

St Dunstan's Review



Photo: Martin Cleaver/PA/EMPICS



St Dunstan's
An independent future for blind
ex-Service men and women

May 2007

www.st-dunstans.org.uk



FALKLANDS 25

From **the Chairman** St Dunstan's Calendar



For the best part of nine months, Ovingdean, Sheffield and Harcourt Street have been submitted to the noise of drilling, hammering, dust, scaffolding and disruption. By the time you read this, it should all be over! Apart from a new coat of paint and clean brick-work, the buildings will look unchanged from without. But internally, it is a fresh beginning and will see us well into the future. I also congratulate all in Harcourt Street for their cooperative attitude towards the contractors which was a strong factor in the dates being achieved on time and budget. Well done and thank you to all for your patience.

Michael Gordon-Lennox

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

May 2007 No 968

Cover Story: An Argentinean bomb explodes on board the Royal Navy frigate HMS Antelope on 23 May, 1982, killing the bomb disposal engineer who was trying to defuse it. Turn to p31.

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MAY

5th Writers Forum
6th-12th Gardening Week
7th Outdoor Bowling
8th VE Day
9th-15th Handless Reunion
12th-13th Golf
19th Feast of St Dunstan
19th Sailability
25th-3rd June Archery

JUNE

1st-4th 50 Year Badge Holders
2nd Writers Forum
2nd Sailability
7th Outdoor Bowling
11th Outdoor Bowling
14th-17th Falklands 25
16th-17th Golf
17th-23rd History Week
17th London to Brighton Bike Ride
20th Bisley Clay Pigeon Shoot
22nd Outdoor Bowling
27th Veterans Day
30th Wildwoods Golf

Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

ARE YOU SATISFIED?

BIENNIAL SATISFACTION SURVEY:

Once again, St Dunstan's has commissioned an independent survey to monitor our services and to seek views and comments from St Dunstaners and widows. Clariant Research will carry out the survey by telephone, asking a series of questions with each interviewee, which should last from 15-20 minutes.

Those who might be contacted will have received a letter notifying them to that effect. Clariant researchers will select interviewees at random. All information gathered will be confidential to St Dunstan's and no comments will be attributable to individuals.

Your co-operation is appreciated. Results will be published in the autumn.

JOIN US FOR A GREAT RUN

START TRAINING FOR PORTSMOUTH: Would anyone like to do the Great South Run in Portsmouth? It is a 10-mile run through the historic port town and will be held on the morning of 28 October. If anyone is interested please contact Mandi Fermer or Mark Brownlow at St Dunstan's Ovingdean in the Sports & Recreation department by 20 May at the latest.

SIGN UP FOR ACTIVITY WEEK

ADRENALIN FUELLED ACTION: The St Dunstan's Activity Week runs from Monday 3 September to Friday 7 September 2007. As in previous years it promises to be a week of adrenalin fuelled action on land and water. A week to remember for sure! Anyone wishing to participate should contact the Sports & Recreation department at St Dunstan's Ovingdean before the cut off date of Friday, 18 May.

UNION JACK CLUB OFFERS COMFORTABLE STAY IN LONDON

MEMBERS RATES FOR ST DUNSTANERS: The Union Jack Club are now offering St Dunstaners accommodation at member's rates. The Union Jack Club in Waterloo, London is a private members club for serving and ex-serving military personnel of many countries, and the emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance.

Ideally situated close to many of London's top attractions the Club offers an excellent base for London visits. They have over 280 bedrooms ranging from singles, twins, doubles and even flats. Details of their tariff can be obtained from their website www.ujclub.co.uk or by telephoning Reservations on 020 7928 4814.



ST DUNSTAN'S HEADQUARTERS SPRUCED UP FOR 21st CENTURY

AUTOMATIC DOORS: New doors that slide aside automatically, open up a new spacious reception area at St Dunstan's Headquarters in London. Valerie and Steve greet visitors from behind an elliptical desk which carries St Dunstan's new grecian cone torch logo.

SMOKING AT O VingDEAN

NEW LAW APPLIES FROM 1 JULY: As of 1 July this year, smoking will not be possible in enclosed places. The law (Health Act 2006) will apply to St Dunstan's Ovingdean and smoking will no longer be allowed by any visitors anywhere in the house or at our off-site premises (where it is already banned). Smoking will still be permitted outside including in the Inner Garden. It is appreciated that this ban will be particularly hard for some people but we must comply or face prosecution and, therefore, we must enforce it seriously.

Advice on giving up smoking can be obtained from the NHS on 0800 169 0 169 for England, 0800 848 484 for Scotland, 0800 085 2219 for Wales, or 0800 858 585 for Northern Ireland. Website www.givingupsmking.co.uk can also be used to find local therapy services.

FIND OUT IF THERE IS A CAB WAITING TO GO WITH THAT TRAIN

WEBSITE DATABASE FOR UK STATIONS: A new online guide can reveal if there is a cab waiting at the end of a train journey. Dubbed traintaxi, it lists all the train, metro, tram and underground stations in Britain and shows whether each station has a taxi rank or cab office. It will also list up to three local taxi or cab firms serving each station. The website, www.traintaxi.co.uk, is screenreader friendly and features an easy to use search facility. The guide can also be downloaded as a pdf file.

AUDIO DESCRIBED THEATRE

THE PLAY'S THE THING: The following theatre productions in Bristol, London and Woking will be performed with added audio description by Irene Richards. As the show unfolds, she will be describing actions, scenery and costume for visually impaired patrons over a radio headset.

Bristol Hippodrome
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang 17 May
Chicago 12 July 19:30
Starlight Express 8 August 19:30
Contact Trish Hodson on 0117 302 3222
or e-mail trish.hodson@livenation.co.uk

Bromley Churchill
High Society 2 June 14:30
Telephone 0870 060 6620 or e-mail
bromleyaccessbookings@theambassadors.com

New Victoria, Woking
CATS 25 July 14:30
Telephone 01483 545900

OFF SEASON SHORT BREAK AVAILABLE IN CORNWALL

HOLIDAY OFFER: A hotelier has offered the use of their facilities (hotel or self catering apartment) for a couple of St Dunstaners and helpers to take a short off season break in Cornwall. Accommodation would be free, though all other expenses and travel arrangements would be down to the individuals accepting the offer. If interested, contact St Dunstaner Service Manager Ray Hazan on 020 7723 5021 to register interest.

LAST CHANCE TO ENTER THE REVIEW DERBY SWEEPSTAKE

CLOSING DATE IS 30 MAY: The **Review** has opened its annual Derby Sweepstake. The draw is open to all St Dunstaners, beneficiaries of the Diana Gubbay Trust, widows and widowers. Tickets are 30p each and issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. We are unable to take orders by telephone. The closing date is May 30th and the draw will be made that day. The Derby is scheduled to run on 2 June.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and a stamped addressed envelope, to Simon Rogers, Derby Sweepstake Department, **St Dunstan's Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Details of prize money distribution appeared last issue. No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold.

NORTHERN IRELAND VETERANS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

NIVA PAY TRIBUTE AT ALREWAS: The Northern Ireland Veterans Association have extended an open invitation to St Dunstaners wishing to join them in their annual Service of Remembrance on 22 September. They will be remembering members of the Military, Police and Prison Service who gave their lives during the fight for peace in Northern Ireland. The day starts at 11:30 with a service in the chapel at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire. The Service will be followed by a march to the Ulster Ash Grove for the laying of wreaths. Membership of NIVA is not required for attendance. Transport will not be provided to the Arboretum.

LEGION SEEKS RARE MEDALS

HELP WANTED FOR DISPLAY: The Royal British Legion are currently compiling a collection of campaign medals from the 20th century for permanent display in one of the Legion offices. Their core collection already contains most of the widely distributed medals from World Wars I & II and they are seeking to extend this to include less common items.

Anyone who would be prepared to gift or loan medals (with provenance) should get in touch with the Legion. In order to prevent duplication, in the first instance they should contact Pauline Tett of The Royal British Legion Legacy Department, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY, telephone 020 7302 7114 (Thursdays only), or by e-mail ptett@britishlegion.org.uk).

VETERANS-UK IS UNVEILED

NEW LOOK FOLLOWING AGENCY MERGER: The Ministry of Defence is creating a new brand for services to veterans – Veterans-UK. The move follows the merger of the Veterans Agency with the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency in April. They have become the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA).

This change will have no effect on the services currently available to St Dunstan's regarding War Pensions and other pension related issues. However, all Veterans Agency products have been re-branded to reflect the change.

Veterans-UK will be the banner covering a variety of different veterans services provided by a range of different organisations. It will form a single point for obtaining information. This includes a new veterans portal website www.veterans-uk.info replacing the previous Veterans Agency website. This will provide a single website and e-mail address help@veterans-uk.info from which information can be obtained. Services provided by the Veterans Services Directorate of Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) will also come under the Veterans-UK name for promotional and publicity purposes.

The new Agency will provide for the first time, a range of "through life" support functions direct to around 900,000 serving and ex-Service personnel from five UK sites, including Norcross. The Norcross site will be the base for most of the new Agency's Veterans Services Directorate, including

the national veterans helpline, providing help to the estimated five-million strong UK veterans community; and also for some of its corporate services. The Veterans free helpline number remains 0800 169 2277.

SPVA offers the following services to the Armed Forces and the Veterans community:

Pay, allowances and expenses through Joint Personnel Administration self service access War Disablement Pensions; Armed Forces Pension Schemes; Armed Forces Compensation Scheme; Administration of medals and veterans badges; Casualty and Compassionate administration via the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC); A nationwide Welfare Service providing support to Veterans and Widows from 25 offices across the UK and Ireland; Pay and allowance dispute resolution via the Pay and Allowance Casework Cell (PACC); All mobilisation and termination administration via the Tri-Service Mobilisation and Termination Cell; Tri-Service arrangements for the storage of all Wills; Tri-Service Records of Service; A formal complaints procedure; An enquiry centre service for Armed Forces personnel and helpline service for Veterans.

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) was launched on 2 April with a flag raising ceremony at its offices at Norcross, near Blackpool, in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Blackpool, Councillor Sue Wright and the Deputy Mayor of Wyre, Councillor John Hodgkinson. Local veteran and National War Pensions Officer for the Burma Star Association, Jack Nield, MBE, raised the flag assisted by members of the 2nd Battalion The Rifles from Weeton Barracks.

VETERANS LAPEL BADGE FOR FALKLANDS VETERANS

ELIGIBILITY EXTENDED TO INCLUDE BIG BROTHER GENERATION: Falklands Veterans and other Service men and women are now eligible to receive the Veterans Badge as the scheme has been extended to include those who served up to 31 December, 1984. Veterans attending the 25th Anniversary of the Falkland Islands Campaign at Horse Guards Parade on 17 June 2007 will automatically be sent an HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge with their tickets and should not apply to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency.

The extension embraces the HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge and the UK Merchant Seafarers Veteran Badge and includes all those who served in the Armed Forces or Merchant Navy at any time up to 31 December 1984.

If St Dunstan's holds details of your military service, 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 Service Personnel & Veterans Agency must still be made via a form which can be downloaded from their website: www.veterans-uk.info/vets_badge.

You can also telephone the Service Personnel & Veterans Agency for an application form on 0800 169 2277. 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 Service Personnel & Veterans Agency, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 3WP.

Eligibility criteria and further information on the UK Merchant Seafarers Veterans Badge can be obtained from two other organisations. The Federation of Merchant Mariners can be contacted by telephone on 01480 412958 and by e-mailing info@merchant-mariners.co.uk. The Merchant Navy Association are on 01472 851130 and mna.national@virgin.net.

FALKLANDS CONFLICT DEBATE AT IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

MEDIA UNDER SCRUTINY: The Imperial War Museum in London will be hosting a panel debate looking at the media response to the Falklands War and its impact on the public consciousness. It will start at 18:30 on 12 June and will be led by key figures in today's media and those involved at the time. Tickets are £15, concessions £12. To book call the museum on 020 7416 5439 or e-mail boxoffice@iwm.org.uk.

The Falklands Conflict will also be the subject of a free lecture at the museum on 23 and 24 June between 13:00 and 14:00. Julian Thompson: The Falklands is an illustrated talk from Exhibition advisor and Falklands veteran Major General Julian Thompson. The Falklands exhibition itself runs until 6 January next year.

Anyone wishing to make use of St Dunstan's membership of the Imperial War Museum should contact Nicki Hall at St Dunstan's Headquarters on 020 7723 5021.

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.

It made me realise life ain't all bad

On 26 March, my wife Rose and I were fortunate enough to celebrate our Pearl wedding anniversary. Earlier though, at the Derby Reunion on 21 March, (which was a lovely occasion and I must say thanks to Dianne Wye for organising everything) our Chief Executive, Robert Leader warmly offered us both congratulations and best wishes from everyone. Afterwards, we made our way home more than happy with people's good wishes still in our thoughts, and packed to fly off to Tenerife to enjoy our anniversary as part of a holiday. Well, what a wonderful surprise awaited us on our return, not only a beautiful basket of flowers, that our daughter looked after for us in our absence, but also a lovely letter from Chairman, Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox on behalf of the Council and the family of St Dunstan's. There was us thinking that our anniversary was just another

year notched-up and it was only important to us when along comes recognition from our extended family - St Dunstan's. How nice it was to read the letter and enjoy the fragrance of the flowers (which are still smelling fantastic), it made me realise that life ain't all that bad. I mean when so many people genuinely and sincerely wish you well, you understand straight-away what family life is all about. So to everyone

who has any connection with St Dunstan's from the volunteers right up the chain to the Chairman and Chief Executive, thank you all for your kind words and good wishes, the flowers, and above all, the privilege of belonging to one of the best families anyone could ever be a member of the family known affectionately as St Dunstan's. God bless you all.

**Rose & Allan Bembridge,
Allenton, Derby**

Beware familiar spirits

I read with interest in last October's **Review** the item about Douglas Bader with a certain Henry Longhurst. Both Douglas and Henry were curious to know whether there was life after death and whether this could be communicated across the divide? Later, when Henry was dying, it was arranged he would try to get in touch from the other side. Henry's

death took place and at first, Douglas heard nothing. Later, however, when Douglas and his wife were attending a fete, he saw a booth marked 'fortune teller' and entered. The lady inside thought she could help. Messages were given to Douglas, including one from a certain Henry. Douglas was impressed by the message from Henry, convinced that it had been

authentic. Using the 1611 *King James' Bible* as my reference, I would answer this episode as follows: from the *Old Testament*, we learn that fortune telling and necromancy (attempts to contact the dead) are strictly forbidden by God.

When Douglas had made an appointment to see the lady in the booth, she had pointed out that, strictly speaking, she was not a fortune teller. She was in touch with the other side.

However, *The Bible* teaches there is an unbridgeable gulf between the living and the dead (*Luke 16, verse 19*). So how could this lady be in touch with the other side? The truth is, she was not in touch with persons who had crossed this divide, but she was a spirit medium, whereby these spirits would pass messages in relation to her, which she could pass on. As Douglas knew the fortune teller did not know Henry, he was thereby convinced the message was from his old friend.

If anyone reading his has had thoughts of trying to contact the dead, but has never tried to do so, I would council them not to.

**Randall Williams,
Tiverton, Devon**

Hectic, but our confidence is restored by Dance Week

Both my wife and I are having a few days relaxing after the very hectic but very pleasant five days of dancing. We would like to thank St Dunstan's, Glynis and David for helping to revive our dancing days which stopped when I became registered blind. We are now back dancing with our friends, confidently thanks to our dancing week.

Basil Gibson, Guisborough, Cleveland

Balancing the Books

St Dunstaner **Ted Bunting** on a gripping thriller that leaves him wanting more

The Interrogators

Author: Allan Prior
Reader: David Geary
Duration: 11 hrs, 15 min
Catalogue No. 000174

This is crime fiction, but it is also the truly gripping story of Detective-Sergeant Jack Eves and his boss and mentor, whisky-swilling Inspector Savage. This time is the 1960s and the place is Hartley, or Artley, (you can never tell which north of Potter's Bar) a Lancashire town where they probably knew all about textiles and rugby-league but precious little else. There is a brutal crime to solve; the rape and murder of a young girl carried from her hospital bed. The media are

screaming for vengeance, the populace too, for the most part, but the spur to the police, the sense of urgency common to them all is the need to apprehend the criminal and terminate his career before it can develop further. The same emotion is shared by the listener but whether the crime will be solved by the brilliant detective and his "nose" or by PC Plod and police routine is not revealed until the final chapter. The end when it comes, is a bit too abrupt for my liking, there were still things I would have liked to know. But "leave 'em wanting more" was always a good maxim and the author can go to the top of the class.

Ten questions on

The subject of Musical Instruments

Harry Beevers fine tunes these teasers

- 1) In a standard symphony orchestra, which instrument has the most players?
- 2) Ex-President Bill Clinton was an accomplished performer on which musical instrument?
- 3) Which musical instrument shares its name with a vegetable slicer?
- 4) What type of instruments make up a high hat?
- 5) Which symphonic fairy tale by the Russian composer Sergie Prokofiev is sometimes used as a way of instructing children how to recognise musical instruments?
- 6) In real life Dooley Wilson, Sam the pianist in the film *Casablanca*, was really a drummer. Is that true or false?
- 7) From the genus Ilex, which tree produces very hard wood with a close grain used in making musical instruments, furniture and interior decorations?
- 8) According to Greek mythology, which instrument was invented by the god Hermes on the day of his birth?
- 9) The sound of which instrument was described by the diarist Samuel Pepys as, "At the best it is mighty barbarous music"?
- 10) The first symphonic use of which brass instrument was by Beethoven in the last movement of his 5th symphony?

Answers can be found on page 43.

Henry, 110, is podcasting to the world

Britain's oldest man linked up with sixth-form pupils in Sussex for a podcast in March. St Dunstaner Henry Allingham described his First World War experiences for pupils of Hazelwick School in Three Bridges, West Sussex. The session was recorded for broadcast on the internet. It can be found on encyclopaedia website Wikipedia or by going to www.hazelwick.w-sussex.sch.uk/podcast/main/Henry_Allingham_1.mp3 or [Henry_Allingham_2.mp3](http://www.hazelwick.w-sussex.sch.uk/podcast/main/Henry_Allingham_2.mp3). You may need to type the full url into your browser and press the return key.

Billy is on the ball at school

Never mind the ref being blind, everyone playing football at Tavistock & Summerhill School, Lindfield, was without sight on 27 March. Children found out what it was like to be without sight when blindfolded for a game using the sound of a sand filled ball that made a noise when struck.

St Dunstaner Billy Baxter visited the school to demonstrate what it is like to be visually impaired. He spoke of his own experiences of sight loss and joined the pupils game. They also got to try on glasses to simulate tunnel vision.

Cannonball falls short of new record

A SKIING ST DUNSTANER narrowly failed to break the world record he set for blind downhill speed skiing last year. Kevin Alderton, 35, from Dartford, Kent, was aiming to top the 100.94mph (162.45km/h) he achieved at Les Arcs in the French Alps on 14 April last year.

However, skiing on the same Flying Kilometre

run on Easter Sunday, he only managed to get up to 99.89mph (160.76km/h).

Kevin who was left with four per cent vision after an assault in 1998, vowed he would carry on trying to beat the record.

"I'm really confident that by the end of the week we're going to have a new world

record," he told the BBC. "I'm back out there trying to beat myself."

Known as The Cannonball, Kevin also set the world speed record for blind indoor skiing in November.

He skis with the aid of a coach who gives him directions via a radio link. He has also been coaching novice skiers at a dry slope in Chatham.

Coors Brewers keep the Winter Garden in tune



NORMALLY YOU cannot spend a thank you, but today St Dunstan's can. Coors Account Manager Chris Jeffrey presented PBK's Paul James and Ovingdean Manager Dick Lake with a cheque for £1,000 to pay for a music system for the Winter Garden. PBK is a loyal customer of Coors

on behalf of St Dunstan's and has been for the last 30 years. During this time the brewers have been supporting the charity by paying for the Boccia Game as well contributing towards some entertainment costs a few years ago and donating the clock located in the entrance hall.

Medway is proud of Stephen

A ST DUNSTANER has been feted for his involvement in the Medway community. Stephen Pendleton of Hoo, near Rochester, Kent was presented with a Pride in Medway award on 23 March.

He received a certificate of commendation from the Mayor of Medway Councillor Angela Prodger. Steve had been working closely with local cadet forces, some of whom took part in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge, and also teaches braille in the Rochester area.

Chatterbox Terry takes his bow

IT WAS THE end of an era as St Dunstaner Terry Walker stepped down as organiser of the Chatterbox news tape on 21 March. The tapes have kept Ovingdean residents entertained for nearly 15 years. Ovingdean Manager Dick Lake presented Terry with some tokens of our esteem. Chatterbox will continue through the efforts of four Terry-trained volunteers.



Colin says thank you to Gloucestershire



GLOUCESTERSHIRE Army Cadet Force, specifically units from Stonehouse, Dursley, Stroud, Wotton, Cirencester and Tetbury were applauded for taking part in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge. The combined units raised over £3,000 to support blind ex-Service men and women

in the course of a 13-mile hike in the Forest of Dean. They were congratulated by St Dunstaner Colin Williamson who was recently appointed as St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge Coordinator. To find out who won the Challenge, turn to page 14.

Independent Living Bill is read by Lords

The House of Lords has been debating legislation which will impose duties of care in respect of disabled people to confer rights for independent living. It will amend the Mental Health Act 1983 and Care Standards Act 2000 and run in parallel to the Disability Discrimination Act. Introduced by Lord Ashley of Stoke in November last year, it reached Committee on 22 March. Amendments drew attention to the need for advocacy and support for any form of independent living. The Bill will have two further readings in the Lords.

Quick thinking keeps Alan in game

SIMPLE IDEAS are often the best. St Dunstaner Alan Mitchell has found bowling from a wheelchair problematic of late. The answer was for him to stand at the side while a Care Assistant acts as a counter balance. This gave Alan the necessary freedom to stay in the game at Ovingdean.



Rehabilitation should be a right

NORTH WEST Glasgow MP John Robertson has introduced a Bill to make provision for a statutory right to rehabilitation leave for newly disabled people or people whose existing impairments change. "My attention was first drawn to this problem by the Royal

National Institute of the Blind, which says that about 66,000 registered blind and partially sighted people of working age are not in work," he told the House of Commons on 13 March. "A further 4,000 people lose their sight each year, of whom 1,000 are forced

into unemployment. Those figures will not help the Government reach their ambitious target of 80 per cent employment."

The Employment Retention Bill will have a further reading in the House of Commons later this month.

Hundreds attend submariner's funeral

A NAVY St Dunstaner paid tribute to a submariner who lost his life in an explosion while their submarine was under the polar ice cap.

Bryan Durber of Halesowen, West Midlands joined 12 other snipmates from Stourbridge RNA to show their respect for 32-year-old Paul McCann.

The funeral on 5 April was also attended by the Captain, Officers and Crew of nuclear submarine HMS *Tireless* who joined the family of Paul McCann at St Johns Church in Halesowen. Paul, or "Tinney" as he was known, was killed in March along with 20-year-old Anthony Huntrod. A third sailor

was injured but is expected to make a full recovery. "The 11th century church was filled to overflowing to applaud his life," said Bryan. "We sang *Keep right on to the end of the road*, because he was a Birmingham City fan, and then the sadness of the *Last Post* and the lowering of the standards, a fitting tribute to a brave sailor."

2513 Squadron pull it off!

Veterans Minister congratulates Challenge Winners



Outright winners of the Cadet Challenge were train carriage pulling 2513 Squadron from Romney Marsh. Receiving the Cadet Challenge Trophy on behalf of their unit from Veterans Minister Derek Twigg and Graham Footer are Cadet Chris Mellor, Cadet Chris Holdsworth and Flight Lieutenant Dave Law.



In second place were Kent Wing ATC Medway. Veterans Minister Derek Twigg and Graham Footer presented the trophy to Cadet Sergeant Stephanie Morton, Sergeant Mike Moorcroft and Cadet Amy Longworth.



Marlborough College CCF were the third prize winners. Receiving their trophy from the Veterans Minister are WO1 Will Finlay and Major Neil Clements.

by Freda Cooper

OVINGDEAN RESOUNDED with the sound of music on March 20 when the winners of St Dunstan's "Go The Distance" Cadet Challenge visited the National Centre to receive their prizes from Veterans Minister Derek Twigg.

Overall winners, 2513 Squadron from Romney Marsh, won the Cadet Challenge Trophy by dragging a carriage from the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway from Dungeness to Hythe. During 2006, cadet units around the UK were challenged to complete a 13 mile course in the most imaginative way possible and with the involvement of a St Dunstaner.

The Squadron's eight-strong band was an important part of the challenge, playing for supporters at stations along the 13 mile track when they and fellow cadets were not pulling the railway carriage. They recreated some of that spirit raising atmosphere at Ovingdean by playing a selection of military favourites for residents and impressing everybody with their musical skills.



Romney Marsh Cadets, Army Veteran Arthur Trussler and St Dunstaner Henry Allingham.



With Frank Smith beside him, Derek Twigg spoke with Bob and Joan Osborne.

Presenting cadets from 2513 Squadron with their trophy, Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans Derek Twigg, MP paid tribute to their imaginative approach to completing their challenge. "All the cadets here today are a credit to everybody involved with the Cadet Challenge," he said. "They've shown tremendous commitment and hard work. Initiatives such as the challenge are fantastic for helping today's young people develop and giving them a great start in life."

Second prize went to Kent Wing ATC, Medway, for their combination of a blindfold walk, orienteering by Braille and carrying a 'casualty' by stretcher.

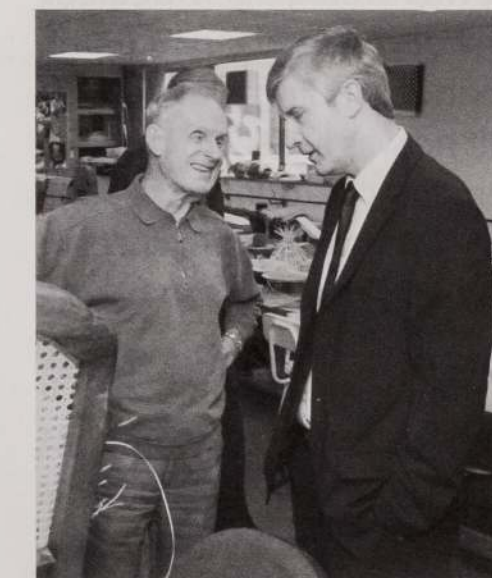
Marlborough College CCF (Army Section) won third

prize for their re-creation of life in the trenches during World War I.

After presenting the prizes, Veterans Minister Derek Twigg toured the National Centre, meeting St Dunstaners and finding out about life at Ovingdean. As well as dropping in for a chat with Stan Grimsey, who was keen to share a few war time memories with him, and spending time admiring the artistic skills of St Dunstaners in the Craft Workshop – and picking up a few tips on the finer points of furniture from Norman Perry – he was also one of an enthusiastic group of spectators at an indoor game of bowls.

Staff also had the opportunity to show the Minister the extensive support and training

provided by St Dunstan's. ROVI Supervisor Ian Hebborn demonstrated devices, such as a talking can lid, to help with every day life, together with some of the training St Dunstaners receive to help them acquire new skills. Ovingdean's colourful stained glass window also featured on the tour, and was explained by Head of Rehabilitation & Training Katy Barrett.



Norman Perry explains chair caning to Derek Twigg, MP.

Alan runs desert gauntlet to help Noma children

St Dunstaner completes Sahara endurance course

by Simon Rogers

ROYAL NAVY St Dunstaner Alan Lock completed one of the most unforgiving sports events on 2 April. His ultimate aim was to help children suffering from an infection that disfigures faces in a cruel in painful fashion. He ran in the Marathon des Sables – a six day run through 151 mile of Sahara desert. With temperatures averaging 36 degrees, it demands extreme dedication.

"It was averaging 47 degrees one day," said Alan, 27, of London, adding that he felt he was luck with the temperature during the run. "It was a great experience and I didn't find it too bad.

In 2004, while serving in the Royal Navy, he was diagnosed with an incurable eyesight condition. He was discharged after his sight deteriorated and gave up many sports and activities

that he loved. This spurred him on to push himself in new directions.

He trained for the event by running up and down stairs at work in the HSBC building in Canary Wharf. That was backed up in February with a 45-mile ultra-marathon – running with full pack from Tring to London.

"I completed that in eight hours," he said. "The main idea though was to get used to running with the pack because you have to carry all your own things in the Marathon des Sables. After flying in to Ouarzazate, he endured a five hour bus ride into the Sahara. That was followed by a kit inspection.

Alan linked up with another Royal Navy runner Anthony Laycock, a Lynx pilot, who would offer advice on the terrain during the run.

"There were 757 people taking part, so there was a really good atmosphere, almost like a family when

atmosphere when you compare it something like the London Marathon which has thousands running."

He added that conditions proved favourable over the next few days. The ground was quite flat, though he had to be cautious when it got rocky. "They were a bit rough but Anthony helped me out with that. It was very windy at night but there were no bad sandstorms."

This feat of endurance is expected to raise £2,000 for Facing Africa, a charity concerned with the prevention and cure of Noma, an acute and ravaging gangrenous infection affecting the face which usual strikes young children, and £1,000 for St Dunstan's.

And if the Sahara seems a little dry for someone who was in the Navy, Alan's next challenge returns him to the sea. He is planning to row the Atlantic in 60 days next year.

Opening the curtain on old school corruption

Simon Rogers talks to John Swanzy about his books

OXFORD ST DUNSTANER John Swanzy has currently has two books on the market and is considering a third. "They are quite different," he said. "The first one, *The Curtain'd Sleep*, is a whodunit which I hope will amuse everybody. The title is a quotation from *Macbeth*. It's about a series of murders that take place in my old school, Bedford."

But are the murders the real story? *The Curtain'd Sleep* has been feted by *The Oxford Times* as a portrait of a bygone England where men and women misbehave even though the consequences of being caught will be their ruin.

"I have called it something else. It's what I would call a minor public school. I suppose I was originally writing it because I was angry at the headmaster because I won a scholarship to King's College Cambridge and the headmaster without telling my mother, or me, or anybody, went to the college and said that he didn't think I should go because if I waited a year I would win an open scholarship somewhere else which would bring the school more honour. It just

happened to be the year before the war started." John did eventually receive his open scholarship, partly through the intervention of a family friend. However, while waiting he suffered a near fatal bought of pneumonia.

"The headmaster is in love with my sixth form master's wife, a very pretty American girl," said John. "In those days, if your wife left you or you divorced, a schoolmaster would have to resign. The headmaster had designs on this wife and they formed a great plot of how to prevent this.

"It links back to India. It was probably a school where people go because they can't afford Cheltenham, all the parents served in

the Empire somewhere, mostly India. Everything is connected to India, the only thing they can't find is the motive for killing the headmaster and various other murders that take place.

"It gives a very good picture of an English minor public school at that date. I tell anyone who buys it that they mustn't look at the end, that they must guess who the murderer is. I think I have managed to keep it going."

Is it a loving portrait of such a school? "No not at all! It's quite the reverse really," said John. *The Curtain'd Sleep* also touches on the rise of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts

"The next book is about my wartime experiences. There's no link between the two books. I first thought it would be fun to carry on the same characters and put them in another plot but I found but I would have had to get them in the Middle East and then I would have to get them back to England



John Swanzy. An author in contemplation.

and then to Oxford and this was going to be too difficult.

"So the second book is nothing but a straight forward account. There are one or two occasions where because it would wound somebody I have omitted the name."

Titled *Medal Without Bar* it follows John's experience in the Royal Horse Artillery. "In those days the Mediterranean was closed, so there's a long account of going out in convoy, which was always exciting, and we sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and put ashore at Durban."

At Durban, he transferred to the Isle de France and headed to Red Sea and

disembarked at Port Said. Initially camped outside Cairo, they moved out to the desert. "Rommell made what was probably his final attack which he hoped was going to break him through to Cairo and there was some very savage fighting. This was before El Alamein. My regiment had been in Tobruk throughout the siege and now found themselves going back but this time it was blocked off by Australians and South Africans.

"We were told to get back to the Delta. We were told we mustn't run away, but we must never fight to the death, which is really rather a difficult thing to do. Then there was the first Battle of El Alamein, which most people don't consider a battle, but

for us it was because the Germans had complete air supremacy. They used stukas, which was the most frightening of weapons because as they turn down they make this appalling screaming noise as they go."

"Finally we got back to other British troops who Montgomery had brought in. Churchill had sacked Lord Wavell and made General Alexander commander-in-chief. That was when Montgomery, who was not a very likeable man really, took over command of the 8th Army. Then we had the opening battle in which we had 4,000 guns and Montgomery said he planned to break through in one day. He certainly didn't succeed in that.

"It was like a First World War battle that went on for ten days. Suddenly I went up to the observation post and found the German troops had withdrawn in full flight for Tunis, leaving the Italians, who hadn't got any transport, behind.

"When we found that there was a terrible downfall of rain. When I later met the great man, he said 'Oh yes, splendid troops! Dammed

good.' I felt tempted to say 'Why have you sacked our Corps Commander, Divisional Commander and only sent through the 7th Armoured?'

"It always irritates me these days when anyone who fought in the desert is referred to as a commando of the Desert Rats. The Desert Rats were a specific corps."

John's next stop was in the Holy Land, followed by Syria where he reached the border with Turkey. "It was unbelievable, or so it seemed to us, that was the last battle we fought."

For a time, John enjoyed life in what he describes as "fashionable Cairo", meeting King Farouk, until he returned to the UK to train as a pilot. "I suppose because of the appalling casualties it was easier to teach a gunner to fly than it was to teach a pilot to shoot guns. I qualified as a pilot and was due to be posted to the Far East, when one night sitting by the radio, we heard that the first atomic bomb had been dropped."

Having met his first wife, John accepted an invitation to return to King's College.

"In many ways that was a mistake. A young man of 26 or something, I must have been at that time, was not as not interesting to the dons as a young man of 17 or 18."

John is considering a third book on life in a Stratford-upon-Avon cottage called Hopkins, but in the meantime he is gauging response to his first two titles. Published by Serendipity, both are available from

www.amazon.co.uk who promise a six-nine week delivery time or can be ordered through high street booksellers.

The Curtain'd Sleep

Price £11.95

- ISBN-10: 184394197X
- ISBN-13: 978-1843941972

Medal without Bar

Price £16.95

- ISBN-10: 1843942186
- ISBN-13: 978-1843942184

Exercise the lazy way!

NOT-FOR-PROFIT group The Lazy Fitness Association says that even the most determined couch potato can manage to summon up the energy for a one-minute work-out and that is enough to have a real effect on their health and fitness. They advise a daily workout consisting of 15 sits-ups, 15

press-ups (half press-ups for women) and 15 standing squats, which should take the average person about 60 seconds to complete.

Their website at www.LazyFitness.org even has a section for armchair exercise which are perfect for wheelchair users.

BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Wiliamson

Mordue Workie Ticket

A workie ticket in Newcastle slang is a troublemaker. This flavoursome ale is 4.5 ABV, so you will have no bother from it unless you sup it to excess. It has a grassy, hop aroma and a sweetish malty palate. The finish is quite nutty and dry. This beer won Champion Ale in 1997 only two years after the brewery was established.



Henry and Dolly Jones started with the Anniversary Waltz. It was their Diamond Anniversary.

Blind Dance Week takes off with the Squadronaires

Don't tell your mama, but St Dunstaners find new zing stepping out on the floor. **Simon Rogers** reports

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE band, The Squadronaires lifted St Dunstan's Spring Dance Week on 30 March. Not that it had been slow going during the previous five days of dance lessons.

St Dunstaner David Schofield had lost his sight before taking up ballroom

dancing with partner Glynis, but once the bug caught them it became a way of life. Their enthusiasm has proved contagious with many other St Dunstaners and their spouses rediscovering the joys of dancing.

Eric and Marjorie Cooper emphasised this aspect of the week. "This is our little

bit of achievement tonight," said Eric. "I lost my sight and my wife has had trouble with her hips. I'm supporting her and she's leading me.

"We didn't learn anything new but the lessons have given us the confidence to go back on the dance floor. It's all come together tonight so that's our achievement.



Irene Wilkinson and Arthur tread the boards.



The sound of a saxophone.



Joe and Betty MacFarlane.



The Squadronaires deploy four trumpets.



Twinkle-toed Basil and Audrey Gibson were fast on their feet.



A frank favourite.



A moment of achievement for Eric and Marjorie Cooper as they return to the dance floor.

We've regained the confidence to dance again and that is all down to David and Glynis."

The dancing shoes were out in force on 29 March as the Ray Miles Trio took the stage. Henry and Dolly Jones, celebrating their Diamond Anniversary set things rolling with the Anniversary Waltz.



The big band sound reached new heights the next day when the Squadronaires arrived from RAF Uxbridge. The station has been staunch supporter of St Dunstan's and this night was no exception.

Vocalist Matthew Little put on Frank Sinatra's shoes for renditions of *Come Fly with Me*, *My Way* and *Mac the Knife*, while Emer McParland echoed the sultry tones of

Peggy Lee with Fever and That Old Black Magic. For some the evening was reminiscent of other magical occasions. St Dunstaner Peter Burdon recalled that he had met his wife at a Squadronaires concert in Morecombe in 1952.

However, on this occasion Peter spoilt the ambience by revealing that his dancing partner had told him "a

mucky joke." "I have never been so mortified as when he said that," she added, but declined to repeat the joke.

Another St Dunstaner recalled that he met his wife in Berkley Square.

The Squadronaires kept playing and the shoes kept shuffling. It seems that our dancers are looking forward to the next time.



St Dunstaners Edwina Holford and Harry Corton.



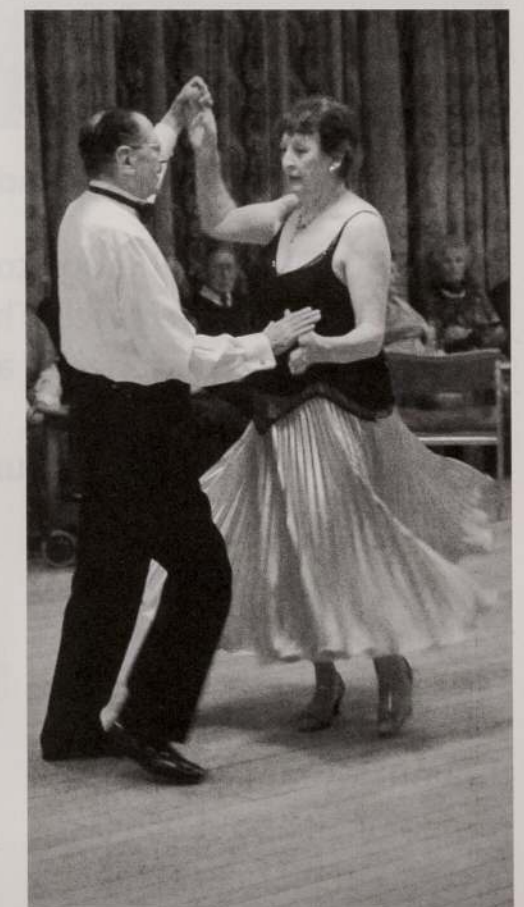
Bob Beswick and Margaret take the floor.



The Ray Miles Trio had an extensive repertoire.



Emer turns up the heat.



David and Glynis take a spin.

Just thought we would drop in!



St Dunstaner Bill Goddon and his tandem master Gary Willard in freefall.

TWO ST DUNSTANERS took to the skies to support charitable causes in March. They both leapt into the unforgettable experience of an tandem sky dive.

Bill Goddon, who made his jump on behalf of St Dunstan's, tells his story:

Sunday, 11 March started early at my home. Reveille was at 05:00 -no bugle though! My family duly turned up at about 06:00 and we set off bound for Headcorn Aerodrome, near Maidstone, Kent. We arrived

at approx 08:00 - booked in and the waiting started.

After some tea and toast in the canteen I was summoned to attend a 30 minute induction briefing, mainly do's and don'ts.

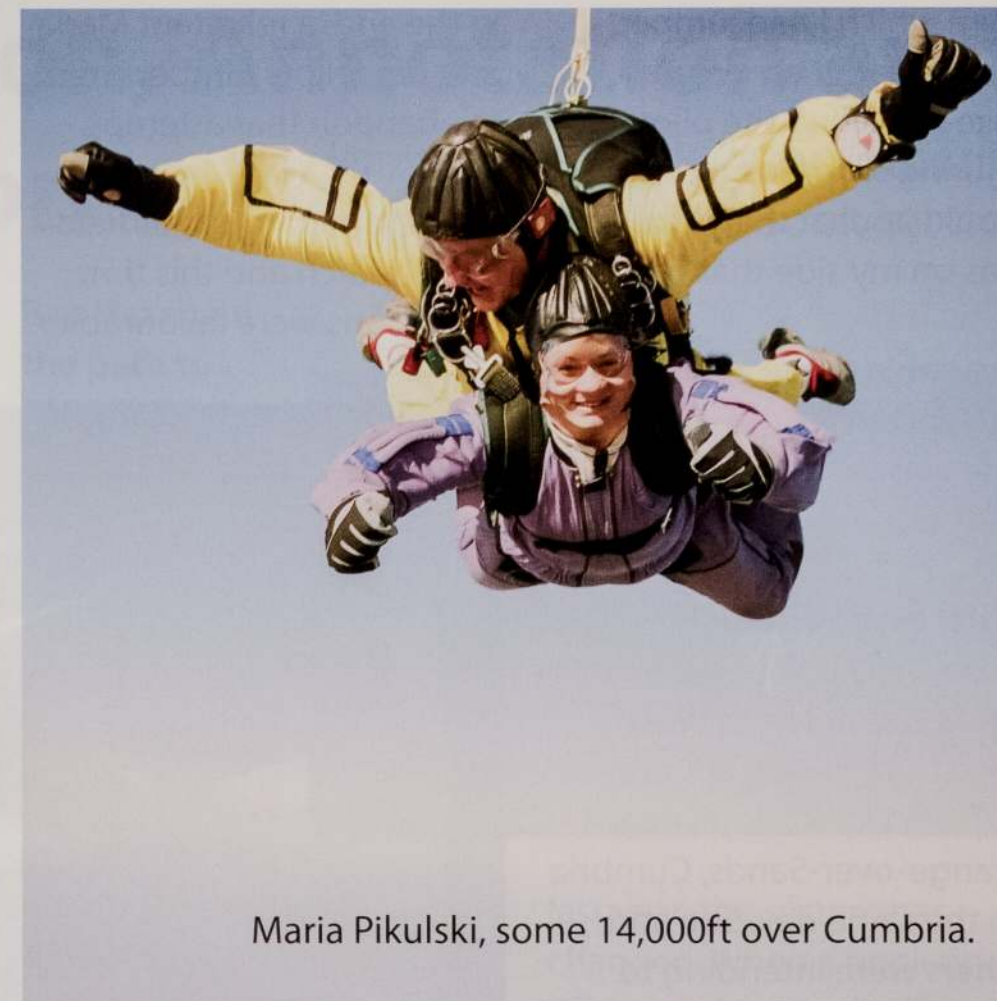
I was then provided with a jump suit, helmet and goggles, said cheerio to my family (wife, son-in-law, daughter-in-law and two of my three grandchildren) and set off with my instructor across the grass towards the De Havilland Turbo Beaver single prop plane. The occupants of the plane consisted of a pilot, co-pilot, six experienced solo sky divers (including "Tilly" a young woman who

operated the video camera) my instructor, who I was "hooked onto" and myself. There were no seats for the jumpers - we all sat on the floor in two lines - space was very limited.

We bumped across the rough grass runway and began our ascent. Due to wind speed and direction we climbed to 12,000 instead



A perfect touchdown.



Maria Pikulski, some 14,000ft over Cumbria.

of the scheduled 10,000 - still what's a couple of thousand feet between friends? At the given time we all exited the plane over a period of 10-15 seconds.

Any doubts I had passed like the blink of an eye as we started to fall at about 120mph. The exhilaration of free falling lasted about 50 seconds as we fell about 1.5 miles before the "chute" opened. We caught a thermal and rose back up approximately 300 ft.

We slowly glided down and landed spot on the circle of dried pea shucks - it was just

like gently sitting down.

Everybody safely down, we proceeded to the admin area and proudly posed for the camera.

I returned my "gear", received my certificate and sincerely thanked my instructor Gary Willard whom I had complete trust in from the moment I met the guy- he was brilliant. My family and I left about 14:00 hrs and returned home after a once in a lifetime experience for me.

However, the day was marred by hearing later that evening the same plane

from which I had jumped crashed after an aborted take-off killing the pilot and injuring six passengers. It would appear that lady luck was on my side that day.

I was able to raise £130 for St Dunstan's but the down side was that I didn't get a badge!

Wild and Windy

Maria was at North West Parachute Centre at Cark Airfield, Flookburgh, near Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria on the same day. She and others were intending to jump on behalf of Preston based Galloway's Society for the Blind which has been celebrating 140 years of enabling blind people to lead an independent lifestyle.

Like Bill, they were briefed on the equipment they were using and the procedure that would be used when making the jump. However, there was one snag. Over the wild Cumbrian countryside, windspeeds had been hitting around 40mph - far too extreme for a successful jump. After an hour or so, winds had dropped to about 27mph, still too fast! Would they ease off?

In the end, a reluctant Maria and her fellow jumpers had to abandon that attempt.

She returned to the airfield on 24 March and this time, conditions were favourable.



Instruction for Maria at the North West Parachute Centre.

Climbing to 14,000ft, she and her tandem master exited the plane for 3,000ft of gravity driven freefall. "I had a fantastic time," she said. "And I want to do it again."

Automation, Annotation and Adaptation

Ray Hazan visits RNIB Peterborough, home of the Talking Book service

A VISIT TO the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) at Peterborough recently revealed a production and distribution system second to none in the world of the blind. The facts and figures are truly remarkable; they send out 10,000 talking books and deal with 350 product orders on a daily basis. They also process 18 million pages of braille and large print, and Customer Services answer 288 thousand calls a year. "Yet, the average blind or partially sighted person is probably unaware of our existence or efficiency", said Zélie, our guide who showed us around, together with Claire McDonald, the Senior Sales and Distributor Manager, and James Bartlett, the Distributor Liaison Manager.

The site at Peterborough covers some six acres, employs 350 staff, and houses the Talking Book library, transcription services, braille and large print production and distribution, products storage and

Ray Hazan on the path to RNIB Talking Book Library.



Photographs: Barbara Sweeney

distribution, product evaluation and research, and their finance department. Many of these services are highly automated.

Talking Book Library

When I first visited the Talking Book Library in the late 1970s, there were two distribution centres employing 80 people each. Today, 15 people carry out all the functions necessary to distribute any of the twelve thousand plus titles held on the library's computer. These are recorded at the studios in Camden, London.

Since the move of the distribution operation to Peterborough early

last year, the system has changed. When a book on CD is returned to the library, the bar code is scanned, identifying title and recipient and the book is "removed" from the recipient's list.

The computer then reads the catalogue number of the next book the reader is waiting for, retrieves the text of the book and copies or "burns" it onto a new blank CD. It further prints the recipient's name and address on the CD, including the number of the burner or machine which produced the book. Should the CD be faulty, it can then be traced back. The copying or "burning" process takes some five minutes per CD.

We visited a room where there were 12 working stations and one spare, each with four CD burners, all copying books 24-hours-a-day with the minimum of human supervision. Once the machine had copied 600 disks onto spindles, they were put through another machine, which inserted the disks into Velcro sealed window envelopes ready for posting. To return the book to the library, the reader has simply to turn the CD round and the Peterborough address is already on the back of the envelope.

Because CDs have personal information on them, i.e. the address, the returned books are "granulated" or ground up and used for road ballast!

Book selection by readers can be done in a variety of ways. For those with a computer, www.rnib.org.uk contains a web catalogue. Either type in the title or

an author and all the titles by that author held in the library will be listed. These can then be added to your selection list and at the click of a few buttons directed to Peterborough, saving many hours of scouring through the print or recorded catalogues.

A monthly list of new recorded books can either be found on the web or sent by e-mail. An e-mail to cservices@rnib.org.uk or a telephone call to 0845 762 6843 will add the titles to your list.

Alternatively, you can tell the library which sections interest you, such as crime, thrillers, adventure, autobiography, and the library will select titles from these sections at random and send them to you. Claire McDonald said, "It is hard to keep a published print or braille catalogue

right up to date as books are being continuously added."

Transcription Services

One large room revealed the braille and large print production line. Text of all sorts, manuals, leaflets, brochures, with the exception of books, are transcribed into a universal digital format, which can then be turned into audio, braille or large print. It is worth describing the Daisy (Digital Accessible Information System).

It has become a universally accepted standard for CD amongst the talking book libraries for the blind. The reader is able, for instance, when listening to a recording of the Daisy TV Listings, to select the day of the week, channel, and time of day and so get to a specific point of a recording in seconds. Further, the reader can slow or speed up playback without the pitch changing, and insert bookmarks for returning to selected passages. While this might not be of use for reading a novel, it has important implications for students.

Some items, such as the Daisy TV Listings, are

automatically recorded using an artificial voice. This takes a fraction of the time were it to be recorded by human voice. But the quality of artificial speech these days is both intelligible and only just short of "human"! The more frequently you listen the greater the comprehension.

Though braille may not be so commonly read these days, there is still a demand. Smaller printers punch the braille, collate, and bind the pages together. One very large printer rolls out long lengths of pages of large print.

RNIB Products

Peterborough carries over 1,000 items, from liquid level indicators to white canes. A large warehouse, with 315 thousand square feet of shelving 6.8 metres high, features the Pickomat with robot arms that lift the pallet containing the wanted item and delivers it directly to the operator. "This has really speeded up the operation", said Zélie, "which means we can deal with some 350 orders a day." Peterborough employs their own maintenance engineers so as to cut delays through breakdowns to a minimum.



Christine and Maxine supply a wealth of RNIB products.

We were able to meet Christine and Maxine who liaise with the two Pauls, Sheard and Coppard, at Ovingdean who order many goods on behalf of St Dunstaners.

Our final visit was to the development team. Existing items were being examined for adaptation – cheaper than specifically designed products. These will never be made in the same numbers as in the commercial world and so will cost much more per item. One of the engineers was working on a system to feed sound from

the telephone through the PC system.

The RNIB can be justly proud of their achievements at Peterborough. An automation, combined with an energetic and devoted staff have resulted in the blind and partially sighted of the UK being well served. To enjoy the luxury of beautifully recorded books being delivered to your door, to be able to access your telephone bill by yourself, to be able to order some time saving device, is surely one more giant step to independence?

Production line methods keep RNIB products and Talking Books on the go.



A CD Burner copies books 24-hours-a-day at Peterborough.

Bowling at Ovingdean

Bob Osborne reports on the National Bowling Club spring activities held at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 11-24 March

OUR TOURNAMENT was saddened by the loss of David Humphrey who helped so much with the Bowling Clubs. He was also Captain of the Brighton Bowls. He will be greatly missed.

I was very pleased to meet Mansell Lewis who at the age of 92 had travelled from Pembrokeshire South Wales to see his old friends at Ovingdean. As usual, Jack and Roger from Saltdean bowling Club came to help us with the calling of the matches.

Able assisted by Colwyn Lloyd and Frank Smith who were coaching Ron Jones to do the job as well!

We were more than pleased to have John Mугan the son of the late Tommy Mугan who was one of our bowlers from the early days, to help on the green and in many other ways.

Our thanks must go to our ladies who organised the coffee and tea breaks and



Lionel James during the spring tournament.

to those who also did the marking of the games for Colwyn and Frank. And too all members of the staff who supported everything during the two weeks.

On our last night we had an excellent dinner in the Winter Garden where the prizes were presented by Geraldine Plaw from the lounge desk and who was super as Joan's PA for the

tournament!! Thanks also to Trevor and PBK for making it a great evening.

Once again, Joan would like to thank everyone for her gift and her garden will benefit greatly from it. I hope we will all meet again on the 28 October for our next tournament. So good luck and good bowling in the summer.

RESULTS

TB SINGLES

- 1st Peter Hammond
- 2nd Bob Osborne
- 3rd Norman Perry

PS SINGLES

- 1st Alan Gibson
- 2nd Graham Johnson
- 3rd Ron Jones

PAIRS

- 1st Graham Johnson and Bob Osborne
- 2nd Alan Gibson and James Poole

TRIPLES

- 1st Bill King, Ron Jones and Norman Perry
- 2nd Alan Gibson, Bob Osborne and Jack Pulfer

The road to Bomb Alley!



HMS Norland and other ships under fire near port San Carlos. Photo: Reg Perrin Collection.

Twenty-five years on, St Dunstaners tell their story of the Falklands War

IN APRIL 1982, Argentina invaded the British territory of the Falkland Islands, prompting the UK to mount a Task Force to retake the disputed territory. For St Dunstaner Edith Curson, a member of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service since 1962, there seemed only one choice. She was Deputy Matron at *Haslar* but volunteered to go with the medical crew who would be joining the Task Force.

"It was a tremendous experience and one that I thought I would never be

having," she said "When I phoned my mother to tell her I would be going she said that my father would be proud of me if he'd still been around. She said that she

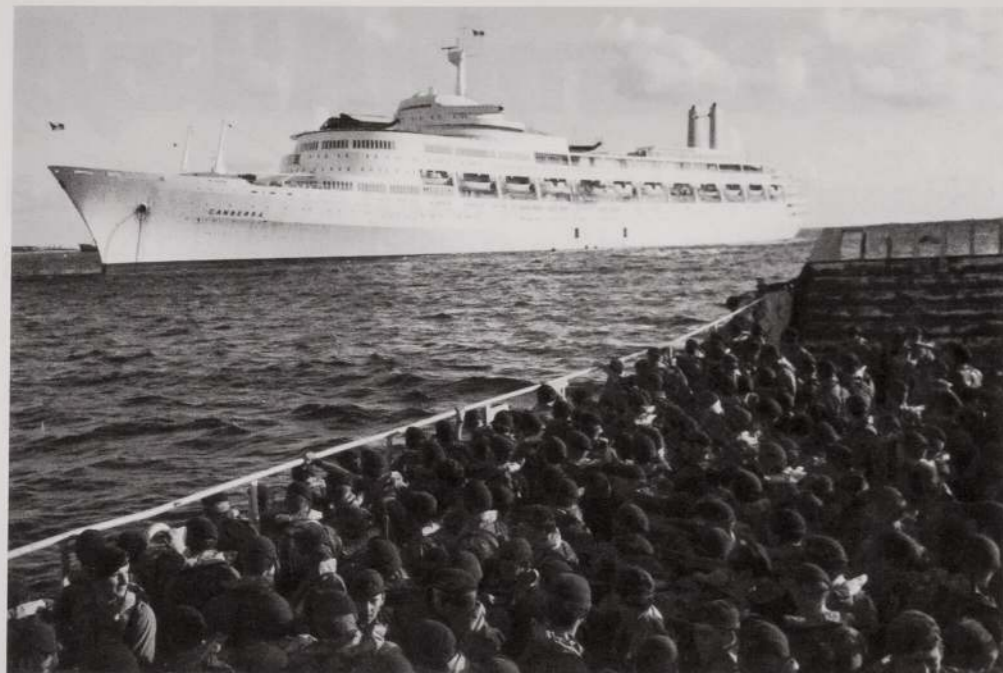


Deputy Matron Edith Curson.

got that her eldest grandson would never be going to war because he was a farmer and her other grandson was much too young, but she never thought that her own daughter would be trailing off to war."

Edith left Southampton on the *Canberra*. "It was annexed as a hospital ship and to carry troops but it was later discovered we couldn't do that. We couldn't put Red Crosses and things up on deck if we were carrying battle type troops.

"Then the *Uganda* was requisitioned. That was in Maples at the time ferrying children around. They went to Gibraltar to refit it with a



D-Day rehearsals for Royal Marines at Ascension Islands.

flight deck and things. I left on the Canberra and joined them at Ascension Islands."

Alan Holderness, then 17-years-old and serving in the Royal Marines recalled his own departure. "Alpha Company got put on the Hermes, so they went straight away," he said. "We were told that we were going down on the Canberra, so we went down to Southampton and ended up kipping in a shed, very nice, while they got the Canberra refitted before they let us onboard.

"We got on board and settled down. My memory of sailing off is that it was dark. Just as you passed the headland. There must have been a crowd of cars there

and they were all flashing their headlights as we were pulling out.

"It was a bimble down there. There was a lot of political activity going on behind the scenes but all we were interested in was keeping fit, keeping up our physical routine. There were civilian chefs on board, gourmet chefs who would cook anything. Unfortunately, our chief cook at the time decided we should keep our hand in, so he volunteered us. We had to keep up with the military side of our training, the physical side of our training and then work shifts in the galley.

"The kitchens were filthy, they were absolutely honking, so the first thing

we did was scrub everything down. I think time passed very quickly for us because we were frying thousands of eggs. None of the other units volunteered their lads, which we weren't very happy about, but we managed to work our way through."

Edith and her team had their minds on the prospect of battle. "It was a terrific training period and adaptation, we were learning how to use our equipment, not how to use, but to adapt it to a different [situation], we no longer had a hospital bed, we were adapting areas to accommodate areas to accommodate casualties, there were mattresses on the deck, there were covered in areas that we rigged up as theatres."

Royal Marine St Dunstaner Steve Sparkes recalled being taken through the hospitalisation zone on the Canberra. "There were stretchers set up and areas set up as operating theatres," he said, adding that he believed it was part of conditioning the men for the coming conflict.

"It was an interesting time for me because I had never been to sea on a ship before.

QARNNS didn't go to sea, not at that time, it was a different world," said Edith. "So it was a lot of learning for me getting used to the ship.

"I was thinking about things such as sorting out casualties and various classes of system whether they were walking wounded or needed a great deal of attention or attention wouldn't have helped them very much and their injuries were so bad that they wouldn't last long. It was a form of triage, not that the badly injured were going to be left alone but they wouldn't have been top priority if they were dying." Edith recalled her fellow passengers, the Parras and the Royal Marines. "We seemed to be constantly washing their clothes. We had a corridor of washing machines. They were going constantly day and night, the amounts of soap powder were enormous. They were going 24 hours a day and I think the Marines realised there weren't going to be any washing machines where they were going. They were exercising forever, running round decks and things."

Alan Holderness suggests there was a limit to the amount of exercise that could be done, but



Alan Holderness, aged 17, onboard the Canberra.

concedes there was a lot of it. "Everyone grouped at Ascension Islands. While we were waiting, we went ashore for forced marches. It was a weird place, just this great volcanic rock in the middle of the ocean. It was just barren, a terrible place.

"We practised disembarking. The temperature must have been 100 degrees C without the sand. We spent time fishing, trying to catch sharks. There are only so many times you can run around the deck. We just wanted to get on with it."

St Dunstaner Alan "Reg" Perrin describes the Canberra as being luxurious with access to swimming pools and other facilities. "It was a big adventure. I think I was too stupid to realise it was dangerous. I was young without any responsibilities. Getting ready was one big rush. I think I had been around long enough to be known, but nobody stopped to check the records and say 'How old are you?'"

At Ascension, Edith transferred to HMS Uganda. "It had been a school ship

taking masses of school kids on educational cruises, so there were big dormitories that were suitable for putting in patients and we converted other areas into intensive care, x-ray department, pathology, that sort of thing."

May opened with Britain having declared a TEZ or Total Exclusion Zone around the Falkland Islands. South Georgia had already been retaken, but the ante was coming up. The Glamorgan group entered Falklands waters on 1 May and had come under attack before the day was through. They bombarded Stanley airport to provide cover to reconnaissance groups landing on the Island.

Meanwhile, one future St Dunstaner was heading in the other direction. "We started making our way north, escorting the Tidespring which had the Argentinean prisoners onboard," said Terry Bullingham, serving on HMS *Antrim*. They also has the British Antarctic Survey Team onboard and were heading out as the Exocet-armed Argentine Cruiser *General Belgrano* was torpedoed by HMS *Conqueror*. The second largest ship in the Argentine Navy, she was reckoned to

have a crew of 1,000 men. Skirmishes continued over the next few days, with RAF Vulcan bombers targeting Port Stanley. On 4 May, HMS *Sheffield* was hit by an Exocet missile that started a fire that made part of the hull glow white. The crew abandoned ship after some hours of fire fighting. In six days time, it would sink while under tow.

A new peace initiative was launched by the UN on 7 May, the same day, Britain extended the exclusion zone to within 12 nautical miles of Argentina. On the *Antrim*, Terry remembers the debate. "We're going back towards Ascension but we're not quite getting there, we're not getting into the tropical heat and there's all this business about General Haig being a peace maker. We were going into the World Service every hour to hear how it's getting on. We've got this stuff on the public address, listening to Lilly Bolero, and these talks are going on and on..."

"Eventually we handed the Tidespring over to HMS *Arrow* and they carry on escorting it. We don't go back to Ascension! We get sent back down again, this time to the Falklands.

"I remember we had a bit of

a snag on the aircraft, and I was with the boss on a test flight. We were flying above the Task Force. It was quite amazing really, an aerial view. We saw the sleek Type 42s, the Canberra which still looked pretty good, and the old Uganda looked like something from the old days with a Victor funnel, and the Atlantic Conveyor, not knowing that they are all going down in history. From the air, 5,000ft, I can see all the hulls in the water, which is green, and I didn't know the significance to me seeing that Task Force."

The Hospital Ship *Uganda* arrived on 11 May, taking up a station in a Red Cross Box, effectively a neutral zone that they shared with an Argentine ship, *Bahia Paraiso*. The first casualties would arrive next day, casualties from HMS *Sheffield*.

"Casualties usually went to a first aid station that was manned by Royal Marine SBA's – Sick Berth Attendants – which is an old fashioned name for what are now medical attendants," said Edith. "They usually had some form of first aid before they came to us because we were out at sea. We looked after them as best we could. As soon as they were fit to

travel, we then medivaced from *Uganda* to one of the little hydrography ships that were positioned as ships that would take patients to Buenos Aires."

HMS *Glasgow* was holed by 1,000lb bomb and forced to withdraw. Harriers from Hermes mounted further raids. Bad weather dogged the Task Force over the next few days, but aerial bombardment of Port Stanley and other targets resumed.

"When got into the South Atlantic waters things started taking more of an atmosphere," said Alan Holderness. "As the waters got colder it got more realistic. We still thought it wouldn't happen. We wanted it to happen, because we were bored rigid. But as we moved down it got more serious. We got Russian ships shadowing us, air raid sirens all times of the day. When you are on a great white ship in the middle of the ocean they're not going to hit the little slims ones first. They're going to come for you first."

Steve Sparkes adds: "We steamed really fast because the hull of the ship just shook. We got there really quickly. The Navy gave us a demonstration of what they

were capable of, the frigates were turning on a sixpence, leaning right over and firing off as they did so. It gave us peace of mind to know we were protected because we were just a great big white lump. They called us the White Whale. You couldn't miss us, such an easy target."

Alan recalls that they were kept busy. "We had practice drills and false alarms," he said. "If there was an aircraft in the area, we got the warning and we were up on deck manning the machine guns, because we had machine guns fitted up on deck, fixed to the upper fencing. It took on a whole new meaning.

"We must have been in the Exclusion Zone when a reporter had let it slip where we were, that there were 3,000 men on a big white ship waiting to go ashore, so we all disembarked. Most of us got disembarked and went into Fearless and other assault ships before the landing. That were a nightmare because you're trying to jump in with all your kit, your weapon, and everything. The docking area of the Canberra was down here and the LSR was down there and then it was up here and then it

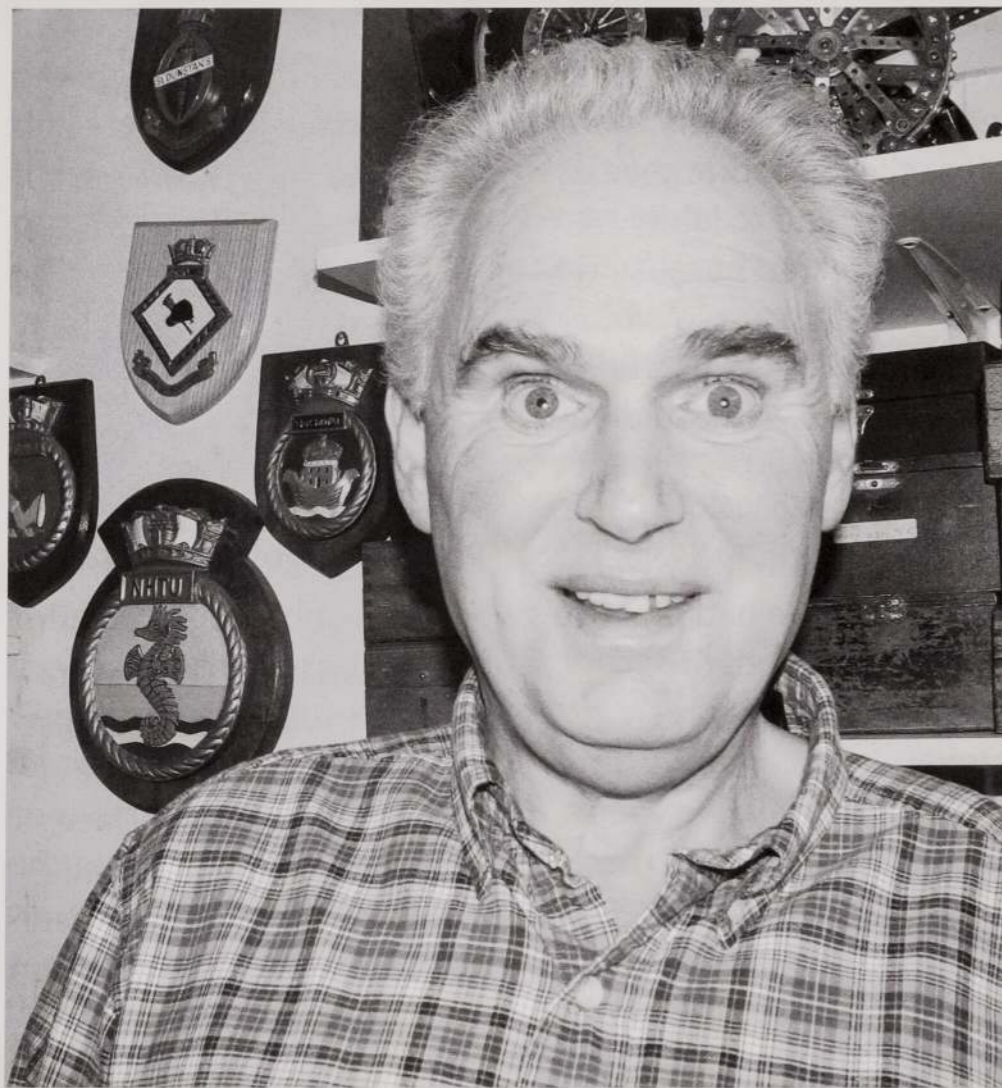


Paul Lightfoot. Lost at sea.

was down here. There were quite a few who ended up in a big snotty heap. One of the blokes I knew, Dave Sturgess, went in and he was luck not to get crushed because he went in between the two boats."

On 19 May, the Cabinet in London gave approval for landings to go ahead. HMS *Glamorgan* began bombarding target between Stanley and Liveley Island. A Sea King helicopter carrying 21 soldiers was lost at sea. Amongst them was Lance Corporal Paul Lightfoot who had transferred to 264 SAS Signal Squadron in 1979. The 21-year-old was the grandson of St Dunstaner Percy Stubbs.

The next day would prove significant on several fronts. It saw the start of the Royal Air Force's first offensive mission flown from a carrier



Terry Bullingham, with Antrim's shield behind him.

since 1918. HMS *Glamorgan* started bombarding the south coast as a diversion for events in Falkland Sound. It was not entirely successful.

"On May 20th we go in at night, coming down between East and West Falklands," said Terry Bullingham. "We had all these people on the ship, these SAS and SBS men, we knew they had swapped their ranks. We had the Officers in the Chief's Mess and the NCO's in the Ward Room and they were serious minded. I remember going back to

get my book on night watch and one of them is sleeping in my bed and under the pillow was a revolver. In the middle of the ship! And he was sleeping with a firearm! So they never relax!

"We put them ashore with the helicopter at Fanning Head, this hill, later realising there was a company there was a company of Argentine Marines on this hill. Eventually there were only about 14 of them left. We started firing on the hill with a 4.5. Looking up from the hanger

we could see the two barrels pumping them out every 15-20 seconds. I remember the thing, 'Fire for effect'. And that got Argies running down the hill. And with SAS and SBS, all the knives and grenades, long hair, these were real fighting soldiers.

"We go on down with six other ships. We had stayed on ZULU time thinking it would confuse the Argies. They did their early morning strike and it was about 11 o'clock with us."

The *Antrim* and other ships came under fire. "They were bombing us! We were distracted and we see these flashes of 500-pounders going into the Ardent. There are flashes and smoke and that concentrates the mind a bit. And then it was our turn.

"I had gone into the hanger offices and I heard this 'whack' and the whole ship reverberated. Four skyhawks had come up the arse end and one of them had put a 1,000lb bomb right down the sea slug missile launchers. Through the flap, where it had rattled around, went through the bulkhead and ended up in the afterheads. As it bounced around in the head, it had hit the deckheads and brought

up a bloody great lump like a mole hill.

"Now as we were all a bit green, we thought it had gone off and this was heat. It hadn't gone off because they hadn't fused it properly. Thank God! If it had gone off that would have been it for us. We were looking at this lump and get the fire hoses coming out, because the routine in that kind of situation is to swap the flight deck down with water to keep it cool.

"And there were a pair of Mirages following the attack, coming down at right angles, so fast you can't really track them. They're like the Red Arrows. The stars on the side, and I suppose they were both firing, but I only remember the one line of cannon shot coming straight towards me. I had the Flight Commander on deck and he got hit in the arm and the aircrewman on my right, he got hit. And it was just a sickening smack in your head. And there's a ringing in your head. Next thing I was on the ground and that was it.

"I did a quick mental check and think the body's alright. I could hear a screaming noise and the doctor gets to me and gave me some

morphine I think and says 'I want this man off the ship'.

"I think all about a dozen off us were hit. I could hear the footsteps and we all ended up on the Ward room floor lying on the carpet. I was going in and out with the morphine at this stage, but I remember the noise of these attacks and the cannon going. "I remember being taken by shipmates on stretcher with others to the flight deck. And a Sea King came and our flight deck was too small for a Sea King so it put one wheel on the deck and were all shoved in.

"We ended up on *Canberra* just off the flight deck. I was on there for about four hours and the medics decided to operate. I think was one of the first they operated on. This happened three times to me, but I had an out of body experience, floating around and I was quite happy to die. I was happy to drift away. I suppose this must be what it's like when you go.

"I came back to the body and I could hear people talking and they took bits of shrapnel out." Terry indicates a gash on his arm, still prominent 25 years on. At a slightly different angle it could have left him

without a forearm. "But the thing was, it was the eyes! And I remember this bastard from *The Sun* came up and said 'How do you feel?' So I told him!"

May 21 was D-Day for the Royal Marines and Paras at Port San Carlos. "We steamed in the early hours of the morning," said Royal Marine Lance Corporal Steve Sparkes. "We could see land and started getting ammoed up. We went in Port San Carlos – Bomb Alley! They very cleverly got the *Canberra* under a ridge. The SBS had done the reconnaissance work and they parked the *Canberra* under the edge of this ridge. So when the enemy aircraft started coming in they couldn't drop their bombs on us, much as they tried!

"They were just coming over the top us and landing in the sea, they couldn't get to us, but the minute we went in there the air strikes just kept coming and coming! It was quite impressive though, the defence missile systems were amazing.

"We ammoed up with grenades and unloaded ourselves on the beach. There were choppers going in and the first wave of landing craft.

We hurtled in as there were still aircraft coming over. They kept coming. So we landed and the first casualty was a helicopter that was brought down in Port San Carlos. They were shot down and the pilot and co-pilot were killed.

"We rushed through the water, formed a square and advanced up. We had a couple of enemy casualties but once they saw the force of us they just started to run away. It was all so quick. We took a couple of prisoners.

"There was a house and they were firing from a machine gun in it. We secured that, then we advanced about a kilometre up the valley and secured a bridgehead. Support came in behind us with the RAF and Rapier anti-air missile systems. That was our saviour because once they were rigged up, the RAF Regiment were brilliant. Everything that flew over us they took out.

"The first night was horrendous because it never stopped raining. As fast as we dug in, it filled up with water. It was peaty, so we had to abandon the idea of digging in and built shelters with rocks. It was freezing, we were soaked to the skin and we stayed like that all

night because we were expecting an enemy attack. But it never came that night."

The rain stopped, but a clear sky brought other dangers. "It was a nice sunny morning," said Steve "We secured the area in the morning and the ship was unloading stores at the bottom and it was quite secure. We started sending out patrols. I was in charge of the gun, so I stripped it down, because I was Lance Corporal in charge of the gun, the worst possible time I'd stripped it down and the air raid warning went. And as soon as the warning went I started to put it together and I didn't even have five seconds. This Mirage came up the valley and I could see the pilots face and I'm trying to put this gun together and it shot past. He was slow close I could have shook his hand. I will never forget how close he was. He didn't drop any bombs because he didn't have any. He just flew off into the distance. He got away because he was flying under the radar systems of the Rapier, they were looking up and he just came in close to the ground."

That flyby didn't cause any damage, but others were not so fortunate. "A chopper

got brought down, that just happened to have my large pack in it with my bags, with chocolate and stuff, and spare kit. Everything had gone!" exclaimed Steve. "They had packed on, so I'd lost everything, my sleeping bag, spare socks, ammunition and ration packs. All I had was my front order, three pairs of socks, ammunition and 24 ration packs. "So day one, I had no what you call home comforts and there was no spare. I was sharing a sleeping bag with a mate of mine, Billy Boan, a gunner. We were sleeping back-to-back because it got so cold. I was wearing a pair of socks under my groin, a pair of socks under my armpits and a pair on. I used to rotate them around because they got soaking wet every day."

On 23 May, in a strike that echoed the events that blinded Terry, two Skyhawks fired two bombs into HMS *Antelope*. One port side, the other starboard, though that plane collided with the ship's mast and blew up. Neither bomb exploded until Bomb Disposal Officers attempted to use a small diffusing charge. Staff Sergeant Prescott was killed while Warrant Officer Phillips lost an arm. It was one of

the first items of news that Terry would hear as he regained consciousness on the Canberra.

The explosion started a series of fires and the 175 crew abandoned her in San Carlos waters. "We had to watch the *Antelope* burn," said Alan "That was horrendous. You see the film footage of that aircraft coming in, that's what we were watching, every now and again they would deviate the path. The thing is they had set up Blindfire Rapier and we were led to believe it would be hunky-dory, but it never worked, the radar just never worked. We were getting told air raid red when they were on you. That was fairly hairy.

"I got blown up. I was punted about 30 yards through the air. It was actually one of our equipment repairers Mac McAndrews. I was his No2 on his GPMG. I'd got moved across. We'd regrouped, I got moved across and put with the group I wouldn't have normally been with and he got killed. A bomb landed at the side of his trench and killed him." Alan gulps as he says that. "You're there but for the grace of god and all that. And you do wonder -

because you would normally have been in that trench or around that trench.

"But in that bit of San Carlos, you are sitting getting your kit ready, you are looking out and the ships are in the Sound, it's a lovely clear day and you see these aircraft coming over the hills and you're thinking 'They must be Harriers'. You carry on cleaning and you still think they are Harriers. It's like everything is in slow motion. You can see the pilots in the cockpit. You see them come in and there's the dawning realisation that they're not Harriers or RAF, and there's big long silver tube with a parachute coming out the end and you're thinking 'He's come to blow you up.' It just goes slow motion until you hear the first bang and then there's a great flurry of activity because we'd all been caught out in the open.

"Normally they'd attack the ships first, but this time they had just cut straight for the settlement and there's a massive scramble to get to your position and into the trench. My trench was on the other side of this peat hill. The first wave came through, there were big explosions, canon fire across the ground.

"There was a big explosion, I got lifted off my feet and ended up in a big snotty heap and thought I had lost my left leg. I just couldn't feel anything! From the hip down it was numb. I was dragged into my trench. There was a Corporal and a Colour Sergeant. I was panicking. 'I can't feel my leg, I've been injured.' There was blood on my leg and I was panicking, so he gave me a good slap to calm me down and wiped the blood off my leg and there was this tiny little hole. So it was put on a bit of field dressing and get on with it. There were no lumps of metal, it was just a hole."

Meanwhile Steve Sparkes and his unit were on the move. "After about 48 hours we started to yomp forward as a spearhead. We came under enemy fire. We sent out patrols probing, so there were a lot of enemy contacts. We sussed out from Intelligence that they were based on Mount Kent. Apart from the landing, this would be the next real assault. Special Forces had done a recce on it and we were ordered to go in

"We picked up our helicopters - the pilots were wearing night vision goggles - and we flew out

and we supposed to get to an RV where the SAS were going to meet us and take us up to a position up the mountain. The weather was atrocious; they got us there but couldn't land, so we had to abandon it that night."

The mission was remounted the next night. "It was perfect," said Steve. "We flew in by choppers and landed on the bottom of this mountain and assaulted as a unit in the extended light. We had a lot of enemy contact but we didn't lose a bloke that night. We had some casualties and took prisoners. The majority

just ran away, they were dropping their helmets, just abandoned leaving their stuff and going over the hill and scarpered.

"When we secured the mountain, we realised what we had achieved because there must have been hundreds up there. We must have taken 40 kills probably. That started a snowball effect, another unit would move, the Paras, 45 Commando, 2 Para, 3 Para. You could hear the other attacks going on. We were holed up in our position, they would attack another position, so

we were sweeping through the islands."

On 25 May, HMS *Coventry* and the *Atlantic Conveyor* were both hit and soon sunk. By the 28th, the Paras began their assault on Goose Green. By the next day, they would take twice their number in prisoners.

As May closed, the Task Force felt confident enough to bring the Uganda into Falkland Sound, the channel between the main islands, and pick up casualties from Ajax Bay. However, the war was not yet over ...

REUNION ROUND-UP Reports on the most recent area reunions

The Derby Reunion united 33 St Dunstaners and three widows at the Midland Hotel, Derby on 21 March. St Dunstaner Jamie Weller was the Member of Council presiding, while St Dunstaner Noel Walsh gave a vote of thanks in reply.

The Middlesbrough Reunion saw 27 St Dunstaners and three widows gathered at the Thistle Hotel, Middlesbrough on 28 March. Grace was said by St Dunstaner Rev David Youngson and St Dunstaner Ruby Corner made the

speech in reply to Andrew Lyburn who was the member of St Dunstan's Council presiding.

The Brighton (II) Reunion united 22 St Dunstaners and eight widows at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 4 April. David Knowles was the member of St Dunstan's Council presiding and Nigel Whitely made the reply on behalf of those attending. He thanked St Dunstan's staff members working behind the scenes, such as Surveyors, Accounts, and Welfare but had particular praise for

the wives and husbands of St Dunstaners.

The Cambridge Reunion united 36 St Dunstaners and seven widows at the Soham Lodge Hotel, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire on 12 April. The Lady Victoria Walker made her debut as a presiding Member of Council and St Dunstaner Daniel Laplain made the reply.

Do we include enough detail in reunion reports? Let us know what you would like us to feature. Write to the Review at Harcourt Street.

Welcome to St Dunstan's

John Badger-Smith of Enstone, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1936 to 1950.

Basil Beresford of Burntwood, Staffordshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1950.

Gordon Bolton of Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

Rex Boreham of Hailsham, East Sussex served as Sergeant in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946 which included time as a POW. He rejoined a few months later, serving until 1952.

Albert Bradley of Norwich, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Robert Bromley of Muswell Hill, London served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1943.

James Callan of Loughborough, Leicestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Alfred Churchley of Plymouth, Devon served in the King's Own Scottish Borderers from 1932 to 1946.

Reginald Claiden of Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Robert Cole of Cramlington, Northumberland served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

Daniel Corbett of Halifax, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

Audrey Denney of Kendal, Cumbria served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

William Doran of Sunderland, Tyne & Wear served in the Royal Engineers from 1958 to 1963.

Benjamin Dyer of Angmering, Littlehampton, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

John Firth of Brighouse, West Yorkshire served as LAC in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

William Fuller of Hove, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

John Hadnum of Bangor,

County Down served in the Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Tank Regiment between 1977 and 1984.

Arthur Hanna of Thornborough, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Air Force in the UK from 1944 to 1947.

John Henderson of Blantyre, Glasgow served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1954.

Sidney Holder of Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire served in the Gloucestershire Regiment and Royal Artillery between 1937 and 1943.

Charles Houghton of Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

James Insch of Corby, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Alexander Lawson of Notting Hill, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1947.

Ralph Jenkin of Boston, Lincolnshire served in the RAF from 1940 to 1946.

Albert Long of Horley, Surrey served in the Merchant Navy in 1940 and then the Royal Air Force until 1942.

Phyllis MacMullen of Hunstanton, Norfolk served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1943.

Samuel Martin of Silverdale, Newcastle, Staffordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Hugh Megarry of Belfast, County Antrim served in the Royal Irish Rangers from 1967 to 1968.

Geoffrey Orton of Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1971.

George Parrish of Emsworth, Hampshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Artillery between 1944 and 1966.

John Patterson of North Shields, Tynemouth, Northumberland served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1962 to 1966 and in the TA from 1971 to 1972.

Tony Peluso of Walton-on-Thames, Surrey served in the

Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1945.

Donald Pilgrim of Braunstone, Leicestershire served in the Royal Marines from 1943 to 1946.

Ivan Pitchford of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Signals from 1956 to 1959.

Eric Prebble of Clevedon, Avon served in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and the Royal Air Force between 1941 and 1945.

Gladys Ranger of Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Arthur Reynolds of Preston, Lancashire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Ordnance Corps between 1945 and 1948.

Kenneth Saltmer of Anlaby, Hull served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1950 to 1958.

Eric Sass of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Irish Guards from 1945 to 1948.

Mary Stocks of Edinburgh served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

Edward Swainston of Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

Tom Thomas of Bognor Regis, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1949.

Robert Tuson of Exeter, Devon served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Perry Vaughan of Newport, Gwent served in the Royal Navy from 1975 to 1978.

Frank Warwick of Bury Green, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire served in the Pioneer Corps and the West Kent Regiment between 1944 and 1947.

Peter Webster of Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire served in the Merchant Navy from 1935 to 1943.

Rudolph Wessely of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1945.

John Williams of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1946.

Frank Wooldridge of Bromley, Kent served in the Inns of Court Regiment and then the Royal Engineers between 1938 and 1946.

POETS' CORNER

The RIB

(with apologies to Pam Ayres)

By Jean Rowe

I've been bounced up the English Channel
Dominos and whist not for me
(This week anyway)
Don the oilskins, the wellies, the lifejacket
I'm going to sea.

Stiffen the sinews
Crank up the engine
My nether regions are aching and bending
Riding pillion in oilskins
The wrinkles are lashed with spray
Leave the sick bag behind
Lean over the side.
A nautical life for me.

Our blind driver, yes!
He has done it before. Praise be!
Give him a ticket for speeding
And a medal for going to sea
With us silly silver surfers
After a thrill and a bruise or two.

Mind the pier, is it the M25?
Watch that buoy!
Joy! Land ahoy!
Open the throttle
Andrew and Mark are testing out mettle!

Back to harbour
Safe and sound
Pity it's all over
Now we're aground!
Well done. Thanks.

Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 10.

1) Violin; **2)** Saxophone;
3) Mandolin; **4)** Cymbals;
5) *Peter and the Wolf*; **6)** True, in the film the piano was actually played by a Warner Brothers musician. Both Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald were considered for the Dooley Wilson role. Clarence Muse auditioned for the part and finally got to play it in a 1955 tv series. George Raft, Gary Cooper and Ronald Reagan were considered for the part of Ric Blaine played by Humphrey Bogart; **7)** Holly; **8)** Lyre; **9)** Bagpipes; and **10)** Trombone.

Family News

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Holly Ann Berisford on 31 December. She is the sixth great-grandchild of Alan and Margaret Naylor of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

Raveena Bailey on 31 December. She is the granddaughter of Margaret and George Bailey of Brighton. Raveena means princess, appropriate since her mother's name is Rani which means queen.

Jessica Carol on 1 April. She is the granddaughter of Billy and Karen Baxter of Ely, Cambridgeshire.

RUBY ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Cyril and Mary Pinfold of Dunsville, Doncaster, Yorkshire on 25 March.

Alan and Joan Wortley of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 28 March.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Albert and Margaret Prior of Hove, East Sussex on 11 April.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Percy and Phyliss Kirby of Fakenham, Norfolk on 22 March.

Graham and Alice Murrin of Warminster, Wiltshire on 27 March.

Aubrey and Ena Jones of Dunstable, Bedfordshire on 29 March.

Henry and Dolly Jones of Birmingham, West Midlands on 29 March.

Bernard and Jeanne Barton of Rottingdean, East Sussex on 5 April.

Robert and Peggy Davies of Weymouth, Dorset on 5 April.

Albert and Florrie Hodges of Leyland, Preston, Lancashire on 5 April.

Patrick and Helena Feeney of Southwick, West Sussex on 11 April.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Trevor and Joan Phillips of White Rock, Paignton, Devon on 20 March who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 20 March.

Hugh and Mary Hartley of Swanmore, Southampton, Hampshire who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 24 March.

Betty and Bill Nairn of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 25 March.

Arthur and Mabel Porter of Bignor Regis, West Sussex who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 4 April.

Howard and Joyce Edgar of Carlisle, Cumbria who celebrated 68 years of marriage on 8 April.

Jim and Margaret Knowles of Darfield, Barnsley, South Yorkshire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 8 April.

Eric and Grace Beck of Clacton-on-Sea, Essex who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 10 April.

Thomas and Edith Mcloughlin of Spital, Wirral, Merseyside who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 10 April.

Doug and Gwen White-Howles of East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 14 April.

Sandy and Sydney Spring of Chalfont, Amersham Buckinghamshire who celebrated 67 years of marriage on 16 April.

Charles and Gladys Pay of Senacre, Maidstone, Kent who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 17 April.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Valerie Harper on 17 March. She was the wife of Len Harper of Gosport, Hampshire.

Barbara Trout on 17 March. She was the wife of Les Trout of Feltham, Middlesex.

Irene Gower on 10 April. She was the wife of Clifford Gower of Westbury, Wiltshire.

Dorothy Beard of West Molesey, Surrey on 6 March. She was the widow of Francis Beard.

Edgar Cox of Cardiff, South Glamorgan on 21 March. He was the widower of Elisabeth Cox.

"Sally" Grace Slade of Aldwick, Bognor Regis, West Sussex on 8 April. She was the widow of Ex-POW St Dunstaner William Slade who she first met at Ovingdean.

Our sympathy goes to their family and friends.

In Memory

Alfred Mullen

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Alfred Mullen of Worcester, Worcestershire died on 16 March, aged 94. He was a farm labourer after leaving school and spent two years in Canada. He joined the Worcestershire Regiment in 1934 and Trained at Norton Barracks. He served in Tientsin, China for eight months and was then posted to Sialkot in India. He also served in Rawalpindi, Waziristan, Manduri, Madras and Burma. In 1944, he transferred to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and fought through Europe with the Glider Forces. After a crash in Holland, he was hospitalised in France. Demobbed in 1946, he became a painter and decorator. His interests included gardening. Our sympathy goes to his sons Keith and Stephen, daughters Jean and Kathleen and all members of the family.

Deva Barrett

Women's Royal Naval Service

Margaret Deva Barrett of Westminster, London died on 17 March, aged 83. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942 and trained as a Writer. She was posted to Scotland and later to Egypt, India, Sri Lanka and Singapore. Returning to the UK in 1946, she was posted to Devonport. Promoted to Petty Officer, she went to Arbroath, working for Rear Admiral (Reserve Aircraft). Discharged in 1949, she became secretary to a Mayfair director and later worked for the US Navy in Grosvenor Square. She worked for the International Planned Parenthood Federation before retiring. Her interests included tennis, theatre, and travelling.

Joan Shreeve

Auxiliary Territorial Service

Joan Kathleen Shreeve nee Chapman of Norwich, Norfolk died on 20 March, aged 90. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1939. After working as a cook, she became a pay clerk at Britannia Barracks in Norwich. She married in 1941 and her husband, a member of the Royal Norfolk Regiment was a prisoner of war in the Far East. Discharged in 1945, she worked for Norwich Union and raised a family. Her interests included reading, embroidery, knitting and gardening. She was also committed to the Brownie and Guide movement. Our sympathy goes to her sons and all members of the family.

Bill Mephram

Royal Engineers

William Henry John Mephram of Cross-in-Hand, Heathfield, East Sussex died on 21 March, aged 96. He was a lorry driver before

joining the Royal Engineers in 1940. Initially, he was posted to France, but after the evacuation, he was deployed with 1st Field Squadron to North Africa. Taken prisoner at Tobruk in 1942, he was moved through Italy to Germany. He was held in Leipzig, forced to work on repairing the railway lines that would carry German Jews to extermination camps in Poland. Expressing his dissatisfaction in earshot of an English-speaking German officer earned him a period in a punishment camp. He also suffered shrapnel wounds to the head when the Allies bombed Leipzig Railway Station. He was liberated in May 1945 and returned to the UK for discharge later that year. He became a handyman in Bexhill and later at Holy Cross Priory where his wife was housekeeper.

Major Harry Rawkins

Army Physical Training Corps

Major Harry Frederick Rawkins of Bedford, Bedfordshire died on 22 March, aged 94. He had worked for the Charles Wells Brewery and Prudential Insurance before joining the Army in 1941. He was posted to 163 OCTU and commissioned later that year. He joined the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment and was deployed to the Shetland Islands and then the Orkney Islands. Transferring to the East Yorkshire Regiment, he was promoted to Captain as he moved into Europe. He was involved in the liberation of Ootmarsum in Holland and the advance to Bremen. After the war, he was promoted to Major and given a regular commission in The Green Howards, serving in Singapore and then Kenya during the Mau-Mau uprising. He later joined the Army Physical Training Corps at Aldershot until retiring in 1968. His interests included rugby and

cricket. Our sympathy goes to his daughters and all members of the family.

Norman Hodgson

Royal Signals

Norman Hodgson of Ulverston, Cumbria died on 27 March, aged 69. He was a car mechanic before joining the Royal Signals in 1955. He trained at Catterick and was then posted to Preston where he trained as a despatch rider. Discharged in 1958, he resumed work as a car mechanic but later became a lorry driver. He retired after breaking his ribs falling from a lorry. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family

Harold Beevis

Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Harold Edmund Beevis of Rottingdean, East Sussex died on 28 March, aged 90. He joined the AMP Corps when called up in 1940, but after four months, transferred to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Discharged in 1946, he became a clerk for an engineering firm and later a furniture removal company. His interests included ballroom dancing and poetry. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Julie and all the family.

Len Gunnell

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Leonard Gunnell of Witherley, Atherstone, Warwickshire died on 30 March, aged 87. He joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1939 and transferred to the Royal Engineers in 1940. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps during 1942 then as Craftsman in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He was deployed on radar and coastal defence in Europe and Northern Ireland until discharged in 1946. In civilian life, he was an engineering

draughtsman until sight loss forced his retirement. He took an interest in pottery, woodwork and religion and started writing a book, dictating his thoughts onto tape. Our sympathy goes to his widow Betty, daughter Maxine and all other members of the family.

Dennis Mills

Royal Armoured Corps

Dennis Frederick Mills of Astley Village, Chorley, Lancashire died on 5 April, aged 83. He was a messenger boy in the War Office prior to joining the Royal Armoured Corps in 1946. He trained at Barnard Castle, Lulworth and Bovington and was then posted to Lubeck, Germany. After his discharge in 1948, he rejoined the Ministry of Defence. His interests included fly-fishing golf and caravanning. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dorothy and all other members of the family.

Maurice Bridgman

Royal Pioneer Corps

Frederick 'Maurice' Bridgman of Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands died on 8 April, aged 84. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1941. In 1942, he transferred to the Pioneer Corps and was promoted to sergeant. Discharged in 1946, he worked for the War Pensions Office and then the Surgical Boot Company. He then joined the Birmingham Post until retirement. His interests included cricket, football and driving. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Linda and all the family.

Jessie Gallagher

Auxiliary Territorial Service

Jessie Margaret Gallagher nee Dunkley of Kettering, Northamptonshire died on

8 April, aged 89. She worked in a clothing factory before joining the Expeditionary Forces Institute, working around the UK and becoming manager of an EFI outlet. In 1944, she transferred to the Auxiliary Territorial Service and was posted to Italy. She was discharged as Sergeant in 1947 and joined the NAAFI managing various canteens until she married. She travelled to Russia, China and India and enjoyed knitting, sewing, baking, DIY and decorating. She was a member of Toller United Reform Church and attended meetings of the Salvation Army. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

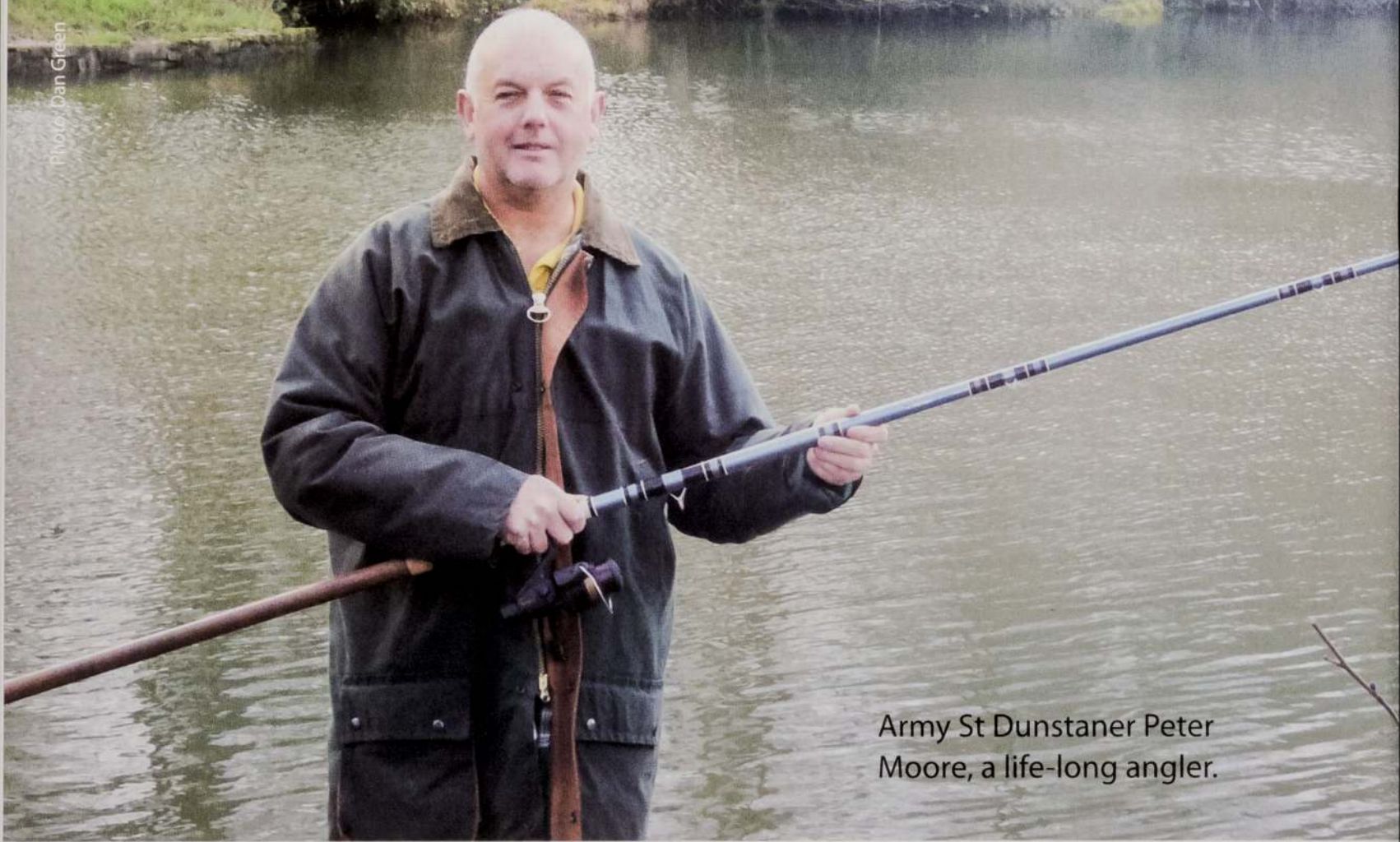
Dennis Hope

Royal Navy

Dennis Hope of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire died on 11 April, aged 85. He joined the Royal Navy at HMS *Victory* in 1941 and trained an Engine Room Artificer. He was serving on the Flower class corvette HMS *Arbutus* when it was torpedoed by U136 on 5 February 1942. As the ship's own depth charges exploded, he was pushed into the water by a shipmate. Thirty survivors spent eight hours in life rafts before being picked up. He was then conscripted into the submarine service. While training, his boat H34 got stuck on the bottom of the Irish Sea, though it eventually broke free. He later transferred to Destroyers and was serving on HMS *Talybont* when it landed American Rangers on Omaha Beach in 1944. The ship was later on patrol in the Middle East before his discharge in 1946. In civilian life, he studied as an Engineer and became a member of the Institute of Builders. His interests included painting, antiques, politics, and golf. Our sympathy goes to his son and daughter and all other members of the family.

Peter hopes to get you hooked!

Photo: Dan Green



Army St Dunstaner Peter Moore, a life-long angler.

ST DUNSTANER Peter Moore is hoping to get people hooked on fishing in his new career as a fishing coach. Peter, and business partner John Beddis, recently set up DACE (Dean Angling and Coaching Enterprises) with the aim of bringing the joys of coarse fishing to a range of corporate and educational customers. Already he has reeled in Gloucestershire County Association of the Blind and local schools for tuition sessions in the tranquil Forest of Dean.

He sees much of his business coming from local youth groups, but adds that fishing is a sport for all ages. "You get mirror carp, common carp, and crucian carp, barbel, bream, tench, roach and rudd amongst other fish here," said Peter. "They are all edible but we always put them back."

Peter and John have organised a taster weekend for 5-6 May at the Dean Heritage Centre, Camp Mill, Soudley, Forest of Dean and allcomers are welcome.

"We will be in the Old Mill pool and people can just turn up." Peter believes that he is the first blind National level 2 angling coach. He was put through 60 hours of theoretical and practical examinations with a further 16 hours of practical work in the field. "Each one of those hours required three to four hours preparation." He is already working on the next stage. Anyone making use of Peter's expertise can expect a grounding in fishing and advice on taking care of the local environment.