

June 2006

www.st-dunstans.org.uk

VETERANS DAY
27 JUNE



ST DUNSTAN'S Review

FOR BLIND EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN



From the Chairman



I AM VERY happy to let you know that on May 3rd, our Member of Council and Chairman of the Royal National Institute of the Blind, Colin Low was appointed to the House of Lords as a new non-party political peer.

Colin Low, CBE has been recommended by the House of Lords Appointments Commission for his work as Chairman of RNIB, President of the European Blind Union and his work as a campaigner for disability rights.

I know you will wish me, on behalf of everyone at St Dunstan's, to congratulate him on a well deserved appointment.

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

ST DUNSTAN'S Review June 2006 No 958

Cover Story: The Thiepval Memorial to the missing Service men of the First World War looms over a band of St Dunstaners who visited the killing fields of the Somme last month. Turn to Letters to the Editor on page 10 and then page 18 for details.

Editor: Ray Hazan E-mail: ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk
Tel: 020 7723 5021 Fax: 020 7262 6199

Available in braille, on MP3CD, on audio cassette, floppy disk and via e-mail.

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

ST DUNSTAN'S Calendar

JUNE

Archery (II) May 26th-June 3rd
Writers' Forum June 3rd
Fishing (III) June 5th-9th
Outdoor Bowling June 8th
50 Year Badge Holders June 9th-12th
Outdoor Bowling June 12th
Golf June 17th-18th
Widows' Week (I) June 18th-24th
Outdoor Bowling June 19th
Veterans Day June 27th

JULY

Writers' Weekend Jun 29th-Jul 1st
Sailability July 1st
British 10K Run July 2nd
Fishing Club (IV) July 11th-13th
Outdoor Bowling July 14th
Ladies Reunion July 16th-22nd
Indoor Bowling July 17th
Band of the Royal Marines July 19th
Golf July 22nd-23rd
HMS Sultan July 28th-August 5th
Sailability July 29th

Complaints procedure at St Dunstan's

Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

ST DUNSTAN'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (COMMUNITY)

COMPLAINTS: We aim to provide the best possible care and service within St Dunstan's. If there is something that you are not happy about, or you can see an area in which improvement is needed, please tell us. It gives us the opportunity to investigate the matter and address it, thereby improving our service to you.

You are encouraged to raise concerns at any time directly with the person involved. He/she will investigate your concerns, try to resolve the problem and advise you if further action is needed. However, if you are unable to discuss your concerns at this level, or you are not happy with the outcome, you may wish to lodge a formal complaint. The following information explains how to do this.

Formal Complaints

You may wish to lodge a formal complaint if:

- Your concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved through the informal complaints process.
- The informal complaints process is not acceptable or appropriate to you, for whatever reason.

How do I make a formal complaint?

- Put your complaint on tape, e-mail or in writing - (preferably using the leaflet available through Reception at Harcourt Street).
- Make it very clear what the complaint is and what you think should be done about it. If you are unable to do this yourself, ask a friend, relative, advocate or member of senior staff to assist you.
- Send your complaint to: Ray Hazan, St Dunstaners Services Manager, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD
Tel: 0207 723 5021
E-mail: ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk

What will happen after I lodge my complaint?

You will receive a letter of acknowledgement, usually within three working days of the complaint being received. You may be asked to give more details of the complaint. You may want to ask a friend, relative or other representative (such as an advocate) to speak on your behalf or to attend any meeting which may be required in connection with the complaint. The St Dunstaners Services Manager will investigate and address the complaint, and will write to you within ten days to advise you of the outcome.



What if I am not happy with the outcome?
If you are not happy with the outcome of the complaint, you need to advise the St Dunstaners Services Manager who will refer the complaint to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will carry out further investigation of the matter and will write to you within ten days (of the complaint being referred to him) to advise you of the outcome.

What if I am still not happy with the outcome?
If the complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, you need to advise the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will refer the complaint to the Chairman of St Dunstan's. The Chairman will investigate the matter further and will write to you within one month (of the complaint being referred) to advise you of the outcome.

Is there anywhere else I can go?
The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is a public body responsible for regulating the standards of care provided in care homes, including St Dunstan's.

You can make a complaint to the CSCI at any time. Any complaint that is not resolved through the Home's internal complaints process (as described above) can also be referred to the CSCI.

You may wish to discuss your concerns with an advocacy service, such as those provided by Age Concern or Counsel and Care. Their contact details, along with those of the CSCI are as follows:

Useful Contacts
Age Concern (Head Office), Astral House,
1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER.
Tel: 020 8765 7200

Counsel and Care,
Twyman House, 16 Bonny Street,
London NW1 9PG. Tel: 020 7241 8555

The Commission for Social Care Inspection,
33 Greycoat Street, London SW1P 2QF.
Tel: 020 7979 2000.

A MESSAGE FROM THE OIVINGDEAN MANAGER

VACATING ROOMS AT ST DUNSTAN'S OIVINGDEAN: Those staying at St Dunstan's Ovingdean are reminded of the requirement to vacate rooms by no later than 10:00 on the day of departure. This is not an issue for most people as they will be leaving in Ovingdean transport that leaves between 09:00 and 10:00. Staff are able to assist visitors, particularly in moving baggage down to the Reception area. The reason for the 10:00 deadline is to give time for getting the room ready for the next occupant including the internal moves that have to happen on occasion. The internal moves are especially necessary at the moment because of the window replacement project.

TRANSPORT:
Although many of us are aware how critical having St Dunstan's transport is for visiting Ovingdean and for several other aspects of St Dunstan's life as well, the size of the task is less well known. In 2005, the team drove over half a million miles (520,000 to be precise). That is 87 times to New York and back, or 20 times around the world, or to the Moon and back! What is also forgotten at times is that the charge for staying at Ovingdean includes that travel to and from home which is particularly significant for those who have to come a long way. If you

are visiting Ovingdean and our transport is collecting you, which won't always be the case as we do encourage people to make their own way if they can, the Transport department will decide on the route taken, the type of vehicle used, and the date and time of pick up/return and will contact you to give you details of the pickup some two days before coming to Ovingdean. If you are being picked up the next day and still have not heard from your driver (usually one of our own though, just occasionally, a contracted taxi firm), phone Ovingdean Reception on 01273 391400 or 307811 (the line is always manned) and check on the arrangements. Similarly, if you have to cancel your visit at very short notice for illness etc then phone Ovingdean Reception and speak to the Receptionist. Please, do not leave messages on ansaphones especially out of hours or at weekends.

We look forward to seeing you at Ovingdean.
Dick Lake
Ovingdean Manager

AUDIO WEB SITE

PUZZLES, POETRY, RADIO AND MOVIES: Mike Tetley has kindly drawn our attention to www.Pressakey.net. This is the home of the Audio Network, a talking web site with puzzles, spoken poetry, access to internet radio, audio described films, which are changed weekly, and comedy programmes to name but a few. Options are selected at the press of a key. Jaws users should note that you need to press 'insert 3' (pass through key) before entering your selection. Speech is not artificial.

It is well worth putting in your favourites list!
Thanks, Mike.

CHECK LOCAL PRESS FOR VETERANS DAY EVENTS

NATION SAYS THANK YOU: The United Kingdom's first Veterans Day will be held on June 27th to honour and unite all who have served in our armed forces.

An inaugural event is being hosted that day in London at Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum (nearest tube, Lambeth North on the Bakerloo line) from 10:00-19:00. The event is family friendly with free admission. Visitors will be able to see un-armed combat displays, field cookery through the ages, music, re-enactments, art displays and exhibitions staged by organisations such as St Dunstan's, BLESMA and Combat Stress.

Check local press and radio for details of other events around the country.

PARADE RECALLS FALKLANDS

COMMEMORATIONS ON LIBERATION DAY: The 25th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict will be marked by special commemorative events in June next year, Secretary of State for Defence John Reid announced on April 27th.

Commemorations will begin on Liberation Day, Thursday June 14th 2007, with a Service of Remembrance at the Falklands Islands' Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne College, Berkshire. This will coincide with a range of events in Port Stanley, the Falkland Islands. On Sunday June 17th 2007 there will be a Veterans' Parade, including a drum-head service and march past, on Horse Guards Parade in London.

VETERANS LAPEL BADGE EXTENDED TO DECEMBER 1959

VETERANS DAY CHANGE: Eligibility for The Veterans Lapel Badge will be extended on June 27th - Veterans Day - to cover those who served up to and before December 31st 1959. Dr John Reid announced the extension during his time as Defence Secretary, before he became Home Secretary. The badge will then embrace those who served in conflicts and theatres in Cyprus, Suez and the Arabian Peninsular as well as First and Second World War veterans.

Other groups 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.

St Dunstan's can issue the Veterans Badge in instances where it holds details of an individual's service record. If you would like to apply, contact Barbara Sweeney at St Dunstan's Headquarters 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.

CHANGE OF DATE FOR FALKLANDS PILGRIMAGE

LEGION SHIFT TRAVEL TO NOVEMBER 2007: The Falkland Island Pilgrimage, organised by Remembrance Travel, will now take place in November 2007, not in April as previously announced. This is the first ever Royal British Legion Pilgrimage to the Falklands, commemorating 25 years since the conflict. For more details please contact Remembrance Travel on 01622 716729.

LEGOLAND DISCOUNT FOR BRITISH LEGION MEMBERS

REDUCED RATES AT HOLIDAY ATTRACTION: This year all Royal British Legion and UK Forces members, plus their extended families and friends, can benefit from great reductions at Legoland. Instead of the standard rates of £29 per adult and £23 per child, the entrance fee will be £21.75 and £17.25 respectively. There is also a 10 per cent discount off all Legoland holidays. For every ticket booked The Royal British Legion will receive 50p towards the 2006 Poppy Appeal. Please note, however, that this discount is not available on the gate - it must be booked in advance on the number below. Please quote offer AUKFORCES when booking. If you are interested in the Legoland holiday offer, please call 08703 90 50 91, quoting offer LGD13, or visit www.legolandhotels.co.uk/corporates.

SEARCH AND SPEAK

CHOICE OF VOICE: Web browsers may like to check out Speegle, a speaking search engine which has its own voice (male or female). Log on at www.speegle.co.uk.

TAKING SOUNDINGS ON SIGHT LOSS

MONTHLY MAGAZINE: For 17 years, the free monthly *Soundings* audio magazine has been reflecting all aspects of living with a visual-impairment, dealing with such topics as daily-living aids for the home and garden, claiming benefits, going on holiday, hobbies and pastimes, human interest stories, news and campaigns.

And if you're not already receiving your own copy of the magazine each month, you would be very welcome to join the several thousand who already do. In fact, St Dunstaners were the very first to receive *Soundings* when it started back in May 1989.

The monthly magazine - available on standard audio cassette and on the internet - features those who provide support to blind and partially-sighted people and, importantly, talks to visually-impaired people themselves. In this way *Soundings* not only reflects products and services that can help with daily living, but also enables visually-impaired people to share their ideas and observations.

So the real star of *Soundings* is the human voice - talking, discussing, explaining, agreeing, disagreeing, enthusing, condemning, asking, questioning and sharing. And the voices come from right across the United Kingdom - and sometimes beyond.

Soundings, which is a registered charity (no 1067451), is impartial and strictly non-commercial and never promotes any product or service over another. It simply offers information for individuals to follow up as and when they wish. The magazine covers a large number, and a wide variety, of subjects each

month and in this way hopes to be of benefit to anyone who is blind or partially-sighted.

Soundings also has its own information service where callers can ask for further details about something they may have heard in the magazine or, by discussing their circumstances, they can be put in touch with other sources of help and advice or even referred onto other organisations that may be able to help.

Soundings listeners also communicate with each other and share life experiences on the free Internet discussion group - the Soundings Forum. In fact, for those who like to dabble on the Internet, the *Soundings* web site offers a host of complimentary audio services as well.

Once again, *Soundings* is completely free of charge to anyone who is blind or partially-sighted (whether registered or not), and if you would like to find out more, you can phone *Soundings* on the local call rate number 08457 258 852, e-mail info@soundings.org or visit the *Soundings* web site at www.soundings.org.

CALLING LANCASTRIA SURVIVORS

WERE YOU ONBOARD?: When the RMT *Lancastria* was bombed on June 17th 1940 many troops, RAF personnel, and civilian refugees, including women and children, who being evacuated from France, were killed. The ship sank rapidly with only around 2,500 of an estimated 9,000 people being saved. If you were onboard the *Lancastria* or involved with rescue operations, please contact Archivist Roberta Hazan at St Dunstan's Headquarters on 020 7723 5021.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST AUDIO DESCRIPTION



Image: ABC/ Art Strieber

Girl Friday! The undescribed Evangeline Lilly who plays Kate on desert drama *Lost*.

C4 RESTORE MISSING DESCRIPTION FOR REPEAT SHOWING: It is a television show with a reputation for leaving viewers in the dark, but blind viewers felt it was one mystery too many when Channel 4's *Lost* returned to the screens without audio description last month.

The TV station received a volley of complaints from blind fans of the desert island castaways who were expecting to enjoy the same description of actions, scenery and costume that had been provided for the first series. Channel 4 were unable to comment on how many calls they had

received, but re-instated audio description for a repeat showing the following week.

Meanwhile, theatre goers can enjoy live audio description for the following productions:

Miss Saigon June 14th 19:30
Bristol Hippodrome
Irene Richards describes the hit musical. Contact Trish Hodson on 0117 302 3222 or e-mail trish.hodson@clearchannel.co.uk.

Starlight Express June 24th 14:30
Norwich Theatre Royal
Telephone 01603 63 00 00.

The Deranged Marriage June 29th 20:00
Theatre Royal, Stratford East (0800 183 1188) Bridget Crowley audio describes British Asian comedy.

Beauty & The Beast July 1st 14:30
Telephone 0870 060 6620 or e-mail bromleyaccessbookings@theambassadors.com.

Guys & Dolls August 12th 14:30
Piccadilly Theatre, London. (0870 060 0123 or e-mail ticketcentre@theambassadors.com). Irene Richards describes Runyon musical.

BIRMINGHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

NEWS FOR YOUR AREA: Birmingham Talking Newspaper Association (BTNA) offers a weekly audio tape with local news from Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield and other magazine items. To apply to become a listener simply telephone their New Referrals Coordinator, Joan Tuffley on 0121 608 4398 or Ian MacLaren on 0121 382 1582 or by e-mail on btna@ukonline.co.uk.

PRISONERS OF WAR 2007

REUNITED NEXT YEAR: The 2007 St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion will be held at Ovingdean from April 13th to April 16th next year.

ACOUSTIC RIFLE SHOOTING

TARGET PRACTISE: St Dunstan's Acoustic Rifle Shooting Club is available to all St Dunstaners on Wednesday afternoons from 14:00-16:00pm. For details please contact Mark Brownlow at Ovingdean on 01273 391465.

PROBLEMS WITH PREMIUM LINES

CONTACT REGULATOR ICSTIS: If you have a problem with a promotion or service that uses a premium rate telephone number, starting with 09, 118 directory services, or reverse billed SMS text services, then get in touch with the industry regulator ICSTIS. Write to ICSTIS, FREEPOST WC5468, London SE1 2BR or use the complaint form on their website, www.icstis.org.uk, which also has a number checking facility. They also operate a free helpline on 0800 500 212 between 08:00-20:00, Monday to Friday. They will require a copy of any promotion that is the cause of the complaint.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Ted Bunting on Cookson's compelling tale of colour prejudice

Colour-blind

Author: Catherine Cookson
Reader: John Davitt
Catalogue Number TB 10731
Duration: 9 hours 46 minutes

This brilliant, hard-hitting and thought-provoking book begins with an almost brutal description of poverty and life in slum dwellings. But the tough Tyne-side family at the centre of the story meet each day with determined fortitude and, indeed, make it their policy to laugh out loud at life's many difficulties. But they could not pretend it was funny in the least when daughter Bridget came home from Liverpool where she had been working. For she

brought back with her an unborn child in her abdomen and a big black Negro husband on her arm.

Jimmy Patterson was an honest hardworking seaman; courteous too and a devoted husband and father to boot, though these fine qualities meant nothing to those people who hated him for the colour of his skin. Foremost amongst these was Matt, Bridget's would-be incestuous brother whose jealous hatred knew no limit. When Jimmy disappears from the neighbourhood, Matt transferees his spiteful loathing to his niece, the beautiful Rose-Angela who

now becomes the central character of the drama. One day, when she is a young schoolgirl, the Parish priest tells Rose-Angela that God is colour-blind. Well, it seems the Deity possesses this defect alone for none that appear in the book are free from some bias on racial and cultural grounds. Not for the first time in her long career, Catherine Cookson tackles a touchy subject with frank honesty and lays bare faults in us all.

I have often heard novels called "compelling", "spellbinding" and "powerful" but rarely do they live up to the words so comprehensively as here.

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.

Peaceful fields belie a bloody history!

I was privileged to be one of the St Dunstan's party visiting the Somme battlefields. The weather was warm and sunny and the peaceful countryside looked beautiful in Spring colours. It was hard to imagine how it would have been in 1916 as battle raged, but our tour leaders were able to paint graphic pictures of what happened then.



The contrast between the peace of our visit and the horror of battle was brought home to me most of all in two places. One was Delville Woods, now completely re-grown after the total devastation of ninety years ago, but where the maze of trenches can still be seen snaking between the trees. The other was at Beaumont where we stood at the top of the hill at the edge of the crater as our tour leader Peter described what happened in the fields we were looking down on. We pictured the handful of British survivors lying perfectly still, hiding and waiting for nightfall to cover their retreat back to the British front line.

In the back garden of the hotel in Auchonvillers (known as

Joan guides Harry to the peak of the Beaumont crater, the tranquil countryside a stark contrast to the WWI shelling.

Ocean Villas to the British Tommies), we saw a restored section of trench. This led to the cellar which had been used as a dressing station, and was linked to over a hundred other cellars in the village, utilising what was left of the village when everything above ground level had been eradicated. This brought warfare to a domestic level, thinking of the families who lost their homes and livelihoods so completely.

The visit changed my whole view of World War I. Before this I had a picture

of poor soldiers being used as cannon-fodder by callous army chiefs. I learned a whole new side to this picture – one of brave men who knew exactly what their objective was, and who were prepared to achieve it no matter what it cost them, just as our armed Forces do today.

Thank you St Dunstan's for giving me this insight and helping me to understand the situation better.

**Joan Beevers,
Castleford, Yorkshire**

• Full report on page 18.

Amazing history beneath the tea rooms

I would like to put on record my appreciation to the Service Awareness Team for the excellent planning of the recent tour of the Somme. It was particularly helped by the "supporting cast" from Headquarters who came along and became more than a voice on the end of a phone or a name which occasionally crops up on literature. Let's hope that we can do it again.

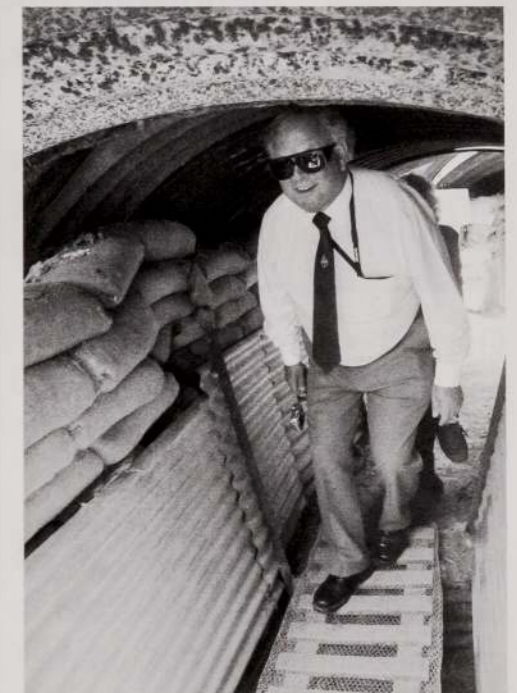
Myself and my wife, Maureen, got a tremendous insight into the camaraderie

within St Dunstan's. This friendship philosophy must have been inherited, surviving, from the examples shown by all those young pals who went to war in 1914 onwards.

On my return, I looked up Ocean Villas Tea Rooms on the web. What a fantastic history Avril Williams has.

**Gerry Jackson,
Worthing, West Sussex**

• Avril Williams's website can be found at www.oceanvillas-tearooms.com.



Gerry Jackson in the trench at Auchonvillers.

Tribute to Irene Newbold

I was very sorry to read of Miss Newbold's death in the latest issue of the **Review**. Miss Newbold was my stepfather, Bob Bunting's health visitor in the 1970s, when he was still running his poultry farm in Ashen on the Essex and Suffolk borders. Miss Newbold was immensely practical, down to earth, and very encouraging in new enterprises. My sympathy goes to her family, and I am thankful for the years of help and friendship she gave my stepfather, my mother and me.

**Shiela Moy,
Bishop's Stortford,
Hertfordshire**

Church was blown up the night before we took vows

Edith and I would like to thank St Dunstan's for the beautiful bouquet of flowers and good wishes which arrived on our 63rd Wedding Anniversary on April 10th. As I sat alongside Edith, my memory wandered back over the past 63 years.

We were both aged 18 at the time and I had been given seven days leave from Army Service to get married. There had been a very heavy bombing raid on Liverpool the night before. As I approached the church, I was met by the vicar who

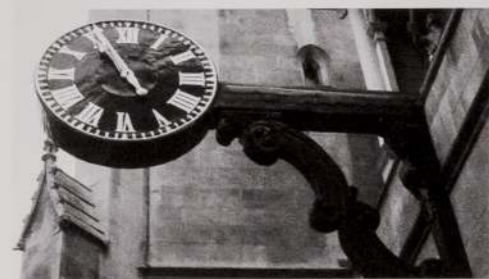
told me that the church had received a direct hit and was in ruins. He had arranged for the service to take place in a small parochial hall which was not very far away.

After eight months I was given embarkation leave before taking part in the second advance into Burma. We did not see each other for three long years until I returned home on a hospital ship from Rangoon after being wounded and losing my sight.

**Tom McLoughlin
Spital, Wirral, Merseyside**

It strikes me...

with Gog and Magog



Gog is bemused by his first encounter with an “automatic contextual analysis engine”! Anyone reading webindia123’s report of Kevin Alderton’s impressive ski-speed record will be drawn to an active link on the word ‘blind’ in the headline ‘Blind skier sets downhill record’. A quick click asks the reader to “Buy Fitted or DIY Blinds – You decide” and offers quotes for made-to-measure blinds and curtain fitting options.

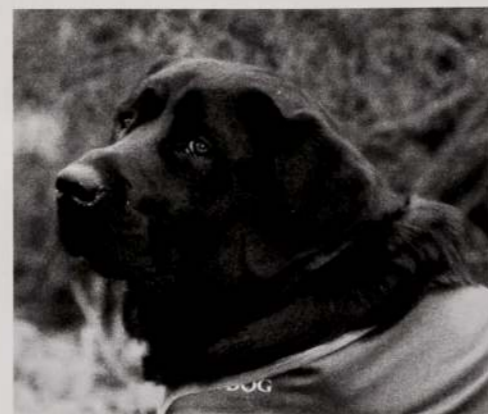
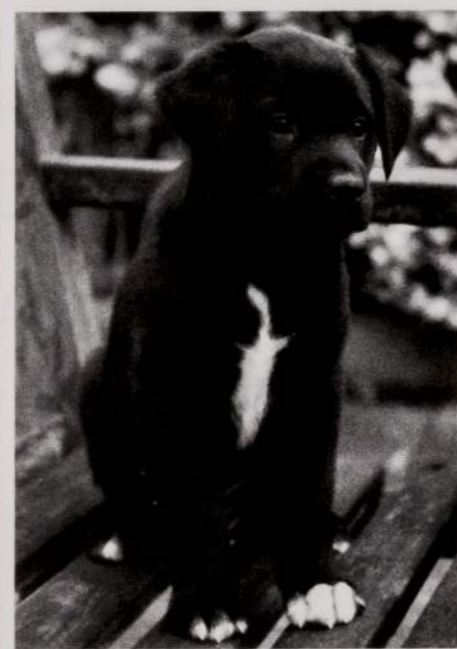
Magog hears that Chief Executive Robert Leader always thinks of Raymond’s Revuebar when he sees the title **ST DUNSTAN’S Review**. Does this mean he thinks we are bouncy and bountiful or bankrupt and broken? Probably the latter!

Gog is curious to note that on May 19th, the Feast of St Dunstan, much commotion occurs across the road at the Temple Church. However, it is not as we expect a group of Goldsmiths making merry, but rather Da Vinci Code fans celebrating the release of the new Tom Hanks film.

Archie is pup, pup and away as super guide dog

ARCHIE, the guide dog sponsored on behalf of St Dunstan’s is pup, pup and away! Actually, not so much a pup anymore, he has graduated as a guide dog and is working with a lady named Kay who lost peripheral vision in 1998.

“I love having Archie around as he is so affectionate,” she said. “He isn’t just my guide dog, but also a real



companion for me. Before I had Archie I wouldn’t go very far from home, particularly at night; Archie gives me so much confidence and after only a month of working together I trust him completely.”

While Archie is bringing restoring mobility for Kay, our generous donor has sponsored another guide dog on behalf of St Dunstan’s. The new boy is a Labrador-collie born in October last year named Rufus. Early reports say he is affectionate, happy and well behaved.

RNIB open eyes in the House

A GROUP of MPs, including Angela Eagle, Tim Loughton and George Galloway, have congratulated the Royal National Institute of the Blind on its “Open Your Eyes” campaign. The 119-strong group called on the Commons to notes that if action is not taken now to prevent avoidable blindness, the

number of people with sight loss in the UK will double by 2030 to four million. They called on the Government to undertake a large scale public health campaign to raise awareness of the causes of avoidable blindness and the importance of regular eye tests in preventing eye disease.

Watson is new Veterans Minister

WEST BROMWICH Member of Parliament Tom Watson was made Minister for Veterans in the May 5th Cabinet re-shuffle. A member of the Home Affairs Select Committee, he has also been Parliamentary Private Secretary to The Paymaster General and a member of the Government Whips Office. He has been involved with issues such as the Rover plant at Longbridge, the proceeds of crime, civil partnerships, gambling, radioactive waste, and organ donation. He recently took part in the Police Parliamentary Scheme and was attached to the West Midlands Police Force for three weeks. He has also worked for the Save The Children Fund. With Mark Tami, MP he is the co-author of *Votes For All*, published by the Fabian Society which urges the introduction of compulsory voting. Outside politics his hobbies and interests include watching football and gardening.

His first duty as Minister for Veterans was to commemorate the death of WWI veteran Bill Roberts who served in the Royal Flying Corps. Since arriving at the Ministry of Defence, he has also had to publish a report on the existence of unidentified flying objects.

In the same re-shuffle, Minister for Defence Dr John Reid was made Home Secretary. In his wake, the Rt Hon Des Browne, MP was appointed Secretary of State for Defence. The representative for Kilmarnock and Loudoun, he has previously been Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Minister of State for Nationality, Immigration and Asylum, Minister of State for Work and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office.

Ten questions on...

the subject of Visual Impairment

Monthly brainteasers from Harry Beevers

- 1) Affected by Glaucoma in the year 1913, who was the former newspaper magnate who founded St Dunstan’s two years later?
- 2) Horatio Nelson lost part of his right arm in an engagement in Corsica in 1797, which eye did he lose in Tenerife three years earlier?
- 3) Who was the 17th century English poet who lost his sight towards the end of his life and was the author of the works *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*?
- 4) According to the story in the *Old Testament*, Samson lost his sight at the hands of the Philistines after his strength had been taken away when his hair was cut off. Who was the barber who removed Samson’s hair?
- 5) The Frenchman Louis Braille who was blinded as a child died in his 44th year during the 19th century. Name one year in the life of Louis Braille.
- 6) When Lady Godiva rode naked through the streets of Coventry, who according to legend was struck blind?
- 7) Which blind entertainer had thirty-four hits in the UK charts before his first No.1 with Paul McCartney with *Ebony and Ivory*?
- 8) Who is the MP who represents the Sheffield Brightside constituency?
- 9) Name any of his five guide-dogs?
- 10) The blind Greek poet Homer wrote favour stories of the siege of which ancient city?

Answers can be found later on page 30.

Minister discovers secret of Colin's Homer Simpson socks

by Simon Rogers

DON TOUHIG, MP received a momentary taste of what it is like to have a visual impairment when he met St Dunstaner Colin Williamson on May 5th. On his last day as Veterans Minister, he also discovered how Colin knows that he is wearing his Homer Simpson socks rather than another pair. It was a puzzle that Colin put to the pupils of St Francis RC School in Abersychan, Torfaen, Wales.

Time was that Don Touhig sat behind a desk at St Francis next to his friend Paul Murphy. These days, they more likely to be seen in the House of Commons as respective representatives of Islwyn and Torafen. However, on this occasion, the MPs returned to their former primary school to witness a St Dunstan's Citizenship presentation.

Colin is one of a group of St Dunstaners involved with St Dunstan's in Schools, an education project launched last year with support from the MOD's Veterans Challenge Fund.

Colin, joined by presenter Maria Walsh, took pupils



Back to school! Paul Murphy and Don Touhig return to their old classroom with current pupils at St Francis..



Talking tins! Maria calls on a pupil to help Colin.



What colour are you? Colin demonstrates a scanner.



A pair of frosted sim specs draws Don Touhig, MP into Colin's World without Sight.

through "a day in his life". He explained how with a little thought, the problems of visual impairment could be overcome. Colin and Maria demonstrated gadgets such as a talking tin lid, colour scanner and liquid level indicator.

Some of the pupils stepped forward with enthusiasm to try on spectacles that simulated visual impairment, while others joined in exercises designed to demonstrate the best way to ask a blind person if they need help in performing a task. So how did Colin know that he had his Homer Simpson socks? The answer was tactile and low-tech - a little button sewn on the top!



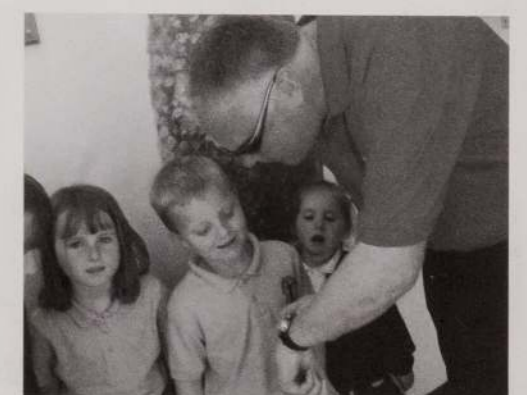
Colin is helped across the road to post a letter.



Mr Touhig, MP meets Holly Lewis of the School Council.



Describe what you can see.



My watch talks, says Colin.

Cannonball Kev cracks the Flying Kilometre

Fen Bagias reports on the first Blind Speed Ski World Record!



Kevin in his bright red slick skin-tight skiing costume.

THE WORLD HELD its breath on April 14th as St Dunstaner Kevin Alderton geared up for his ultimate challenge – an attempt to set the first ever Blind Speed Ski World Record and demonstrate to others that disability need not stop anyone from achieving their dreams.

After serving 12 years in the British Army with the Honourable Artillery Company and Grenadier Guards, Kevin from Dartford,

Kent, was injured in an vicious street attack and was subsequently registered blind in 1998. Kevin had been a keen skier before losing his sight and as part of his rehabilitation at St Dunstan's, he opted to join the charity's Ski Club.

“After putting my name down for the annual trip to Canazei, Italy, I couldn't wait to get back onto my skis. Once we had arrived, we were allocated a one-to-one guide, who would act as my

eyes for the week. Our guides were Military Ski Instructors and knew exactly how to get the best from us. Having not been on skis since losing my sight, this was a terrifying experience at first, but I was determined to see it through. Having been an MSI myself, I knew that I was in good hands, so I just had to trust them,” said Kevin.

“My first run was interesting to say the least. I fell over two or three times, some more spectacularly than others. I decided there and then that I wasn't going to give in. It occurred that although I couldn't really see where I was going, I could still feel what was happening beneath my skis. Armed with this theory, I was hell bent on skiing to my full potential on the next run. This I did, much to my guide's surprise and horror. He nearly fell over when he saw me short swing turning down a steep and heading for a mogul field. But I did it and it was the best feeling in the world. He then spent the rest of the week literally trying to keep up. As the trips went on and my confidence went from

strength to strength, I realised that this was something that I could still do well – given my visual impairment. But free skiing wasn't enough for me, I wanted more.”

A conversation with St Dunstaner Billy Baxter set Kevin thinking about where he could take his skiing. Billy set his own blind world land speed record on a motorbike, clocking up an average speed of 164mph. Kevin decided that he would attempt to set the world's first ever Blind Speed Skiing World Record and commenced a 12 month training programme.

‘Cannonball Kev’, as he has been nicknamed, went out to Les Arcs, France in January 2006 for a final three months of intense training with his mentor Norman Clark (a member of the British Speed Ski team), who would be relaying instructions to Kevin through an earpiece set within a specially designed helmet, in order to guide him safely down the slope. In the weeks preceding the attempt, Kevin was already reaching speeds close to 100mph.

Finally, on Good Friday morning, April 14th, after a week of heavy snow and threats of avalanches at the Les Arcs resort, there was a window of good weather, with clear blue skies and champagne snow. As further bad weather was predicted

over the remainder of the bank holiday weekend, the support team, along with the BBC's Robert Hall, knew that if the attempt didn't go ahead that day, it would be touch and go for it to happen at all.

The resort staff worked hastily to prepare the track. At lunchtime, Kevin finally hit the slope, powering his way down the Flying Kilometre and achieving a phenomenal speed of 100.94mph.

However an unexpected fall at the bottom of the slope left the onlookers – including his partner Sue Gradwell – on tenterhooks. “At the end of the run I began to drift a little,” said Kevin. “As I tried to reposition myself, I began to turn and I actually went through the gate backwards.”

Fortunately, he was unhurt apart from some bruising, and

was delighted to hear that he had broken 100mph.

“It was a dream come true and just goes to show that disability really is no barrier to achievement.”

The new Record featured on national and satellite TV, radio, and newspapers worldwide!

Kevin's ski run brings to an end, with the exception of two outstanding events, the Blind Ambition campaign, which has supported several St Dunstaners in achieving their ambitions.

Meanwhile, Jamie Weller is waiting to be the first blind person to complete a flight in a hot air balloon across London. In June, Mark Threadgold makes an attempt of the deepest sub aqua dive by a blind person.



Norman and Kevin demonstrate the radio equipment inside the bullet-shaped helmet used during the ski run.

With the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme approaching **Harry Beevers** finds mixed emotions on French fields!

Sleep soft ye dead for peace has come!



Charles Scott guides St Dunstan's Eric Sayce as he lays a wreath at the Thiepval Memorial commemorating missing First World War Service men and women.



Alan Brown feels one of the tanks represented at the Tank Memorial at Poziers, Somme.



Emrys hands Don a shell case that would have been loaded with shrapnel.

AS PREPARATIONS PROCEED for the official celebration of the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Battle of the Somme in 1916, thirty-five St Dunstaners and staff members paid a visit to the heart of the battle zone to pay their own respects to the bravery and sacrifice of the men of Lord Kitchener's "Citizen's Army".

Thanks to the excellent commentaries by Battlefield Tour guides Peter Hewlett-Smith and Emrys Jones, May 10th and May 11th are days that our party will not forget for years to come. They were days of mixed emotions, wonder, sadness, admiration and above all appreciation and pride at the dedication of

the troops of Britain and the Commonwealth.

I like the quote of one of my fellow St Dunstaners when we were discussing the terrible loss of so many lives during the five months battle. "It was not so much a dreadful wastage of life, rather a dreadful loss of

life" was the way he put it and there is a world of difference. Fortunately for Britain, the Allies and the rest of the world, one of the main reasons for fighting the Battle of the Somme was successful. Their aim was to take pressure off the French fighting their own very costly battle as they defended the strategic area around Verdun. The French held on to Verdun, its fall may well have caused the collapse of France and a German victory. But having learnt from the mistakes of the Somme the



A moment of quiet contemplation for Moirra McGrath.



Nigel Whiteley probes the last hornbeam.



The Highland Memorial marks the start of the sunken road, parallel to the Allied front and adjacent to the Beaumont Crater immediately behind the St Dunstan's pilgrims.



Terry Walker goes over the top! Allied troops gambled their lives with such moves during World War I.

stark inscription "Known unto God" indicating that the occupants could not be identified.

We visited Delville Wood, or Devil's Wood as it was known to our soldiers. It had received an unbelievable pounding from the heavy artillery and was the scene of bitter hand-to-hand fighting. Only one tree had survived the bloody carnage, an ancient hornbeam which we were able to touch and feel the scars of bullets and shrapnel. The moving words of Lieutenant F.C. Cornell, written some years later, describe the scene very much as we saw it.

*"In Delville Wood
the shattered trees are green with leaves,
And flowers bloom where cannon stood
And rich the fields with golden sheaves.
Sleep soft ye dead for God is good
And peace has come to Delville Wood".*

We visited a German cemetery where Baron Von Richthofen - the Red Baron - was originally buried and saw the graves of Jewish dead, killed in the service of their native country Germany, and buried in the traditional Jewish style with a small pile of rocks on each headstone. We were able to visit the memorial to the grandson of author Charles Dickens, a memorial set up after the war by a mourning mother grieving for her lost son.

One of the highlights for me was when we stood at what was in 1916 the front line of the British forces at 7:30 a.m. on the morning of July 1st 1916. It

was the start of the hottest day of the century up to that point and minutes earlier one of the greatest

fortunes of war began to change and following the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge in 1917, inexorably the tide turned in favour of the Allies.

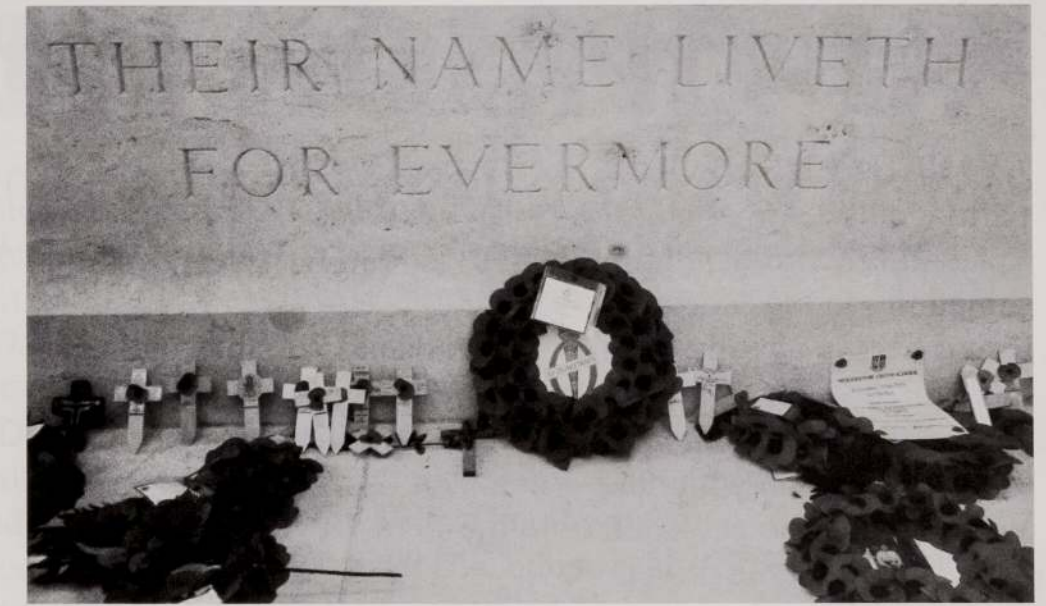
We heard stories of individual acts of great heroism, of Victoria Cross winners Sergeant Gill and the young Irishman Billy McFadzean, both of whom gave their own lives in order to save those of their comrades.

We felt a sense of the horrors of those days as we walked along row upon row of graves of British, Australian, Canadian, South African, New Zealand, and Indian fallen, many bearing the



A cast metal representation of South African troops.

artillery bombardments of all time had just ended after days of what must have been frightening, ear-shattering, thundering noise. Ten minutes earlier a terrific explosion had rent the air as British engineers detonated a huge mine under a German strong-point creating a tremendous crater still to be seen today. Then all was quiet as thousands of troops stepped forward into no-man's land and began the terrible walk towards the German lines which were protected by yards of impenetrable barbed wire. On May 11th we too began that walk towards the German fortified line from the sunken road which had been occupied by the Lancashire Fusiliers, nicknamed the "Immortals" after winning six VCs before breakfast at Gallipoli. As we made our way through some 400 yards of open country I tried to imagine the scene 90 years ago as the Germans emerged from their protected underground shelters and opened up a withering machine gun and deadly mortar fire which cut down the wave upon wave of men like sheaves of corn. I could not believe the distance from the front line to the rising ground ahead of us as I cast my mind back 90 years as to what could have been the thoughts of those many thousands for whom life was to end in a matter of seconds, minutes or hours at the



St Dunstan's tribute at the Thiepval Memorial.

most. I found the experience unimaginable.

The culmination of our visit was our own act of remembrance at the Thiepval Memorial. After laying our own personal crosses on the graves of our choice, (Joan and I placed a cross inscribed with the name of my grandfather's younger brother, a KOYLI Sergeant who died at Arras in April the following year, on the grave of a soldier from one of the Yorkshire regiments and another on that of an unknown French soldier). Peter conducted the service and we were joined by a sprinkling of other battlefield tourists as Graham Footer read words from St John's Gospel, St Dunstan Terry Walker read the exhortation and Ron Jones spoke the final words. St Dunstan Eric Sayce, escorted by St Dunstan's Director of Resources Charles Scott, laid a wreath and our standard was dipped by Nigel

Whitely. It was an extremely moving occasion and there were few dry eyes amongst the assembled company. In fact there were some unashamed tears.

We returned to England after two tiring but unforgettable days. We had been lucky with the weather, warm and sunny throughout. Old friendships had been cemented and new ones made. Staff and St Dunstaners mingled together and people who had been merely names or voices at the end of a telephone became real flesh and blood. One thing is certain, we all now know some of the realities of the Battle of the Somme, its horrors, its appalling loss of life, its devastating effects on those who managed to survive and are more able to appreciate the unstinting sacrifice and courage of those who laid down their lives for future generations.

Return to the Ypres front

AT MICHAEL'S REQUEST I arranged a return visit to Ypres in order to give him something to look forward to and having already been there three years ago, he was really looking forward to it. I booked up with 'The War Research Society' and requested the same driver/guide, as Michael was so pleased with his last visit. Also, because I needed assistance with Michael, I asked Christine Carlton, one of St Dunstan's Nursing Assistants to accompany us on the tour which was over four days, staying at The Ariane Hotel in Ypres.

Michael would like to say what a great time he had because the whole four days were dedicated to his areas of interest and that he could touch as many things as possible related to this. His guide, Gordon Hall (an expert on The Great War) arranged

Terry Gleadell joins St Dunstaner Michael Ryan on a battlefield tour!

as much as possible, including a special visit to a local resident who allowed Michael to handle many artefacts from the 1914-18 war.

We again attended the Menin Gate ceremony at 8pm and Michael was introduced to Jacque and Michael, two of the main organisers of the Last Post ceremony.

We returned to Ovingdean on Friday evening, with Michael having well and truly exercised by the number of times he had been in and out of the vehicle over the four days. He was really grateful for every effort made by Gordon, to visit as many places as possible. Michael was greeted and treated with so much enthusiasm and genuine affection by all the



Michael and Christine examine a large shell!

staff at the Ariane Hotel in Ypres, as again can be seen in the photograph of Michael with the four beauties!

And finally a very special 'thank you' to Christine, from Michael and Terry for her total dedication to make sure he got the most out of his trip.

Japan is top hole for golfing Dave

ST DUNSTANER DAVID MORRIS won the International Blind Golf Association's World Championship for the third time in April. The 2006 Blind Golf World Championship was held at the 500 Club in Shizuoka, Japan.

David from Newquay, Cornwall beat nine other competitors in the Mens B1 category with a score of 217. He came third overall

net with Australian Peter Robinson coming first in that category. David has since been promoting blind golf in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

St Dunstaner Mike Mayo from Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire claimed third place in a field of 14 players who competed in the Mens B3 category.

St Dunstaner Des Chandler of Lewes, East Sussex also competed in the B1 championship.

REUNION ROUND-UP

THE EAST ANGLIA Reunion on April 13th at the Holiday Inn Cambridge in Impington brought together 28 St Dunstaners and 11 widows. David Knowles, CBE was the Member of Council presiding, while Cambridge St Dunstaner Eric Barwell responded on behalf of those present. David Knowles also had a chocolaty Easter Egg for Doreen Grimwood, wife of Douglas, who was celebrating her birthday.

David also presided at the first of this year's Eastbourne Reunions, held on a sunny April 19th at the Hydro Hotel, Eastbourne. Thirty-two St Dunstaners, including 109-year-old Henry Allingham, met up with eight widows. RAF St Dunstaner Wallace Burnet-Smith responded to David Knowles. Guests included Kathy Watts from the Veterans Agency.

St Dunstan's Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided at the London Reunion on April 26th. There were 30 St Dunstaners and three widows united at the RAF Club in Piccadilly. St Dunstaner Ted Arnold responded on behalf of those present.

There were 42 St Dunstaners and seven widows attending the Newcastle Reunion on May 2nd. It was held at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne with Major General David Joliffe, CB, FRCP as the presiding Member of Council. St Dunstaner Steve Nixon gave a vote of thanks on behalf of those gathered.

The Leeds Reunion was held on Wed May 3rd at the Holiday Inn Bramhope, Leeds. A beautiful sunny day was an unexpected bonus for the 21 St Dunstaners and four widows attending. They included St Dunstaner George Cowley who became 100 years young in November. RNIB

Chairman Colin Lowe, CBE was the presiding Member of Council. St Dunstaner Harry Beevers gave the response.

There were 31 St Dunstaners and nine widows gathered at Burley Manor Hotel, Burley, Hampshire for the Burley Reunion on May 10th. Timothy Bacon was the presiding Member of Council while St Dunstaner Roy Edgar responded.

There were 54 St Dunstaners and eight widows gathered at The Imperial Hotel, Blackpool on May 16th. St Dunstaner David Stuttard was the Member of Council presiding, while Maria Pikulski replied on behalf of those attending.

David also presided at the Liverpool Reunion, held at the Liverpool Marriott Hotel, City Centre on May 17th. There were 50 St Dunstaners and seven widows attending and Ted John made the response.

Tulip salad was spring surprise

ST DUNSTANER MARTIN Shail had a sharp surprise when eating a spring salad recently. Some onions he had mixed in had an absolutely appalling taste. Martin quickly realised what had gone wrong. Earlier, while shopping, he had picked up some daffodil and tulip bulbs with his groceries. Once home, the bulbs had gone in the fridge and then on to the dinner plate. It's an accident that his colleagues at St Dunstan's Ovingdean seem unwilling to let him forget. A few days later, Martin's desk acquired a flower vase complete with a bouquet of spring onions!

Great run on St George's Day!

ST DUNSTANERS IAIN Millard and Don Planner were amongst 11 runners who braved the drizzly streets of London on St George's Day. They ran past knights, dragons, wombles, rhinos and a dalek during the 26th London Marathon on April 23rd. All our runners completed the 26.2 mile course which starts in Greenwich Park.

Iain Millard was guided by St Dunstan's Sports & Recreation Supervisor Louise Timms. They completed the course in 5 hours 22 minutes and 22 seconds. Marathon

veteran Don Planner, running with Stuart Gray, crossed the line in 6 hours 55 minutes and 33 seconds.

Also running was Neil Cameron, son of Royal Air Force St Dunstaner John Cameron. He finished the Marathon in 4 hours, 3 minutes and 49 seconds. As a result, he is set to raise £4,000 for St Dunstan's.

Steve Lloyd-Brennan of RAF Uxbridge, who previously ran blindfold, opted to don a football ref's kit. He and Victoria Bannister completed their run in 6 hours, 15

minutes and 50 seconds. Meanwhile, Sport & Rec's Andy Alliston finished his run in 4 hours, 33 minutes and 35 seconds.



Photograph: Tim Pickles

BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Williamson



with a liking for Crunchie bars! A nice, easy beer to drink, served slightly chilled. The name is an Anglicised contraction of Pelican forte and the brewery still uses a yellow Pelican as its emblem for all its beers.

Poppy Blonde

Poppy Blonde is a lovely refreshing golden French beer with a delightful perfumy nose with a wonderful hop aroma. It has a notably pineapple flavour. The label depicts British Tommies and a poppy motif, a tribute to those who took part in the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Pelforth Brune

Pelforth Brune is a dark, thick pouring French beer weighing in at 6.5 abv. It has hints of caramel and chocolate and is decidedly sweet on the palate with strong malt undertones. This will appeal to anyone

Amy wins Craft prize

St Dunstaner Amy Gordon enjoyed a triple win at the Wiltshire Blind Association's Craft of the County exhibition on April 5th. She won first prize for a circular mosaic on a wooden base and the cup for best entry in that section. She also won first prize for a woven waste paper basket and second prize for a fruit basket. Humble Amy from Warminster, who served in the Territorial Army Nursing Service, put her success down to training received at the Ovingdean Craft Workshop.

Henry is given Freedom of Eastbourne

And he also received one of those three magic ingredients

by Simon Rogers

EASTBOURNE BESTOWED the Freedom of the Borough on its oldest resident on April 21st. St Dunstaner Henry Allingham, who will celebrate his 110th birthday on June 6th, was duly honoured at a special ceremony in the Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall.

The honour was proposed by Leader of the Council Ian Lucas and seconded by David Tutt, Leader of the Opposition. They both spoke of different aspects of Henry's life, as a serviceman during the Battle of Jutland and of the changes that have occurred since 1896. It was then that the Mayor of Eastbourne,



Councillor Graham Marsden presented Henry with a scroll proclaiming his freedom of Eastbourne. Henry graciously expressed his pride in this privilege to those present. Henry has previously put

his longevity down to "wild women, whisky, and cigarettes" and repeated that claim again. Cllr Marsden was happy to oblige with one of those ingredients - a bottle of single malt whisky!

SYNCOATING SELECTIONS

This month's selection is from St Dunstaner Moira McGrath who served in the Ulster Defence Regiment

My first choice is *Somewhere over the Rainbow* by Eva Cassidy. This is because *The Wizard of Oz* was the first movie I saw with my granddad as a child. I suppose Judy Garland's version should be in there, but each time I hear Eva Cassidy sing it I am transported back in time.

Next would be *Hotel California* by the Eagles. It reminds me of care free school days.

Third is *Bat Out of Hell* by theatrical rocker Meat Loaf. This duet reminds me of cold wet nights spent out on Border Patrol.

My fourth choice is *Fields of Bally*, again a song by the late Eva Cassidy. This makes me think of all my mates that I lost in 30 years of conflict.

Finally, Roberta Flack's haunting rendition of Ewan McColl's *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*. It reminds me how I felt the very first time I held my baby daughter in my arms.

Everything but the sink!

Ray Hazan examines the Portset Digital Media Centre which offers users accessible all-in-one listening for £850!

IN THE MARCH issue of the **Review**, I described the DVB TV memory stick, which enabled your personal computer to receive digital radio and television sound and pictures. It was a cheap solution (£45) if you already owned a personal computer. Here, I shall describe the Portset Digital Media Centre (DMC), at the other end of the market, which might be called a Rolls-Royce of receivers!

It has been specifically designed by Portset Systems of Southampton for the visually impaired, which means small numbers of units manufactured and consequent higher cost. It is a Freeview television and radio receiver (with audio description if carried by the programme), can receive talking teletext, and incorporates a CD player for both audio and Daisy formats. The unit can record up to ten hours of playing time. A most useful feature is the ability to receive and read out the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG), giving the user access to seven days' worth of listings, with programme start and finish times, duration and synopsis.

The 'all-in-one' unit measures some 16 inches wide, by 10 deep and 4 high. On a sloping front panel are 31 different keys in three blocks, with some keys in differing shapes. Also on the front

panel is an on/off switch, 3.5mm ear-phone socket, volume control, small stereo speakers at either end, a CD slot, and infra red socket ready for a future upgrade incorporating the use of a remote. On the back panel is a TV aerial socket and phono sockets for connecting to a hi-fi system. The unit comes with a manual on CD.

You must have a reasonably good digital signal reception. My unit shares the TV roof aerial. When first switched on, the unit will self tune, telling you what is happening all the while in a digital female voice. It will load and name some 30 TV and 20 radio channels. This tuning is then saved to memory and will only take place again if selected on the system menu. Also, the first time you switch on, the keys go into 'describe' mode so that you can learn your way around without causing the system

to function. This 'learning mode' is also available again through the system menu.

Each time you press a key, the system voice (that same female digital voice) will either say what it is doing, eg "selecting television BBC1" or give you various options. You can select TV or radio channels either by preset - by keying in a channel number - or by moving up and down the list of stations and selecting the 'go' key.

A programme can be recorded by either selecting it in the EPG and pressing 'record', or by simply keying in the date, channel, start time, etc. The unit must be left in stand-by if the record mode has been selected.

There are several other refinements, such as being able to balance the volume level of the audio description and sound track, plus speed and volume of the female system voice. A system menu gives access to several other features. A nice touch are the 'info' and 'next' (the star and hash on a telephone keypad). The info key reads out the EPG description

for the current radio or TV programme being listened to and the next key describes, predictably, what is on next, its start and finish time, and a synopsis.

The unit is under constant development and is upgraded by simply inserting a CD sent out by Portset. For instance

the EPG was still on GMT, an hour behind current British Summer Time, and a bug fix was provided. Since starting to write this article, the DMC can now read DVD's and a remote is an optional extra. Both these facilities are available at extra cost (£90 and £39 respectively). My one criticism is the

time it takes to announce and change channels. Other users will no doubt have their own comments! But, overall, it gives the visually handicapped person free and independent access to the media and programme guide. What may be less accessible is the £850 needed to purchase such a device!

This round goes to England

OUR TOURNAMENT started on a sad note. With the loss of our dear friends Rita Pryor and Doreen Humphrey on the same day. They were two of our greatest supporters, always ready to help with our tournaments.

Twenty-two members met to make this a very happy and friendly occasion. We have been approached by several St Dunstaners to play in the games but it must be realised that it takes two weeks to play them as we only have one green. However, all newcomers will be made welcome. For making the tournament a success, we have to thank Jack and Roger from the Saltdean bowling club for their help in calling the matches. Also what would we do with out Frank Smith and all the other bowlers who stepped in to help when necessary. Of course, I make no apologies in thanking the ladies who kept us going with tea, coffee and cakes. We must also thank the staff at Ovingdean and PBK for their help during the two weeks.

by Bob Osborne

We certainly missed Phil Dobson and Dave Humphrey who have been very ill and we wish them both a speedy recovery.

With regard to International - the Welsh lost! This was because there was only Colwyn Lloyd and myself as Mansell Lewis was unable to play. We had to have a sub and it was an Englishman with welsh connections. Alan Gibson fitted the bill as his better half is Welsh. We nearly had Graham Johnson as his wife has a Welsh Collie.

I personally would like to thank the bowlers and ladies for presenting Joan with a gift to buy plants for the garden.

Our next tournament will run from Thursday October 26th to Thursday November 9th when we hope to meet again.

RESULTS

PS Singles

For the Jess Mills Trophy
1st Graham Johnson
2nd Ted Arnold
3rd Alan Gibson

TB singles

For the Jackie Pryor Trophy
1st Peggy West
2nd Bob Osborne

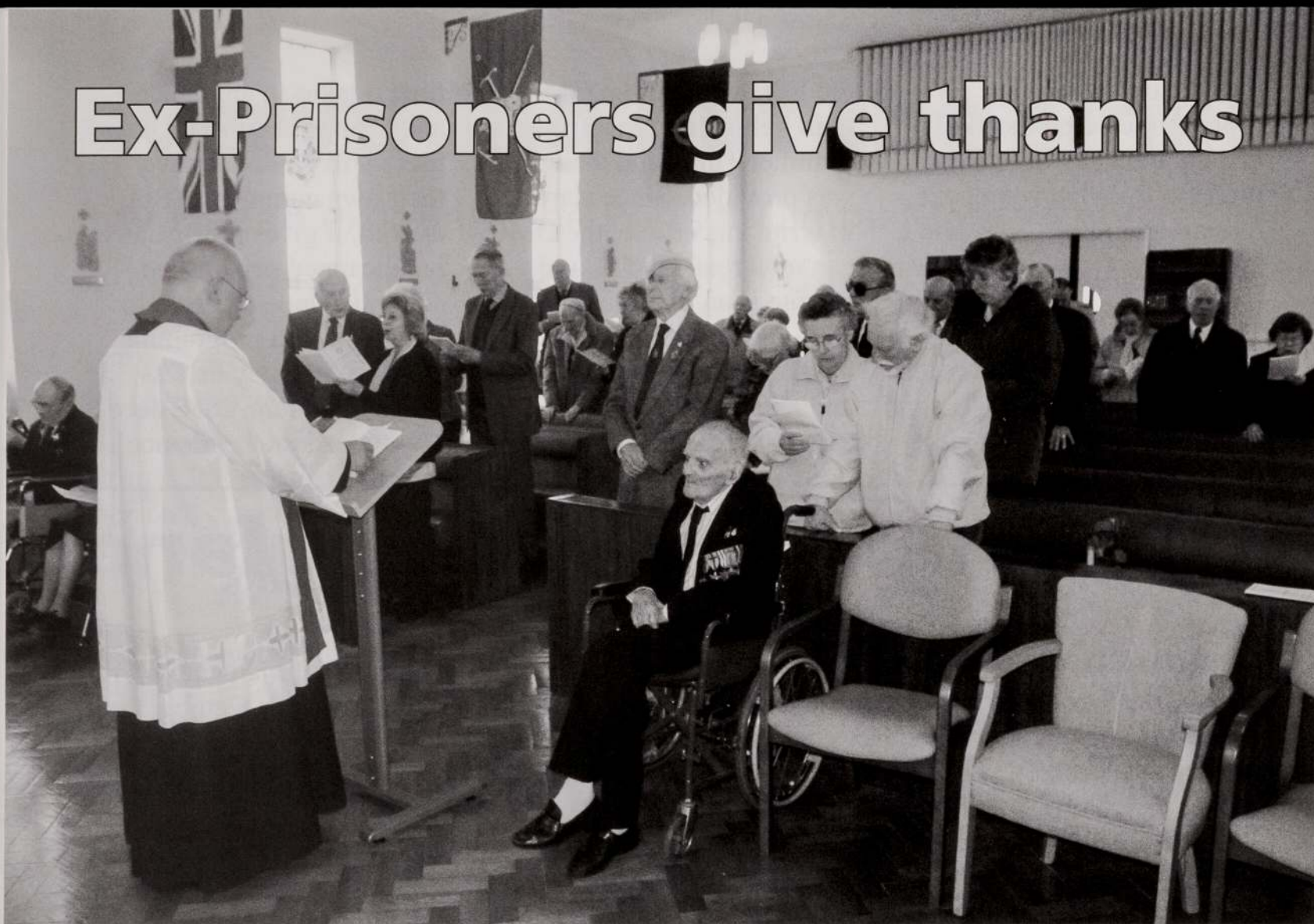
Pairs

1st John Powell
and Boyd McKinley
2nd Alan Gibson
and James Poole

Triples

1st Marjorie Scott,
Norman Perry
and Syd Wisdom
2nd Cliff Ford,
John Sullivan
and Alan Gibson

Ex-Prisoners give thanks



Rev Morgan leads St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War in a Sunday Service in the Chapel.



Sir John Gingell reading from Corinthians.

Alf Lockhart reports on April's annual meeting of St Dunstan's Ex-POWs!

ON FRIDAY APRIL 7th, St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War met at Ovingdean for the start of their Annual Reunion. We had an informal get-together in the Bar and partook of a magnificent buffet, which was provided by PBK. Sadly, due to advancing age, our numbers are ever-decreasing, but we can still turn out sufficient numbers to have a good party over the Reunion weekend. On Saturday April 8th, we held our AGM in the Ballroom. Sir John Gingell was presiding with Bill Griffiths as Chairman, Tom Hart as Hon Secretary and Alf Lockhart as Treasurer.

During the meeting, Alice Griffiths read a letter from some interested parties concerning the Thai-Burma Railway. Apparently they want the Railway (I think most of it is in ruins now) to be classified as a World

Heritage Site. My own view is "let it rot away". After all, with all malaria, dysentery and cholera that is there, not to mention large tropical ulcers, it is not a Health Resort! Although we should remember these things, we should not brood over them. Although those present had no objection the site being made a memorial, they were wary of any scheme that might make it a tourist attraction and elected not to pursue the matter further.

We discussed the date of the next Reunion, which has since been set for April 13th-16th next year. The meeting adjourned with the Committee re-elected en bloc.

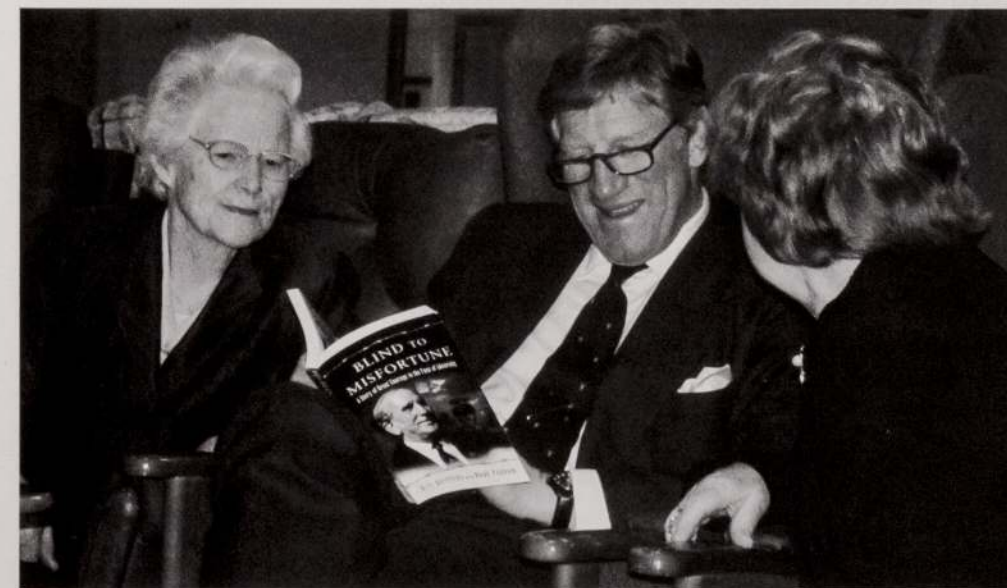
The Guest Speaker at our Reunion dinner was Major General Denaro who was accompanied by Mrs Denaro. Other guests included several senior members of staff from Headquarters. The dinner was roast duck with the



Tom Hart uses on-hand sign-language to converse with deafblind FEPOW St Dunstaner Ron Ellis.

appropriate vegetables and special sauce to go with it, all of which was served up by PBK with their usual good taste and sense of occasion.

Everybody seemed to enjoy the dinner, in fact the mood was quite convivial. We had a really good time.



Major General Denaro gets stuck into a good book.

On Sunday, the Service was held in St Dunstan's Chapel. Father Otterwell retired last year, so the Vicar of Rottingdean, Father Martin Morgan has taken on the additional duties of Chaplain to St Dunstan's. He very kindly came to Ovingdean to conduct the Service in St Dunstan's Chapel after he had finished at St Margaret's in Rottingdean. We thank him for giving us his time. He must be an extremely busy man on Sundays. In the evening, we were entertained by the Tim Nail Trio. They were quite good. The young lady singer has a lovely voice, and they played and sang the type that I like. I was quite happy with their performance and would like to hear more from them.

Right time for stopping?

IN ORDER TO get the flowers on time for shows we have to stop the plants - that is take out the growing tip either once or twice depending on the cultivar. This will then give us some good flowers for the right time.

Each cultivar has its own particular stopping date which can vary depending on the type and even from one garden to another. Growers in the south can stop later than those in the North due to the difference in the light.

There are several classes of plants: Jap 1 and 2 are the large football-sized flowers, then come the decorative, tea plate-sized blooms; incurves, where the petals curve upwards and inwards, are the size of large oranges; reflexes have petals that droop down from the center, while fantasies or spiders are so-called because they have a large centre with "tentacles" poking out; large and normal singles and anemones look similar to a daisy. All have their own stopping dates unique for your particular garden.

Japs, for example, are normally stopped twice, once in March and once again in June. This is supposed to give a better "form" that is more pleasing to the eye than if

Peter Moore on Chrysanthemums!

they were stopped only once. Having said that some Japs are only stopped once around mid-May.

The stopping is vital, as we have said before to get the blooms right on time for the shows. But how do we get there and what do we do.

Well having moved the cultivars into five inch pots, some would have been ready to stop mid-March. It is better to have at least ten leaves showing before stopping the plants for the first time. If you only have say six leaves showing but need to stop a plant, curl back the leaves from the growing tip, then pinch out the tip that is growing. This stops the plant in order to make new shoots from where the leaves join the stem of the plant or the leaf axils as it is known.

The second stop is the most crucial; this is the point where you need to stop the plant to be ready for showing. The best way of doing this is to keep a diary of the stopping dates and the following year you can alter the dates of both stops to suit the shows you need or want to enter. Most shows are normally held around the

same date each year.

If you only want plants to put into the house as cut flowers then you only need to stop them once, normally around mid-May, you will still get good blooms but you will not have the headache of working out critical stopping dates for the show calendar.

Some plants will produce a "natural" break and will not need to be stopped unless it is out of line with the dates you want, you will need to check on the plants to see what is happening with them. If your natural break comes early enough you can correct the dates with the second stop, otherwise you can run it on and take your chances.

Ten answers...

Answers for page 13.

- 1) Sir Arthur Pearson;
- 2) His right eye;
- 3) John Milton;
- 4) A soldier, not Delilah;
- 5) 1809-1852;
- 6) Peeping Tom;
- 7) Stevie Wonder;
- 8) David Blunkett;
- 9) Lucy, Sadie, Ruby, Teddy and Offa; and
- 10) Troy.

Welcome to ST DUNSTAN'S

Edwin Ashworth of Birkdale, Southport, Sefton served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

John Bruce of Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear served in the Royal Signals from 1946 to 1949.

Albert Chattin, MBE of Droitwich Spa, Worcester served in the Royal Corps of Signals from 1940 to 1942.

Gerald Cooper of Knottingley, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1967.

Frederick Cram of Downham Market, Norfolk served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Charles Docker of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1956.

Brian Dunn of Bromley, Kent served in the Royal Fusiliers and Pioneer Corps between 1940 and 1946.

Verna Elliott of Morecambe, Lancashire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1946 to 1947.

Henry Evington of Saltburn-by-Sea, Cleveland, North Yorkshire served in

the Royal Navy from 1938 to 1956.

Peter Fairmaner of Storrington, West Sussex served in Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1947.

Anne Franklin of Calcot, Reading served in the Women's Royal Naval Service, working with the Royal Marines from 1946 to 1947.

Charles Gautrey of Wonersh, Guildford, Surrey served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Norman Hodgson of Ulverston, Cumbria served in the Royal Signals from 1954 to 1958.

Donald Hollis of Chingford, London served in the Royal Anglian Regiment from 1968 to 1971.

Harold Jackson of Gravesend, Kent served in the Royal Air Force in 1941 and then the Durham Light Infantry and Green Howards between 1941 and 1946.

David Jones of Barmouth, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1966 to 1971.

Eric Lewis of Kenilworth, Warwickshire served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1946.

Frances Ling of Shotley, Ipswich, Suffolk served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1950 to 1953.

Peter Maher of Clitheroe, Lancashire served in the Lancashire Fusiliers and Royal Artillery between 1939 and 1948.

Joseph Murray of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Harold Pearce of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and Army Catering Corps between 1939 and 1946.

Joan Price of Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve from 1944 to 1946.

Joyce Roberts of Sherborne, Dorset served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service from 1945 to 1947.

Reginald Rowe of Goring on Thames, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Ronald Smith of East Putney, London served in the Northamptonshire Regiment from 1944 to 1947.

William Smith of Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent served in the Royal Signals from 1943 to 1965.

Edward Standeven of Dersingham, King's Lynn, Norfolk served in the Middlesex Regiment from 1940 to 1946.

Edmund Storey of Carrville, Durham served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Stanley Taylor of Primrose Hill, London served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1942 to 1947.

Richard Vickers of Pulborough, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

Stanley Watson of Laver de la Haye, Colchester, Essex served in the Rifle Brigade, Middlesex Regiment and Pioneer Corps between 1942 and 1947.

Peter Welch of North Warnborough, Hook, Hampshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1946 to 1947.

Kenneth Whiteside of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1946 to 1949.

Ernest Willett of Olton, Solihull, West Midlands served in the Royal Artillery and Royal Army Service Corps during 1939.

Morris Wooding of Cemaes Bay, Anglesey served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1930 to 1945.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of: Elizabeth Grace Crossley on February 25th. She is the sixth great-grandchild of *Kenneth and Anne Goulding* of New Moston, Manchester.

Ronnie Littlefair on March 16th. She is the granddaughter of *Cyril and Peggy Vickers* of Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: *Donald and Sylvia Bagley* of Wolverhampton, West Midlands on May 21st.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: *Silas and Agnes Morum* of Cobham, Surrey who celebrated 63 years of marriage on April 28th.

Ronald and Rita Hitchcock of Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on May 2nd.

Robert and Marjorie Coupland of Hessle, North Humberside who celebrated 62 years of marriage on May 13th.

William and Rose Lockert of Brighton, East Sussex who celebrated 61 years of marriage on May 15th.

George and Margery Allan of Grundisburgh, Suffolk who celebrated 64 years of marriage on May 16th.

Dick and Bett Hall of Hassocks, West Sussex celebrated 64 years of marriage on May 16th.

Frederick and Marjorie Healy of Tunbridge Wells, Kent who celebrated 64 years of marriage on May 16th.

John and Marjorie Janes of Brighton, East Sussex who celebrated 62 years of marriage on May 20th.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of: **Kay Pacitti** on April 11th. She was the wife of *Ralph Pacitti* of Weymouth, Dorset.

John Pendle on April 20th. He was the husband of St Dunstaner *Joan Pendle* of Horndean, Hampshire.

Rose Shepherd of Bromford, Birmingham, West Midlands. She was the widow of St Dunstaner *John Shepherd*.

Elsie Nolan of Crewe, Cheshire on April 17th. She was the widow of *John Nolan*.

Eva Williamson of Colchester, Essex on April 20th. She was the widow of St Dunstaner *Bertie Williamson*.

Kathleen Pezzack of Rhiwbina, Cardiff, South Glamorgan on April 28th. She was the widow of *Leslie Pezzack*.

Rita McCulley on April 23rd. She was the daughter of Marie Nichols of Camberley, Surrey and the late *Cyril Nichols*.

Freda Empson of Chester, Cheshire on May 4th. She was the widow of *James Empson*.

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 Duffy 18 Anti Tank Battalion

Thomas Nicholas Duffy of Bunbury, Western Australia died on January 28th, aged 83. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1986. He was a courier before joining Australia's 18 Anti Tank Battalion in 1940. Posted to the Far East, he was captured by Japanese Forces and forced to labour on the Burma Railway. The malnutrition he experienced would later cause his loss of sight. He was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Alfred Greenaway Royal Artillery

Alfred James Greenaway of Totteridge, London died on March 3rd, aged 92. He worked in marine insurance before joining the Royal Signals in 1940. Serving in the UK and India, he transferred to the Royal Artillery in 1942. Discharged as Major in 1946, he returned to the insurance industry. His interests included amateur dramatics. Our sympathy goes to his widow Greta and all members of the family.

Gilbert Waite Queen's Royal Lancers

Gilbert Waite of Accrington, Lancashire died on April 10th, aged 89. As a 14-year-old, he became a plumber's assistant, working building sites in Oldham. He joined the Cavalry of the Line in 1934 and in turn was posted to the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers. Completing a four-year tour of duty in India, he remained with the Lancers when they became part of the Royal Armoured Corps in 1939. Discharged in 1942 after an accident, he became an engine fitter with BAC working on Lancaster Bombers. After the war ended, he continued as an engineer and welder. Our sympathy goes to his son John and all other members of the family.

Dr Heymann Koefman 8th US Air Force

"Doc" Heymann Koefman of Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset died on April 13th, aged 91. Born in Salisbury, Rhodesia, he embarked on a medical career, studying at King's College and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He was teaching anatomy in a Dublin hospital when America entered the war. Initially, he joined the Medical Corps at the US 2nd General Hospital in Belfast, but was then posted to the 8th US Air Force at Alconbury, East Anglia. The base stationed B17s, and he was wounded in the hip during a flight over Dresden. He was discharged as Captain in 1946. In civilian life, he worked in private and corporate medical practices. His interests included playing the violin, rugby and boxing. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jean and all members of the family.

Paul Child Royal Air Force

Paul Roy Child of Bessacar, Doncaster died on April 14th, aged 73. He joined the Royal Air Force as a technician in 1948. He served at RAF Cottesmore before being posted to Malaya, spending 11 years in the Far East. Back in the UK, he served in Air Sea Rescue

and later researched the use of computers for aircraft services. Discharged in 1960, he became a training officer for International Harvesters and later trained young people in computer skills. Our sympathy goes to his widow Babs, daughters Gail and Lesley and all members of the family.

Donald Harvey

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Donald Arthur Sydney Harvey of Maidstone, Kent died on April 18th, aged 87. He had been training as a dentist at Guy's Hospital when he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1941. He joined 2nd Tactical Air Force in Berkshire and Sussex. During the Normandy landings, he ran a mobile dental vehicle that followed the advancing forces through to Germany. Discharged in 1946, he ran a dental practice in Kent. Our sympathy goes to his sons Peter and David, daughters Linda, Dianne and Julia and all other members of the family.

"Tom" Parr

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Gordon Thomas Parr of Mark, Highbridge, Somerset died on April 21st, aged 67. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1975. He was a motor mechanic before joining the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1960. The following year, he was injured in South Wales as a passenger in a Land Rover that went over a cliff. He lost his left eye and suffered injury to the right. After discharge, he joined his brother in a metal reclamation business and later ventured into a self-drive car hire business. Our sympathy goes to his widow Ann, son Stephen, daughters Jayne and Lucy and all members of the family.

Lionel Dockerill

Royal Navy

Lionel Dockerill of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on April 22nd, aged 79. Originally a farm worker, he joined the Royal Navy in 1943.

He served on a destroyer deployed to Malta and later on a minesweeper operating in the Mediterranean and South Africa. He was discharged in 1947 as Stoker 1st class. In civilian life, he worked as a driver, chicken breeder, airfield sentry and engineer. Our sympathy goes to his widow and all other members of the family.

Ivor Jones

Royal Air Force

Ivor Arthur Jones of Tuffley, Gloucester died on April 22nd, aged 83. He joined the Royal Air Force as an apprentice in 1939. Training at RAF Cranwell and RAF Halton, he was later posted to North Africa and on to Burma in 1942. His unit was able to withdraw to India during the Japanese occupation. They subsequently returned to Burma before the end of the war. He was later posted to Germany and was involved in the Berlin Air Lift before being discharged in 1948. In civilian life, he worked on automatic pilots for an aviation electronics firm and later joined the Gloucester Aircraft Company working on Meteors and Javelins. He then worked in power stations and on railway electrification. Our sympathy goes to his widow Edna and all members of the family.

Edward Sherlock

Fleet Air Arm

Edward Jutland Watts Sherlock of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on April 25th, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy as a 15-year-old in 1932 and was stationed at Portsmouth before joining the Mediterranean Fleet for two-and-a-half years on HMS *Repulse*. In 1939 he volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm, serving as an Air Gunner. He later served in the Middle East with the 852 Squadron. Post War, he continued to serve as air crew, flying the world in Doves. After his discharge in 1961, he became a pub manager in Little Hampton and later a porter at King's Lynn Hospital. Our sympathy goes to his widow Marion and all members of the family.

Ronald Cooper

Royal Army Service Corps

Ronald Cooper of Worthing, West Sussex died on April 28th, aged 88. Originally employed as an information clerk by an Italian bank in London, he joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1940. After training at Aldershot, he served in France and Germany. Discharged as Staff Sergeant Major in 1946, he joined Kleinwort Benson and the London branch of a Parisian bank. Our sympathy goes to his niece Lesley and all of the family.

Leo Brittain

Royal Air Force

Leo Brittain of Ormesby, Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on April 30th, aged 84. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and served in Belgium, Germany and Poland. He was discharged as Leading Aircraftman in 1946. In civilian life he worked in insurance and administration for engineering firms. He enjoyed opera and other classical music. Our sympathy goes to his widow Betty, daughter Lynne and all other members of the family.

James O'Grady

Royal Engineers

James Patrick O'Grady of Shirley, Solihull, Warwickshire died on May 1st, aged 74. He was an apprentice French Polisher before joining the Royal Engineers in 1949. He served in Germany, Italy and Belgium, working on bomb clearance. Discharged as Corporal in 1971, he worked as an engineer. He was a Scout Commissioner and a cycling instructor for RoSPA. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joyce and all of the family.

Leonard Radwell

Welsh Guards

Leonard Harden Radwell of Ovingdean, Brighton died on May 4th, aged 84. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1991. He was an Apprentice Printer at *The Times* when he joined the Welsh Guards in 1942. Landing in Normandy on D-Day, his battalion pushed

through Europe, advancing an unprecedented 100 miles in a day at one point. As they closed on the Rhine, he suffered gunshot wounds to the face, losing his left eye. After a period of convalescence at St Dunstan's ward in Stoke Mandeville, he returned to *The Times*, moving from printing to publishing administration. His interests included golf and the theatre. Our sympathy goes to his son John and all of the family.

Arthur McGuire

Royal Engineers

Arthur Norman McGuire of Etal Park, Newcastle upon Tyne died on May 16th, aged 70. He had been a St Dunstaner since 2000. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1953, serving with 8 Railway Squadron at Longmoor Camp. Deployed to the Suez Canal in 1956, He operated a signal box in support of operations at Port Said. Discharged in 1957, he became a true-to-scale printer of plans and design drawings. He also worked as a photographer and draughtsman. His interests included amateur radio and chess. Our sympathy goes to all of the family.

Leslie Thompson, DCM

Royal Artillery

Leslie Thompson of Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Canary Islands died on May 16th, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1942. He worked in the building trade before joining the Royal Artillery in 1939. He was posted to 4th (Durham) Survey Regiment and was awarded the DCM while serving as Sergeant in the Middle East. He was blinded in 1942 when a truck he was driving struck a landmine. Coming to St Dunstan's in Church Stretton, he took a special interest in joinery and rug making. In 1950, he opened a grocery store and soon after incorporated an off license. He occasionally spoke to groups on the work of St Dunstan's before retiring to Tenerife in 1981. Our sympathy goes to his widow Doreen, sons William, Robert and Philip, daughter Helen and all the family.

Handless Group stage high spirited reunion at Ovingdean



A chuckling Gwen Obern ensures that PBK's Paul James has the right guest list.



Handless St Dunstaner Bill Griffiths with Ovingdean Manager Dick Lake.

ST DUNSTAN'S BLIND AND HANDLESS Group staged a spirited reunion in May, starting with their traditional scampi dinner and ending with a rousing sing-along! Gwen Obern of Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan, who became a St Dunstaner in 1943 after a munitions accident, told guests at the Handless Group's reunion dinner that she had been away from St Dunstan's for far too long. She added that the group missed Wally Lethbridge who was unable to join them that evening, though they had visited him earlier.

She and Bill Griffiths, who lost his sight and hands in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp, reminisced with friends such as St Dunstaners Alf Lockhart and Tom Hart about different activities that had characterised the Handless Reunions - or

indeed the characters that had defined those activities, such as David Bell, Elizabeth Dacre (attending a dance in her night dress), and Arthur Cavanagh, Tom Gaygan,

and many others. Tom Hart prompted a rosey laugh of embarrassment when he recalled an occasion when Gwen suffered sunburn in South Africa.

Alf Lockhart replied on behalf of the guests, adding that it is always good company that makes an event such as this worthwhile!



Bill Griffiths and Gwen Obern with their friends and guests.