast as Mark, but we all have our Mount Everests to climb in our own ways."

He particularly thanked HPA Anna Robinson and PAEO Rebecca Shadwell, who had organised the St Dunstan's side of the event.

This was followed by a speech by St Dunstan's Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN, in which he summarised an important year for St Dunstan's. He thanked the guests for coming.

Everyone then adjourned outside, where the hot air balloon attracted much interest from passers-by. Mobile phones with their in-built cameras abounded. One

pedestrian asked Jamie how he had landed the balloon in the middle of London?!

Mark Threadgold writes: "It was a great honour to be part of such a fabulous day and receive the Freedom of the City of London. Surrounded by family and friends, the Mansion House was a stunning location for the whole event. The sight of the inflated St Dunstan's balloon flanked by my water speed record boat must have made heads turn. The organisational skills of the St Dunstan's team shone as the event location was changed with just two days notice and they excelled at the challenge once again. A truly memorable day."

The third of our freemen, Jamie Weller added: "It was a really special day for me and my family. I felt very proud and honoured to be put forward for the Freedom. I enjoyed the ceremony and to tip it off, getting the balloon inflated outside Mansion House was even more of a bonus!"

With Trafalgar Day coming up a week later, it was reassuring for Jamie, Mark and Ray to know they could not be press ganged. They retired, however, to the nearest public house to test their right not to be convicted for being drunk and disorderly. Their case comes up next week!

Blind seaman follows in Nelson's steps to mark Trafalgar anniversary

A ROYAL NAVY St Dunstaner followed in the footsteps of Lord Nelson to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. On October 23rd, Bryan Durber of Halesowen, West Midlands joined 500 other Royal Navy Association members gathered in Worcester to march to the Cathedral for the Battle of Trafalgar Bicentenary service.

Nelson himself walked those streets in August 1802. He stayed at the Hop Pole Inn on Foregate Street, not far from the Cathedral. Thousands of people turned out to greet the hero of the Nile and Copenhagen.

“What a way to celebrate!” exclaimed Bryan. “With the Nave filled to capacity, the Standards of the RNA, Royal British Legion and The Worcester Regiment were

paraded and unfurled for the service led by the Archdeacon of Worcester, the Venerable Dr Joy Tetley. The choir's rendition of *They that go down to the sea in ships* was fantastic. The *Last Post*, the lowering of the Standards and *Reveille* was most moving as ever. With Nelson's Prayer and the *Anthem*, the service was brought to a close.

“We fell in outside, this time with our wives joining us

to march to the Guildhall to meet the civic dignitaries and Commodore A.J.G. Miller, CBE, RN representing the Royal Navy. A lot of talk and a few drinks brought to an end a memorable day.”

During his visit to Worcester, Nelson purchased a fine porcelain dinner set, decorated with his coat of arms from Chamberlain's China Factory. When he was killed at Trafalgar, the debt went unpaid. In March this year, the Chairman of Remember Nelson settled the debt, adding 200 years interest, and Royal Worcester (who took over Chamberlain's) donated the money to the RNA.

Trafalgar story victory for RAF St Dunstaner

THE BATTLE OF Trafalgar inspired a winning story for Royal Air Force St Dunstaner John Robinson of Buckingham. He entered a contest organised by the Bucks Blind Association to write a story in 50 words plus title. This is his story:

They did their duty as expected

A powder monkey scurried frantically to keep the cannons charged, he paused momentarily in the gangway.

A cabin door opened. A slight figure emerged and said “Stick to it lad.” Tom raised his eyes, he noticed a mass of gold braid, and an empty sleeve pinned to the wearer's tunic.



Admiral Nelson came down off his column on October 20th to offer blind wisdom and council to First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sir Alan West, GCB, DSC, ADC. The Admiral's old and new launched a weekend of celebrations marking the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Eastbourne celebrate Trafalgar Day

Jacquie Whiteley reports

EVERY YEAR, Eastbourne Royal Naval Association organises a parade and church service to commemorate Nelson's victory over the French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805.

This year, the 200th anniversary, the parade was bigger than ever, with standards from more than 20 different RNA branches and other maritime and military organizations. For the first time, this year, St Dunstan's were invited to participate, and Nigel Whiteley carried our standard with pride.

The parade was about 250 strong, with all age groups represented, from 80 or more, down to a young boy – no more than seven, who



Eastbourne MP and Shadow Minister for the Disabled Nigel Waterson with St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley.



Royal Fusilier St Dunstaner Ron Parsons met up with Nigel Whiteley at the Eastbourne Trafalgar Day parade.

pleaded to be allowed to march with his big sister in the Sea Cadet Corps. After the service, the standard bearers were introduced to the Mayor of Eastbourne, Alderman Graham Marsden, and local MP Nigel Waterson.

The parade then reformed to march to the Royal Naval Old Comrades Club, where

a superb buffet was provided with a generous naval “tot” for all those of a suitable age, who had managed to stay the two mile round trip. During the subsequent speeches, the president of the RNOCC, thanked all standard bearers for attending, and said how pleased they were that St Dunstan's had been represented.

Nelson would be banned

ADMIRAL NELSON would be barred from any modern-day Battle of Trafalgar by today's rules on disability, says Anthony Howe, a history professor at the University of East Anglia. At best, Nelson would be behind a desk.

“It would be impossible in a much more professional navy for him to be allowed to do the job he did given his disabilities.” He reckons a modern Nelson would work in information technology or make his fortune in the city.

It strikes me...

with Gog and Magog



Gog is heartened to hear that St Dunstan's surveyors will do just about anything to help those in their charge, though some things might seem beyond the call of duty. One surveyor recently recalled one morning when he was summoned into the presence of a St Dunstaner staying at Ovingdean. "I went up to the fourth floor and he asked me to go round to his house. 'You'll find shoes under the bed, coat on the back of the door, trilby hat on top of the cupboard and my white stick in the hall. There is a coach going to Goodwood at 11:30 and I aim to be on it'."

Our surveyor drove off, entered the house in question and sure enough, the shoes were under the bed, the coat was on the back of the door, the hat was on the cupboard and the cane was in the hall. He rushed back to Ovingdean and up to the St Dunstaner's room. The St Dunstaner was preoccupied with his ablutions but called through the bathroom door "Actually, it feels like it is going to rain, I don't think I'll go. Can you take my things back to the house?" The answer is apparently unrecorded.

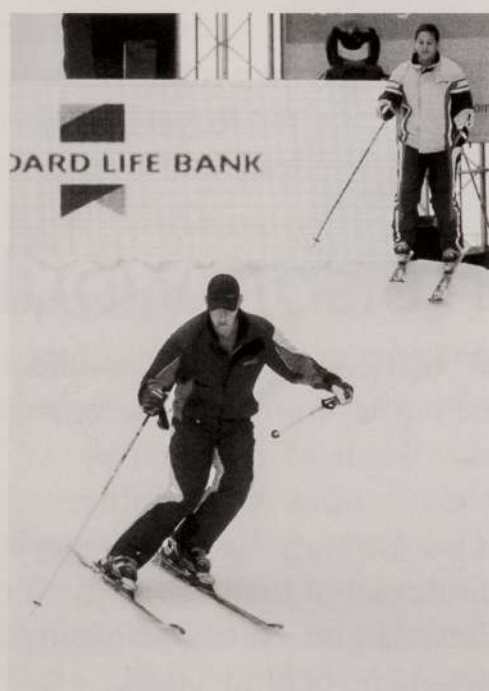
Happy 100th birthday for George at Sheffield Centre

YOU ARE NEVER too old to learn something new - even when you are coming up to your 100th birthday. St Dunstaner George Cowley of Huddersfield, Yorkshire proved that during St Dunstan's Sheffield's first introduction week when he celebrated that landmark anniversary. The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry St Dunstaner was joined by fellow trainees for cake and a sing-song as their week of lessons drew to a close. George, who was 100 on November 21st, said that when he arrived that Monday he only knew the driver but had made many friends since then. He thanked everyone for making the week fulfilling and enjoyable.



Where are the other 97 candles? George Cowley with the cake baked in his honour at Sheffield.

Kevin shows his skiing skills



St Dunstaner Kevin Alderton demonstrated his skiing skills on a dry slope at the Daily Mail Ski Show in London's Olympia in October. He was guided by Sgt Vicky Stewart of 7 Air Assault Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. She will also act as Kevin's eyes when he attempts to set a Blind Speed Skiing Record at Les Arcs, France in February next year. Kevin hopes to top speeds of 130mph.

Blind archers can now compete at Paralympic events

St Dunstan's Archers now in training

ARCHERY FOR THE visually impaired has been approved as an additional competition category by International Paralympic Committee Archery. Blind archers will now be able to compete at both International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) sanctioned events and IPC world and regional championships.

Blind Archery recently gained official status within IBSA and was similarly acknowledged by the Paralympic organisers at their Sports Assembly in Massa Carrara, Italy in October.

The meeting took place at the IPC Archery World Championships, where blind archers from Great Britain, France, Belgium and Italy competed in exhibition events in an endeavour to show the IPC nations that blind archery should be accepted as an additional category. Amongst those blind archers taking part was St Dunstaner Terry Ottewell from Brecon, Powys.

IPC Archery waited until blind archery had IBSA status before considering its inclusion at their events. Initially, there will only be two categories, male and female, wearing blackouts or shades. There are eight categories within IBSA Archery accommodating different levels of vision.

Following the Paralympic Committee's decision, several St Dunstan's archers, David Poyner, Peter Hammond and Terry Ottewell have been asked to attend Development Training weekends at Stoke Mandeville.

Ten questions on...

The subject of Trees

Harry Beevers branches out this month

- 1) In the Christmas carol *The Holly and the Ivy*, which one bears the crown?
- 2) The name of which tree appears in the words of the traditional song *Twelve Days of Christmas*?
- 3) What name is applied to various gum resins obtained mainly from trees which contain volatile oils and were valued in Biblical times for worship and medicine?
- 4) What is the more common name for the Norway Spruce?
- 5) From the genus *Ilex*, which seasonal tree produces very hard wood with a close grain used in making musical instruments, furniture and interior decorations?
- 6) According to an old legend, wood from which tree is said to have been used for the cross of Jesus causing it to shake ever since?
- 7) During the reign of which British monarch was the Christmas tree popularised in this country?
- 8) What in Germany is a "Tannenbaum"?
- 9) According to Celtic law, in ancient times the Druids were supposed to worship during their winter festivals in groves of which sacred trees covered with mistletoe?
- 10) In Germany and Scandinavia which tree is known as "Christ's Thorn"?

And finally as the year 2005 draws to its close, can you re-arrange the letters of the following phrase to give a popular seasonal greeting? "Try a miser's charm". **Answers are on page 48.**

Acts of Remembrance

Ray Hazan reports on Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph

AS THE FIELD gun of the King's Troop crashed out its single shot, all fell silent in Whitehall apart from the hissing of a stiff breeze through the trees. It was as by magic that an overcast sky opened up to allow the sun through as Big Ben started to sound the eleventh hour on November 13th. The warmth of the sunshine lasted until the end of the service. Reckoned to be the largest contingent on parade, the 200 St Dunstaners, widows and escorts paid their silent tribute. This was followed by an excellent rendition of the *Last Post* by the Buglers of the Royal Marines.

Once again, the Irish Guards provided a Company



President Ray Hazan, Chairman Michael Gordon-Lennox, Billy Griffiths and the head of St Dunstan's contingent were applauded by the Association of Ammunition Technicians.

Sergeant Major to keep us in order, and marching behind the band ensured a uniform step. It was a proud, poignant and emotional moment as we turned our heads towards

the Cenotaph. Wreaths were handed over by Mike Tetley and James Byrne. The St Dunstan's contingent then marched on to the applause of the numerous people lining the route. It was a relief to march through the crisp air, an 'eyes right' to the Prince of Wales in RAF uniform on the dais by Horse Guards, and then on to the buses.

Back at the hotel, the noise level quickly regained the threshold it had met the previous day. Tales, friendships and news had to be exchanged, with each pair striving to out-shout the other! Some chose not to assist the bar profits – London prices being somewhat



Her Majesty The Queen laying the first of many wreaths.

exorbitant - by visiting local hostelrys. A few even managed to lose their way on the return journey, despite the short distance from the pub back to the hotel – but other forces may have been at play!

Because of train timings, it was decided to have the speeches towards the beginning of the meal. The Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN, stood first to welcome the guests and to re-emphasise the television commentary that we were the largest contingent on parade. He especially welcomed General Sir Peter de la Billière, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC.

The Chairman summed up a remarkable year, highlighting our visit to Winfield House to plant an English Oak in honour of St Dunstan's 90th year. "It was a highly



Sir Nicholas Bonsor and RAF St Dunstaner John Vincent.

appropriate symbol, for from an acorn a mighty organisation took root."

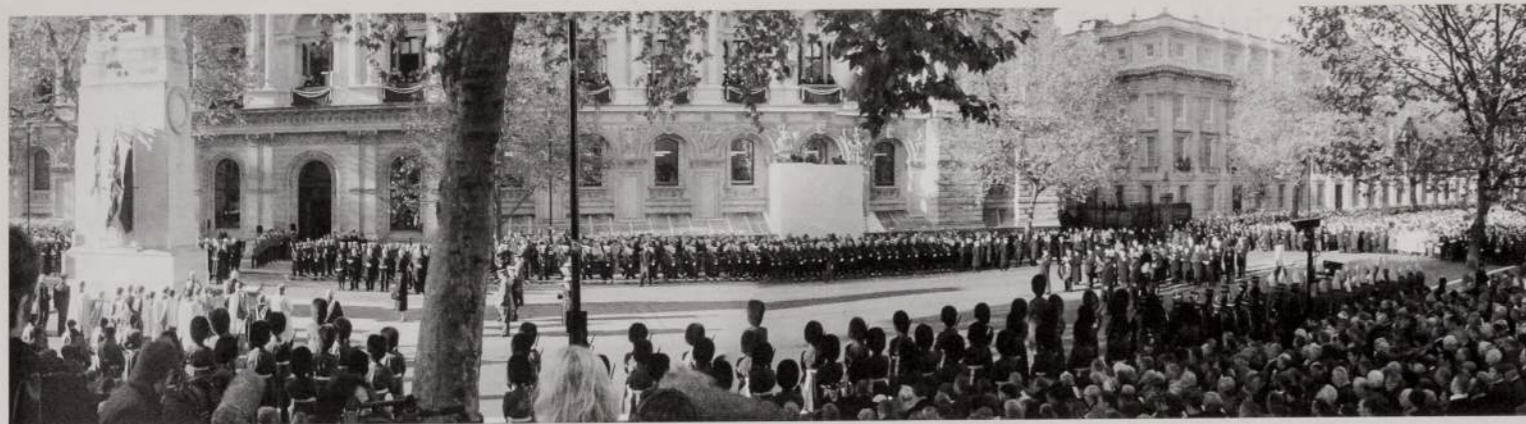
He went on to mention the ceremony at Sir Arthur Pearson's graveside, the commemorative events of the end of WWII in St James's Park and at Horse Guards,

the Church Stretton Reunion, and the Freedom of the City ceremony on World Sight Day.

Finally, the Chairman mentioned the current project in Ghana in which David Stuttard and Steve Pendleton are assisting a team of Royal



St Dunstaners Roy Heyes, Nicholas Morgan and Colin Frampton were followed by Vivian Jerome, Marjorie Hordyniec, Peter Hammond, Caroline Bulbrook, Jean Hogg, Bertha Drew and Christine Stalham along the west side formed by Royal Navy detachments.



Her Majesty The Queen led the Nation in its annual act of Remembrance. Thousands of people stand in respectful silence for those who sacrificed their lives in the Services.

Engineers to find fresh, clean water for many people in an area where water borne diseases cause blindness.

The guest speaker was Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Bt, Honorary Colonel TA, commercial Barrister, and MP for 18 years. He started by congratulating the Chairman and staff for such an excellent day. He wanted to explain how changing scientific expertise had altered our lives. He first reflected on increased longevity, and said how he had many years to go to catch up with St Dunstaner Henry Allingham (currently aged 109).

The second point was how much we used the computer, and Sir Nicholas went on to say he was very impressed when he saw how St Dunstaners made use of the technology during a visit to Ovingdean.

The third effect science had was on warfare, and the use of unmanned weapons. He wondered if war planes and other vehicles such as tanks might ever be manned again in the future? He was not sure we were leaving a peaceful world for future generations. He was concerned with the cutting back of our armed

forces, and the greater demands being made on them nevertheless. His speech was punctuated with amusing stories which raised much laughter from the gathering. Sir Nicholas concluded by proposing a toast to "All Servicemen, past and present."

St Dunstaner Billy Griffiths rose to respond. He said how exactly 60 years ago he had arrived at Ovingdean and found himself to be one of 17 handless St Dunstaners. He went on to say how many of his handless colleagues had found useful employment in shops and businesses.

Billy concluded by thanking David Habershon and all at Headquarters, Ovingdean, the Welfare Officers, and the hotel staff for organising such a splendid weekend.

The gathering then broke up as all made their way back to railway stations, cars and coaches. It had been a weekend of great friendship and camaraderie, carrying on the tradition that had seen British Service men and women through tough times.

It was another opportunity, in this our 90th year, to remember all those St Dunstaners who had laid such an important path for we succeeding generations to follow.



Jerry Lynch, Jock Carnochan, Eve Lucas and Norman Kerslake.



Frank Breach, David Habershon, Peter Carr, Dominic Marshall, Sir Peter de la Billière, Gerry Jackson, Eric Sayce, Clive Jones, Leonard Lane, Nigel Whiteley, Don Planner and others.



Jim Byrne carried our wreath to the Cenotaph.



Christopher and Dorothy Spellacy, Dick Lake and Joyce Graham, Charles Hanaway and Anthony Rudzki.



In contemplation - Kevin Rixon, Marjorie Scott and Richard Jones, Harry Smith and David and Yvonne Roddis.



Tom Hart, Fred Cox and Dennis Mills on parade.

Henry recalls fallen men of WWI

Simon Rogers reports

BRITAIN'S OLDEST VETERAN, 109-year-old St Dunstaner Henry Allingham remembered fallen comrades on three fronts during Remembrance week. "You recall things you want to forget," said Henry. "But I do the best I can and I come here to pay homage to these brave men."

"We owe so much to these men who gave all they could have given on my behalf and everyone's behalf. It is so important that we acknowledge them."

Henry and fellow WWI veteran Bill Stone, aged 105 received a guard of honour when they attended a Remembrance Service at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London on November 9th. Their arrival was heralded by a lone bugler.

Next, Henry travelled to France on November 11th for an Armistice Day ceremony at a British memorial in St Omer, near Calais. It is the first permanent memorial to British air personnel who served on the Western Front, in particular 4,700 airmen who died there during the war. Henry served there in 1917.

The last survivor of the



Photograph: Chris Young/PA

Henry Allingham laying a wreath beneath the eagle crest of the memorial to British airmen at St Orme near Calais.

Battle of Jutland and the last surviving founder member of the Royal Air Force, he was joined by Air Vice Marshal Peter Dye, the RAF's Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and 12 aircraft engineer trainees from RAF Cosford, near Wolverhampton.

Using his walking stick, Henry marched up to the memorial and lay a wreath beneath the RAF motto *Per Ardua Ad Astra* - "Through Struggles to the Stars". He then stood to attention before returning to his wheelchair in time for the Last Post. He later lit candles at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in St Orme.

Henry was back in Blighty by November 13th to join members of the Fleet Air

Arm Association at the Cenotaph in Whitehall for Remembrance Sunday. Henry was taken on parade in a wheelchair.



Henry joined Fleet Air Arm Association members at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Ted Bunting ventures out on to Emily Bronte's windy, misty moors.

Wuthering Heights

Author: Emily Bronte

Reader: Robin Holmes

Duration 12 hours, 30 minutes

Catalogue No TB283

There's a landfill site on the outskirts of our town where scavengers search for treasure. One found a Queen Ann chair a while ago, worth a small fortune apparently; which may prove they are not all so green as they are cabbage looking after all.

There is something of great value in *Wuthering Heights* too, but oh my word you have to sift through tons of rubbish before you find it. Allow me to try to explain. The storyteller at the outset is Mr Lockwood, Mr Heathcliff's new tenant at the grange. But Mr Lockwood quickly encounters one Nellie Dean, a servant woman of the

locality and before you know it we have Lockwood saying what Nellie said somebody else said to somebody else, and if you think things are becoming over complicated you are right. And what ridiculous dialogue pours from Lockwood's supposed pen! When the doctor calls at the grange for example, and asks Nellie if Mr Heathcliff has been lately, does she say "No Sir", and maybe bob a little curtsy? Good Heavens no, what she says is this "... At present he's discharged from the trouble of calling owing to some presumptuous aspirations after Mrs Linton which he manifested..." Did you ever hear such tripe in your life? Try repeating it a time or two and then see if you believe an unschooled servant would use such words.

And then there's old

Joseph who only speaks in dialect. Now if you have ever listened to the talk of Yorkshire salesmen you will already know that only their collie dogs understand a word they say, but here we have Lockwood, from London and bless my soul he can record Joseph's gibberish to perfection. Either the folk from the capital are much cleverer than I thought or we have a serious credibility gap without even mentioning the supernatural stuff, the ghostly scratching at night and all.

Nevertheless, the story of Heathcliff and his love for Cathy Earnshaw is one of the most famous romances in fiction and the underlying story is justly celebrated as such. It seems such a shame to me though, that later adaptations have invariably improved on the original.

Eyewitness account of the silent service



KEEPING A DIARY while serving on a World War II Submarine went against regulations, but St Dunstaner Arthur P. Dickison did it anyway. As a result, his book *Crash Dive - In Action with HMS Safari 1942-43* stands as a unique historical record of life on a submarine at war. As the boat's Leading Telegraphist, with

access to all signals traffic, he was afforded fascinating insights into daily operations. The book covers everything from the tedium of long passages to stalking enemy convoys and surface battles. It has been feted for its accurate portrait of life underwater. *Crash Dive* by Arthur P. Dickison is available from Sutton Publishing, priced £7.99.

LET'S TWIST AGAIN, LIKE WE DID LAST SUMMER

Waltz, square tango, latin, even some live jive jumping as St Dunstaners come dancing



St Dunstaner David and Glenys step out to the music of the Dave Masters Band.



Ron Spathaky danced with his granddaughter.



St Dunstaner Bill Holland and his daughter Lorna.

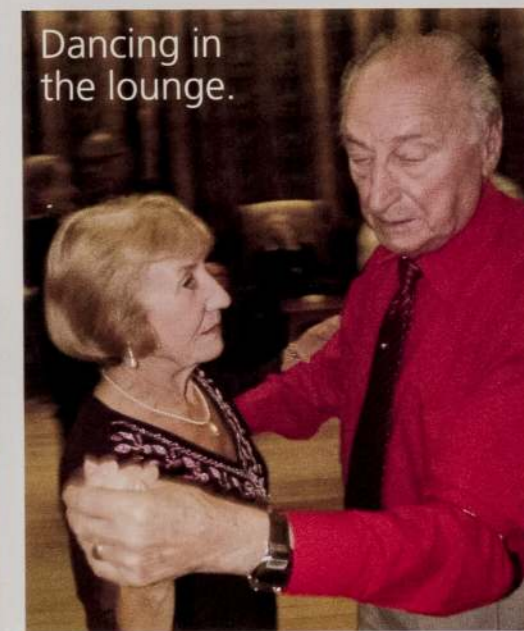
Brighton Jive were a high jumping dance display team.

IT WAS THE surprise hit of the year! To anyone who wasn't involved that is, for the St Dunstaners, wives, husbands and everyone else who attended the Dance Week October 24th-29th it was an eagerly anticipated occasion - but did anyone expect it to be this much fun? On some days as many as 30 St Dunstaners were trying out their moves in the ballroom at Ovingdean. As the lynchpin of the event, St Dunstaner David Schofield admits that he only recently caught the dancing bug. "I was 72 before I started," he said. "When Glenys and I first learnt the square tango we thought we were brilliant."

It is an enthusiasm that has proved



The ever-dapper Billy Orr takes to the floor.



Dancing in the lounge.

infectious with other St Dunstaners making their first steps on to the dance floor and others deciding that they have been off it for far too long.

A week of lessons forged new friendships with many couples and making their own plans to put their new dance steps into action.

"My wife Iris, a wheelchair user, and myself arrived at Ovingdean just in time for supper," said St Dunstaner Arthur Turner of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. "I was there to learn to dance, Iris to watch and listen to the music.

"David and Glenys Schofield who organised the proceedings had been blessed with infinite patience, particularly for me. If my grandchildren had been there I'm sure they would have called out "Granddad, you've lost the plot!" Despite all our shortcomings, it was great fun. David and Glenys said we tried - they might have thought we were trying but refrained from saying as much.

"Thursday evening brought the pièce de résistance, a 16-piece big band which played great music, Glen Miller etc. This brought back memories for Iris and me of when we used to see such bands in the 50s and 60s.

"From time to time they were joined by three young

couples. The boys all wore dark blue American Navy suits with gold badges on their sleeves. The girls were in civvies with swirling skirts. They treated us to exhibitions of the jive - they were great! The boys never lost their hats at anytime.

"Friday, being the last day, we all re-capped on what we had been taught and in the evening, put it into practice with the help of a young man on keyboards.

"I'm sure I am not alone in saying a big thank you to the organisers and in particular David and Glenys for their wonderful efforts and forbearance whilst teaching us all. It was a great week and we look forward to the next occasion."

Far East Prisoners reunited by chance comment on Remembrance Sunday



Norman and Bill met up 60 years after their captivity in the Far East.

TWO MEN WHO survived the privations of Changi Gaol and other hell-hole prison camps in the Far East were recently reunited after a chance comment at last year's Remembrance Sunday parade.

While waiting for St Dunstan's contingent to form up, Norman Kerslake of Winchester, Hampshire stuck up a conversation with Granville Burne of Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset. Hearing where Granville lived, Norman commented that he

had been held in camp with someone from Bridgwater, a marvellous barber. The reply came back "I know him, he used to do my hair."

Following that encounter, Norman received a telephone call from Bill Nicolls, the barber in question – Granville had passed on his details. The two former FEPOWs arranged a meeting in Bristol – 60 years after they had previously met, though it has to be said under much better circumstances this time round.

Cadets take up St Dunstan's Challenge



Army Cadets from South East London with St Dunstaner Gerry Jones at Oxleas Wood during their 12-mile attempt at the St Dunstan's Challenge.

CADET UNITS ACROSS the country threw themselves into the St Dunstan's Challenge in October and November.

One group of year 11 cadets (aged 15) from Sutton Valence School in Kent walked a full 20 miles along the Greensand Way from South East of Ashford to Sutton Valence School. "Walking with these hyperactive teenagers was quite an experience," said Helen Knott. "As the officer in charge I assumed that the young whippersnappers would tire and become downhearted as the pain of blisters intensified. Not a bit of it! With three-miles to go

the pace quickened as the cadets raced against each other to determine the first back. With two-miles to go the group started running. I was impressed with the stamina displayed by the youngsters. For 48 hours general walking was painful for most of the group. Pain in the pursuit of a good cause is worthwhile as the proud cadets found out. An annual event for a good cause such as St Dunstan's is certainly worthwhile. What is a bit of temporary pain compared to a shellshocked victim on the Somme!"

The group raised £300 in sponsorship.

We've got what it takes!

Simon Rogers trails St Dunstaners who tackled the Commando Challenge

FIVE FIESTY ST DUNSTANERS demonstrated that they had what it takes to crack the Royal Marines Commando Challenge in Exmouth, Devon on October 22nd.

For Chris Bennett of Coventry, Warwickshire it was the chance to recapture a missed opportunity. While serving in the Army, he was asked if he would like to attempt the Commando training course. However, before he could accept the invitation, he was posted to Northern Ireland. It was during this tour of duty that Chris began to experience



St Dunstaners Colin Williamson, Gordon Paxford, Steve Sparkes, Joe Cousineau and Chris Bennett with their challenge guides from the Sergeants' Mess at CMTC Lymstone.

deterioration of sight. So on the tail-end of a week's training at St Dunstan's, he jumped in when asked to join the team heading down to CMTC Lymstone. Also joining the team were Joseph Cousineau of Liverpool and Gordon Paxford of Braunton, Devon, rounded out by Colin Williamson and Steve Sparkes.

The challenge called for the team to traverse three miles of undulating assault course, run down hill, through thick mud, a stream, more mud, through tunnels - and there was still more to come! The St Dunstaners were guided through by members of the Sergeants' Mess at CMTC Lymstone.

A former Gloucester, Gordon Paxford, aged 71, lived up to their reputation for sticking with it when things got rough. He made his way through the labyrinthine tunnels, waded across the watery depths of Peter's Pool, back up the hill and on to the Sheep Dip. This is another tunnel, but one submerged underwater – participants are thrust down, through the pipeline and out the other side. Gordon didn't back away from the experience.

The Challengers then have to make it back up hill, naturally through another black muddy bog before they finish. But what a glorious finish it is!



Gordon emerges from the Sheep Dip with a hand from Ceri Lewis and Charlie.

Hams break through sunspot activity

W.F. Shea, G4AUJ broadcasts to the remotest part of the UK

ON JULY 9th, members of the St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society travelled to Ovingdean to spend a week in the radio shack. This was their third burst of activity this year using their special event call sign, GB90STD, celebrating the 90th anniversary of the founding of St Dunstan's.

There was another kind burst going on. We were at the bottom of the sunspot cycle, which meant that direct station to station contact on the High Frequency (HF) bands can be difficult or non-existent. In spite of this, three members beavered away over hot microphones and morse keys from nine in the morning until after nine in the evening, apart from a break for meals. They were spreading the awareness of St Dunstan's around the world, something the St Dunstan's ARS has been doing for nearly 30 years.

One of the more interesting contacts was on July 12th, with Peter, GM3oft/p who was operating a portable station on the Island of St Kilda. He described the journey to the island in very rough weather.

The archipelago of St Kilda

is the remotest part of the British Isles. It lies 41 miles (66 km) west of Benbecula in Scotland's Outer Hebrides. Its islands with their exceptional cliffs and sea stacks, form the most important seabird breeding station in north-west Europe. Because of this, St Kilda is a World Heritage Site.

Although it is home to fulmars, wrens and gannets these days, people lived on St Kilda for several thousand years, farming the land. The closure of a naval station and a steady migration of the island's youth led to a final evacuation of the last 36 islanders in 1930.

Ted has been tuning in for 50 years at St Dunstan's



ONE COVETED AWARD at St Dunstan's is the 50 year Golden Jubilee badge. This was initiated in 2003, on the occasion of our Patron's Golden Jubilee. Ray said, "It was my very great pleasure, as President of St Dunstan's, to present one such badge to Ted John at the

St Dunstan's Amateur Radio luncheon on October 9th. Ted has been an exemplary St Dunstaner. In addition to his long service, he has been a working man all his life and has never failed to attend a single club meeting in the 29 years of its existence."

GB90STD IS ON THE AIR AGAIN!

Ted John, G3SEJ reports on the Amateur Radio Society AGM

THE FOURTH WEEK of operating the St Dunstan's ARS Special Event Station at Ovingdean started with the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, October 8th 2005.

Bill Shea, the Chairman, in his opening address requested those present to stand in tribute to Dennis Landin and Jim McGoff who had gone 'Silent Key' in June and July respectively.

Beryl John was thanked for reading the minutes of previous Meetings, which were accepted with alacrity! Thankfully, the finances were sound and the Financial Statement was accepted, too. The Secretary would write a letter of appreciation to Ted Nicolas, the volunteer auditor! The outgoing Committee were re-elected, at which there was a sigh of relief!

Alec Higgins, G8GF, of Eastbourne, Darwin Evans, G3JAH, OF Carnforth, and Alex Scott, M3TZW, of Peacehaven, were warmly welcomed as new members, which was very heartening.

During the week some 189 contacts were made worldwide, and we were most grateful to have Frank Green, VE4FA, Jane Taylor's



Bill Shea, Chairman of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society presents Brian, John and Eddie with the G3MØW Trophy.

brother from Winnipeg, Canada, manning the morse key in company with Tom Frankland, Alec Higgins and Ted John. Frank was a great asset and a very competent operator. We were also grateful to Ray Hazan for spending so much time on the mike, which enhanced the number of contacts.

We were sorry that Audrey Gaygan, Elsie Cole and Ethel were unwell and unable to join the excellent luncheon provided by PBK Catering which everyone present so much enjoyed, and our gratitude goes out to those who worked so hard to ensure a happy and contented gathering. Following the luncheon, the presentation of the G3MØW Memorial

Trophy was made to Brian Freeman, John Houlihan and Eddie Wilson, known as Freeman, Hardy and Willis, for their outstanding service to the Society in 2004. These gentlemen have maintained the equipment and aerials to a very high standard, and without them the Station could not operate.

We are most grateful to all those who contributed to our enjoyment of the week in any way.

The Society celebrates its 30th Anniversary in 2006 and Meetings have been arranged for February 24th-March 3rd and October 13th-20th. It is hoped that our application for the call-sign GB30STD for 2006 will be approved.

A short history of Braille

Stephen Pendleton examines the origins of tactile code

NO ONE CAN deny that Louis Braille's ingenuity, modernity and far sightedness with regard to his invention of a Tactile Embossed Code has had far reaching consequences for the literacy of blind people the world over. But who was Louis Braille?

And where did the idea of a Tactile Embossed Code come from?

Louis Braille was born in Coupvray, France in 1809. He was one of four sons and daughters of the village Saddler and Leatherworker. Louis was without doubt a very intelligent child and like most children he was very curious. It was due to this curiosity that he found himself playing with an awl, a sharp implement used for making holes in leather, in his father's workshop. You guessed it! The awl slipped and pierced his left eye blinding him forever. Over the next two years countless infections rendered his right eye totally blind, leaving the four-year-old Louis completely and totally blind.

Surprisingly for these times, Louis was educated at the



Steve reading a braille issue of St Dunstan's Review.

local Village School where he excelled at maths and music. When he reached the age of ten, he was given a place at Valentin Haüy's School in Paris. This was the only Blind school in France at this time and conditions were hard for the boys there. Misbehaviour, no matter how slight was ruthlessly punished by sending the boys to their rooms and being locked up with nothing but bread and water. The living accommodations the boys inhabited were always damp and these conditions would have far reaching consequences for young Louis. Children at

this school were not taught to write. At this time there was no workable system for the blind to be able to write for themselves. They were only taught to read. This was achieved by shaping copper wire into the form of conventional letters. These letters were then pressed into paper by the use of a very heavy press, thus leaving a raised letter on the page.

In 1821, an officer from the French army, Captain Charles Barbier, visited Louis's school. This visitor would go on to make a lasting impression on the youngster. Charles Barbier had bought

with him a system by which soldiers could communicate to each other at night without making any sound, therefore not giving their positions away to anybody who might be within earshot. This system was called 'Nightwriting.' Nightwriting was a Tactile Embossed Code, made up of 12 raised dots that represented sounds. The idea being that the soldier could write a message in Nightwriting, then pass the message down the trench line and the recipient could read it and take what ever action was required. However, Nightwriting was found to be far too complex for the average soldier of the day and the trials were abandoned and Nightwriting was never used in action.

Louis Braille was 12-years-old when Charles Barbier visited his school and he found himself totally fascinated with this Tactile Embossed Code and he thought that it could be modified in some way, so that the blind could gain writing as well as reading skills. So he got to work modifying Nightwriting.

Louis worked for several months, until he came up with the six dot Braille cell - three dots high and two dots wide. He found that the six dot cell could easily fit into the pad of a finger and he also found that by using

the six dot cell, he could make up another 63 patterns that would represent letters, punctuation and numbers. All these signs could be easily read with the finger tip. He had invented what we now call Grade One Braille. He then went on to invent the Braille Writing Frame also known as a Slate. With the Stylus and Frame, the blind could punch holes into paper which could then be read back. This was an absolute revolution as the blind had no way of writing anything down. And Louis still had not reached the age of 15. In between 1821 and 1827 Louis went on to invent a Braille maths code and also a code for music.

His hands were removed from his body and buried in Coupvray

In 1827, the first book in Braille was published. You would think it would be an automatic best seller, but you would be wrong! The blind would have accepted Braille straight away, as it was the only true medium whereupon they could become fully literate. But sadly the establishment, teachers for the blind, did not accept Braille at all. They thought that Braille would only isolate the blind and they found it to be a mysterious code that only the blind could read. Also, the

establishment did not want to take the time to learn this new and exciting code. So the message did not reach the blind community. However their feelings did not matter! Louis had secured a job at the Valentin Haüy's School for the Blind and he began to teach Braille to his students. Word got around and Braille began to be taught in other Blind schools in France by Louis's ex-students, albeit in secret.

Sadly Louis Braille would not live to see his invention become adopted. Louis died in 1852 from tuberculosis. He was only 43-years-old. All the years living in the damp conditions at the

Valentin Haüy's School in Paris took their toll on Louis's health and it was as a direct result from this that he died so young. However in 1854 France fully recognised Braille as the official communication system for the blind. Because of his great achievements, his body was exhumed in 1952 and reburied in the Pantheon Paris, the home of all France's heroes. It is sad to think that Louis Braille never lived to see his invention gain world-wide recognition and emancipate

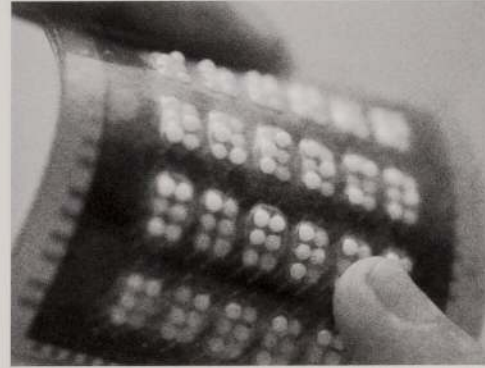
blind people the world over. A rather macabre fact about Louis's exhumation was that his body was reburied without its hands. His hands were removed from his body and buried in Coupvray.

The Universal English Braille Code was not adopted until 1932. Dr Gabrielle Farrell, a Director of the Perkins Institute, the first school for the blind in America, asked their woodwork teacher, Mr David Abrahams to come up with a more modern way for producing Braille. David Abrahams worked for 20 years and finally came up with the Perkins Brailier, a tool which would revolutionise the way in which Braille was produced. The first prototype was seen by the public in 1951 and this machine remains the standard model today. It is a vital tool for Braille literacy. There have been many variations on this basic six-key plus one space bar design, but some 50 years since its invention it is still the machine most commonly used by Braillists the world over.

Braille is a critical skill for people with a visual impairment! Proof, if needed, is this little statistic that I came across in my studies. More than 70 per cent of blind people who do not have Braille skills are unemployed. In contrast 85 per cent of blind people who do have Braille skills have jobs. I think that says it all.

Future of Braille

Will this device give the blind better access to everyday electronic gadgets?



Light and flexible, the Braille Sheet Display.

THE WORLD'S FIRST portable electronic Braille display will be given its first public demonstration in the USA on December 5th. Scientists from the University of Tokyo and Osaka's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology will unveil the prototype of the pocket-sized device which can be rolled up like a newspaper.

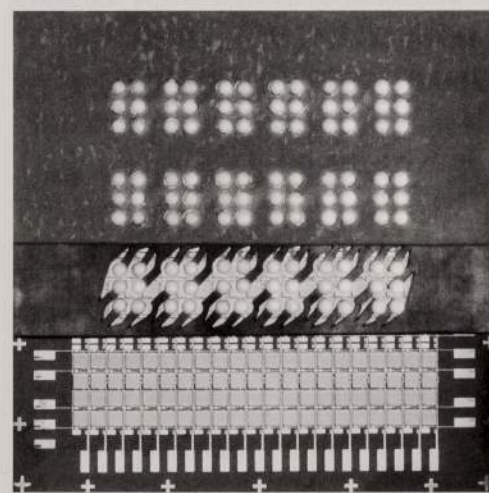
The demonstration will be held at the 2005 International Electron Devices Meeting hosted by America's Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

The device itself, the Braille Sheet Display, is a little over five inches square and is made from a flexible polymer and metal film. Researchers built an underlying array of organic pentacene thin-film

transistors. Then they added actuators in two by three arrays that can form every Braille letter when charged.

The actuators were fabricated from a conductive polymer – the plastic is laced with lithium – and are tipped with a tiny metal bubble. When voltage is applied, the actuator bends causing a bump in the rubber surface of the display. The prototype can create up to 24 braille letters with the actuators changing within a second.

The device is designed to be attached to mobile phones, laptop computers or PDAs. Initial reports suggest the device could be sold for around \$100. Larger displays are also being considered.



Inside the micro-thin layers of the Braille Sheet Display.

Putting a leaf in artist's book



Sheffield trainees Len Lane, Stephen Hanlon, Ray Khan and Edwin Holmes and their wives making tactile leaves.

THE WORKSHOP WOULD like to say thank you to all those people who made a leaf during October, as part of our event to mark Art Beyond Sight Awareness Month and The Big Draw. Needless to say we now have a fair few ceramic leaves! These have all been fired in the kiln and are now being painted in a variety of Autumnal colours.

Many St Dunstaners joined in and made a leaf. Some

were visiting St Dunstan's Ovingdean, though they do not necessarily attend the Workshop regularly. All of the leaves were made in clay and drawn into using different tools and mark making implements.

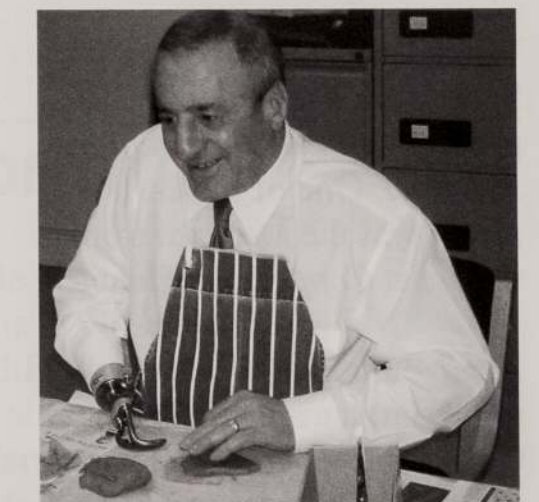
Some St Dunstaners made use of our Roving Art Trolley which was loaded with boxes of clay and leaf making goodies. The trolley found its way to the Nursing



Wallace and David work with intensive dedication.

Floors, the Human Resources department and other floors. The Roving Art Trolley later moved on to Headquarters in London and St Dunstan's Sheffield training centre.

Many members of staff contributed to this project. Sighted leaf makers were requested to make their leaf with their eyes covered, so they couldn't see what they were doing. It proved very enlightening for a number of people and we hope it raised awareness of some the difficulties faced by those who are blind or partially sighted when making and creating things - but also we hope it highlighted the sense of achievement and fun that can be had by having a go and helping create a piece of artwork that will be enjoyed by a number of people. The results were wonderful; each leaf is entirely unique and when put together they will look great. More soon!



The Presidential leaf.

SYNCOPATING SELECTIONS

RECENTLY, WE ASKED St Dunstaners to name their favourite pieces of music. This month, we present the first selection, which was made by Rev David Youngson of Billingham, Cleveland.

SOME YEARS AGO I compiled a tape for my four grandchildren to illustrate the impact of music throughout my life. In time after I have departed they will receive their tape and hopefully what it contains will be something of their memory of me.

In the end I recorded 13 tracks but for this exercise I have left out a Boys' Brigade Hymn, George Formby and the *Vespers* by Rachmaninov.

The brief notes will give you some idea as to how I chose the ten pieces of music.

As a young man I was taught the violin and my first choice is the *Scottish Fantasia* – Max Bruch – played by Campoli who I heard play it in Newcastle when I was about twelve years of age.

When I was at Primary School we listened to a BBC programme called *Adventures in Music*. One of the earliest pieces was the *Mazurka* from the ballet *Coppélia* by Delibes.

As a young man I played in the Jarrow and Hebburn Co-operative Orchestra and every Good Friday we played at Hetton le Hole Methodist

Church. The first year we accompanied the soloists and congregation, who were the choir, in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. My choice is the solo, *Lord God of Abraham* sung by Dietrich Fischer Dieskau

As a supporter of Newcastle United since 1946 I have to include the *Overture to The Thieving Magpie* by Rossini.

As an Apprentice Deck Officer in the Merchant Navy and much later Chaplain to the Mayor of Hartlepool when the *Warrior* left for Portsmouth, Elgar's song from his *Sea Pictures* cycle, *Sabbath Morning at Sea* sung by Janet Baker became a must for me.

My first visit to Salzburg and Vienna brought to life Mozart, probably the greatest composer. *The Clarinet Concerto* played by Benny Goodman brings the classical and jazz musical world together. The recording was made at Carnegie Hall.

Next, with my interest and

Send your top five favourite tunes, with a brief explanation of why each item holds significance for you, to Syncopating Selections, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

research into World War I and having visited Arlington Cemetery and the *Civil War Battlefields* a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes is a must.

"We have shared the incommunicable experience of war,

"We have felt, we still feel, the passion of life to its top, In our youth our hearts were touched with fire."

The choir of King's College Cambridge has been a great source of inspiration to me. The carol, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, the dark setting sums up what life as a Christian is all about.

I tried to limit myself to one piece per composer and conductor, but the music of Elgar conducted by Sir John Barbirolli had to appear again. *Symphony No 2 – the Largo* section. A friend of mine once said it reminded her of Nash's painting of the Menin Road. If I only had one choice this would be it.

Sir John Barbirolli also conducts my last piece. *The Agnus Dei* from Verdi's *Requiem Mass*.

PENDLETON'S PANTRY

Blind Chef **Stephen Pendleton** doesn't care for fish soup

Classic Italian Fish Soup

This recipe will serve six portions. A word of warning from the Blind Chef!! This Soup is one of the stinkiest dishes I have ever made, in fact it absolutely honks like nothing you have ever smelled before. By no means is this a personal favourite.

Ingredients:

2½lb of mixed fish pieces, such as dogfish, whiting, pollack, haddock or cod. The choice is up to you as long as you have a good mixture of these fish.

6tbs of olive oil, plus extra to serve.

1 medium onion, finely chopped.

1 chopped celery stick.

1 chopped carrot.

4tbs of freshly chopped parsley.

¾ of a cup of dry white wine.

3 medium tomatoes, skinned and chopped.

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped.

3 pints of boiling water.

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Rounds of French bread to serve.

Method:

Prepare your fish. If you have bought skinless fish fillets



from the supermarket, all you will have to do is basically cut the fillets into nice sized pieces. If you purchase your fish from the fishmonger, he will be able to prepare the fish for you.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and add the onion, cook over a low heat until it softens. Stir in the celery and carrot and cook for another five minutes, then add the parsley. Pour in the wine and raise the heat until it reduces by half. Then put in the tomatoes and garlic and cook for another three to four minutes. Next, pour in the boiling water a pint at a time and bring back to the boil,

cook over a moderate heat for about 15 minutes.

Pour in the fish and simmer for 15 minutes or until the fish are tender, season with the salt and pepper. Note from the Blind Chef! Pierce the fish with a sharp knife to check if it is tender, you should feel no resistance from the fish when it is tender.

With a perforated spoon, remove all the fish pieces from the pan.

Puree the fish in a food processor and check the seasoning for taste. If the soup is a little too thick, add a little more water.

To serve, keep the soup simmering. Toast the rounds of French bread and sprinkle with olive oil. Place two or three in the base of a soup bowl before pouring the soup.

More fish in February!

BEER OF THE MONTH by Colin Williamson

Young's Christmas Pudding Ale is a truly delicious beer. A superb nose to it! This is as close as you can get to a "liquid" xmas pud! Full of complex flavours. Raisins, brandy, figs, almonds. Strong hints of caramel and, surprisingly, Parma Violets! A beer to be savoured, sitting in your favourite armchair in front of the fire on a cold winter evening.



Sure-shot Dorothy has silver score



Dorothy was on target.

ST DUNSTANER DOROTHY Wright has developed some exceptional shooting skills with the acoustic rifle. On October 26th, she scored a maximum 50 while competing with other St Dunstaners at Ovingdean.

Dorothy, who will be celebrating her 93rd birthday later this month, took up acoustic rifle shooting when she moved into Ovingdean a few years ago. Until recently, she was the only lady member of the Rifle Club.

“She has been consistently improving,” said Mark Brownlow of the Sports and Recreation department. “It has been a real pleasure watching and helping her get better and better. This culminated in her gaining a maximum score of 50 which has only been achieved by a handful of people in the last few years.”

Dorothy’s success goes beyond the walls of St Dunstan’s. In August, she won a silver medal in the Wiltshire Visually Impaired Target Sports Club Postal League.

Douglas completes 300-mile walk

A ST DUNSTANER completed a sponsored walk of nearly 300 miles in October, nearly losing some toes in the process. Douglas Rogers spent two weeks walking from his home in Colchester, Essex to his old regimental barracks in Catterick, North Yorkshire.

He was supported in his endeavour by Lance Corporal Gill and Private Holmes from the 1st Battalion, Prince of Wales’s Own Regiment of Yorkshire. “Generally the weather was good, apart from the second day,” said Douglas. “It was the fourth day that I was in a bit of a state. I suffer from gout and forgot to take my medication

with me, which was the wrong thing to do. I had everything else with me but that. They had to rush me to hospital and I had to rest up for 6-7 hours with injections while they straightened me out. They thought they might have to amputate two toes but they decided it wasn’t necessary. I did lose two toe nails though.”

Douglas added that the remainder of the walk was an enjoyable experience. “As I

entered the camp, the RSM had arranged for everyone to line the route and they cheered and clapped as we came in.”

He was also surprised by the generosity of some supporters. One lady having heard about his walk on the radio offered to sponsor him for a pound a mile. “I said ‘You do know how far I am going to be walking?’ She said yes and sure enough a cheque for £300 came through.”

Legion over moon about beer

The Royal British Legion has teamed up with Suisse Connection for a Poppy branded version of their

Vollmond Bier - only brewed when there is a full moon. It can be ordered from www.suisseconnection.com.



The War Widows Association held a Service of dedication at the Cenotaph on November 12th. Afterwards, they gathered for lunch at the Overseas Club where Walter Briggs of Huddersfield met fellow guest Dame Shirley Bassey. Walter’s late St Dunstaner wife, Alys was a Lance Corporal with the ATS.



St Dunstaner Gerry Jackson demonstrates to East Worthing and Shoreham MP Tim Loughton how screenreaders and magnification software can provide visually impaired people with access to everyday documents.



A fine gift from Freddie

IT WAS VERY many happy returns for St Dunstaner Freddie Cox in August but it will be other visually impaired Service men and women who enjoy his gift supporting their independence!

The Horsham St Dunstaner, who served in the Royal Artillery, was 90 years old and celebrated the occasion with no less than four birthday parties. He organised each celebration for family, friends and fellow Masons.

Freddie had been saving every week for the previous two years for his parties and instead of receiving gifts asked his guests to make a donation to St Dunstan’s. As a result, Freddie and his family raised £1,000 for St Dunstan’s. We wish him a belated happy 90th birthday!

Club keep access software in view

THERE ARE TIMES when there seems to be little or no advances in the field of computing, at least at the basic level. But despite this, there was plenty to discuss at the Computer Club meeting of October 5th-6th. A few devotees attended, small in number but worth the gathering.

Janis introduced Michael Crawford, our own St Dunstan's version, who has joined the Training and Rehabilitation staff on the computer hardware side. He will check, re-build, and install hardware – a very useful addition!

We looked at various software access systems designed to enable the beginner who has no or little knowledge of computing to get started. Guide, one such programme, has recently doubled in price to £400, half the price of other screen readers, and though it may help the novice, it may make it more difficult for outside sighted assistance. Janis can best advise. We also looked at Text Aloud, which reads text using some very sophisticated human sounding synthetic voices. It can also create 'talking files' which can be downloaded onto reading devices, or sent via the web.

In the afternoon we enjoyed three favourites; the first was a 50 question quiz written by Harry Beevers. Heads were scratched and hands thrown up in ignorance, but Harry let us off with a few easier ones!

by Ray Hazan

Question: What is a girl called who prefers computers to boys? Answer: An infomaniac! Complete the following: To err is human, to really foul up requires... Answer: A computer, of course!

This was followed by our question and answer period with Brad, who, as usual, ran out of time, such was the vigour of the discussion. He highly recommended Mozilla Firefox as an alternative to Internet Explorer. There is a direct link to the Mozilla download via Google search, or go to www.mozilla.org. Once more, a relaxed and delicious buffet supper rounded off a very pleasant day.

It was up to Michael to put us out of our misery and go through the quiz answers on Thursday morning, followed by a general mystery solving session on "How do you do this?", or "Why doesn't it talk to me when I do that?" We looked at a self voiced web page reading programme called Webbie, available from www.webbie.org

The meeting ended with a visit by Iki and Gabrielle of CVIP Ltd. We were shown a range of items, including the Nano, a small organiser device with Braille keys and speech output. The Sherlock is a labelling system (successor to the Voila) which enables you to record a message and affix it to a label. That label is then attached to a CD, or item of clothing for instance. You then scan the label and thereby identify the object, or listen to whatever message you recorded about the item. The system costs around £105, which includes 25 labels and 10 tags. Additional labels and tags costs £15. He also showed us an iPod, which can hold literally a thousand music tracks, and a memory stick half the size of a cigarette lighter which plugs into a USB port and can act as an additional drive holding many megabites of information.

Iki also demonstrated some portable speakers running off either battery or mains, one at around £35 and the other (the On Tour) £75. Yet another was a CD carrying case incorporating a speaker. Of interest was a system for networking computers or sound systems via the electrical wiring in the building. Some may have come across a similar idea using baby alarms! You

simply insert a special plug, costing around £50, into an electric wall socket and connect your PC to that plug. A similar arrangement for your second computer will enable the two to "talk" to each other. A more expensive plug at around £120 enables other devices, including speakers, so that hi-fi or computer audio output can be piped into other rooms. Since there are no radio signals, security is not a problem.

The Computer Club attendees are grateful to Janis, Michael, Donna, Anna, Iki and Brad who all assisted us in particular, and to the staff at Ovingdean who helped us in general. The next meeting takes place on Wednesday and Thursday February 22nd and 23rd 2006.

Clock on to this 70th anniversary

It is 70 years since Gog and Magog returned home. After more than a century in the grounds of St Dunstan's Regent's Park, our namesake clock was returned to St Dunstan's-in-the-West, Fleet Street. The house was purchased by Lord Rothermere who arranged for the clock to be restored. It was unveiled by his brother Cecil Harmsworth on October 24th 1935. Both men had worked with Arthur Pearson on *Tit-Bits*.

Blind gardeners reap rewards in competition

THE SKILLS AND achievements of some of the UK's blind and visually impaired gardeners have been celebrated by Thrive, the national therapeutic horticulture charity, and Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) with the 2005 Blind Gardener of the Year competition.

The winners of the national competition were selected by a panel of judges that included gardener and television presenter Monty Don and St Dunstaner Vincent Robins who is Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Blind Gardeners.

Prizes in three categories, Young Gardener, New to Gardening and Old Hand were presented at an awards ceremony in London on October 27th, in which St Dunstaner Eric Sayce took part. Eric was on the design committee which drew up the plans for the new layout of the Inner Garden at Ovingdean and has retained an interest in the development of gardening activities. He talked about the work of St Dunstan's and presented some of the competition winners with their prizes.

Entries from across the country included moving and

inspiring accounts of blind gardeners ranging from ten to 72 years of age.

"We had not realised we would hear such a variety of wonderful stories," said Nicola Carruthers, Chief Executive of Thrive. "We know from our work with blind and partially sighted gardeners what enjoyment and satisfaction gardening can bring. We hope to encourage more visually impaired people across the UK to get out and into gardens. There is a wealth of specialist information and tools available to help, and the competition has shown that the level of creativity and innovation in this area is almost never-ending."

Each of the winners received a Halls' greenhouse delivered and erected in their gardens, a set of Peta Easi-Grip hand tools and a wood turned trophy from St. Dunstan's. Winners and runners up in each category received further prizes and vouchers from Suttons Seeds, who also offered seeds and money-off vouchers for 1,000 entrants. For further information, ideas, techniques and advice on gardening contact Lucy Morrell at Thrive on 0118 988 5688 or bgoty@thrive.org.uk or visit www.thrive.org.uk.

Port Hall offers an independent training ground at Ovingdean

Dick Lake describes the facilities at our new residence

VISITORS TO OIVINGDEAN now have the opportunity to stay at Port Hall, our new off-site accommodation. St Dunstan's purchased the residential property last year though those who know the Charity's history will say "re-purchased" as it did belong to us in years past when it was used as a convalescent home for lady St Dunstaners and then became the place where visiting wives stayed in those days before they were allowed to remain in-house overnight! In Ovingdean, and situated on the corner of Greenways and Beacon Hill, it is within easy walking distance from St Dunstan's main building. An extensive refurbishment was undertaken by the building firm ROK, who did an excellent job in converting the building to our specifications.

Port Hall now has eight bedrooms on three floors, each with en-suite shower room with the exception of one en-suite bathroom. Furnished to a high standard, each room contains a



En-suite showers.

television, telephone, hairdryer and beverage making facilities. Situated on the ground floor is a communal lounge with television and stereo system which was kindly donated by ROK. Adjoining the lounge is a conservatory which has a resource area containing a typewriter and CCTV for residents' use.

In the kitchen there are facilities and supplies for making hot drinks plus basic breakfast provisions should residents choose to make their own breakfast in lieu of dining at the main building. All other meals are served at the main building and, as for those living in-house, individuals must notify the Lounge Desk if they intend eating out in order to avoid waste. In addition to these facilities there is a disabled access toilet on the ground floor as well as a washing machine, iron and ironing



Steve Jones of ROK presents a stereo system for St Dunstaners staying at Port Hall. It was accepted by Peter Hammond.

board. Smoking is restricted to the porch and the garden is equipped with suitable furniture and a summerhouse to complement the newly laid lawn. Guide dogs are welcome with a dedicated spending area to the rear of the property.

Housekeeping staff visit Port Hall each day for cleaning purposes. For safety reasons, our security staff pay a late night visit to check that everything is in order. Otherwise, the building is unmanned though there is immediate communication

with the main building by phone to Reception plus a direct dial facility to the emergency services in the entrance hall.

The primary purpose of Port Hall is to provide accommodation for the trainees (and their companions) who are attending training with the Rehabilitation and Training department. To quote Katy Barrett, Head of Rehabilitation and Training: "staying at Port Hall provides the opportunity for St Dunstaners to build their confidence and independence skills, and may be incorporated as part of their rehabilitation programme." Subject to availability, rooms may be booked out for holiday makers and visiting staff. The room rate for paying guests (for example, holiday makers and trainees' companions) is currently £18 per night which is less than for staying in the main building. The pressure on accommodation in the



The kitchen at Port Hall.

Port Hall rejoined the St Dunstan's fold at Easter.



main building is such that an offer of a room at Port Hall should be anticipated for anybody who is deemed suitable particularly those who have good mobility and live independently in the community in their home setting. Some already even prefer it; in the words of a recent and recurrent visitor: "I much prefer its unique and independent atmosphere to staying in the main building." However, visitors with care needs which they require Ovingdean to meet must be accommodated in a residential or nursing care bed in-house paying the appropriate (and higher) accommodation charge.

New arrivals to Port Hall will be orientated on arrival either by a member of the Rehabilitation and Training Department or a Residential Care Assistant. In the spirit of engendering independence, guests are encouraged to walk to and from Port Hall and St Dunstaners will receive

support from a ROVI to orientate them to the route if required. Due account will be taken of factors like the weather and travel between sites using taxis or our own vehicles at advertised times will also be possible though prior notice may have to be given and sharing inevitable.

When the building is full, which it now is most of the time, it is very busy. For the benefit of the lighter sleepers there is a "no noise after 23:00" rule which includes using the communal areas or having TVs on too loudly.

"Since Port Hall opened at Easter, we have been working hard to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for our guests. There are still some finishing touches to be added, but I am pleased with the feedback I have received so far, much of which has been useful in helping us to improve the quality of stay for future guests," added Katy Barrett.

Fare action for Billy at bus rally

Photograph: Essex Enquirer



All fares please. Billy Baxter raced a Routemaster bus at Action for Blind People's World Sight Day rally in Essex.

SPEEDING
ST DUNSTANER
Billy Baxter was back behind the wheel on October 13th – this time on a 1950s double-decker Routemaster bus. The distinctive red vehicles have all but been withdrawn from London's streets, but the brakes were well and truly off at a rally organised by Action for Blind People to mark World Sight Day and draw public attention to the fact that many kinds of blindness across the globe are preventable.

Billy has previously set a world speed record for a blind person riding a motorcycle and he was joined on this occasion by Mike Newman who has set blind speed records driving a car. They took on Lord Charles Brocket

Wireless for the Blind Fund, was beaten by Lord Brocket, but Newman secured a win for the visually impaired team. Walpole conceded that the blindfold challenge had been more difficult than he expected. "It is very difficult to go from fully sighted to losing your sight and have to rely on someone else. My confidence was taken away," he said later that day.

Hornchurch Olympic blind skiing champion Mike Brace also turned his hand to driving despite having never driven.

The day was rounded out by a banger race which Billy and co-driver Paul Gower won by a whisker.

and chef Steven Walpole in a race at the Arena-Essex Raceway in Thurrock. Brockett and Walpole put on blindfolds for the occasion. Billy, driving for the British

Nuggets moves to pole position



In honour of ITV's 50 anniversary, we were fortunate to have Jim and Chrissy Rosenthal to record Nuggets. Jim commentates on F1 Racing and other sports for ITV1. They read features on a 60 million year old spider, relics from the Mary Rose and old boiled sweets amongst others. Nuggets is a general interest magazine available from St Dunstan's in braille and on Daisy format MP3CD. If you would like a copy, contact Roberta Hazan on 020 7723 5021.

CHRISTMAS IN THE CANAL ZONE

And a Very Merry Christmas to you too... writes St Dunstaner **Arthur Morley**

Christmas 1946 Location: Egypt.

THERE I WAS, a 19-year-old soldier, a long, long way from home, serving King and Country. I had been posted abroad with my comrades to serve in what was then simply called Palestine, but I never actually got there. Instead, after a brief sojourn in a Transit Camp in Cairo I found myself posted to the Suez area in Egypt itself. Although I had 'opted' as they say to remain with my mates and join an Infantry Regiment I found myself being posted to a Prisoner of War Camp, destined to become a POW Camp Guard. This was near a town called Fayed in the Suez Canal Zone.

The Camp held around 20,000 prisoners, all Germans, allotted out into four 'Cages' holding 5,000 prisoners each. As you can imagine duties in the camp were many and varied. There was only one Main Gateway into the camp through which anyone and anything had to pass. On any normal day around 15,000 of the prisoners left the camp to go out on Work Details of various kinds, returning mid-afternoon. Most had been

POWs for a year or two and had become accustomed to the Work details and while in camp providing their own leisure activities and entertainment. Among them were many who had been in civilian life professional musicians. Three VERY GOOD dance orchestras had been formed as a result. They were regularly allowed out of camp, often without escorts, to take up engagements all around the Canal Zone. This was in addition to performing regularly for both Staff and prisoners in the camp itself.

Christmas Eve 1946 and I had the misfortune to be given the 'privilege' of being appointed Guard Commander (Corporal-in-Charge) of the Main Gate Detail - a 24-hour Duty. This commenced at mid-afternoon on Christmas Eve and would terminate at the same time on Christmas Day itself. More than that, my small Guard and I had to watch on glumly and enviously as a modest number of people and two of the dance orchestras left camp for 'other duties', early on Christmas Eve. I have to tell you. It was not a particularly pleasant experience as we jealously watched them go.

We, the guard, would have

to miss our Christmas Eve 'Tiffin', the Band entertainment, the Christmas midnight jollities, our mates, breakfast with the lads and Christmas Dinner itself. A few people came back into camp, 'happy as Larry's' but our responses to their cheerful greetings were lukewarm at the very best. At midnight we saw no one, so much for Christmas we thought. It was not a busy night despite, being able to hear festivities going on elsewhere in the camp. We grudgingly shared the night, each of us taking it in turn to stretch out for a limited time and 'resting our eyes' as they say.

So, midnight passed, I am came and went, one of the bands returned, almost silently. Two o'clock raced by, then half past, my turn for a wee break, thinking "Am I dreaming, is it really Christmas Eve? I wonder what they're doing at home?" Then suddenly, all hell breaks loose! Trumpets sounding, cymbals clashing, dozens of instruments playing all at once, more muzak, drums and, oh, everything! What a noise, at this time in a morning! I raise myself up, glance at my watch, it's only 3am! "Three o'clock! What is happening?" I stand up, grope

my way through the doorway and stagger outside to be met by a full dance orchestra playing their hearts out and shouting out greetings. "Merry Christmas Corporal". Is it a nightmare, am I going mad, that is 'Silent Night' isn't it? And it most certainly was. I hadn't the heart to grumble or complain, after all it was Christmas wasn't it and they did mean well after all. We exchanged seasonal pleasantries until finally the orchestra left for their own billets. Which left a very dejected guard to survive the remainder of their lonely night. Which left us with just one comment: "And a very merry Christmas to all of YOU too!"

PS Haven't YOU ever been 'serenaded' by a large dance orchestra at 3 o'clock on Christmas morning?

Heroes Return roll of honour

THE BIG LOTTERY Fund saluted 17,500 Second World War veterans who have undertaken visits back to the battlefronts of 60 years ago through the Heroes Return scheme. They put the names of every single WWII veteran who made the journey back to the places they saw action, onto a Heroes Return roll of honour scroll. The scroll was presented to Minister for Veterans Don Touhig on November 7th.

The multi-million pound scheme enabled veterans and widows to visit the battlefields where they helped secure the Allied victory, and where comrades fell.

Minister for Veterans Don Touhig said; "The heroic

acts of those who fought in World War Two must never be forgotten, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who suffered for future generations' freedom. The 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II is an important event that has been commemorated with pride to ensure younger generations appreciate the great sacrifices our veterans made. We must never allow them to forget.

"The Heroes Return scheme has provided funding for veterans wishing to travel back to the battlefields of WWII, and pay tribute to their fallen comrades. This scroll is a fantastic memorial to all those who made such personal and, for many, emotional journeys."

Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

John Bentley of Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland served in the Polish Army from 1941 to 1948.

Ryszard Broll of Rowley Regis, West Midlands served in the Polish Army Resettlement Corps from 1944 to 1949.

Francis Burrow of Ruislip, Middlesex served in the Rifle Brigade and the Reconnaissance Corps between 1940 and 1946.

Edward Chew of Chorley, Lancashire served in the Home Guard and then the Royal Marines between 1942 and 1946.

Thomas Collins of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire served in the Hertfordshire Regiment from 1939 to 1944.

John Doyle of Dyserth, Denbighshire served in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and Welch Regiment between 1944 and 1948.

Jack Durban of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1941 to 1946.

William Etherington of Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1954.

Kathleen Ford of Dawlish, Devon served as Lieutenant in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service from 1939 to 1946.

Donald Hampton of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Cyril Handley of Barming, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Marjorie Haworth of Fleetwood, Lancashire served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945.

Frederick Healy of Tunbridge Wells, Kent served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Richard Heard of Enfield, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1948.

Alexander Hill of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire served in the Royal Artillery and Royal Army Service Corps between 1942 and 1948.

Douglas Hinde of Sheffield, Yorkshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1934 to 1946.

Lt Col Andrew Howard of Bognor Regis, West Sussex served in the Royal Artillery from 1937 to 1958.

Julia Kane of Pleasley Vale, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1969 to 1972.

John Kidd of Godalming, Surrey served in the Royal

Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Czeslaw Knopp of Norbury, London served in the Polish Armoured Regiment and the Polish Resettlement Corps between 1940 and 1949.

Samuel Kyle of Turriff, Aberdeenshire served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1946.

Alexander Lambie of Bearsden, Glasgow served in the General Service Corps from 1944 to 1946.

Ronald Langley of Thatcham, Berkshire served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1958 to 1960.

David Lloyd of Llandaff, Cardiff served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1945.

Geoffrey Lutman of Tottenham, London served in the Royal Artillery in Burma and India from 1940 to 1946.

Donald Mackenzie of Borehamwood, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

William MacKintosh of Inverness served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Edgar McWilliams of Paignton, Devon served in the King's Regiment (Liverpool) and the Royal Tank Regiment

between 1940 and 1946.

William Morgan of Woking, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1968.

Norman Morley of Woodingdean, Brighton served in the Royal Sussex Regiment from 1942 to 1945.

Douglas Pickering of Mould, Flintshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1946 to 1948.

Keith Robins of Goole, East Yorkshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1958 to 1983.

Edward Sanderson of Plymouth, Devon served in the Devonshire Regiment from 1956 to 1958 and then the Royal Hampshire Regiment until 1965.

Leslie Sims of Locks Heath, Southampton, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1929 to 1964.

David Simmonds of Stourbridge, Worcestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

William Smith of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands served in the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery Regiment between 1939 and 1946.

Lois Suttle of Luton, Bedfordshire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1939 to 1942.

John Taylor of Findon, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1960.

Derrick Thomas of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1952.

Winifred Timmins of Alvaston, Derby served in the Women's Auxiliary Air force from 1942 to 1946.

Alwyn Tromans of Blackheath, West Midlands served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Betty Woodin of Rustington, West Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Henry Edward Haskey on September 4th. He is the great-grandson of Rose Haskey of Pinner, Middlesex and was named for his great-grandfather, the late *Henry Haskey*.

Annabel Mallery on September 6th. She is the great-granddaughter of Ethel Jenrick of Wallington, Surrey and the late *George Jenrick*.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Julie and Carl Bridge who married on September 24th. Julie is the granddaughter of *John Richards* of Worsley, Manchester.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Jack and Marjorie Wakeford of Brighton on October 20th.

Kenneth and Jessie Jay of Saffron Walden, Essex on October 23rd.

William and Evelyn Beardsmore of Dudley, West Midlands on October 24th.

Ten Answers

Answers to the quiz posed on page 19.

- 1) Holly;
- 2) Pear Tree;
- 3) Frankinsence;
- 4) Christmas Tree; 5) Holly; 6) Aspen;
- 7) Queen Victoria. The first mention of Christmas trees in Britain was in 1800 at a party at Windsor given by Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III. They were popularised following the marriage of Victoria and Prince Albert in 1840.
- 8) Christmas tree. 9) Oaks. 10) Holly.

And the final seasonal anagram unwraps to wish everyone "A Merry Christmas".

Alan and Joyce Hirst of Darlington, County Durham on November 1st.

Richard and Claire Bowyer of Bolton, Lancashire on November 17th.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Lawrence and Lillian Wilcox-Howell of Brighton who celebrated 63 years of marriage on October 24th.

Stanley and Florence Rickard of Trowbridge, Wiltshire celebrated 61 years of marriage on November 8th.

George and Ann Taylor of Maidstone, Kent who celebrated 65 years of marriage on November 9th.

Richard and Peg Wadey of Gillingham, Kent who celebrated 66 years of marriage on November 11th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Patricia Lynch on October 14th. She was the wife of *Jerry Lynch* of Horsham, West Sussex.

Meta Lane on October 19th. She was the wife of *Frederick Lane* of Longlevens, Gloucestershire.

Elsie Lockhart on November 1st. She was the wife of *Alf Lockhart* of Dagenham, Essex.

Geraldine Norton on November 2nd. She was the wife of *Stanley Norton* of Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire.

Amy Harris on November 9th. She was the wife of *Joseph Harris* of Tavistock, Devon.

Greta Walton on March 17th. She was the wife of *Norman Walton* of Southfields, London.

Frances Craddock of Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire on October 23rd. She was the widow of *Reg Craddock*.

Vera Lowry of Southwick, West Sussex on October 26th. She was the widow of Royal Air Force St Dunstaner *Patrick Lowry*.

Evelyn Reeves of Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire on November 14th. She was the widow of *Victor Reeves*.

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.

Thomas Wilding Royal Air Force

Thomas Alfred Wilding of Northwich, Cheshire died on October 13th, aged 83. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. His unit set out airfields in advance of squadrons, serving in Europe and the Far East. Discharged as Leading Aircraftman in

1946, he then worked in the petrochemical industries. He enjoyed walking, gardening and music. Our sympathy goes to his widow Irene, sons Michael and Peter, daughter Margaret and other members of the family.

William Curl

Royal Armoured Corps

William Tabanor Curl of Northampton, Northamptonshire died on October 15th, aged 87. He initially joined the Lothian and Border Horse Yeomanry 1938, which transferred to the Royal Tank Corps and as a wing of the Royal Armoured Corps was renamed the Royal Tank Regiment. He served in North Africa and Italy before being released to the reserves in 1946.

Thomas Jones

Welsh Guards

Thomas Jones of North Shields, Tyne & Wear died on October 25th, aged 92. He joined the Welsh Guards in 1930 and was deployed on Royal and political guard duties. He was released to the Reserve in 1937, but recalled to duty with the outbreak of war in 1939. He was injured during a bomb blast in 1941 but continued to serve until 1945. In civilian life, he became a policeman with the River Tyne Police but then moved to Australia as a coal miner. Returning to the UK, he joined the Air Ministry Police at Boscombe Down and later worked in Airport Security with the Dog handlers section. Our sympathy goes to his son Thomas and all members of the family.

Terence Day

Army Catering Corps

Terence Day of Ashford, Kent died on October 27th, aged 62. He served in the Army Catering Corps at Chatham in 1959. He was blinded as a result of a traffic accident in 1960. He worked as a switchboard operator at Chatham Dockyard, as a packer and trained as a capstan operator. His interests included woodwork and classic cars. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

John Ayre**Royal Army Ordnance Corps**

John Cresswell Ayre of Swadlincote, Derbyshire died on October 29th, aged 85. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2000. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1941 and was posted to Singapore. Ten days after he arrived, he was taken prisoner by the Japanese and moved through Malaya to Thailand where he worked on the Railway until the war ended. He was repatriated in 1945 and demobbed the following year. In civilian life, he joined the coal board in Derby, working underground and becoming a planning accountant. Our sympathy goes to his widow Marjorie, their daughters and all other members of the family.

Kenneth Jay**Royal Artillery**

Kenneth Jay of Saffron Walden, Essex died on October 30th, aged 83. He worked in a factory making munitions and motor bikes before joining the Royal Artillery in 1942. He served in the UK, North Africa, Greece, Italy and Germany. He left the service as Sergeant in 1954. He then became a joiner, but later became a licensee and kept four public houses before retiring. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jessie and all of the family.

Douglas McLean**King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry**

Douglas Dalrymple McLean of Sutton-in-Craven, West Yorkshire died on October 31st, aged 96. He worked in the textile industry and then for a firm of coopers making barrels before joining the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry as a 19-year-old in 1929. He retired from the army in 1954 and joined a firm of engineers. Our sympathy goes to his son Douglas, daughter Mavis and all other members of the family.

Edward Miller**Royal Engineers**

Edward "Ted" Miller of Leamington Spa,

Warwickshire died on October 31st, aged 90. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1945. He was a furniture maker before joining the Royal Engineers in 1940. Deployed with 19th Field Company, he took part in the Normandy landings, clearing mines, repairing bridges and roads. His unit was also responsible for setting up water purification plants. Come January 1945, the Corporal was engaged in clearing mines in a snow covered St Phillipsland in Holland. An anti-personnel mine exploded in his face, blinding him and injuring his hands to the point that amputation was required. He spent over a year hospitalised at Stoke Manderville and had to undergo plastic surgery. He was discharged in 1947. While training at St Dunstan's, he considered weaving, shop keeping and home decoration as occupations. In turn, he studied history and became a guide at Warwick Castle, lecturing on the armourments and battlements. His interests included music, antiques, gardening and carpentry. He also designed doll's houses, enlisting his wife Iris to help with construction. Over the years they fabricated some elaborate structures, some of which raised funds for Sunshine Homes and Save the Children, some of which were presented to members of the Royal Family and others which drew praise from doll's house collectors on an international level. Ted was a mainstay of St Dunstan's Blind and Handless Group and reported on their reunions for the Review. Our sympathy goes to his widow Iris, son Edward, daughters Susan and Angela and all of the family.

Walter Denington**Royal Tank Regiment**

Walter Philip Denington of Norwich, Norfolk died on November 2nd, aged 88. He joined the Royal Tank Regiment in 1939 and was deployed to Egypt the following year. He fought in the Western desert, through Sicily and Italy. He was demobbed in 1946. Our sympathy goes to his widow Blanche and all other members of the family.

John Hall**Royal Army Medical Corps**

John Frederick Hall of Taunton, Somerset died on November 7th, aged 76. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1947 and served at Aldershot and Dover. He was discharged in 1949 and continued a career in nursing, eventually becoming the Senior Nursing Officer at Haywards Heath Hospital. Our sympathy goes to his partner John and other members of the family.

Joseph Robinson**Royal Air Force**

Joseph Albert Robinson of West Molesey, Surrey died on November 11th, aged 84. He worked for United Automobile Services before joining the Royal Air Force in 1941. He was stationed at Halton and later in South Africa, Burma and Singapore servicing training aircraft. Discharged in 1946, he became a warehouse manager. Before losing his sight, he enjoyed astronomy, driving and reading. Our sympathy goes to his widow Florence and all members of the family.

Ernie Bowditch**Royal Air Force Police**

Herbert Ernest Bowditch of Ovingdean, Brighton died on November 12th, aged 93. He was a policeman in Sydenham, London before joining the Royal Air Force Police in 1940. He was posted to a radar base at Chittagong, India and then Burma. He was discharged in 1946. Returning to civilian life, he initially worked in the building trade but later started making title sequences for Pearl and Dean film advertisements. He enjoyed writing poetry and as St Dunstan's own "Bard of Bockerly" published a well-received collection of verse, *Ernie's Magic Apple*. Our sympathy goes to his nephew Richard.

Robert Taylor**Royal Air Force**

Robert William Henry Taylor of Loughborough, Leicestershire died on

November 13th, aged 85. He was an apprentice joiner before enlisting with the Royal Air Force in 1940. He maintained airframes on Halifax and Lancaster bombers. At one posting, in Linton-on-Ouse, he was responsible for the plane of Pilot Officer Leonard Cheshire. Discharged in 1946, he became a Building Superintendent at Loughborough University. Our sympathy goes to his widow Eileen, son Stephen, daughter Kay and all members of the family.

Alexander McLeod**Royal Air Force**

Alexander Charles McLeod of Luton, Bedfordshire died on November 14th, aged 73. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1974. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1953 and was stationed in the UK. In civilian life, he worked with his father as a window cleaner. After training at St Dunstan's, he became a machinist. His interests included gardening, horse racing, ballroom dancing and walking. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joyce, daughter Angela and all other members of the family.

Shirley Blackmore**Royal Engineers**

Shirley Duncan William Blackmore of Gosport, Hampshire died on November 15th, aged 85. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1942. He was a French Polisher before joining the Royal Engineers in 1937. He was deployed with 16th Fortress Company and was serving with them as Sapper in 1941 when he was injured by a landmine explosion. He was struck by flying splinters of glass. He came to St Dunstan's at Church Stretton and initially trained in boot repairs and later telephony. He was also employed on inspection work at the Royal Naval Armament Depot and as a plastic cutter. His interests included handicrafts, pottery and walking. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dorothy, son Paul, daughter Christine and all other members of the family.

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ST DUNSTAN'S Review



FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN