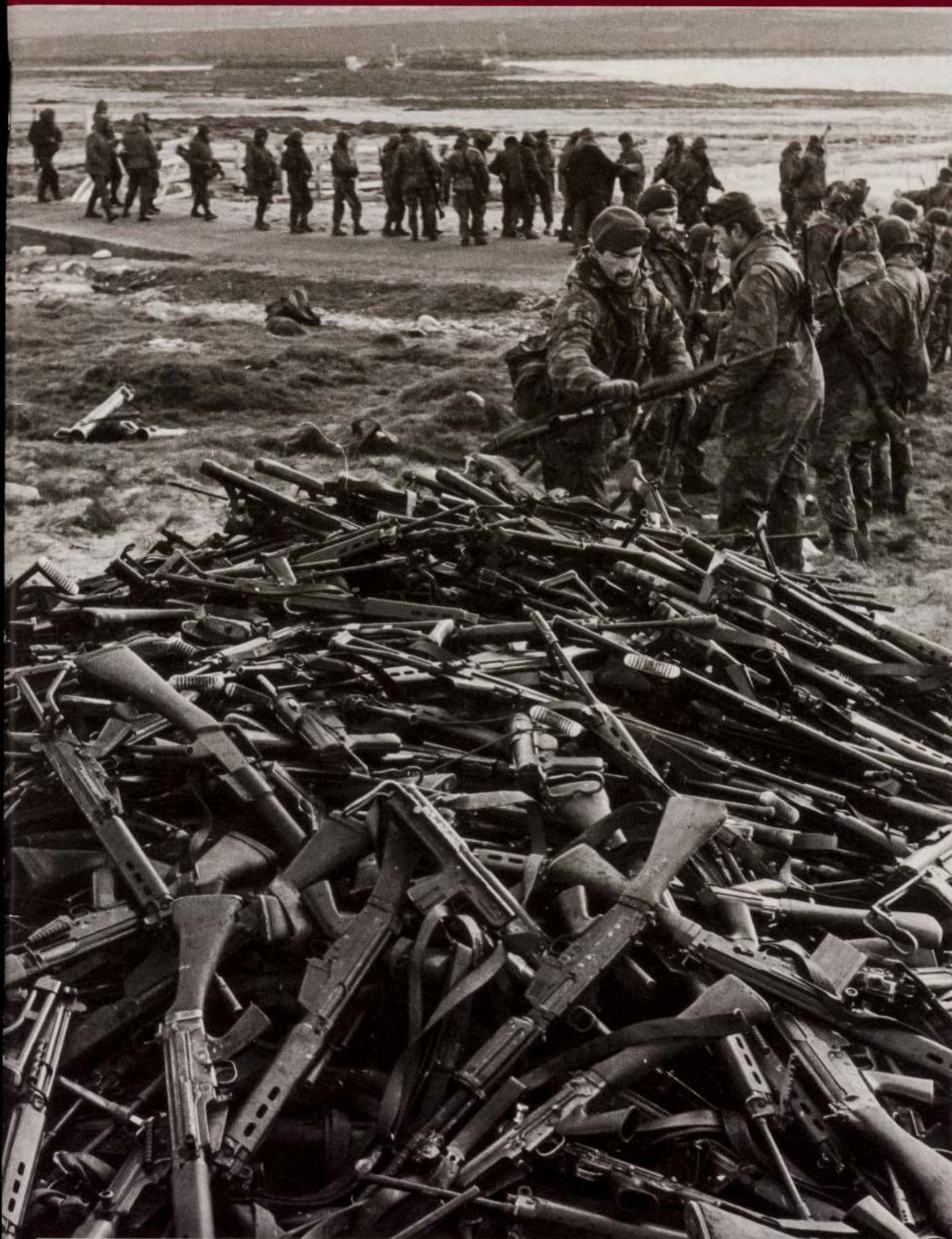


# St Dunstan's Review

VETERANS DAY  
27 JUNE



## STRIDING THE WORLD

From Meridian to Mall,  
Marathon report inside!



## HANDLESS REUNION 07

Billy and Gwen recall  
good times and friends!

  
**FALKLANDS 25**

## FALKLANDS REGAINED

Royal Marines in Port Stanley collected  
firearms from Argentine troops after they  
surrendered in June 1982.



**St Dunstan's**

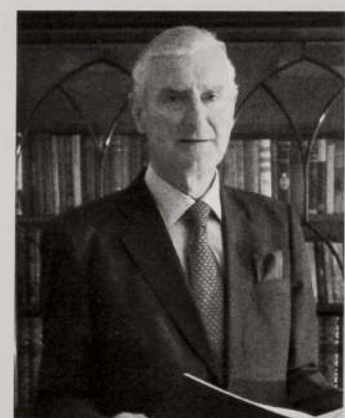
An independent future for blind  
ex-Service men and women

**June 2007**



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

## Calendar



MY ADMIRATION and congratulations to those St Dunstaners, staff and friends of St Dunstan's who competed in the London Marathon on our behalf. To take part, let alone finish, in such conditions is truly to be admired. Well done!

There is one section of our staff who are rarely mentioned, because they 'come to life' as we go to bed. I refer to the night staff, the nurses, care assistants, and security at Ovingdean and Sheffield, who all work away while we slumber. Our thanks to these unsung and for the most part, unseen heroes.

In the May **Review**, I referred to the inconveniences faced by the staff at Headquarters. Of course, now that building work is finished at Ovingdean and soon to be at Sheffield, I can add that both St Dunstaners (permanent residents and visitors) and staff at Brighton and Sheffield were similarly 'put to the test'. Everyone has shown a great deal of tolerance and I am grateful to them all as well.

**Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN**

### 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

### JULY

- 1st No Smoking at Ovingdean
- 5th-8th Writers Forum Weekend
- 13th Outdoor Bowling
- 15th-21st Ladies' Reunion
- 16th Indoor Bowling
- 18th Band of the Royal Marines
- 27th-4th Aug HMS Sultan

### AUGUST

- 2nd Outdoor Bowling

**June 2007 No 969**

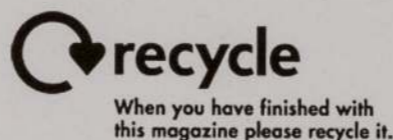
## St Dunstan's Review

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# Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information

## OVINGDEAN ACCOMMODATION

**BOOK HOLIDAYS VIA JACKIE:** Anyone wishing to book or enquire about holiday accommodation at Ovingdean, please, contact Jackie Castle on 01273 391422 or e-mail jackie.castle@st-dunstans.org.uk. Please do not attempt to send to bookings through the St Dunstan's website using the enquiries e-mail facility as this will take some time to filter through to the correct person.

It is preferable if you can get through by phone as the bookings team can discuss the options with you. Remember this is only if you are able to occupy a 'holiday' bed. If you have care needs (nursing or personal) that you want Ovingdean to meet or if you are booking for Christmas and New Year, the booking must be made through your Welfare Officer who will liaise with the Ovingdean bookings team. The procedure for Christmas and New Year bookings will be promulgated in the August **Review**.

## CANCELLATIONS AT OVINGDEAN

**CANCELLATION AND AMENDMENT FEES:** We fully understand that changes happen and, sometimes, at short notice for reasons beyond one's control like illness. However, cancellations including leaving early can have spoiled someone else's chance

of a holiday or training. Amendments, likewise, cause additional work and potential disappointment. In cases of non-emergency cancellation, a fee may be levied as detailed below:

1 month's notice or more	No charge
2-4 weeks' notice	£25
Under 14 days' notice or leaving early	£50
Amendments made after a booking has been confirmed.	£5

Those leaving early will be expected to make their own transport arrangements though we will be able to provide details of the taxi company that we sometimes use.

Of course, these charges will be waived in cases of exceptional circumstance or illness. If you do have to cancel at very short notice knowing that a driver will otherwise pick you up, then you must phone Ovingdean Reception on 01273 391400 or 307811 (the line is always manned) and let us know. Leaving an ansaphone message or sending an e-mail will not usually be successful, especially outside of normal working hours.

## EX-POW REUNION 2008

**DATE SET:** St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoner of War Group will meet at St Dunstan's Ovingdean once more on 4-7 April 2008.



## SMOKING LAW COMES TO ENGLAND AND WALES IN JULY

ONE MONTH TO STUB OUT THOSE FAGS: As of 1 July this year, smoking will not be possible in enclosed places. Virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England and Wales will become smokefree. Similar legislation came into effect in Northern Ireland on 30 April and in Scotland on 26 March last year.

You won't be able to smoke in: pubs, bars, nightclubs, cafes, restaurants, membership clubs and shopping centres; public transport and work vehicles used by more than one person and indoor smoking rooms will not be allowed. The law introduces a fixed penalty of £50 for individuals convicted of smoking in a smoke-free place.

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 the ban 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.gosmokefree.co.uk](http://www.gosmokefree.co.uk) can also be used to find local therapy services using their postcode search facility. Mobile phone users can text GIVE UP with their full postcode to 88088.

## VETERANS DAY IN BIRMINGHAM

NATIONAL EVENT GOES NORTH: The United Kingdom's celebration of Veterans' contribution to our nation will be presented by the City of Birmingham this year. They have five-days of public and civic events planned. They start on Veterans Day - Wednesday 27 June with a Ceremony to add names to the Book of Remembrance at the Hall of Memory: Centenary Square, Birmingham. It will be attended by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham and civic dignitaries.

An exhibition, dubbed Military Vehicles through the decades will be held in Victoria Square, Birmingham. This includes Services Recruitment stands, VA, Royal British Legion stands, workshops and interaction with Veterans. Free of charge, it will be open from noon to 17:00 between 27-30 June.

There will also be a daily Lunchtime Concert at Chamberlain Square. Free of Charge, it will be held noon to 14:00.

Between 14:00-17:00 each day, the BBC Big Screen at Chamberlain Square will devote three hours of video to Veterans material with a different period featured each day. On Saturday 30 June there will be a Public Fireworks Finale on Centenary Square at 22:45.

On Sunday 1 July, from noon to 17:00, the City of Birmingham Pipe Band Championships 2007 will be held in Centenary Square with a Veterans Day theme.

All events and timings are subject to alteration so check local press for updates and details of other Veterans Day events at libraries and art museums.

## STAYING AT THE UNION JACK CLUB

LETTER REQUIRED: In the May *Review*, we reported that the Union Jack Club is offering members rates to St Dunstaners. If you wish to book at the club, written proof of entitlement is required so please contact Joan Henlon or Barbara Sweeney at St Dunstan's HQ in good time on 020 7723 5021 who will send you the required letter.

## FEPOW MEMORIAL AT ALREWAS

PERMANENT FAR EAST PRISONER EXHIBITION AT NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM: The Far East Prisoners of War Memorial Building serves as a unique living and lasting focus of remembrance for those who lost their lives or suffered as prisoners in the Far East during the Second World War. The shape of the building represents the huts that many FEPOWs lived in, while the Java Memorial Windows are replicas of those found in the St George's Chapel on Java. Close by is the original Changi Lychgates made by FEPOWs in Changi Gaol, Singapore. It formed the entrance to the burial ground through which all deceased were taken. The gates were brought to the UK in 1972. Also nearby are sections of the Burma and Sumatra Railway tracks.

The Memorial building was built by the Children and Families of the Far East Prisoners of War (COFEPOW) and is in the Arboretum West, near the entrance of the National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AR. It is open 10:00 to 17:00 each day. Telephone 01283 792333. More details can be found on [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) or [memorialtreesuk.org.uk](http://memorialtreesuk.org.uk).

## STARS SUPPORT ST DUNSTAN'S FOR DUMBARTON AUCTION

SHOES, SCREWDRIVERS AND CELEBRITY MEMORABILIA: Dame Shirley Bassey once sang that she had nothing, but her five-inch Monaco leopard-print stiletto heels are amongst the celebrity items on offer in a fundraising auction in support of St Dunstan's. Organised by St Dunstaner Tom Boal, the auction evening is being held at Abbotsford Hotel, Dumbarton on 15 June.



Other items include a brochure for The Queen, signed by Dame Helen Mirren, a sonic screwdriver and signed

photograph from Doctor Who David Tennant, and a signed calendar from Kylie Minogue. Other celebrity items have been donated by Dame Judi Dench, David Suchet, Angela Rippon, Annie Lennox and Christopher Timothy. Auction items also include a golf day for two, a meal for two at Loch Lomond, vintage wine and watches.



Tickets on the door cost £5, which includes a buffet and entertainment from singer Mhari. There will also be a raffle with lots of prizes to be won. Abbotsford Hotel have provided the venue free of charge. An updated list of auction lots can be obtained from Tom who is also accepting pre-auction bids. E-mail him at [tomjam9@hotmail.com](mailto:tomjam9@hotmail.com).



## ARGOS CATALOGUE ON CD

**SOUND TALKING PRODUCE SHOPPING CATALOGUES:** SoundTalking are currently providing an audio version of the catalogue produced by High Street retailer Argos. The Argos catalogue is on CD. However, they also produce catalogues for Marks and Spencer (quarterly), Waitrose Seasons (bi-monthly) and Waitrose New (monthly) on tape cassette. All these publications are available free. If anyone requires a copy, please make your request by telephoning SoundTalking on 01435 862737 or e-mail [irwin.bray@soundtalking.co.uk](mailto:irwin.bray@soundtalking.co.uk).

## VETERANS KNOWLEDGE MAP

**INTERACTIVE DIRECTORY:** The Veterans Knowledge Map on [www.veterans-uk.info/knowledge](http://www.veterans-uk.info/knowledge) provides a directory of organisations offering practical help and advice to Veterans, their families or their representatives. Currently, two strands are in operation – Accommodation and Money Matters. The list of topics will increase over the coming months.

This interactive directory has been produced to assist people in identifying local organisations most likely to be able to offer support for a specific need. If a relevant organisation has no local point of contact, a Head Office address will normally be displayed. Where possible, organisations have been included on a regional basis. Sighted assistance may be required as users scroll down the page and click on the part of a UK map that matches their area. A series of questions will then lead the user to access contact information relevant to their enquiry.

## STAFF CHANGES

### LUCY CLARK

Lucy has joined St Dunstan's as Welfare Officer for Kent and the South East. She previously worked for Social Services in Hammersmith and Merton. With wide experience of care issues for children and adults she has had a variety of posts in Child Care and with Adults, she has lately managed an Older People's Commissioning Team and a Training Team. "My hobbies include pleading with my newly acquired chickens to lay me an egg!" she says. She also enjoys ceroc dancing.



**SHARON GRADWELL** Sharon Gradwell also joined St Dunstan's as a Welfare Officer, but covering the north west area. She previously worked for Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council for 18 years, firstly as a residential social

worker with adults with learning disabilities, then as a hospital social worker. She moved onto adult community social work and progressed to managing a social work team.

Prior to this, she served as a police constable. Her hobbies include cycling and, she adds "good old eating and drinking." Another skill, is that she trained to do acrylic nails. "It's something a little diverse and different," said Sharon.

# 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](mailto:ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk).

## I wish that councils would fix these cracked pavements

On Friday 27 April I was returning home from Sale on foot when the roller ball of my long cane jammed in a crack in the pavement. I am known for being a very fast walker so couldn't stop and the other end of the cane went into my lowest rib and abdomen, the pain was incredible. After a visit to the doctor I was told that I had broken my lowest rib.

On Monday I had had a uncomfortable weekend feeling light headed, faint and lethargic, (not my usual self), so again headed for the doctors to be told to stop taking the painkillers and go to hospital straight away - he suspected possible spleen damage.

I spent the rest of the day in casualty where they decided that my rib was broken and I had severe abdominal and spleen bruising.

The moral of story:

1. If I hadn't worn my guide dog out in 18 months this wouldn't have happened.
2. My usual long cane is about 2 inches longer than the approved "sternum" length, but this cane was in for repair and I was using my sternum length cane. Does this mean that my longer than normal cane would have been better as I encounter hazards like this day after day?
3. An older style cane would have bent or broken but not this carbon fibre one.
4. Two years and longer is a long time to wait for a suitable replacement guide dog.
5. Finally, when are the councils going to fix these appalling pavements?

**David Poyner  
Sale, Manchester**

**Ian Hebborn, ROVI  
Supervisor comments:**

I was sorry to hear about David's unfortunate accident with his long cane but felt that I should take the opportunity to comment on some of his points so as not to put people off from using a long cane, which for many blind and partially sighted people is a great mobility aid that enhances independent travel.

Unfortunately being a very fast walker is not always compatible with walking with a long cane, as they do unfortunately snag on uneven surfaces and of course they will come to an abrupt halt when they locate obstacles - which is of course the idea. The long cane only gives the user information about obstacles that are one step in front of them so the user needs to be able to stop suddenly when the cane locates something.



We now tend to use graphite canes as David points out, though the older aluminium ones are still very durable and I suspect that they wouldn't have snapped or bent sufficiently to avoid injury in this case. The advantage of the graphite cane's rigidity is the increased sensitivity and therefore the user gaining greater feedback through the cane. There are different types of tip available for the end of canes which may suit different surfaces better. For example, as well as the commonly used roller ball tip, there is also a jumbo ball or wheel available,

both of which run over rough surfaces more easily, though there is some loss of sensitivity as a result. There are several St Dunstaners who have found these to be the preferred tip for their cane, particularly for those long cane users who have some useful vision and so can make out their environment but require some additional feedback on the surface in front of them.

The older style of holding the cane in the centre of the body, to ensure an equal sweep on either side of the body, isn't used as much now. We would tend to

suggest that the user holds the cane to the side of their body and compensate with a wider sweep to the other side. This would eliminate the uncomfortable, and in this case injuring, result that David experienced.

I am unable to comment on David's feelings regarding the waiting time for a replacement guide dog, but am aware that Guide Dogs work very hard in trying to match up dogs to their prospective owner's needs.

And finally, yes uneven surfaces are a problem, both as a tripping hazard and for the cane to snag against.

## Our Dad, Harry, received the best of care from Nursing

If I could be allowed to convey my family's thanks and gratitude to all the members of staff on the Floor 2 Nursing Station at Ovingdean for the care and professional nursing skills shown to our father, Harry Preedy. Dad was a resident on the Second Floor Nursing Wing for over three years up until his death on 18 April.

The sensitivity, kindness and patience afforded to my father and all the family was

exceptional, nothing was ever too much trouble.

Once again, a very big and sincere thank you. In the words of a popular song 'You are simply the best'. You are all held in the most highest esteem by us all.

**Brian Preedy,  
Sandra Peck (nee Preedy),  
March, Cambridgeshire**

Harry Preedy, who was a St Dunstaner for 67 years, is remembered on page 56.

## Blame Sir Walter for the smoking

With the smoking ban due to come into force at Ovingdean, the words of Bob Newhart (circa 1962) came to mind. He imagined a telephone call from Sir Walter Raleigh explaining tobacco to a business partner.

**Colin Oakes,  
Saltdean, Brighton**

Bob Newhart's monologue can be found on the internet or on an anthology CD, *Something Like This...* The telephone was conceived by Francis Bacon.

## Harry is wizard, but CD price is not so magic

As a Harry Potter fan, I was delighted to hear that the CD version of the new book *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* will be released at the same time as the hardback print edition on 21 July. I am quite excited at the prospect of discovering Harry's fate – does he kill Voldemort or does Voldemort kill Harry as has been rumoured? However, my excitement was dented when I checked the price on amazon.co.uk. The audio CD version is £52.48 – and that is discounted from £75 – whereas the print version is only £8.99. At this rate I won't get to find out what happens to Harry until September! I really don't know how they justify the difference in price.

**Moira McGrath,  
County Down**

• Bloomsbury, who publish the Harry Potter series, told the **Review** that they endeavour to keep prices as low as possible, but a combination of production costs, such as studio time, and the lower quantities of audio CD produced in comparison with the print version create the difference in price. Though with music

CDs averaging £12 on the High Street, the 20 CD set that makes up the Potter book doesn't seem that bad a deal.

However, there is an alternative available. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* can currently be pre-ordered in Braille and on Daisy CD from [www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk](http://www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk) or by telephoning RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023153. Both formats cost £17.99 which matches the Recommended Retail Price for the hardback print edition. It can also be borrowed from the RNIB Talking Book Service.

The Daisy CD also features the same distinctive reading by actor Stephen Fry found on the audio equivalent.

The previous book, *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, can be purchased on Daisy CD for £7.99.

In the meantime, the Royal National Institute of the Blind continues its Right to Read campaign. "Three million people in the UK are being denied the right to read just because they have a sight problem or print reading disability," they say.

"Research commissioned by RNIB shows that a shocking 96 per cent of books are not available in large print, audio or braille. RNIB and the Right to Read Alliance are campaigning to change this. We want everyone in the UK to be able to read the same book at the same time at the same price."

## Keep those shoes polished ...

From some of the feedback I have received, you enjoyed the March Spring Ball. I am in the process of acquiring a band for the November Dance and will let you know the results shortly. We hope to see those who couldn't make it for the March dance. Glenys and I thank

you all for your support in making these social events so successful. Enjoy your summer holidays, we look forward to seeing you later on in the year. Any queries please ring David Schofield on 0115 932 3517.

**David Schofield,  
Ilkeston, Derbyshire**



## D-Day atmosphere still lives in Normandy



Jackie and Nigel Whiteley with Don Planner on the current Pegasus Bridge, the first area liberated on D-Day in 1944.

During the talks we do all over the country, we are frequently asked questions, often by our younger audiences. Some of those questions should now be easier to answer.

The horror of the fighting was brought alive for us, by two very experienced guides. Their, sometimes too, graphic detail brought home to all of us some of what those men had to go through in order to preserve our freedom.

Our short, but very moving, act of remembrance at the British cemetery at Bayeaux, enabled us to personally to think of, and thank those who gave their lives so that we could be free.

**Jax Whiteley,  
Peacehaven, East Sussex**

I would like to thank everyone concerned, particularly Graham Footer and Jenny Shannon, for giving the Speakers team the opportunity to travel to Normandy to see and, particularly to feel the atmosphere of, the D-Day Landing Beaches and the various battlegrounds.

impenetrable fortifications.

Places like the Merville Battery, which was taken by a much smaller force than was deemed possible and Pegasus Bridge, and Caen, almost totally destroyed by the Allies, but now rebuilt as a thriving town.

Yes, I've read books about the landings, and of course seen the films, but nothing prepares you for actually being there, and seeing and hearing the details of the seemingly impossible feats performed by the Allies, against a well established force, with almost

### Many happy returns, Dorothy

Dorothy Jacobs celebrated her 95th birthday on 16 May. Love from all the family.

**Pat and Mike, Peter and Margaret, Bill in Australia and all the grandchildren**

### Thank you

Our sincere thanks for the beautiful flowers on our 63rd wedding anniversary - also for the support and friendship over the years. It is much appreciated.

**Max and Joan Ash,  
Woolbrook, Devon**

## General Sir Edward Jones KCB, CVO, CBE

General Sir Charles Edward Webb Jones, KCB, CVO, CBE, one of St Dunstan's four Vice Patrons died on 13 May. Born in 1936, he was commissioned into the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in 1956. He served in Cyprus and Borneo through periods of unrest. He was later a Colonel Commandant of the Royal Green Jacket's 2nd and 3rd Battalions and of the Royal Army Educational Corps.

He was mentioned in dispatches for an emergency tour of South Armagh with the Royal Green Jackets in 1975. He came to political prominence as a young Colonel in charge of MO4, the branch of the Ministry of Defence responsible for Northern Ireland.

From there, he went on to serve in the British Army of the Rhine, commanding 6th Armoured Brigade, and became commander of the British military and training team in Zimbabwe during the 1980s. He developed a workmanlike relationship with Robert Mugabe.

After 40 years in the Army,

he retired as the UK's Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee and became Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. In this capacity, he oversaw six state openings of Parliament between 1995 and 2001. He also led a refurbishment project aimed at making the Palace of Westminster more accessible to disabled people. He became a Vice Patron of St Dunstan's in 1998 and was closely

involved with the Army Cadet Force and The Forces Memorial Appeal as well as being a Governor of Wellington College in Crowthorne, Berkshire and Chairman of the Governors of Eagle House.

"Sir Edward has been a very enthusiastic and loyal supporter of St Dunstan's for many years. He will be sadly missed," said St Dunstan's Chief Executive Robert Leader.

## Yvonne Lyall

Many long term St Dunstaners will remember Yvonne Lyall as Yvonne de Burlet who was liked by all those she visited on a regular basis. I remember one St Dunstaner saying to me "I look forward to Mrs Lyall's visits, she always reminds me of a little dicky bird - lively, full of fun and underneath all that she quietly sorted everything that would make my life more comfortable. I always felt better for our chats and was sorry when she had to leave to call upon another St Dunstaner." Few St Dunstaners knew that Yvonne was a talented amateur artist. Her needlework pictures were so

lifelike and were truly a work of art. Sadly the last few years of her life had to be spent in a nursing home in Hampshire where she died on 15 April at the age of 82. During her years as Welfare Visitor, she made a valuable contribution to the work of St Dunstan's Welfare department. She always worked hard and made welfare visits to her men regardless of distance or timing and was quietly efficient in studying the needs of all. As a working companion, her joy of life was shared by all who knew her. Mrs Lyall will be remembered by all who had the pleasure of knowing her with happiness. The world will be missing a valuable person.

**Phyllis Rogers**



# Balancing the Books

**Ted Bunting** reveals his verdict on this history of a famous court

## Marlborough Street

Author: Joan Lock  
Reader: Carol Marsh  
Catalogue No: 4003  
Duration: 9 hours, 18 minutes

Over the years different people have advanced their pet theories about crime and the so-called "criminal class" In 1772 for instance, well before Henry Feeling's Bow Street Runners gave way to the Metropolitan Police Force, Sir John Fielding (also a Bow Street magistrate) told a House of Commons committee that "the present gang of housebreakers" were the sons of poor people and had begun as child pick-pockets. Another magistrate, Patrick Calquhoun, wrote in 1795 that young men of the middle and upper classes were setting a bad example by their drinking and gambling and that young men of "the lower ranks" were taking to crime to emulate them.

Others thought lack of moral fibre was to blame and suggested Sunday schools as a remedy. Even

facial ugliness or the shape of one's head was put forward as a root cause for crime, but all seemed to agree that criminals were mostly young men and that the "criminal class" also implied "lower class".

When the Metropolitan Police Force was established, in 1829, the Marlborough Street Court was one of the first to be set up with a stipendiary magistrate. Should anyone still believe that crime is a class affair, a listen to this delightful little history will help them to change their minds.

Situated as it is in London's up-market West End, it is in the Marlborough Street of the Monopoly board, the court has seen a vast cross section of society in its dock and witness box. The Marquis of Queensberry was there, as also was Oscar Wilde. There was John Profumo and Mandy Rice-Davies; and there would have been Lord Lucan too, but he failed to turn up. All manner of criminals have

stood before the bar, I'll not attempt to list them but Joan Lock has left nothing out, she even tells of an elderly lady who wished to be locked up for a while because Holloway was so much more exciting at Christmas than her retirement home. Yes, this is an interesting book, it is educational too. You won't be long before you learn that the law is not dull and dry after all.

• Marlborough Street was first published in 1980, when the Marlborough Street Court was still the second oldest magistrates court in the country. Since then, it has been closed and converted into a hotel, The Courthouse Hotel Kempinski, London.

Visitors can still go before The Bar, but they will now be served wines and spirits in the cells. Rates start from £160 a night (before VAT), some tariffs are over £2,500, and a private butler or chauffeur is just one of the services that are on offer to guests.

# Heart-warming tale of evacuees

THE LIVES of WWII evacuees are examined in a new book from Joan M. Moules. The wife of Army St Dunstaner Leonard Moules, she has written *Tin Hats and Gas Masks*.

In synopsis: Johnny Bookman did not want to leave the familiarity of his London home when he was evacuated to the country in 1939. Anita Evesham, used to living away from her parents, treated the move as a bit of an adventure. Coming from totally

different backgrounds, evacuees Anita and Johnny, an unlikely match, are thrown together during the Second World War. Anita is drawn to the young boy from the first day. Their experiences are destined to change both of their lives and the lives of their families in this heart-warming story.

One review by writer Peter Lovesey favoured the book. "I warmed to these characters at once," he said. "The portrayal of

Britain in the 1940s is just as I remember it. And Joan Moules always writes a story that lifts the spirits and leaves you feeling better."

*Tin Hats and Gas Masks* is published by Robert Hale Ltd, London. ISBN is 978-0-7090-8235-4 Price is £18.99 (Hardback book).

Another book by Joan, *The Straw Halter*, a tale concerning a young girl sold to a farmer, will be released later this year on 31 August.

# Stick adaptation helps Billy



A SIMPLE IDEA has kept Blackpool St Dunstaner Billy Griffiths on his feet as he recovers from a stroke.

Billy had the wind knocked out of him when he was taken ill last year, but having survived several years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp as a blind man who had lost both hands, he wasn't going to let that stop him.

He was feeling unsteady on his feet, but walking sticks are not readily helpful for a handless person. With a bit

of lateral thinking, Billy's son-in-law attached a cone to a hospital crutch. The cone fits comfortably over Billy's stump when he slides his arm in, with a brace above the elbow, allowing him an extra degree of stability as he walks.

Billy and his wife Alice were at St Dunstan's Ovingdean recently for the Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion and again for the Handless Reunion. A report on the Ex-POWs Reunion is on page 20 while the Handless Reunion features on page 26.



# Kent quake shakes St Dunstaners

**S**T DUNSTANERS IN Kent were amongst those who experienced the most intense earthquake to hit the United Kingdom in 100 years. Residents in the Cinque Port town of Folkestone were subjected to tremors of 4.3 on the Richter scale at 08:18 on the morning of 28 April.

"Everything seemed to lift up 2ft and then came down with a mighty crash," said Royal Navy St Dunstaner Stan Hook. "I lost electricity and my first thought was 'damn scaffolders'. I thought some scaffold had fallen down in the road, but somebody had a car radio and they said an earthquake had hit Folkestone.

"The funny thing was, anybody who was indoors felt it, everyone outside carried on as if nothing had happened." Stan eventually discovered that his kitchen window had been cracked.

Royal Artillery St Dunstaner Kenneth Reeves was enjoying a cup of tea when the quake struck. "I could hear the crows screeching, they were just sitting of the ground, when

suddenly everything rattled like an express train. It felt as if the roof was lifting up. It lasted a couple of minutes and then moles started digging out of the ground. It had disturbed them."

Alan and Molly Wainwright were on the edge of the quake-zone. "It was just a rumble," said Molly. "We are still standing, though nobody phoned to check."

St Dunstaner John Gidley did not experience the quake directly. "I was aboard ship waiting to come ashore at Dover after a trip to France," he said. "I got held up because there was a power cut and they couldn't lower the ramps."

Meanwhile, St Dunstan's Chief Executive Robert Leader was at the mouth of the Eurotunnel heading the other way. "We were sitting at the barriers waiting to check the car through and it was a very windy morning," he said. "Suddenly the earth shook and even though it felt quite different to the buffeting of the wind, I attributed it to that as I didn't expect earth tremors.

"I was told that, for those in the Tunnel at the time, the effect was even more noticeable and cars actually moved around on the trains."

Across the area, some 1,500 homes suffered damage such as broken chimneys, tiles and masonry. Seventy-three houses were deemed to be so dangerous that residents could not return home. The epicentre was reckoned to be half a mile east of Folkestone and a mile and a quarter underground.

"This is the largest earthquake in this region since a 4.4 ML (local magnitude) earthquake in 1950," said the British Geological Survey. "Significant earthquakes also struck the Dover Straits in 1776 and 1580; the latter had a magnitude of 5.7 ML and caused damage as far as London where two people were killed by falling masonry. Earthquakes of magnitude 4.2 ML occur in mainland UK roughly every five years although are more common in offshore areas. A magnitude 4.7 ML earthquake struck Dudley, West Midlands in 2002 and was widely felt across England and Wales."

# Mayo makes good start in golf season



Mike and Iain at the Forrester Park Golf Course after their win.

ST DUNSTANER Mike Mayo is jubilant about the start he has made in the new blind golfing season. "On 25 April, I played in the Greater Glasgow Classic held at Cawder Golf Club, finishing sixth," he said. "This was also my first round with my new Wilson Staff clubs."

Mike, from Lesmahagow, Lanark was out on the lawn again with 20 other blind golfers on 30 April. "This time I played in the Fife Classic which was held at Forrester Park Resort, Cairneyhill, Dunfermline, finishing first. Both times, my guide was Iain Wilson.

"I have had a good start and am now sitting in second place order of merit for the Scottish Blind Golf Society.

# Ten questions on

The subject of Poetry

From our Quizmaster Laureate, Harry Beevers

- 1) Which form of poetry shares its name with that of an Irish county?
- 2) In a 2001 BBC poll, which 1871 verse by Edward Lear was voted the nation's favourite children's poem?
- 3) Who was Poet Laureate for 37 years from 1930 to 1967?
- 4) In English literature, whose sonnets are written to a mysterious dark lady?
- 5) Which World War I poet wrote *The Soldier* with the opening words, "If I should die think only this of me"?
- 6) In the poem *The Green Eye of the Yellow God*, the one-eyed yellow idol stands to the north of the capital of which country?
- 7) "They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn, At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them", are words by which poet?
- 8) "We sat in the car park till twenty to one and now I'm engaged to Miss Joan Hunter Dunn" are words from *The Subaltern's Love Song* by which former Poet Laureate?
- 9) What is the missing word in the lines by Robert Burns, "Oh my love is like a red, red rose that's newly sprung in ---"?
- 10) Who wrote the lines, "I must go down to the seas again, To the lonely sea and the sky, I left my vest and socks there, By now they should be dry"?

Answers on page 53.



# St Dunstan's Talking Review is now 30 years old

Ray Hazan covers some sound history

**T**HIS IS THE first time in 30 years I have read the **St Dunstan's Review** from cover to cover and not what my wife thought I wanted to read!" so quoted a handless St Dunstaner in May 1977 after reading one of the early pilot editions of the **St Dunstan's Talking Review** on cassette.

It seems hard to believe that 30 years ago, neither did the home PC, nor digital recordings exist, even in the imagination. Recording was on tape or vinyl. The 'in' tape mode was compact cassette which is still in use today – just! Printed material had either to be read to visually impaired people, translated into Braille or recorded onto tape.

On 3 January 1977, I reported for work at St Dunstan's Headquarters, 191 Old Marylebone Road, on the retirement of St Dunstaner Commander Robin Buckley, RN, Public Relations Officer. The first task I was given by his successor, David Castleton, was the result of a request by the 'handy andies', the Blind and Handless group. They wanted the **Review** put on tape. "We want to be able to read the **Review** for

ourselves and save our wives a lot of reading."

There was much consultation to carry out, especially with Talking Newspaper groups. From recording, to packaging, to duplicating to address labels – it was all new.

The most important task was to obtain the services of a good reader. A request to the Talking Book Library recording studios was answered by Stephen Jack. He was an actor and was a very popular reader of books for the library. His speciality was regional accents. I would visit him at home in Hendon, with an expensive cassette recorder and the galley proofs from the **Review**. Sometimes, he would record onto his own reel-to-reel recorder, which I would then transpose onto compact

cassette. St Dunstaner Peter Jones made a mixer unit which automatically dropped the level of music whilst a spoken commentary was added over the top. Editing was done by feeding two or more recorders into one. There was no cutting and splicing of tape!

Cassette duplicators were expensive. So, initially, we used a commercial company to duplicate cassettes for us. Then, we purchased our own copiers, which enabled me to copy seven cassettes at a time taking two to three minutes per run. I could spend two solid days erasing and copying up to 300 tapes. Everything was done in-house.

In the May 1977 issue of the **Review**, the project was offered to the first 200 St Dunstaners who applied and who had their own cassette players and the July edition was the first post trial edition to be sent out.

Today, some 780 UK St Dunstaners receive the cassette and over 400 listen to the magazine on MP3CD. Digital recording has led to a marked improvement in

sound quality and has made editing much easier.

As we were 30 years ago, so are we still grateful to volunteer readers. Andrew Jack, Stephen's son, Bill Weisblatt, former General Secretary of St Dunstan's, read for several years. Today, David Castleton, now retired, and Mrs Valerie Tomalin, who lives locally to Harcourt Street are regular readers of the **Review**.

Once the page proofs have come back from the printers, a 'script' is devised to decide who will read what. A variety of voices helps to keep the listener awake – well, that's the aim! The majority of older people prefer male voices or deeper tone female voices.

The two readers gather in my office once a month. A 'recording' sign goes up on the door and we are off for the next three-to-four hours. The recording goes via a mixer unit into the sound card of my computer. Mistakes are over recorded with the correction at the time. David and Valerie, our most regular readers are very competent and mistakes are very few – I cannot vouch for the fingers on the controlling keyboard!

The Sound Recorder editing programme used

on the computer is written especially for visually impaired people by the American Printing House (the US library for the Blind). This editing programme allows one enormous editing scope. In just a few seconds one can reduce a recording time to fit onto a cassette if you have over-run. Words or phrases can be added or taken away and the listener will never be the wiser!

A master CD is prepared which is then sent to SoundTalking, the commercial arm of the Talking Newspaper Association of the UK (TNAUK) who then copy and distribute the 1,400 cassettes, since the **Review** is almost regularly on two cassettes.

Another master CD is made up for the digital version. This is not an audio hi-fi CD, which can only play for some 80 minutes, too short for the Talking Review. So the master is converted into a compressed format, called MP3, which allows the **Review** to fit on one CD. This can subsequently be played on an RNIB talking book system or any unit capable of playing MP3 files. A duplicator can copy a **Review** CD in about one minute. This is an automatic process. 200 blank CD's can

be loaded into 'bins' on the copier. An arm picks up one at a time and drops it into the CD tray. When complete, the newly copied CD is picked up by the arm and dropped into another bin. Another machine folds the address sheet into a window envelope and we put the CD into the package by hand. Neither CD or package is returned to Harcourt Street.

## The Future

The compact cassette, which has been around for over 30 years, is slowly approaching its end. Today's market place, thanks to ever developing technology, offers too many choices! Although some playback devices are amazingly cheap at around £15, they seem to be replaced every four months, making recommendation very difficult.

The decision to cease producing the St Dunstan's Talking **Review** on cassette as of February 2008 has been taken. Readers will be encouraged to convert to the MP3 CD format.

Changing and adapting to new technologies is not easy. In next month's issue, we shall recommend some suitable MP3 CD players.



# Henry recalls days of Grace



Henry Allingham with Surrey Cricketers at the Oval.

**S**T DUNSTANER Henry Ailingham attended a cricket match at The Oval on 11 May, nearly a century after he saw W.G. Grace bat there. On this occasion, Surrey drew with Warwickshire while Jonathan Batty and Mark Ramprakash each achieved a century score. Henry, aged 110, was there on the third day of a four day match. He also met with cricketers Alan Butcher, Neil Saker, Matthew Nicholson and Chris Scofield.

However, with Britain's oldest man as guest of honour, all anyone wanted to know were his memories of what one pundit described as "a fat, elderly

man with a beard more than a century ago." Henry, due to celebrate his 111 birthday, is possibly the only surviving person to have seen W.G. Grace bat. He was happy to repeat the story he told *Wisden* last year about visiting the Oval as a seven-year-old in 1903 and seeing Grace make 43 for London County, but he revealed that it was not the first time he had seen Grace.

"I was about four or five and I saw him at Leytonstone," Allingham said. "He was big, square-built with a beard, but he walked like an old man and I recall him wearing pads that were too big for him. He faced a few

balls and everyone gave him a big hand, but the thing I really remember is the lunch and the tea, and that there was plenty of sunshine," said Henry.

With Surrey as his host, he recalled other star players of bygone times. "Jack Hobbs was my pin-up boy," he said of the Surrey and England batsman who made his Test debut in 1908.

"There used to be a clock in the pavilion at the Oval and I remember Hobbs always tried to smash its face with the ball. I never saw him do it, but he had a good try.

"I used to collect cigarette cards of the great players, like Hobbs and Hammond. I had two full sets; if I had them now they'd be worth a bob or two."

Cricket was an expensive passion. "Matches cost a penny, but I didn't have that, even at the start of my working life," he said. "I used to hang around near the end of matches to see if I could get in cheap."

In 1930, he saved up to see the touring Australians.

"I saw Don Bradman, he was marvellous. There's never been anyone like him."

Cricket has changed immensely in the past 30 years, let alone in the 92 years since Grace died. "The thing that is most different is the look of the grounds," said Henry, surrounded by the Oval's large stands, video screens and electronic scoreboards. "I can't believe this is the same place that I used to come to, but everywhere I knew has changed. The only place I recognise is the Bank of England. Take me anywhere else and I'm stumped to know where I am."

## Jaffas were like platinum dust

In April St Dunstaner Henry Allingham visited Wilnecote High School, Tamworth, Staffordshire to answer questions about his experiences in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force during WWI. He fascinated a group of 13 and 14-year-olds with a tale of giving two small German children a Christmas gift of two Jaffa oranges. "They were not gold-dust then," he said. "They were platinum dust."

# Compound and recurve wins for St Dunstan's

**A**N ARCHERY TEAM from St Dunstan's competed in the British Blind Indoor Archery Championship held at the National Sport Centre Lilleshall on 31 March and 1 April. The weekend started well with Colin advising us all that the meal was beef stir fry. We were all amazed when we dug our forks into the meat – it quacked! We spent the rest of the weekend explaining to Colin the difference between cows and ducks.

In the BBS Archery Championship match, Peter Hammond won the Male B1 Compound class with a score of 685. Norman Perry came third with the score of 458. Patrick Sidnell won the Male B2/3 Recurve class with a score of 759, a personal best by over 200 points.

Terry Ottewell won the Male B2/3 Compound class with the score of 644.

Marjorie Scott was second in the Female B2/3 Recurve with the score of 376.

On the Sunday there was a short round competition for

## Patrick Sidnell reports on the 2007 British Blind Archery Championships

people wearing blackout. This was won by Peter Hammond.

It is worth noting that all those who won their class had attended the BBS coaching weekends held at St Dunstan's over the past season. This included Melissa Bubb and Lewis March visitors from other clubs. Well done to the coaching staff and spotters.

Two members who were due to attend Clive Jones and David Poyner were taken ill and could not make it. We hope they recover in time for the next archery week as we can not stand the quiet.

Once again we must thank all the spotters and coaching staff and not forgetting our driver Brian. I am please to say this year I did not go for a walk with him, if you have been out with Brian for a walk you will know what I mean.



# Like coming back to my family

**S**T DUNSTAN'S HANDLESS Group held their annual reunion at St Dunstan's Ovingdean in May. Gwen Obern from Aberdare and Billy Griffiths from Blackpool were joined in the Winter Garden by an assortment of guests.

"This reunion means so much!" said Gwen. "For me, being here with you all, since losing my husband, it seems like I am coming back to my family. I am so proud of being a St Dunstaner and being with you all as my family. Long may there be a St Dunstan's because to me, St Dunstan's is the most wonderful organisation.

"You know, when I came to St Dunstan's many years ago, I thought I would live again. I never thought about being blind when I got to St Dunstan's because there were so many of us, nobody spoke about being blind. Believe me, blindness has some great advantages – you can get away with such a lot! Some things are bad, but where ever I am, I enjoy everything.

"I want to say a big thank you to you all for being with



Billy and Gwen with guests such as Ben Gillam, David Vinal, Alf Lockhart, Jeremy Hinton, Robert Leader, and Tom Hart.

us to night. There's only Billy and myself here tonight, but I did go and visit Wally Lethbridge. He's quite well and would love to join us next year. I hope so. He wished to be remembered to you all."

Gwen thanked Paul James and the PBK staff for providing a lovely meal. "I want to thank all of St Dunstan's and the staff for all they do.

Gwen's comments were echoed by Billy who added his vote of thanks, with special reference to David Vinal and his team of drivers. Tom Hart expanded on that theme. "They go all round

the country picking people up, listening to their trials and tribulations and what have you," said Tom. "They are a marvellous group of people and they often don't get the thanks they deserve."

Billy commented further on the standard of care provided by the Nursing Floors. He added that for the first time, he had booked in for two weeks on his own, prompting his wife Alice to comment "I'll be alright so long as I can have your pension." Billy didn't seem so sure about that.

He recalled 29 years as a staff speaker for St Dunstan's, with a nod to one of the

guests, retired Public Relations Officer David Castleton who was a guest.

St Dunstan's Chief Executive Robert Leader also addressed the gathering.

"It's a real pleasure to be with you tonight," he said. "This evening is about you, the two of you, and I would particularly like to pay tribute to Ted and Iris Miller, Iris, who died comparatively recently. I remember when I first came to meet you, there were four of you then, because I didn't really know Winnie (Edwards) very well, I remember Iris as that chirpy little thing who was so funny. We have one of their dollshouses now in Harcourt



Gwen Obern and David Castleton chuckle as they catch-up.

Street. It is an amazing achievement when you think of the things they did.

"I remember going to see them and being in their sitting room in Leamington Spa and Ted saying to me 'You see that tree out there?' There was a big eucalyptus tree in their garden and he said 'When it rains it looks like it's covered in diamonds.' And that was a really humbling experience to know that Ted was describing the tree as he had seen it through Iris's eyes.

"I'll never forget that. It was a real example to me of the courage and fortitude that you as a group of people have shown. It is a



Ted and Iris Miller constructing a dollshouse.

real pleasure for us, as your guests, to be here."

The evening turned to reminiscence, with stories about Elizabeth Dacre, interrupted Toc H meetings in South Africa, people at stately homes who thought Billy and Gwen were a couple. Alice Griffiths recalled being stopped by the police because one of Billy's prosthetic hands was hanging out of the car boot. Billy had his own story of a Police stop while out walking and a nurse who wanted to take blood out of his finger.

Gwen related her own embarrassment at discovering that six screws in her hip were responsible for setting the anti-theft alarm off in a favourite shop in Cardiff. "I haven't been back since."



## Biking Billy is back!



Billy at Donnington with BSB rider Leon Haslam who offered a few tips on the course.

**B**ILLY THE WHIZZ is getting back on his bike - this time in aid of a charity that supports nearly 6,000 blind and visually impaired children and adults. St Dunstaner Andrew "Billy" Baxter is aiming to ride a solo lap of Donnington Park on 23 September this year.

The challenge will take place during Bennetts British Superbike Championship. Billy will be setting a record for the fastest single lap of an international racecourse by a blind person. He is being backed by Ducati UK and *Motorcycle Monthly*.

Ducati are providing two Monster 695 motorcycles, one for Billy, the other for his outrider Malcolm Wheeler who will radio instructions.

Billy is no stranger to speed having raised the biking speed record for a blind man to 164.87mph in 2003. This time he is hoping to raise money for blind charity Vista and to inspire blind people – especially children – to chase their dreams. He will be riding on a two-and-a-half mile circuit in Leicestershire which sweeps, twists and dips.

Motorcycling has long been a passion for Billy, he was

a motorcycle instructor in the Royal Horse Artillery and backed Cambridgeshire's BikeSafe scheme and a motorcycle education project.

"I have to do extraordinary things to get the Press and public's attention," said Billy. "But the hardest things to do when you are blind are the ordinary things, like going to the shops to buy a loaf of bread. Vista work with people of all ages and if I can inspire the young kids they work with to do the things they want to do, and help raise the money to achieve that, it must be a good thing!"

## Sporting Joe qualifies as coach

**S**T DUNSTANER Joe Elsander has realised his "impossible dream" by qualifying as a Level 2 Sports Coach. "I thought such an achievement was out of my reach," he said. "How wrong I was! I may be just five foot, one but I feel ten foot tall."

As previously reported in the **Review**, Joe was encouraged by a coach, Brian Reekie, at Chester-le-Street to apply for a Level 1 Coaching Licence.

In November last year, he passed the Level One UK Athletics Coaching Certificate which qualified him to act as an assistant coach. He then embarked on preparing for the Level Two qualification. After five weekends of work, Joe was assessed as a coach over two weekends in April.

"Joe was very enthusiastic and quite independent," said UK: Athletics Coach Education Manager Melanie Curds. "He had Brian Reekie along for support, but his confidence built and grew through the course and he became more independent.



Joe and Susan Shands on a training run.

He was highly regarded by the people on the course. He was a lovely chap."

Melanie told the **Review** that Joe's assessment was divided in to three parts. "The first part is a practical assessment to ensure that a coach can put what they have learnt into action. Joe brought his own athletes along and put them through a 20 minute session. The second part is a written paper and the third part is a multiple choice."

Joe was allowed to dictate his answers for the written section of the assessment.

Instructor Jeremy Harries who oversaw the practical side of Joe's evaluation also praised his independence.

"There was a race walk section over 20 metres square and he asked me to walk him round the course. After two laps he had it. It was quite interesting listening to the other coaches on hearing that Joe was blind because they said 'we're going to have to do this,' and 'we're going to have to do that,' and, of course, they didn't have to do anything.

"Joe has a good grasp of coaching issues and is developing ways of getting feedback so that he knows how to tell athletes what they need to do. The impressive thing was that Joe would take part and then adapt to what was needed.

"I'm guessing but I suspect he is the only visually impaired coach we have. The fact that he was there and was prepared to take part was impressive. I have no doubt that he will grow as a coach and develop the sophisticated questioning required to get feedback from athletes."





## DACE men are licensed to fish!

DEAN ANGLING and Coaching Enterprises – DACE for short – cast off their new venture with an open day at the Forest of Dean Heritage Centre on 5-6 May. St Dunstaner Peter Moore and his partner John Beddis, pictured right, introduced passing visitors to the joy of fishing in between the exhibitions of mining and charcoal burning.

Potential anglers were introduced to whips, poles

or rods and it seemed the gudgeon and roach were biting. Peter and John are offering a selection of courses and a days fishing for all ages and all abilities, mixing theory and practical lessons. They are the only professional, licensed angling coaches in the Forest of Dean, but add that they can take their courses nationwide to suit groups. More information about DACE

can be found online at [www.daceangling.co.uk](http://www.daceangling.co.uk). Alternatively, contact Peter on 01594 560241. Fishing is the largest participation sport in the United Kingdom.



## Eddie goes back to the valley

ST DUNSTANER Eddie (Ernest) Taylor from Prestatyn, Denbighshire went back to his old unit at RAF Valley for his 70th birthday on 16 March. He and his wife Patricia spent the day at the airfield and had lunch, though bad weather scuppered the prospect of a flight in one of their Sea King helicopters. However, the crew did have to take to the air to join in a search and rescue mission.



Eddie added that they always were a hard working bunch. "I was in the RAF for 16 years, 126 days boy and

beast," said Eddie. "I enjoyed my time at RAF Valley, it was always a happy squad. All the crew looked after everyone else. It was small,

so you all knew each other, you couldn't get lost like in some Squadrons." Eddie served in Borneo and Cyprus as well as bases in the UK.

## Bernard meets Dame Vera again



Bernard and Dame Vera Lynn on the Bluebell Railway.

ST DUNSTANER Bernard Holden, MBE celebrated his 99th birthday on 15 March with family and friends on the Bluebell Railway, the famed Sussex steam railway line. Bernard is President of the Bluebell Preservation Society. He was joined by Dame Vera Lynn, five days before her 90th birthday. Royal Engineer Bernard, from Ditchling, originally met Dame Vera in March 1944, on the eve of the Battle of Kohima.



# UNSHACKLED AND UNBOWED

St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War rejoice in their freedom

**S**T DUNSTANERS who were taken prisoner during the Second World War and Korean War met for their annual reunion at Ovingdean on 13-15 April.

The Ex-POW Group's President, Sir John Gingell, opened the AGM explaining that his title was purely honorific as he had never been a POW, though he did have a loud enough voice to reach those at the back of the Blue Room. He welcomed St Dunstaners new to Ex-POWs group and gave apologies for Tom Hart who was unwell, missing his first reunion for several decades.

Chairman Billy Griffiths welcomed St Dunstaners, Noel Tilling, Henry Smith, Gerry Barnard, Joseph Hirsh, and Peter Brice. He then drew attention to the work of COFEPOW, details of which are on page five. "We have all well and truly passed our 60th year of freedom," said Billy. "That is celebrated by the National Arboretum in Alrewas. There is a Chapel set up by COFEPOW – Children of Far East Prisoners of War."



The theatre at Nakom Paton POW Camp as sketched by St Dunstaner Joseph Hirsh during his captivity.

Beryl Gardener read a report from Secretary Tom Hart: "2006 was a sad year with the death of so many members and friends. Ron Ellis with whom I spent considerable time in a prisoner of war camp became totally blind and deaf and one had to learn how to talk to him on his hands. I would like to thank the staff of the house for learning the language and keeping in contact with him. Bert Wood was another great friend."

The Treasurer's report was delivered by St Dunstaner

Alf Lockhart, who raised the possibility of levying a membership subscription for the first time in several years. Members agreed to discuss the option before next year's meeting.

Sir John read the names of St Dunstaner POWs who had passed away during the last year such as Ted Yeaman, Sam Keating, Richard Hooper and Joseph Holt. This was followed by a moment of silence.

At the reunion dinner that evening, guests included

Chairman of St Dunstan's Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox and his wife Jenny, Chief Executive Robert Leader, Service Delivery Director Jeremy Hinton, Manager Secretariat Richard McCrow and Admissions Manager David Habbershon.

Early conversation was dominated by the introduction of some sketches by Joseph Hirsh, drawn while he was a prisoner of the Japanese. They record the lives of prisoners in rare detail. A collection of his work can be found in the Imperial War Museum.

After dinner, Sir John introduced guest speaker Colonel Viscount Slim, OBE. Educated at Dehra Dun, he served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Gurkha Rifles and was later an aide-de-camp to his father, then Lt General William Slim. He received a regular commission into the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1948. Four years later, he joined the Malayan Scouts which soon became 22 SAS. He became Acting Major and OC A Squadron in 1957. He retired in 1972 and was a director of Boyden International and Chairman of the British-Australia Society. He is a crossbench peer and President of the



Korean veteran Noel Tilling and Viscount Slim.

Burma Star Association. "I don't laugh when I think of POWs and what they had to go through," said Viscount Slim. "I met one tonight who fought in Korea with the Glosters on the other side of the hill from where my regiment was. I think the only time I saw my father get angry – because he didn't get angry, he was rather a calm chap, strong, humorous, but calm – after he had visited his first Far East POWs, as the commander-in-chief of all the Land forces in South East Asia. He was white with rage, that silent rage that is much more dangerous than the chap who screams and shouts, and he said to me 'Don't worry I shall see quite a number of them hang.' And

they did! And I think we were all quite pleased about that.

"But I think if you are somebody like Billy, or anyone in a POW camp, in any part of the world, you are a special chap, because somehow you kept your morale going, you were in some places, especially in Europe you were sometimes able to try and escape with great difficulty and sometimes with great horror pressed upon you. But there was no way you could escape in Asia, you had to stay there. Actually there was no way you could escape in Korea, and the torture and the really foul treatment is something that people too easily forget.



"I pay tribute to you, to all of you. You were brave twice! You were brave at the time – and in your afterlife as you are now. You have been doubly brave, taking your part in the world, taking your part in society, very handicapped, but making light of it and working to be perfectly normal. Some of you are more normal than those of us who have got bits left. I congratulate you, I honour you and I am privileged to be with you tonight."



Viscount Slim at Ovingdean.

much use to you.' I said 'The trouble is when you do what you do and what we always used to do, blow somebody up, shoot somebody up, and then runaway, I can only run 25 yards now before I run out of puff. I think I would be a bit of a nuisance. There's a big hill up there, I can walk. I'll walk up there with a couple of you and I'll watch, but for god's sake keep the enemy away from me because I can't run!'"

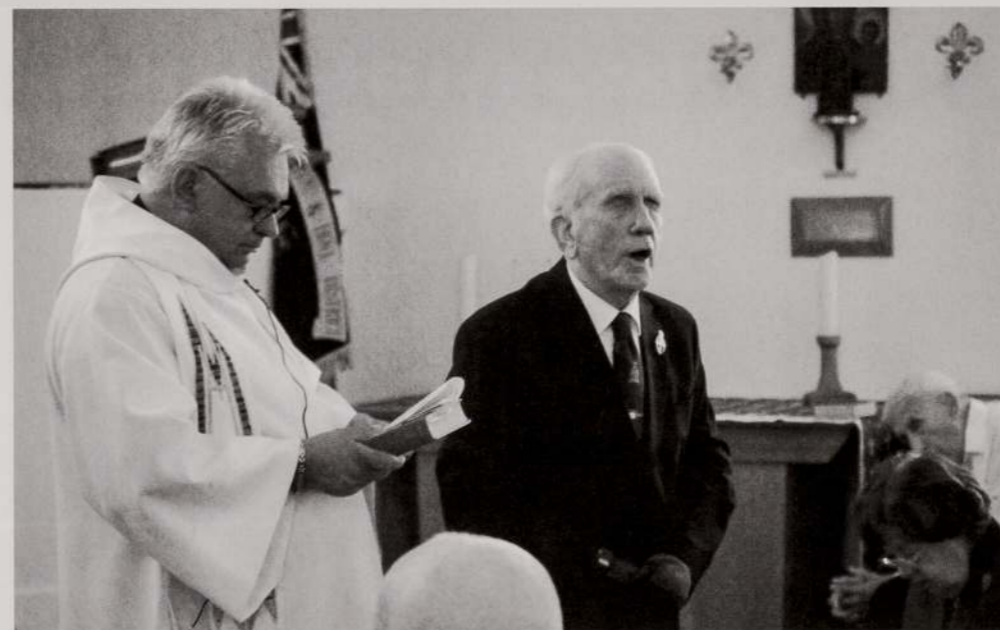
"So we had a very happy time with some remarkable young men as you were in your day. And you were more remarkable because you didn't go home for four or five years – or longer – because the war in Asia went on for three months longer and then there was terrible trouble, particularly in the place where Billy was in Java and Sumatra with terrible casualties and a lot of war still going on. I think the whole of that time, you never went home, you never saw your wives and families, some of you did Dunkirk, some of you off in Asia, or in the Desert, or in Italy, some of you had fought on the North West Frontier before that. You didn't get back to Blighty for seven years. This is something a young man in the Forces today doesn't understand.

He went on to speak of recent trips abroad. "I have been wandering around Afghanistan, which is perhaps a bit stupid at my age. But I went to live with some people called the Special Boat Service who, in the SAS I have lived with and served with. They are Royal Marines, wonderful

young men today. I lived with them in a little secret base in Afghanistan and I wandered about a bit. One of the chaps said to me 'Boss, will you come out on patrol with us? We are going away for two or three days' And I said 'Now look here, I'm 80, with an Army age of 81 and a half, and I don't think I'd be



St Dunstaner Peter Brice and Viscount Slim.



Father Martin Morgan and Billy Griffiths in the Chapel.

He thinks if he's doing six months somewhere he's having a hell of a time. Well, he probably is having a hell of a time.

"I want to say a little about Pakistan. Why did I go there with Buffy? It's because we run 14 eye hospitals. It's only eyes we look after, we raise money here, America, and Asia, and any man, woman or child can walk in to any of our 14 hospitals and have free treatment – there is no charge for anything. Perhaps we can't stop people going completely blind," he said, commenting on their doctors' workload. The average number of patients at the door at 6:30 in the morning is between one thousand and thirteen hundred. Everyone sees two doctors and a technician, even if it is

just to have a pair of glasses fitted. Our surgeons, a most amazing bunch of Pakistanis, dedicated, professional surgeons. They don't stop for lunch, 80 high-end operations in every single one of those hospitals, every day. I was slightly worried, were they good managers, but I found they were good leaders, good administrators and they could run good hospitals.

"Why did I take Buffy? Because I like having her with me, and in the hospitals we don't separate men and women, except of course in the theatres and in recovery wards afterwards. Most of the operations are obviously cataracts, but some big high operations are done. I tell you that because some of the soldiers who were

in the Indian Army, which I was in, which my father was in, they come in and I was able to talk to them. It's very rewarding for me and Buffy."

Ovingdean Manager Dick Lake was commandeered to make presentations and then Chairman Billy Griffiths thanked Viscount Slim for joining the POWs. He thanked other guests present and PBK and Ovingdean staff for their help with the reunion.

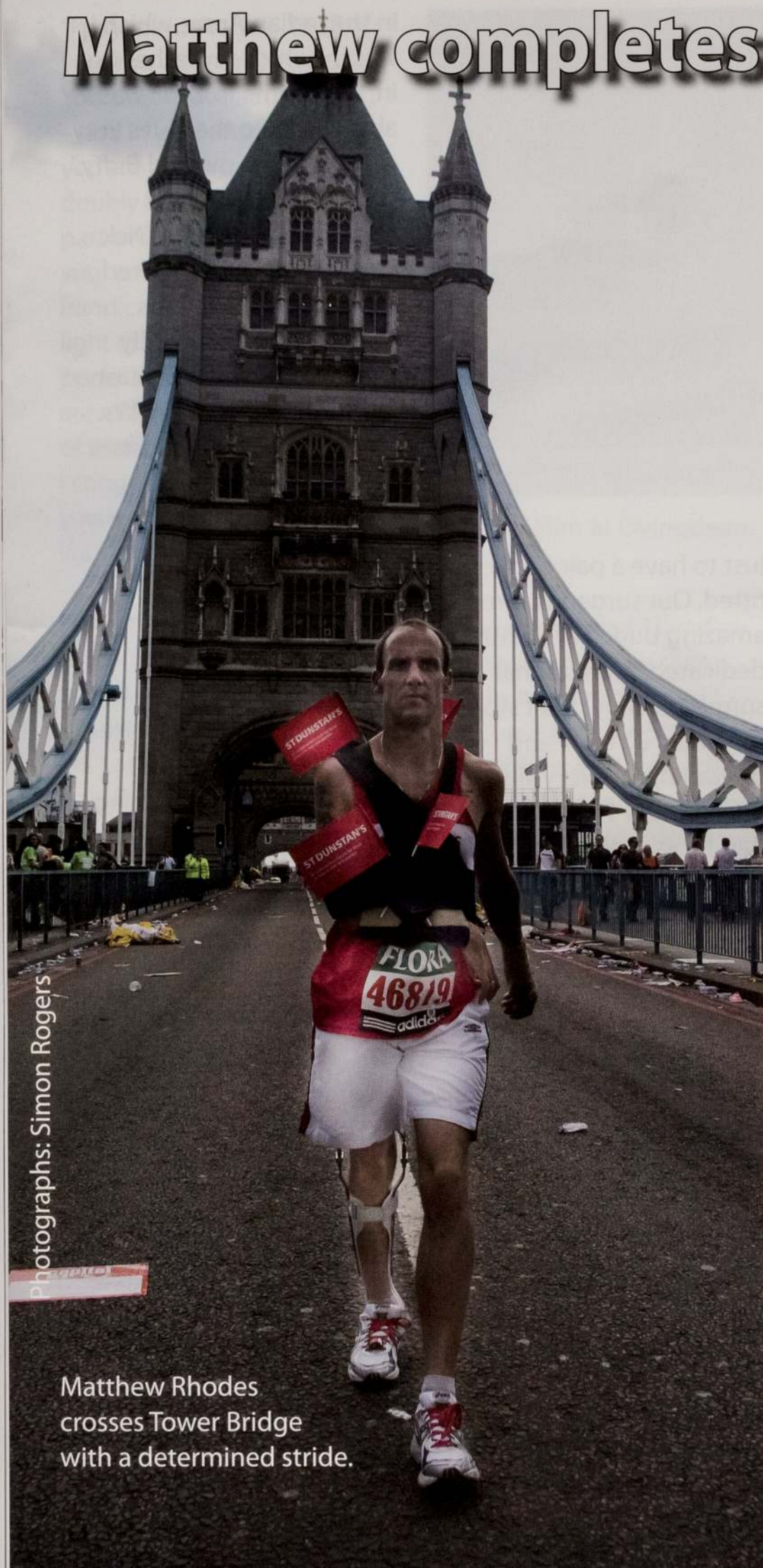
Sunday started with a service in St Dunstan's Chapel, conducted by Father Martin Morgan. He read from the *Gospel of St John*, verses concerning the appearance of Christ to the Apostles after the resurrection and the bestowing of the Holy Spirit.

He went on to say that there was much that could be learnt from St Dunstaners that would help us become more truly human. "I think one of the miracles of humanity is the way in which you lived your lives when you came home to your families."

Billy Griffiths recited the exhortation which was followed by the *Last Post*.



# Matthew completes Marathon



Matthew Rhodes crosses Tower Bridge with a determined stride.

photographs: Simon Rogers

**N**INE RUNNERS ventured out onto the streets of London to support St Dunstan's in the hottest London Marathon on record! They were amongst 36,000 athletes, some dressed as rhinos, dancers, superheroes and baked beans, who committed themselves to running 26.2 miles on 22 April.

For St Dunstan's, Becky Sharp, daughter of IT guru Janis Sharp, took the lead to finish in 4 hours, 19 minutes and 26 seconds. She has raised over £1,750 so far. Sports and Recreations Andy Alliston was close behind at 4 hours, 31 minutes and 26 seconds, while his boss Louise Timms hit the line in 4 hours, 59 minutes and 2 seconds. St Dunstaner Iain Millard made his mark in 5 hours, 31 minutes and 42 seconds.

The heat claimed a victim in the form of St Dunstaner Don Planner. In the middle of his 16th marathon, he began to experience chest pains - no joke when you have had a triple heart bypass - and took the decision to drop out. A

Hillary, Matthew, Louise and Iain at Greenwich.



Korean veteran Bill Leith crosses Tower Bridge at 3 hours, 16 minutes.



Louise at almost 18 miles in.

Iain Millard nears the finish of the Marathon.



Don and Chris after six miles.



passing cab driver picked him up and took him back to the Union Jack Club free of charge. "It was very good of him to that," said Don. "Once I had rested I began to feel better again."

The intervention of the cabby allowed Don's running partner, Chris Moorley, to complete his run in 6 hours, 13 minutes and 22 seconds.

Still out on the road was Ex-Service man Bill Leith who had not long had his



Where's Walter Raleigh? Matt and Hillary reach Creek Road.

leg out of plaster. He was attempting to raise money for a flying project and completed his run in 7 hours, 48 minutes and 53 seconds.

Meanwhile, St Dunstaner Matthew Rhodes and his mother, Hillary, were still on the move. Matthew was injured ten years ago while serving in the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment. As a result of those injuries he was paralysed on one side of his body and was setting out with his right arm strapped up in a sling and his leg held in place by a metal brace.

Matthew takes us back to the beginning of his run:

It was 05:30 in the morning and I was filled with anxiety about the race. My 16 months of training was finally over and there I was in London, about to join the crowds of runners, waiting to start the London Marathon.

After a train ride in which we were crushed like sardines, we started walking towards the start line. A lady came up to me and said that she thought it was amazing that I was going to attempt the marathon and that she wished all the luck to me and thought that I was an

inspiration. I thanked her and walked on with a spring in my step. This meeting was just one of thousands that I would have all the way through the marathon with loads of people saying that I was an inspiration. Every time I got a compliment, it added another spring to my step!

After about 15 minutes of walking, I came round a corner and all I could see ahead of me was a steep hill. I hit this hill with a surge in my step and was worried that I'd feel exhausted even before I started the marathon! As I made it to the top of the slope I saw thousands and thousands of other runners all looking like a herd of sheep, following each other in huge circles as if they had nowhere to go. I went and joined this massive bunch and awaited the starting orders. Then everyone turned and began to walk to the starting canopy. My escort and guide was my mother. I was quite pleased at the speed as I could keep up. As we passed through I had a microchip fitted onto my laces and this would give me my time from start to finish. Suddenly all these walking people sprang into a keen jog and shot passed me making

me feel as if I was a hazard. Again, I got loads of pats on my back as people jogged passed wishing me all the luck. So, even though I was disappointed that I could not jog, I too felt honoured with all this praise I was being given.

After about a mile, I started to see people standing beside the route cheering everyone on. Again, the public, no matter who they were gave me and extra cheer, and this continued throughout the marathon, even at the end when it was just ordinary people on the street.

Because of the intense, heat my mum and I were pleased to reach each watering point. This feeling only lasted until the six mile point as by that time there was no more water! Luckily, I had taken a rucksack with me and had filled it with water, Lucozade and energy foods before I had started out.

As we plodded on, the people jogging past me were no more and at times it felt quite lonely; still, on we marched. We then came across a pub full to the brim with locals. When they saw me plodding along miles behind everyone



Matthew and brother Steve across the Thames from the London Eye and County Hall.

else, and seeing that I was disabled, they all jumped up and shouted at the top of their voices, "Go on, you can do it, well done!" This happened with every pub we passed, no matter how drunk the occupiers were, and again they made me feel very proud.

Suddenly after about eight miles I saw a massive boulder being tugged along the ground by an Indiana Jones impersonator. My mum and I were both thrilled to bits, as finally there was someone that we could overtake!

After walking for four hours, we were almost at the half

way point, at Tower Bridge, where my mum and I were meant to be meeting my Uncle Gordon and Aunty Janet. I heard a cry from the crowds, "Hillary! Matt! There you are!" They walked with us for half-a-mile. Their presence gave Mum and me a well needed boost. When they went both my mum and I had huge smiles back on our faces.

After reaching the half way point my good leg began to feel tired, and from here onwards the tiredness of the leg became more and more intense. Still, I could hide it at this point, so on I trod with a wide grin on my face.

As we walked on we saw all the other joggers moving in the opposite direction, and as we passed them by they me all the best. Among these joggers my mum and I saw a Parachute Regiment Platoon marching along at a very rapid rate in full combats with huge Bergen rucksacks on their backs. All this reminded me of my time in the Army, but I was not jealous at all!

About a mile from Tower Bridge, we met my brother, Steve. We had arranged to meet him on the marathon,





The sun sets over Big Ben.

but had not said a specific point. Steve didn't have a clue where we would be, so he'd started from the finishing line and had walked the race the wrong way until he met us. It was great to see him. He stayed with us all the way to the finish.

When we got to Canary Wharf all of the road markings had been removed, and there were hundreds of people all sweeping up the used water bottles. Luckily, my brother

once lived in London, so he knew the exact route to go. When we first entered the Canary Wharf area, a chap came up to us and said in a very strong voice, "Well done, you are definitely an inspiration." To which my brother replied, "Thanks..." After this chap had passed on my mum and I started laughing at my brother, telling him that he wasn't saying it to him!

My walking was fine up until I reached the 22 mile mark. Up until this point my mum, brother and I had been having quite a comedic walk which had kept us moving on. The pain in my one good leg became unbearable and every step was becoming harder and harder to achieve. A pavement would have been too high to lift it. My army training then took over. I would not give up. My mum said that she could tell that I was finding it hard as I just stared ahead and didn't speak. The last four miles took us two-and-a-half hours to complete, but as this was my one and only attempt at the London Marathon, I would not give it up for any reason.

As we moved beside the River Thames, my brother said that we only had to get

to Big Ben and we would be as good as finished. I looked and I looked and I finally saw it, a miniature Big Ben that seemed only an inch high! Still, on I trudged and stumbled.

The final surge was around St James Park in front of Buckingham Palace and I found it so very hard. A young man came and joined me on my final push for victory, and a young couple walked behind me, but I could not tell nor see that anybody was there as I was concentrating so hard to stop myself from falling. The short distance of roughly 800 metres took me so long to accomplish. It felt as if I was walking along an escalator in the wrong direction, but I could feel, if not see, the finish.

When I finally crossed the line after a long ten-and-a-half hours of sheer determination a great many thoughts rushed through my head: was it worth the 16 months of training? Was it worth all the pain and exhaustion? Was it worth the worry of not knowing whether or not I would actually complete the course? A big strong yes came over my mind, telling me to be very proud of myself for achieving this



Done it! And a bit beside!

marathon task which had taken all those months of training to achieve. Memories then started to flood: how ever since I was a young lad I had always wanted to do the London Marathon; how in the army, running those ever exhausting uphill, cross-country races, literally dreaming of doing the London Marathon, and now I had finally achieved one of my greatest ambitions, I felt oh so very proud, crossing the actual finishing banner as it still fluttered in the wind!

### MONET WAS BLIND

Scientists believe that painter Claude Monet developed his impressionistic style because he had cataracts. They say his vision was becoming more brownish and blurrier .

## Well done, Longfield



**L**ONGFIELD AIR Training Corps, 2511 Squadron, were feted on May 17 by a blind ex-Serviceman for their part in a 13-mile hike using Braille map references. Former Royal Green Jacket Stephen Pendleton of Hoo, Rochester presented cadets at their Longfield base with certificates of commendation for taking part in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge last year. He read their names from a braille list as he handed each cadet their certificate. As part of Kent Wing ATC, Longfield came second in the competition nationally.

Stephen told the cadets of his experiences as a soldier, culminating in a helicopter

crash that blinded him and tore off one of his legs. "My dad ran through all of my injuries, but when I asked him to turn on the lights there was the biggest silence you could imagine," said Steve. "Then he told me I was blind." Steve, who has since become a qualified chef and Braille instructor explained his rehabilitation with St Dunstan's.

Cadet Aimee Langwith, who completed the exercise with blistered feet, was named Outstanding Cadet of the Challenge. Stephen presented her with a silver cup and commended her for her determination to carry on with the challenge last October.



# THE FALKLANDS REGAINED

In the third part of our series, St Dunstaners tell **Simon Rogers** about the final weeks of conflict in the South Atlantic

**W**HEN THE Falkland Islands were invaded in 1982, St Dunstaner Gerry Jackson had already left the Royal Navy. However, his civilian employers were contracted by the Ministry of Defence on weapons and communications systems.

"I was an Electronics Designer," said Gerry. "I had already worked on Larkspur and Clansman communications systems and Rapier missiles.

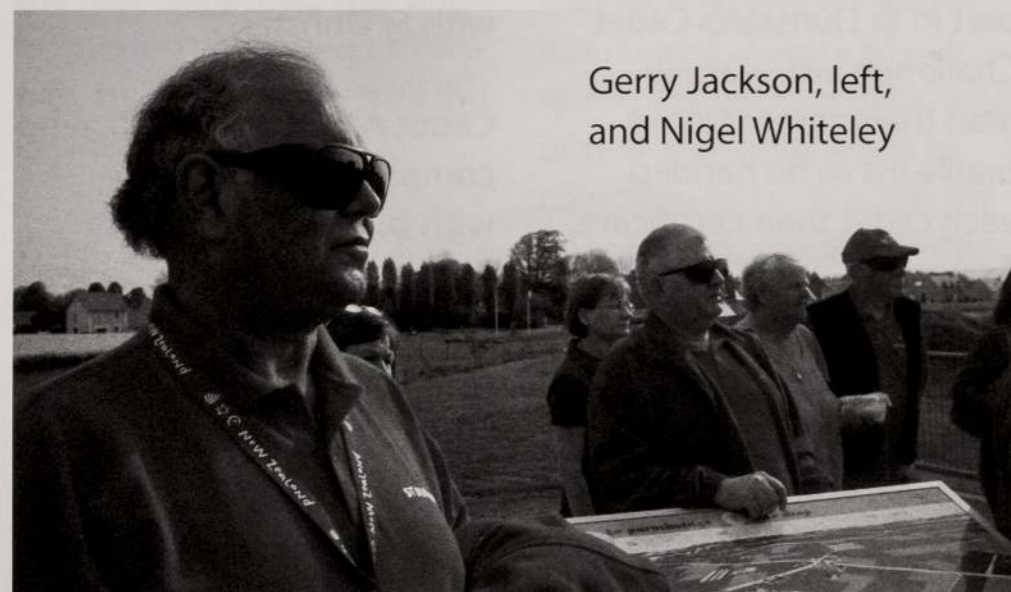


42 Commando yomp up Mount Kent.

Naval ships had been dispatched southwards and I began to wonder if, as a Naval Reservist, there would be a call up." The call up never came, but Gerry was asked to go as an MOD sponsored observer to evaluate weapons and communications systems in action under harsh

and wartime conditions. "I felt it would be good experience," he said. "After a bit of soul searching and family discussions, I agreed to go. I think the fact I had been in the Navy, that I was a Reservist helped, that if necessary I could put myself under Military Command."

Gerry arrived in the Falklands on 21 May. Early news concerned an attack on HMS *Antrim*. "I didn't know him at the time, but I heard about Terry Bullingham being blinded. I felt very bad about that. The next day, I landed at San Carlos to liaise with the Royal Artillery manning the Rapier installations, endeavouring to protect the fleet from air attacks. "I spent the time observing



Gerry Jackson, left, and Nigel Whiteley

operations and gathering information that would come in handy later in design work. I didn't feel threatened, but I was upset watching other people come under attack, witnessing ships being hit by bombs and missiles."

On the edges of the exclusion zone, CPO Nigel Whiteley had joined merchant vessels supporting the British Task Force, training medics. "I then joined a mine sweeper and was responsible for the decompression chamber when the divers went down to defuse mines."

As June opened, HMS *Alacrity* was bombarding positions west of Port Stanley and Royal Marines were holding secure positions on Mount Kent and Mount Challenger. US president Ronald Reagan is reputed to have asked Margaret Thatcher not to inflict too serious a defeat on Argentina. As 2 Para reached Bluff Cove, an Argentinean envoy offered to surrender to the United Nations.

Sean Allman, serving in the Engine Room on HMS *Hermes*, was still on full alert. "I was a watchkeeper," he said. "The naval day is split into four-hour watches. Mine was in one of the engine rooms, then you came out and did four-hours at a defence watch, that would be at your action stations point. You had about

eight-hours off and then it would repeat itself.

"During your time off, the ship would go to action stations. It always did this at dawn and at dusk everyday. That's when you are at most danger of attack because of the light, so you always had your sleep interrupted. That got worse and worse as the conflict went on.

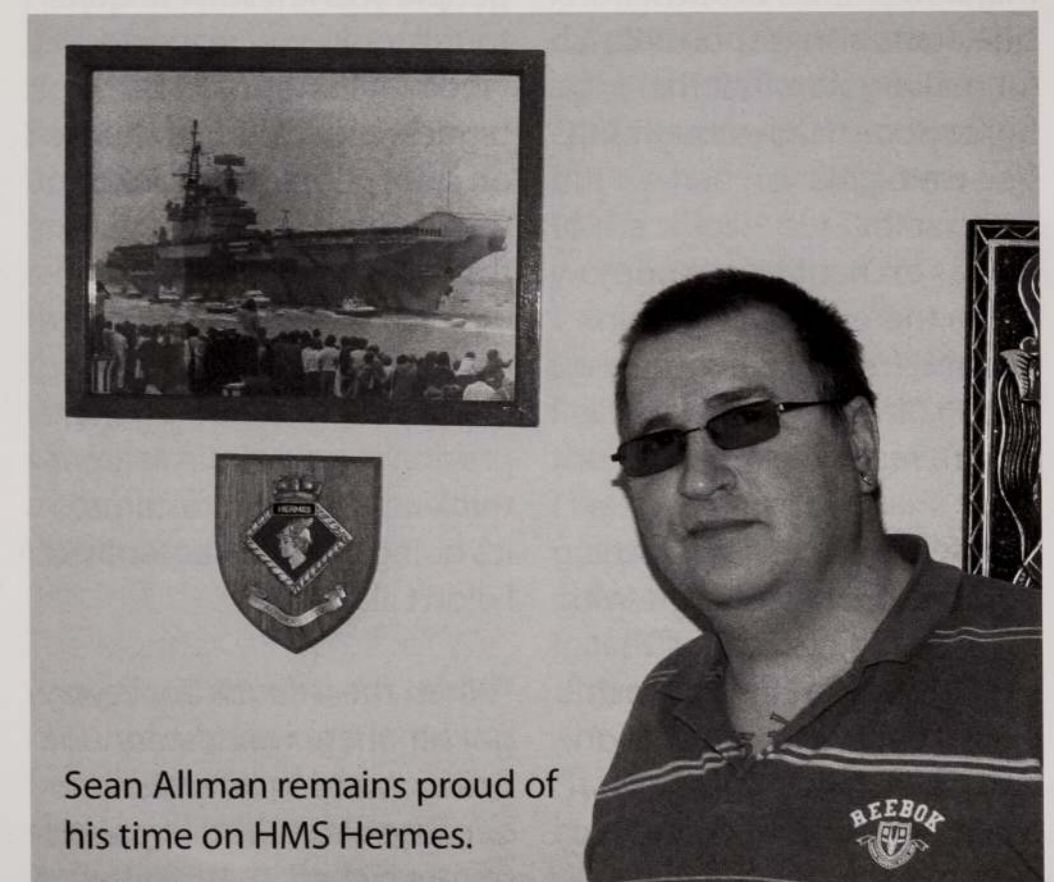
"Our Mess was full of SAS people polishing their bullets, which I found most disconcerting. I was so bloody tired and I thought 'Do I feel brave enough to ask them to get off my bed?' I was just a little sailor, so I slept in a passage way for a couple of days.

"Invariably, this was easier because the ship went to

action stations so often. You had so much stuff with you, your life jacket, a once-only suit, a sort of PVC suit that was supposed to protect you from the elements if you went in the water, and an oxygen cylinder with a mask, so that you could see to get out of the engine room.

"It was a hindrance getting through the hatches with all this stuff and then you slept with it on, you didn't bother to take it off. I had a gas mask as well some of the time. I think someone was worried about a biological or nuclear attack, but I don't think that was going happen.

"We just carried on. The *Hermes* was a prime target; we were carrying the biggest threat, the Harriers. We had



Sean Allman remains proud of his time on HMS *Hermes*.



over our normal compliment of Harriers; we had the Fleet Air Arm and also the RAF Groundstrike ones which were slightly different. We had the Wessex Sea King helicopters. The ship's compliment was over 2,000, not that I knew being down in the dungeons all day. With extra Marines, the RAF personnel, we were stuffed to the gunnels really.

"Most of the time I was watch-keeping in the Engine Room and down on the shafts. I had a horrible job. There are three pumps and when the klaxons used to go off, I had to put them on automatic, so that if we got hit they could pump the Engine Room out from a remote location. I was inside of the engine with these major fuel tanks on either side. I was also responsible for making sure that the Boiler Room had enough salt free water.

"It was exceedingly choppy down there. When you think that the *Hermes* is something like 30,000 tons, when it rolls it has a really big roll.

"I suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. I struggle with it quite a lot because of that below decks stuff. I get flash backs from certain events on ship – even during the day. I see people and my sleep patterns get mucked up.

Emotionally I find things hard to cope with. "I don't know if I was too young to cope or whatever? If the ship was called to action stations, that was fine. Everyone would run off to their station, but sometimes they would say 'Quarter, stand to, we've detected a missile launch' that meant you didn't have time to get to your action station. So you slammed the nearest door shut and put the details down to seal it and lay on the floor with hands over your head. You had a mass of bodies lying on the floor.

"You're bracing for impact, particularly after the *Sheffield* got hit when you realised what they could do launching the Exocets. And there are older chaps, people you knew were quite tough, guys you respected who would normally be the biggest most loudest drunks on ship, people you looked up to, people were lying on the floor crying.

"It gave it a more scary feeling. These people are sitting there praying to god and you are thinking 'It's going to come, it's going to hit!' I was terrified. I didn't like that.

"When the *Atlantic Conveyor* got hit, there was a story going round that it was because of us. We'd put up so much chaff, that's metal

and stuff to confuse the radar; it skipped over us and hit *Atlantic Conveyor*. We went up on deck and saw it burning from a distance.

"The only other thing we saw on deck were the Harriers that came back on deck with holes in them. We were right at the back of the Exclusion Zone and we had our goalkeepers. We had a frigate and a destroyer with us. They were our safety net."

Back on land, Royal Marines such as Steve Sparkes, Reg Perrin, Alan Holderness, and the late Tom Higgins were engaged on patrolling the areas they had secured. Checking for mine fields was a priority.

"It was down in the Falklands that I realised I had problems with my eyes," said Alan Holderness. "I strayed into a minefield. It had been marked off but I hadn't seen it. It was twilight, I didn't know that I was carrying this eye condition where the first thing to go is night vision. I just thought I was clumsy. If we went out on patrol, I would be the one who found the dirty great hole to fall down in. I got nicknamed Torchy in the end."

Lance Corporal Steve Sparkes was amongst those on Mount Kent. "We moved off Mount Kent to another ridge of mountains, but the



Steve Sparkes, 25 years later.

problem was we were not getting our supplies," he said. "We were not getting the food through. We yomped all loaded up with our kit because the choppers couldn't keep up. We were having to carry excessive amounts of ammunition because we were moving so quick, they couldn't keep the supplies coming."

However, the Argentineans helped matters somewhat. "The bonus was that we were able to use their ammunition," said Steve. "It was the same calibre, so as fast as they were leaving their ammunition, stupidly, it was good for us because we would use it. So that was a blessing in disguise for us. If we hadn't had their ammunition we would have been running desperately low.

"All the way through, we were calling mortar fire support and artillery and we were restricted on what kind of ammunition we could use on call in. We would call in a sighter and ask for fire for effect for two minutes and they would come back and say 'We can only give 30 seconds.'"

Steve met some of the islanders. "We managed to get to this farm," he said. "It was a lovely family, I would love to see them again. It was a farmer, his wife and his lovely three kids. They put us up in this barn for the night. We actually slept in this barn on bales of hay! It was probably the best night's sleep we had for three weeks. We were rested, a troop at a time and this farmer brought in hot soup and stuff. It was lovely!"

However, it was brief respite. Sparky's unit were picked up by a landing craft. "We got orders to do another raid on a farm that they thought was occupied by the Argentineans. We found very little resistance, but we saw a lot of running. We took a couple of kills but basically they scarpered."

The Marines set up base. "We were like sherpas across the mountain bringing mortar bombs to a forward position," said Reg Perrin recalling 8 June, 1982. "We took cover



Alan 'Reg' Perrin, aged 17.

in the rocks while a couple of Skyhawks came round and we watched them take out *Sir Galahad*, which was one of the most upsetting things to watch. We had seen the ship lying idle for sometime and even as a young Marine with not a great deal of military knowledge, it seemed rather daft that ships were sat in sight of Port Stanley. We could see the planes coming, but we had no radios to get to the ships – our radios only went to each other."

Steve concurs: "We could see Port Stanley. We could see the Exocet missile launcher. I was on sentry duty and I got pulled up to the forward point and they said 'Sparky look! That's one of our ship's down there isn't it.'

"It was the *Sir Galahad* and it's come round in front of us in the sea. We know it's got no



guns on it. So we get on to the Navy and said 'We've got a friendly forces ship, we've identified it as *Sir Galahad* RFA. That ship shouldn't be there, there was no covering ship there, nothing.

"A couple of Mirages, Skyhawks came in and they've flown out to sea. And we knew what they were going for, they were going for the ship. They were not going for any of the land troops. One swoop and these planes have come round and we've ordered fire to distract. We're not going to hit them because we're two kilometres away, but we've opened up the machine guns to try and distract the pilots. It did nothing."

"He's dropped his bomb and its gone straight into the ship. We saw it explode and the smoke was billowing out. We could see they had massive problems down there and we were sent down to help with survivors."

Reg recalls the white hot blast. "It was glowing!" he said. "It was so bright it messed up my night vision. There was nothing we could do, we were just up on the cliffs, watching these poor buggers swim ashore. Guys were jumping off ship and fire and there was nothing you could do. The smokers didn't seem so bothered, so that was the first time I have puffed a fag. It



Edith Curson in the Falklands.

didn't do any good, so I never had one again!

"Once it was all over, we picked up the bombs and carried on with our task and hoped somebody was looking after them."

Fifty-one people, including 38 Welsh Guards, died in the attack, while 55 were seriously wounded. They were taken to HMS *Uganda* where Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service St Dunstaner Edith Curson was Matron.

"We had Simon Weston on board when the *Sir Galahad* was hit," said Edith. "He had terrible burns. We had about 300 patients that day. It was quite horrific! Some of our nurses were really quite young, one had been 21, her training would haven taken three-years in the service, to be an SRN or state enrolled

nurse. Although some of them had worked casualty, they weren't used to such numbers of casualty coming on to treat at one time.

"Of course if you work the A&E department now you get used to bullet wounds and knife wounds but things like that, 25 years ago, weren't all that common in this country unless you were in a war situation. But they coped well, they did good!" Back on land, Reg was still lugging mortars. "They weighed 40lbs each," he said. "It wasn't the weight, but the plastic straps they came in. They were not designed to be carried over rocks. They would twist and break and cut into your hand. It was a long day!"

Despite this, Reg and his unit set up their mortar bases. Meanwhile, Steve Sparkes had been gathering information to prepare their next move.

"The last real feature before Port Stanley was called Mount Harriet and it was heavily defended," said Steve. "Captain Babbington asked us to go out on patrol. It was Sgt Collins, myself Lance Corporal Sparkes, Marine Kent and Marine Simpson.

"We could observe the enemy on the mountain

from our distant range. Colonel Vaux, the CO of 42 Commando, was told to take the mountain. How he did it was up to him. He came up with a brilliant plan to assault the mountain from behind. We didn't know this at the time, we were just given these orders to go and do a recce support patrol.

"We were given a fire support team from L Company which was Reg's unit. We went out on the first patrol. The idea was that if we got into trouble we would come scarpering back and get behind our fire support team and they would give us covering fire.

"We patrolled deep and we realised that we were in the middle of a minefield and with that we heard the sound of a mine going off – pffft – like that. And screaming. It was one of Reg's mates. They lost two, Patterson was the first one. He went out like a light. We made our way out, probing with bayonets and managed to get him casevaced by chopper. Thank the lord, he lost his leg but he's still alive to tell the story.

"We went out again the following night, marking our route with pegs. If one of our minefields was rumbled we would have sent out a clearing patrol, so we were always in fear of running

into one of their patrols but they never came. We got a clear path through and were coming round the mountain in descent.

"We probed further and could see through our infra red systems that they were dug in on the mountain. We could see their lights. We went further and we came into contact so we all went to ground. We were all lying there as their patrol came straight past us without noticing us, so we sussed out straight away that was the safe route.

"We followed them, almost right behind them. We went back for a de-brief. The boss was well impressed because we could even spot the guns they had." The third night took Steve's unit further into the mountain. "We heard another pffft and we lost another lad to a mine, but this time we were much closer to the mountain, so there was every chance they'd heard that and if they hadn't they would have heard the screaming.

"We had a medic, Jumper, he took out a needle with morphine and stuck it in his neck and cut him out straight away. We got him out of there, fireman's carry, it must have been a total two-and-half k. Tourniqued his leg and got him back to

the fire support team, but the weather closed in and we couldn't get a chopper. It was too foggy, so we had to get him further down the track. We talked in the helicopter in the end about 4k back. They got him out and the medic said he had good signs.

"Then we had Sunray on the radio, Sunray being the Colonel, 'Sunray here, mission must continue, mission must continue.' I thought 'What? Can you say again, over?' And he said 'Mission must continue.' We've just been rumbled in one of their minefields and our boss wants us to go back in again on the same night!

"I've got my boss, Sgt Collins, and he's said 'How do you feel Sparky? How's your bottle?' And I said 'I think it's just popped!'

"We set off, just the four of us. We didn't take a fire support team this time, we thought it was too risky. We got through the same minefield and Sgt Collins actually crawled into the enemy positions. He could identify all the major positions.

"We were told to set up more fire points, pre-arranged targets that you set up with artillery. So you can say, 'Call in Foxtrot Charlie' or something. As we were going back, I spotted a patrol coming from behind. We scarpered into



this field and as we're running Jumper's torch has come on, so he's got this red torch flashing in his pocket.

"So I rugby tackled him. We've all stayed low in the ground and we hear this Argentinean shouting. We thought he's probably seen us, so we've moved ourselves round in a little line ready to be fired upon. We think to this day that they must have thought we were stragglers, their own men running away. They never opened fire on us, but I'm sure they must have seen us.

"We stayed our ground. I started calling in fire missions. We came into contact with another patrol, so we all huddled in a bog and they came and stood right by us, 18 of them having a fag. We just laid there, we didn't move a muscle, we didn't twitch.

"We had everything ready to go in case they came round the bush, but they moved off. As soon as they did that, we moved out. They started putting up palumes, lighting up the sky. They knew someone was about. We went to ground again, but started getting worried because daylight was coming and we were still behind their lines and we couldn't get out.

"Our boss came on the radio saying he wants us back, so

we made quick decision to go down lower to the seaside and get out that way, but we didn't know if it was mined. We ended up walking in arrow formation until we got down and could go back on the bearing."

This route would later be used to get to survivors from the *Sir Galahad*, but this night covering fire was required to allow Sparky's team to get out.

After a debrief, Colonel Nick Vaux revealed his plan, to take 40 Commando up through this route and line them up on the other side of the mountain. One company would draw attention from the front, while K Company would go up the established route.

"We set out about 2-3 o'clock in the morning," said Steve. "One big extend line, and our orders were not to fire until fired upon. We assaulted from behind because they had nothing on that side. One guy, from our company broke the rules and opened fire, but he had infra red and could see an Argentinean moving a machine gun round.

"He got him, but he alerted them, that's when the fire fight started. Everything started moving, that's when it all hits the fan and your professionalism kicks in. Just sweeping across the mountain, Captain

Babbington was calling in the naval gunfire and they were stepping it up.

"We had helo rounds coming in and artillery going off, fire on the mountainside. As I was skirmishing through, I got orders to leave my gun. So Bill and I moved off to give covering fire for the rest of the unit. I set the gun up on the rock and was giving fire for my unit to advance, all the time listening to the other corporals on the Net. Then I get a message on my radio 'Fetch starlight.' Starlight is the medic.

"It was Lofty, my corporal! He'd been hit and all I could hear were his struggles to talk. I'm trying to get hold of him, saying 'Where are you?' but all I'm getting are the sounds of a dying man on the radio. Of course he also had his presser switch pressed as well, so I couldn't get anything.

"In the end, I reverted to shouting, with tracer rounds going everywhere. The noise was amazing, thunderflashes going off and constant rounds going off. The whole sky was lit up like a firework display. It was chaos.

"I got hold of my boss and he's said 'Clear Lofty'. We've secured up and I've gone off to find Lofty with my section, with the rest of the lads

giving us covering fire. Jacko found him and shouted to me 'Sparky! I've found Lofty.' I've got round there and turned Lofty over. He was just blowing bubbles. He didn't have a chance!"

Sparky was ordered to take command of his patrol and mark his Corporal for latter recovery. "So I had to take the radio off him and get his kit. We secured the position, we had two casualties with us, which wasn't too good.

"We advanced somewhat and then we faced this big machine gun and we were just pinned down. It was in the perfect place and it was just sweeping the whole of us, rounds of ammunition, bullets flying everywhere.

"It was a guy called Steve Newland, a corporal who assigned himself and his section to try and take this machine gun out. The orders were to give him covering fire. So we all systematically started laying fire down on the machine gun.

"Steve managed to advance it, running and dashing through the rocks. He was underneath the machine gun, but there was still 25ft. We were firing on this machine gun post and our man was underneath it. He managed to get a grenade off and took it out.

"So we all sprint forward before they can get another man in there. And we're on the enemy lines, clearing as we go so that nobody pops up behind us, we're throwing grenades in trenches. I've thrown a grenade in one trench and then I've dived in."

Sparky gives an elementary description of what he found. The smell would linger with him for some time to come. "I'm laying in it, up to neck in it, in the height of battle!"

However, the battle was coming to a close. "Everything was burning and before we knew it, we were on top of the mountain," said Steve. "There were bodies everywhere. I remember a young boy. I reckon he was only 16. He was laying on his side with his helmet on and he was crying. I leaned down to see him and said 'How are you mate?' I could see his stomach hanging out he'd taken a nasty wound!" It was also too late to get help and the boy shortly died.

Reg recalls crossfire being a problem during the battle. "With us being on the front and others being on the side, there was some over-firing. I remember a message on the radio saying 'It's us! Switch your fire!'

"My section got pinned down by a machine gun post.

My corporal told me to cross to some cover because I was carrying some anti-tank rockets. Me and my buddy ran across and for a minute it felt like a hail storm, but it was bullets dancing around our feet. I landed in a peat bog and after a while fired a rocket but misjudged the back blast. It set my jacket on fire but it took out the bunker. It also took out the ammo dump behind it. That went up and the four guys inside didn't fire back again."

Over on Mount Longdon, 3 Para were also engaged in battle. Sgt Ian McKay is awarded a posthumous VC for his actions. Three islanders are killed during bombardment of Stanley and Pope John Paul II denounced all wars as 'unjust' during a visit to Argentina. HMS Glamorgan sustained damage from a land-launched Exocet missile.

With Mount Harriet secure, section commanders were called in for a meeting at which point Sparky was reminded of his newly acquired eau d'trench. "Nobody would stand next me. We didn't have any water, so I couldn't wash myself and it was the one day we didn't have any rain!"

The Marines were warned to stay alert in case of counter-attack. "The following



Argentine troops after the surrender.



morning the Colonel wanted to talk to everyone and they promoted me to Acting Corporal on top of the mountain," said Steve. He is reckoned to be the only person to receive a field promotion since the Second World War.

"The sad thing is we have a myth in the Royal Marines that we don't wear steel helmets, that our berets will protect us. Lofty was the only one who had his steel helmet on. And he was the only one in our section who was married with kids! We recovered his body. That was quite an emotional thing, carrying your boss away."

With fighting still taking place in Tumbledown, Wireless Ridge and Mount William, the Marines were expecting orders to attack Sapper Hill. The weather had turned and snow set in. "It was freezing," said Sparky. "We were playing a waiting game. They were sending

airstrikes and we were due to take Sapper Hill when a temporary ceasefire was announced."

At 10:15pm on 14 June, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher informed the House of Commons that the Argentineans had surrendered. In the Falklands, General Mario Menendez surrendered to General Jeremy Moore.

Alan Holderness has a personal interpretation of events. "I always maintain they surrendered because they knew it was my birthday. It was my 18th birthday," he said.

"When they surrendered, 40 Commando never got into Port Stanley. We were helicoptered across to Port Howard and we took the unconditional surrender of that island. It may have been the next day, but I was given a bottle of Old Spice by one of the locals. I still have

it somewhere, that and a Falklands pound note."

Birthday or no, it was a busy time as surrendering Argentineans came down and handed in their weapons. Both Reg and Sparky were amongst those who came down into Port Stanley to guard prisoners and direct them in clearing things up.

"Their support systems were fantastic," said Steve. "They had great rations, they had meat, they had fresh fruit, we just started going ballistic. Of course, we'd been starved so we started getting dysentery. I was just curled up for two days with serious stomach cramps. All because we weren't used to fresh food!"

Clean up operations began and prisoners were marshalled prior to being



Surrender came on Alan's 18th birthday.

repatriated to Argentina. Edith Curson recalls going ashore.

"We went across in the helicopter to Port Stanley," she said. "It was still very harsh. We saw off the Argentinean occupation and we went to the hospital and had a wander round the main street. There was nothing much in the shops. The mast from the SS Great Britain lies in the harbour which was interesting to see.

"We just said hello to islanders in the street. It was quite deserted. Shops were empty and there was a lot of debris around. The buildings were wooden type houses, probably well insulated.

"There was an Argentinean hospital ship, *Bahia Paraiso*. We had transferred a few of their patients back to them and we were invited across to visit them in their sick bay. About four or five of us went. Most of the people on this ship had been trained in this country. At one time we had quite a thing about training the Argentinean's here.

"They had a custom built hospital ship with proper theatres and care units and what have you. They were treated very well there.

"We had had previous exchanges, apart from giving them their patients

and having their soldiers on board and giving them to them to take back to their own ships, we had also exchanged drugs and things because they were short of drugs. There was no animosity between the medical people, between them and our people.

"There was a good rapport. They were very kind, very pleasant, very caring.

"I think the troops were very grateful to us. I think they thought we would ill-treat them in some way, but no way. Their fellow British patients were quite kind to them. There didn't seem to be any problems. A lot of them didn't seem to know why they were there or what they were doing.

"We had two padres on board, one Church of England, one Roman Catholic and he spoke Spanish so he was able to converse with the Argentinean patients. None of them spoke English, or appeared not to, apart from some prisoners we had.

"We had picked up some Argentinean's on a fishing boat. They weren't fisherman at all. We had them under armed guard. We had them about ten days. They were definitely service people or intelligence people of some sort."

Edith compared one of them to the menacing submarine captain portrayed by Philip Madoc in *Dad's Army*. "Don't tell him your name Pike!"

General Galtieri resigned as leader of the Junta on 17 June. "The government declared an end to hostilities," said Gerry Jackson who had linked up with 42 Commando in Port Stanley. "I, and I suspect many others, heaved a sigh of relief!"

Spirits were buoyed for all our St Dunstaners on the voyage home. The chance for a shower, a shave, a beer, just to speak with comrades was a common factor. The reception at Southampton with crowds lining the cliff making an overwhelming impression as they reached the UK.

"I went and saw my granddad and a few old boys who had served in the Second World War," said Steve. "I said 'I take my hat off to you,' because I only did it for three months, those guys did it for years."

Terry Bullingham, meanwhile was visited by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach. "He told me he had just agreed to become a council member for St Dunstan's. I said 'I guess we will see more of each other then!'"





Gerry Jones explores a fortified bunker with Elizabeth Baker.

# Walking where liberty returned



St Dunstaner Eric Powell by a gun that would have been trained on Allied Forces on D-Day.

A GROUP of St Dunstaners visited the beaches of Normandy and other sites in the area that were key to the liberation of France during the Second World War. Guided by Anglia Battlefield Tours, they heard tales of personal bravery and sacrifice and gained a perspective on the scale of the Normandy landings and the forces marshalled against Allied Forces. The Merville Battery was one such fortification taken by a handful of troops, who were then expected to move on to their next objective.

The April pilgrimage concluded with a service of Remembrance at Bayeux War Cemetery. During the ceremony, St Dunstaners



Remembering British soldiers who fell at Bayeux.



David carries our wreath.

Eric Powell and Harry Beevers recited epitaph and evocation. Nigel Whiteley lowered the Standard and Member of St Dunstan's Council David Stuttard, escorted by Sally Cornish, stepped forward to lay a poppy wreath on the main memorial, a tall cross.



St Dunstaners at Pegasus Bridge.



# Masons meet up at St Dunstan's

by Bob Strickland

## FIFTEEN MASONIC

St Dunstaners gathered at St Dunstan's Ovingdean for our annual gathering over the weekend of 27-30 April. Most of us arrived on Friday afternoon and after our welcoming meal we met up in the lounge and had a drink talking over the events that had taken place over the previous 12 months. It was nice seeing old faces once again.

Saturday morning, at 10.45am we all gathered in the ballroom for our AGM and under the guidance of our long standing Secretary, Worshipful Brother Ron Freer, we planned the events for the afternoons meeting at the Masonic Temple in Brighton. The Temple Lodge, who were our hosts, planned to do their own ceremony this year, so it was easily sorted out.

Worshipful Brother Ron informed us that at next year's meeting, it is planned that we will be doing a ceremony, so each of us volunteered to fill the various offices required. For

those who are in the Craft, it is planned that we will be doing a First, two of our brethren sharing the position of Worshipful Master.

At the AGM the subject of our partners was raised. In general, it was pointed out that whilst we were at our meeting in Brighton, they were left to fend for themselves. It was decided that if there was sufficient interest a trip will be organised for them next year. We feel that more brethren would attend if there was something organised for the partners.

The Temple in Brighton is quite magnificent inside. Very large and a marvellous place to perform in. I had the great honour of performing there last year. The meeting was good and the after proceedings at the festive board (when we eat) were equally as good. We arrived back at Ovingdean around 10:30 pm.

Sunday Morning we all met up at 12:30 and proceeded up to the Winter Gardens for a formal meal with our guests and friends.

Why not join us next year!

## RAF cycle for St Dunstan's



WARRANT OFFICER James Blackwood of JARIC at RAF Brampton and his team completed a fundraising cycle around Holland last year. They raised £891.36 which was accepted by St Dunstan's Head of Awareness Graham Footer.

# Ten years with Tony

With Tony Blair having announced that he will step down as Prime Minister on Veterans Day, 27 June, we revisit some of his encounters with St Dunstaners.



Photograph: Express Newspapers

St Dunstaner Jamie Cuthbertson received a Daily Express Unsung Hero of the Year award in 2000 when he became the first British blind person to complete the Marathon des Sables. The Prime Minister presented Jamie with the award during the Labour Party Conference in Brighton.



Photograph: PA

St Dunstaner Cecil Green, who served in the RAF, discussed the work of the charity with the Prime Minister when they met at a local constituency function.



Photograph: Simon Rogers

Silent moment. The Prime Minister by the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 2006.



Photograph: Crown Copyright

The Prime Minister met St Dunstaners such as Henry Allingham and Mike Tetley on Veterans Day last year.



## REUNION ROUND-UP Reports on the most recent area reunions

Royal Navy St Dunstaner Jamie Weller was back in the chair as the presiding Member of St Dunstan's Council at the Birmingham Reunion on 17 April. There were 45 St Dunstaners and eight widows at the gathering which was held at The Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Edgbaston, Birmingham. St Dunstaner John Heath replied on behalf of those present.

Warm sunshine greeted 37 St Dunstaners and nine widows at the Eastbourne Reunion held at the Hydro Hotel on 19 April. Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided and St Dunstaner Alan Wortley replied on behalf of all those attending.

There were 27 St Dunstaners and one widows gathered at the London Reunion at the RAF Club, Piccadilly on 25 April. David Knowles, CBE was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding and St Dunstaner John Evans made the response.

At the Leeds Reunion, held on 9 May at the Britannia Hotel, there were 24 St Dunstaners and five widows. David Knowles, CBE presided and Harry Beevers gave a vote of thanks. Peter Shields, MBE, Welfare Officer with BLESMA was amongst guests.

St Dunstan's President, Ray Hazan presided at the Blackpool Reunion at the Imperial Hotel on 15 May.

There were 31 St Dunstaners and six widows. St Dunstaner Peter Burdon made the reply.

There were 32 St Dunstaners and three widows at the Preston Reunion held at the Pines Hotel, Chorley, Lancashire on 16 May. St Dunstaner Ray Hazan was the Member of Council presiding and St Dunstaner Maria Pikulski made the reply.

The Barrow Reunion was held at the Abbey House Hotel, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria on 17 May. St Dunstaner Ray Hazan was the Member of Council presiding and St Dunstaner Tom Jones made the reply. There were 11 St Dunstaners and one widow attending the gathering.

## BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Williamson

### Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby

Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby, 6.0 per cent abv. This bottle conditioned beer is toasty, fruity, rich and complex with some wine notes in the mix. It is an 'old style' ale brewed in Sedgley near Dudley and is a real delight. Dark Ruby won third prize in the Mild category of the Norwich Beer Festival last year. Milds are normally brewed using fewer hops than bitter, with darker malts, or sugar and caramel. This beer is so moreish and quite strong so treat it with respect.

## JUDGEMENT HAS BEEN MADE!

The verdict is in! Entries to the **St Dunstan's Review** Story Competition have been judged by broadcasting legend Charles Chilton, MBE whose *Journey into Space* is currently repeated on BBC7. Who won? All will be revealed in the July issue.

# Welcome to St Dunstan's

**Albert Allen** from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

**Ernest Allott** of Aylesford, Kent served in the Royal Marines from 1941 to 1946.

**Cecil Atkinson** of Wallasey, Merseyside served in the South Lancashire Regiment from 1950 to 1955.

**Alan Blakey** of North Anston, Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Tank Regiment between 1941 and 1946.

**William Bothomley** of Camberley, Surrey served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946, the Royal Army Service Corps (TA) from 1947 to 1950 and the Army Cadet Force (TA) from 1960 to 1967.

**Alan Breeze** of Newsome, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire served in the Coldstream Guards from 1958 to 1965.

**Alfred Burrell** of Brackley, Northamptonshire served in the Hertfordshire Regiment from 1927 to 1928, and then the York and Lancaster

Regiment and the Gordon Highlanders between 1928 and 1946.

**Ernest Dix** of Great Haywood, Stafford, Staffordshire served in the Army Catering Corps from 1946 to 1949.

**Stanley Elliott** of Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire served in the General service Corps and Royal Signals between 1942 and 1947.

**Leslie Epps** of Thetford, Norfolk served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1937 to 1940.

**Raymond Feakes** of Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1951 to 1961.

**Stanley Fleming** of Amhurst Park, London served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Bernard Hale** of Wooley, Wells, Somerset served in the Devonshire Regiment from 1943 to 1946.

**Thomas Harrison** of Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Leonard Harwood** of Boston, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

**Donald Hendry** of Tain, Highlands served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Brian Hinchcliffe** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1947.

**April Hoar** of Petworth, West Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1944.

**David Hollowell** of Rhyl, Denbighshire served as Sergeant in the Royal Air Force from 1969 to 1993.

**Francis Hookham** of Clayton-le-Dale, Blackburn, Lancashire served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1970.

**John Jarvis** of Ashted, Surrey served in the General service Corps, Queen's Regiment and Royal Army Pay Corps between 1945 and 1948.

**Trevor Knight** of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.



**Peter Lennon** of Reading, Berkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

**Doris Matthews** of Trowell, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

**Agnes Milne** of Nairn, Nairnshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Wallace Moore** of Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne served in the Royal Artillery and Parachute Regiment between 1949 and 1959.

**Ian Morgan** of Marlow, Buckinghamshire served in the Territorial Army and Royal Armoured Corps between 1939 and 1946.

**Thomas Morgan** of St Clears, Carmarthen, Dyfed served in the Royal Welch Fusiliers from 1940 to 1946.

**Kenneth Morley** of Castle Vale, Birmingham, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Bernard Naish** of Walmley, Sutton Coldfield served in the General Service Corps, North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's), Dorsetshire Regiment and Royal Artillery between 1942 and 1947.

**Margaret Peacock** of Attleborough, Norfolk served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1946 to 1948.

**Marjorie Pendleton** of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1945.

**Kenneth Piper** of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

**Ewart Pulford** of Royston, Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve from 1941 to 1946.

**Cyril Richardson** of Sidcup, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Donald Roberts** of Bronybuckley, Welshpool, Powys served in the Army Catering Corps at Catterick from 1948 to 1949.

**Kenneth Sedman** of Scarborough, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

**Ben-Jack Shaw** of Edinburgh is serving in the 3rd Battalion, The Rifles having joined the Army in 2003.

**Henry Sheen** of Kings Lynn, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1942.

**Alec Simmons** of Haigh, Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Gerald Skeggs** of Bedford, Bedfordshire served as Corporal in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1965.

**William Smith** of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

**Philip Taylor** of Saxilby, Lincoln served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

**David Thompson** of Little Clacton, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex served in the Royal Navy from 1955 to 1957.

**Charles Thorn** of Doddington Park, Lincoln, Lincolnshire served in the General service Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1942 and 1947.

**Stephen Tuffen** of Broomfield, Herne Bay, Kent served in the Parachute Regiment from 1980 to 1983.

**Victor Wainwright** of Gravesend, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

**William Williams** of Heacham, King's Lynn, Norfolk served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1947.

## It strikes me ...

with Gog and Magog



Gog hears that something was missing as St Dunstan's Speakers headed towards Normandy recently. They were all aboard the coach which was on the verge of driving on to the train that would take them through the Channel Tunnel. However, Melita Fearn from the Grants department and Sarah Clark from Admissions were not! It was a St Dunstaner who realised that the two girls were no longer present after a quick stop. Their absence had gone unnoticed by sighted members of the group. Chunnel officials soon reunited them with the team, after a stern warning.

Magog hears that guide dogs receive excellent training. As one St Dunstaner says "He's marvellous, but he can't go past a pub. I don't know what it is? We go by a pub and he veers to the left and I find myself standing at the bar. I feel silly if I don't buy a pint."

Gog hears of another guide dog whose habits are more temperate. "He drinks tea, but only if he sees the milk being poured from a carton, not a jug."

## Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 15.

- 1) Limerick;
- 2) *The Owl and the Pussycat*;
- 3) John Masefield; 4) William Shakespeare;
- 5) Rupert Brooke; 6) Nepal;
- 7) Laurence Binyon in his poem *For the Fallen*;
- 8) John Betjeman;
- 9) June; and 10) Spike Milligan.

## Family News

### BIRTHS

#### Congratulations on the birth of:

Austin, to Félise and Simon, on 28 December 2006 and Charles Joshua, to Caroline and Andrew, on 21 April. Austin and Charles are both great-grandsons of Bob and Joan Osborne of Saltdean, Brighton.

Lili Patricia Middleton Westbrook on 21 April. She is the first great-grandchild of Dorothy Jacobs of Wallasey, Wirral and the late Samuel Jacobs, Royal Engineers.

Louie Josee Taylor on 27 March. He is the great-grandson of Jane Taylor of Freshwater, Isle of Wight and the late Arthur Taylor.

### RUBY ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

John and Carol Gasston of Findon, Worthing, West Sussex on 6 May.

### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

#### Congratulations to:

Anthony and Margaret Newland of Hove, East Sussex on 20 April.



## DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

### Congratulations to:

John and Betty Davies of Rotherhithe, London on 19 April.

Francis and Rachelle Smith of Egham, Surrey on 26 April.

Tom and Amy Bryden of High Spenn, Rowlands Gill, Tyne & Wear on 27 April.

## SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

### Congratulations to:

Richard and Eileen Aston of Buckingham, Buckinghamshire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 19 April.

Leonard and Violet Barber of Ipswich, Suffolk who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 20 April.

Colin and Eve Bassett of Thetford, Norfolk who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 20 April.

Andrew and Muriel Goodall of Dereham, Norfolk who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 20 April.

Kenneth and Marion Sills of Winteringham, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 21 April.

Ron and Cynthia Murray of Brotton, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 23 April.

William and Jean Poulson of Harwich, Essex who celebrated 71 years of marriage on 23 April.

Silas and Agnes Morum of Cobham, Surrey who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 28 April.

Ronald and Rita Hitchcock of

Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 2 May.

Digby and Margery Wills of Marlow, Buckinghamshire who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 2 May.

Robert and Marjorie Coupland of Hessle, North Humberside who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 13 May.

William and Rose Lockert of Brighton who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 15 May.

Audrey and Cyril Mathews of Benllech, Isle of Anglesey who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 15 May.

George and Margery Allan of Grundigsburgh, Suffolk who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 16 May.

Dick and Bett Hall of Hassocks, West Sussex who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 16 May.

Frederick and Marjorie Healy of Tunbridge Wells, Kent who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 16 May.

## DEATHS

### We regret to announce the death of:

Barbara Roden on 18 March. She was the wife of James Roden of Romford, Essex and sister-in-law of Derek Roden of Hassocks, Sussex.

Elma Hayward on 24 April. She was the wife of Stanley Hayward of Fakenham, Norfolk.

Mavis Moore on 24 April. She was the wife of Paul Moore of Tilehill, Coventry.

Jillian Chadwick on 27 April. She was the wife of Paul Chadwick of Colyton, Devon.

Thelma Tetley on 1 May. She was the wife of Michael Tetley, MBE of St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Iris Turner on 7 May. She was the wife of St Dunstaner Arthur Turner of Harbury, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Stella Attfield-Baldwin of White Rock, Paignton, Devon on 18 April. She was the widow of St Dunstaner Joe Attfield.

Kate Ireland of Garn Dolbenmaen, Gwynedd on 19 April. She was the widow of Royal Marine St Dunstaner Trevor Ireland.

Betty Redbond of Cleethorpes, South Humberside on 26 April. She was the widow of St Dunstaner Jeffrey Redbond.

Marie Nichols of Mytchett, Camberley, Surrey on 13 May. She was the widow of Gunner St Dunstaner Cyril Nichols.

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# In Memory

## Kenneth Hollowell, AFC

### Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Kenneth Bruce Hollowell, AFC of Grayshott, Surrey died on 14 February, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1938. He joined 25 Squadron flying Blenheim and Beaufighter aircraft on night patrols. As a Sergeant, he flew during the Battle of Britain. He was commissioned in November 1941 and posted to West Africa, flying aircraft into the North African war zone. He was promoted to Flight Lieutenant in November 1943 and was awarded the Air Force Cross in June 1944. In civilian life, he worked as an agricultural

engineer and then on flight planning for British Airways. His interests included golf. Our sympathy goes to his widow Marianne, their daughters and all members of the family.

## Frank Snowden

### Royal Air Force

Frank Snowden of Frodsham, Cheshire died on 31 March, aged 87. He was an apprentice bricklayer before joining the Royal Air Force in 1940. After training at Wilmslow, he was posted to Pembroke Docks securing Sunderland Flying Boats. His unit were in Malta through out the siege. He returned to RAF Woodbridge before being discharged in 1946. After working as a bricklayer, he became an engineer inspector for Vauxhall Motors at Ellesmere Port. He was a regular bowls player. Our sympathy goes to his widow Violet, daughter Valerie and all of the family.

## Trevor Giles

### Royal Artillery

Trevor Theodore Taylor Giles of Bassett, Southampton, Hampshire died on 3 April, aged 85. He worked for Southern Railways before joining the Royal Artillery in 1941. He was posted to India and served in Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Kirkee and Puna. Discharged in 1947, he worked in the docks at Southampton and later became a coppersmith's mate. He then joined the GPO for 12 years before moving to Cornhill Insurance. Our sympathy goes to his widow Peggy, son Neil, daughters Kay and Adrienne and all of the family.

## Thomas Bond

### Royal Artillery

Thomas Henry Bond of Alston, Preston, Lancashire died on 4 April, aged 93. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1941 and became an instructor in 137 Field



Regiment. Discharged in 1946 as Quartermaster Sergeant, he worked in his father's cleaning factory and engineering business. He was also a pianist playing at concerts as a soloist and accompanist.

### **Thomas Gannon**

#### **Royal Fusiliers**

Thomas Gannon of Lewes, East Sussex died on 11 April, aged 92. He was a teacher in Rochdale before joining the South Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) in 1940. He later transferred to the Royal Fusiliers and served in Sierra Leone. In 1944, he suffered a head wound while serving in Italy. He was discharged in 1946 and returned to teaching. He became Headmaster of a school in Grimethorpe, Yorkshire and later wrote about his experiences. Our sympathy goes to his widow Peggy and all the family.

### **Joan James**

#### **Women's Royal Naval Service**

Joan James of Ledbury, Herefordshire died on 12 April, aged 85. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1941 and served as a Writer Clerk at HQ Western Approaches. She later transferred to London and was discharged as Petty Officer in 1947. She joined the Police in London for five years and then followed a career as a secretary and administrator, often in hotels, and became Banqueting Manager of a Cunard hotel. Her interests included cooking, sewing and knitting. Our sympathy goes to her sister Angela, niece Jane, and all of the family.

### **Peter Friend**

#### **Polish Army Resettlement Corps**

Pejsach Frajnd, later Peter Friend of Great Bookham, Surrey died on 17 April, aged 84. Born in Hrubieszów, Lubin, Poland, he was

a Farm Worker and Apprentice Fitter before being taken prisoner when the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1939. He was deported to the USSR but released under the Sikorski-Maisky agreement in 1941. He joined the Reserve of 5 Infantry Division and crossed into Iran where they came under British command. Deployed to Palestine, he transferred to 11 Wołyński Rifle Battalion in 1942. He served in Iran, Iraq, Palestine and Egypt and transferred to 14 Wileński Rifle Battalion in 1943. His battalion moved on to Italy and he was wounded in action during May 1944. He was awarded the Polish Cross for Valour. Transferring to the Polish Army Resettlement Corps in 1946, he came to the UK and was discharged in 1948. In civilian life he became a spectacle manufacturer and later a barber. Our sympathy goes to his widow Herta, sons Allan and Melvin, daughter Linda and all members of the family.

### **Harry Preedy**

#### **Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)**

Henry Edward Preedy of Ovingdean, Brighton, also known as Harry, died on 18 April, aged 95. Blinded in 1940, he was senior St Dunstaner at the time of his death. He was a fitter and iron worker before being called up to join the 2nd Battalion, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). He was deployed to the continent with the British Expeditionary Force. During heavy battle, he was injured by a shell burst on 28 May 1940. Both eyes were ruptured and were removed after he was evacuated to Brighton. After his discharge, he became the first St Dunstan's trainee at Church Stretton, studying Braille, typewriting and telephony. He became a telephonist, initially with the Patent Steam Carpet Beating Company in Notting Hill. He remained with one company for over 25 years until he was made redundant following

a take-over and relocation. He carried on with a cabinet making firm and then a firm of printers and die stampers before retiring in 1973. Football was a passion and he regularly attended Tottenham Hotspur matches for many years. He was a regular at the Brighton Club and a keen member of St Dunstan's Bowling Club. Other interests included amateur and citizen band radio. Our sympathy goes to his son Brian, daughter Sandra and all members of the family.

### **Donald Hampton**

#### **Royal Air Force**

Donald Robert Hampton of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 19 April, aged 85. He worked in his father's department store before joining the Royal Air Force in 1941. He trained as an electrical engineer. He served at RAF Finningley, Luton and RAF Cosford, Staffordshire before discharge in 1946. He later joined his uncle's photographic business in Blackpool and later ran a driving school. Our sympathy goes to his widow Patricia, son Mark, daughter Wendy and all of the family.

### **Robert Richardson**

#### **Royal Auxiliary Air Force**

Robert Richardson of Sleights, Whitby, North Yorkshire died on 20 April, aged 78. He was a trainee clerk with British Steel before joining the Royal Air Force at Padgate in 1947. Training as a Radar Operator, he served in South Wales, at Topcliffe, RAF Ouston and other UK stations and specialised in Air Traffic Control. Discharged in 1949, he joined ICI. In 1954, he joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and served until 1957. In later years, he set up as a Ship Convenor and was involved in the import of European cars. Our sympathy goes to his

widow Ruth, son David, daughter Elaine and all members of the family.

### **Peter Welch**

#### **Royal Engineers**

Clifford John Peter Welch of North Warnborough, Hook, Hampshire died on 23 April, aged 78. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1946 and was stationed at Aldershot. After his discharge in 1947, he became an architect. His interests included DIY, making dolls houses and furniture. Our sympathy goes to his widow Sylvia, sons Peter and Kevin, daughters Jennifer and Janice, and all members of the family.

### **Eileen Morland**

#### **Queen Alexandra's Royal Nursing Service (Reserve)**

Eileen Jane Morland nee Dale of Norwich, Norfolk died on 24 April, aged 93. Having helped her father on a farm, she began nursing training at a Whitley hospital in 1931. She completed her training in Manchester and specialised in Midwifery. She joined the Queen Alexandra's Royal Nursing Service (Reserve) in 1939 but left the following year when she married. She was re-mustered in 1941 and served at RN Hasler, RNA Hospital, Minterne Magna, Dorset, and was then posted to 64th General Hospital in Alexandria, Egypt. She left the service as a Nursing Sister in 1943 but continued in nursing in a civilian capacity until retirement. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

### **Roy Sutcliffe**

#### **6th Australian Divisional Cavalry Regiment**

Roy Richard Alan Sutcliffe of Punchbowl, New South Wales, Australia died on 25 April, aged 87. He was a farm worker before



joining the 6th Division Reconnaissance Regiment in 1939. Renamed the 6th Australian Divisional Cavalry Regiment they were posted to the Middle East and became the first Australian soldiers to deploy with tanks in 1941. He suffered gunshot wounds to the legs while serving in Greece. He was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to his widow Leah and all of the family.

**Andrew Goodall, MM**

**Royal Regiment of Artillery**

Andrew Goodall, MM of Little Dunham, Kings Lynn died on 26 April, aged 88. He worked on a farm in Cromarty, Ross-shire before being called up to the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1939. Initially, he served on coastal defence but later deployed to Iraq guarding oil wells. He moved on to fight in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns and was awarded the Military Medal for distinguished service in support of the Gurkha Rifles. Discharged in 1946, he joined the GPO as a telephone engineer. Our sympathy goes to his widow Muriel and all members of the family.

**Walter Barton**

**Pioneer Corps**

Walter Stanley Barton of Heathfield, East Sussex died on 4 May, aged 96. Originally working with his father as a Plumbers' Merchant in Manchester, he joined the Royal Signals in 1933. He transferred to the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry in 1936 and was discharged the following year. In 1940, he joined the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps but was soon released for duty in the National Fire Service. He rejoined the colours in 1942 and became part of the Army Fire Fighting Company (Pioneer Corps). He was discharged in 1946, but remained a

reserve member of the Royal Army Service Corps until 1955. In civilian life, he became a salesman. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Margaret and all of the family.

**Sydney Liddle**

**Gordon Highlanders**

Sydney William Liddle of Middleton St George, Darlington, County Durham died on 5 May, aged 85. After leaving school, he worked for his family's wholesale newspaper distribution business. In 1940, he joined the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers and transferred to the Gordon Highlanders the following year. He was involved in infantry training, first at Enniskillen and then in Sangur, India. Discharged as Company Sergeant Major Instructor in 1946, he returned to work in newspaper distribution. He enjoyed golf and was President of Darlington Golf Club. Our sympathy goes to his son Ian, daughters Diane and Paula, and all of the family.

**Sid Morgan**

**Royal Armoured Corps**

Sidney Llewellyn Morgan of Morchard Bishop, Crediton, Devon died on 5 May, aged 95. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1939 and was posted to the Middle East. Avoiding capture at Tobruk, he fought at El Alamein, Sicily and Italy before moving round to North West Europe. Discharged as WOII in 1945, he worked for Aga Cookers and Allied Iron Founders. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

**Thomas Whitley**

**Cambridgeshire Regiment**

Thomas Leonard Whitley of Elsenham, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire died on 5 May, aged 87. A bookstall assistant, he had joined the Territorial Army and

was embodied into the Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1939. Posted to the Far East, he was taken prisoner when Singapore fell to the Japanese in 1941. He was put to work on the Burma Railway and during this time suffered gunshot wounds to the abdomen and back, endured malaria and dysentery, as well as malnutrition. He was discharged in 1946. Initially, he resumed work for WH Smith & Son and became manager of their Bishops Stortford branch. Later, he went into business independently, setting up a newsagent and tobacconist. He and his wife ran the CTN for 15 years before the privation he had experienced as a FEPOW forced his retirement. He was a member of St Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War group. A keen bowler, he also enjoyed toymaking, handicrafts, and gardening and made an impression at the Lee-on-Solent camp. Our sympathy goes to his widow Mary, sons David and Brian and all of the family.

**Frederick McCluskey**

**Royal Norfolk Regiment**

"Mac" Frederick Charles McCluskey of Norwich, Norfolk died on 6 May, aged 88. He joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1940 and was posted to their 2nd Battalion in Yorkshire. He boxed for the regiment and sustained an injury to his eyes which led to his discharge in 1942. His left eye was removed in 1959 and the right in 1963. He was Chairman of the Rainbow Club for over seven years which hosted a variety of activities for deafblind people in Norfolk. For many years, although totally blind, he made daily trips into the town to do shopping for other residents at the home where he lived. He retained an interest in boxing and was a keen dancer. Our sympathy goes to his sons and daughters and all of the family.

**Reginald Monks**

**Royal Armoured Corps**

Reginald Stanley Monks of Chesham, Buckinghamshire died on 10 May, aged 92. Hailing from Dartford, Kent, he worked for London Transport before joining the General Service Corps in 1942. After three months training, he transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps and was posted to Kirkubright, Scotland. There he trained drivers to operate Crusader Tanks. Discharged in 1946, he returned to London Transport as a bus inspector on routes in the outer country areas of Greater London. In 1960, he took a lease on a Shell Garage in Slough which he ran for the next 27 years. He boxed for his regiment and was a keen golfer. Our sympathy goes to his son Roger, niece Barbara and all members of the family.

**Leonard Soar**

**Rifle Brigade**

Leonard Benjamin Soar of Henfield, West Sussex died on 10 May, aged 91. After leaving school, he worked for the nascent River Trent Catchment Board but later joined a colliery as a trainee accountant. In 1939, he joined the Sherwood Foresters and was posted to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. He was evacuated from Dunkirk. Commissioned in 1942, he transferred to the Rifle Brigade and became an instructor at OCTU. He later became PA to Northern Eastern District and later joined the Military Secretary's department. Discharged as Captain in 1946, he qualified as an accountant, eventually becoming financial director of the Gloucester Railway and Carriage Company. His interests included golf and rugby. Our sympathy goes to his widow Ruth, daughters Miranda and Rachel and all members of the family.





## Sea Cadets gun run for St Dunstan's

TS EASTBOURNE stepped out with powerful effort when they fired the opening salvo in the St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge 2007 on 28 April. The first Sea Cadet unit to take part, they had the 100th Anniversary of the Field Gun in mind when they started work on restoring a canon that had been lying around their unit for ages. With a new coat of paint, they pulled the gun three-and-a-half times (13-miles) up

and down the Eastbourne seafront in support of St Dunstan's.

They were joined along the seafront by St Dunstaners Gerry Jackson and Colin Williamson, while Nigel and Jacquie Whiteley manned

an information stand. The signal to start was given by the Mayor of Eastbourne, Councillor Colin Belsey and St Dunstaner Ron Parsons.

On their last leg, the cadets were joined by the band from TS Brilliant, Tunbridge Wells who played *Hearts of Oak*. As they marched home, (pictured left) the salute was taken by General John Moore-Bick, representing the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mrs Caroline Mayhew, High Sheriff of East Sussex, Mayor Colin and his Mayoress, daughter Anna. Eastbourne Marine cadets welcomed their friends back by firing a round into the air.

