

St Dunstan's Review

Strood salute!



Photograph: Ron Charlton

Encore! The Band of the Royal Marines bring sunshine to the Inner Garden!



Photograph: Sharon Rogers

St Dunstaner Graham is GB hope for Hamburg Triathlon!



Photograph: Sgt Jay Webster, Red Devils

Exit at 13,000ft!

Harry Beevers takes the plunge with Cpl Billy Blanchard of the Red Devils!



St Dunstan's

An independent future for blind ex-Service men and women

September 2007

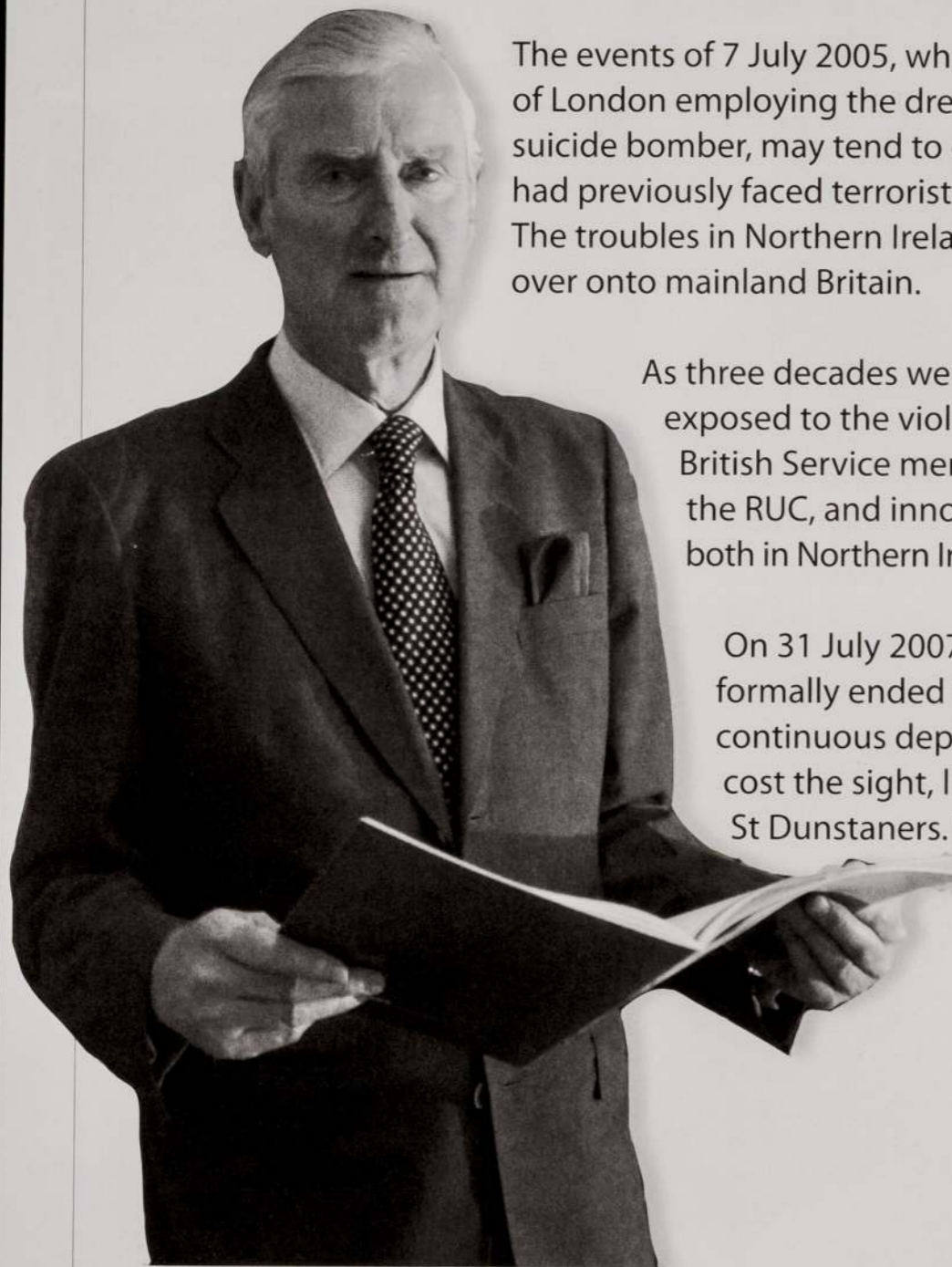
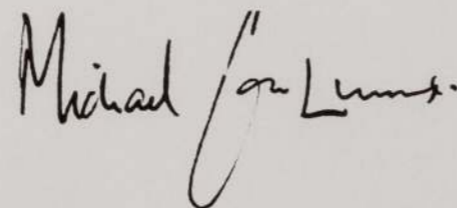
From **the Chairman**

The events of 7 July 2005, when terrorists struck at the centre of London employing the dreadful new weapon of the suicide bomber, may tend to obscure the fact that the UK had previously faced terrorist attacks in the 70's, 80's and 90's. The troubles in Northern Ireland began in 1969 and spilled over onto mainland Britain.

As three decades went by, the public became exposed to the violent acts committed against British Service men and women, members of the RUC, and innocent men, women and children both in Northern Ireland and here on the mainland.

On 31 July 2007 after 38 years, the Army formally ended Operation Banner, the longest continuous deployment in military history. It cost the sight, limbs and comrades of several St Dunstaners. We acknowledge their sacrifice.

We hope and pray that lasting peace may now reign in Northern Ireland.



St Dunstan's Review

September 2007 No 972

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Noticeboard

St Dunstan's Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 1st Writers Forum
- 1st Sailability
- 2nd-8th Activities Week
- 20th Outdoor Bowling
- 28th-Oct 1st Physio Weekend
- 30th-Oct 6th Widows' Week

OCTOBER

- 1st Indoor Bowling
- 6th Writers Forum
- 8th Indoor Bowling
- 10th-11th Computer Club (II)
- 11th World Sight Day
- 12th-19th Amateur Radio (II)
- 13th-14th Commando Challenge
- 28th-Nov 10th Bowling (II)
- 28th Great South Run

NOVEMBER

- 3rd Writers Forum
- 11th Remembrance Sunday
- 10th-11th Computer Club (II)
- 11th-17th Dancing Week (II)

A GREAT YEAR TO RUN IN LONDON TOWN

THE ULTIMATE RUN: Now is the time to get your running kit out of the cupboard and blow those cobwebs away by preparing to taking part in next year's London Marathon! Entry is conducted by ballot which closes on October 19th this year. The 26-mile event will be held on Sunday April 13th 2008. It is the running event to be part of, and it is worth getting your entry form sent off as places fill very quickly, well before the closing date. For more details of the event and how to prepare, contact Sports and Recreation Supervisor Louise Timms at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 01273 307811.

ST DUNSTAN'S DANCE AND SOCIAL CLUB

NEXT DANCE 11-17 NOVEMBER: The band of the Light Cavalry will be playing for St Dunstaners attending the November dance. "I understand they enjoy playing our type of music and are looking forward to playing for us," said St Dunstaner David Schofield. "The dance in March 2008 will now take place in February. I have been asked to do a Valentine's Ball and so the week will therefore be the 10-16 February. I wondered if anyone has had any interesting things happen on Valentine's Day that could be included in the February 2008 publication of the **Review**, ie a wedding, engagement, or special memory. I would like to collect these stories during the November 2007 Dance. I have yet to book a band for February, but rest assured I am doing my best. Keep laughing, keep dancing." For more details of the Dance Week, contact David on 0115 932 3517.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

REFLEXOLOGY, MASSAGE AND HOPI CANDLING AVAILABLE: Complementary Therapies are available at Ovingdean for visitors to the building. St Dunstaner Iain Millard is able to do Reflexology on either feet or hands, Indian Head Massage, Swedish Body Massage and Hopi ear candling. Iain can come to the building on most days to suit clients. In addition, he holds a clinic on Wednesday and appointments can be made via the Lounge Desk. For an appointment other than Wednesday, telephone Iain on either 01273 302412 or 07968 740089.

CARPENTER'S RULE REQUIRED

WANTED: Does anyone please have a 36 inch, four-piece, folding carpenter's wooden rule with studs at half-inch intervals, which they are happy to give to a St Dunstaner? If you are able to help please contact Robbie Hazan on 020 7723 5021 or e-mail archives@st-dunstans.org.uk.

AUDIO DESCRIBED SHOWS

DESCRIBING MANY COLOURS: Irene Richards will be describing costumes, actions and scenery for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, starring Lee Mead, at the Adelphi Theatre, London on World Sight Day, 11 October at 19:30. Tickets cost £22.50 each are available on 0870 895 5598. The show runs two hours, ten minutes.

THEATRE ACCESS GUIDE

STAGE ACCESS: The Access Guide to London Theatres is available free in a range of accessible formats by telephoning 0207 557 6700, or e-mail access@soltma.co.uk. It lists all London Theatres with telephone numbers, addresses, and details of discounts available. It also says how many steps in all areas and even which way to turn for the box office when in the foyer. It has details of which theatres are ok for guide dogs, and if not says whether they can be "dog-sat" during the performance. It even lists which theatres have audio description. It can also be downloaded in word or pdf from www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/access.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

GOVERNMENT HELP TO KEEP WARM: A Winter Fuel Payment is an annual payment to help people aged 60 and over with the costs of keeping warm this winter.

If you are aged 60 to 79 and you are entitled to receive a Winter Fuel Payment, you will get either £100 or £200, depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week (17-23 September 2007).

If you are aged 80 or over and you are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment, you will get an extra £50 or £100, so you could get up to £300, depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week.

You do not pay tax on Winter Fuel Payments.

If you need to make a claim for a payment for winter 2007/08, you should return your claim form by 30 March 2008.

The Winter Fuel Payment Helpline is on 08459 15 15 15 (0845 601 5613 for textphone users). Lines are open from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Charges are the same as for local calls.

Remember, if you are in receipt of a State Pension or another social security benefit other than Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit contact the office that normally deals with you.

As a result of pensions reform the minimum age at which both men and women will be able to receive a Winter Fuel Payment will rise incrementally to 65 between 2010 and 2020. There is a working assumption that it will rise again to 68 with the increase in State Pension age. Precise details of how the Winter Fuel Payment qualifying age will increase are yet to be finalised.

INCLUSION THROUGH MUSIC

CONFERENCE ON 24-25 OCTOBER: The Royal College of Music, London will host a two day conference focusing on visual impairment and other special needs. Promoting access to music in education, registration costs £20 per day or £30 for both days. For more details contact Rebecca Bell, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BS. Telephone 020 7591 4370. E-mail inclusion@rcm.ac.uk.

LEGAL CHANGES TO ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY

NEW LEGISLATION EFFECTIVE FROM 1 OCTOBER: Previously it was possible to complete a Power of Attorney form but this was revoked by the incapacity of the donor and was replaced by Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA) in 1985.

An EPA can be used at any time without the need to register it with the Court of Protection. Should the donor become mentally incapable of managing their own affairs the attorney(s) will then have to apply to the Court of Protection for registration of this power. It will no longer be possible to complete an EPA from the end of September this year.

EPA is being replaced by "Lasting Powers of Attorney" (LPA) which will come into force on 1 October 2007. It is believed that LPA's will be divided into two distinct documents; the first dealing with the property and affairs of the donor and the second with their personal welfare. Should an attorney wish to act on this power immediately then it has to be registered with the Court of Protection before it can be used.

Unfortunately St Dunstan's or members of staff cannot and do not act as Attorney.

If you do not have a solicitor or wish to discuss the matter (in total confidence) please write to or telephone Mrs Eileen Mobsby, Wills & Trusts Coordinator at Ovingdean on Brighton (01273) 307811 ext: 1445 who will be pleased to assist you.

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.

Michael showed us how to live with whatever life throws at you

I would appreciate it if you could put a brief note in to show my own appreciation of all the work carried out by all staff at St Dunstan's. I know that everybody did all they could to make Michael Ryan's final years the best they could be under the circumstances. I worked with Michael since 1991 and

I can honestly say that I was privileged to have had that opportunity and he taught me a lot about how to live with what life throws at you. He kept his sense of humour to the end and I never heard him ever complain about the problems he had to endure, which were far greater than many of us could ever

imagine. So thank you to all staff and St Dunstaners for the support they gave to me on my many visits to Ovingdean and to reunions over the past 16 years.

**Terry Gleadell,
Wells, Norfolk**

• Michael Ryan is remembered on page 45.

A great week in Devon

I would like to say a big thank you to St Dunstan's for giving me the opportunity of going to the Calvert Trust at Blackmore Gate at Devon. The week was organised for the Not Forgotten Association by Rosie Thompson and what a great week she set up for everyone. We had three full days of activities which included such things as rock climbing, abseiling, canoeing, sailing, quadbikes,

challenge course, horse riding, swimming and more. The week was capped by glorious weather, which meant sun tan lotion on all exposed parts of the body. The banter in the bar made the whole thing complete. Thanks to everyone who had anything to do with the running of that week. We all had a great time and made some good friends.

**John Taylor,
Findon, West Sussex**

Thank you!

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the flowers received from St Dunstan's on our Silver Wedding anniversary. It was a lovely surprise and really appreciated. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from the Fundraising department at Harcourt Street for their wonderful gift and card. This organisation never ceases to amaze me. Thank you all once again.

**Colin and Brenda Williamson,
Hebburn, Tyne & Wear**

Writers Forum know what's ode to Donna

Letters to the Editor are usually written in prose, But as this is rather special, a poem I'll try to compose.

It'll win me no praise as a poet,
But I'm not seeking fortune or fame,
A huge thank you to Donna,
Is the Writers Forum's aim.

It's worth the bad headache it's given me,
Trying to make this thing rhyme,
As long as the word gets to Donna,
How much we value her time.

Her talent is well known in computers,
But her devotion to "the writers" is extra,
To thank her this way is more heartfelt,
Than merely trying to text her.

As you can tell from this effort,
A wordsmith I'm definitely not,
But three days of the Writers Forum
Gives us a hell of a lot.

It's all thanks to Donna who runs it,
With patience, humour and fun,
What's more we all like each other,
When all's said and done.

We thank her for finding good authors,
Who help us with tips and advice,
And I hope that the "Chiefs" at St Dunstan's know
She's a pearl of great price!

**Evelyn Lucas,
Shepherds Bush, London**

• Donna précis the Writers Forum Weekend on page 18.

A letter from Down Under!

As a Blinded TPI Ex-Serviceman from World War II (having been in Darwin during the bombing and seen action in New Guinea) and a member of the New South Wales Blinded Soldiers' Association and also St Dunstan's, I would like to let you know how much I appreciate receiving my copy of **St Dunstan's Review** each month. It is read to me by my wife Dorothy and I enjoy it very much.

My wife and I are both 84 years old now, and will be celebrating our 60th Wedding Anniversary on 9 August, 2007. We are very fortunate to be able to still enjoy our life and our family of three children and seven grandchildren. They will be joining us for our celebration on 12 August.

Our home at Bawley Point is on the South Coast of New South Wales, about 250km south of Sydney, and is opposite to a nice beach. It is very pleasant in the summer to be able to swim and also enjoy the cool breezes off the South Pacific Ocean. I look forward to many more issues of **St Dunstan's Review** in the future and congratulate you on its publication.

**Eric Aitken,
Bawley Point,
New South Wales, Australia**

Isn't it easier to navigate by stars?

I have a comment on the quick navigability, or rather the lack there of, of the computerised version of the **St Dunstan's Review**.

My problem is that after reading the contents of the **Review** with my speech synthesiser, I spot say five articles I quickly want to access to read. It is now however very annoying to memorise the different codes such as NB4, FT3 etcetera needed to find the specific article.

An easy solution is to put a * or alternatively a + in front of the code, thus the

codes will be *NB4 and *FT3. Now rather than having to go back to the contents to check the code, a digital reader only has to do a MS Word search for the * and whala, each time the reader hits the enter key, the cursor jumps to the beginning of the next article. If you want to be even more revolutionary, you can totally do away with your system of different codes for the different sections of the **Review** and replace it with chronological numbering combined with a * or +. As an example, the *E-Access Bulletin* has a + in front of each heading and all the

articles are numbered + chronologically from +01 to +12. James also got the editor of the South African **St Dunstan's Review** to mark the start of each article with a *.

**Don Wessels,
Somerset West,
South Africa**

• Following Don's suggestion, we will prefix the codes with an asterisk in the e-mail and floppy disk version of the **Review** from the October issue. Other e-readers are invited to comment on whether they feel it is a helpful addition and if we should continue with it.

Let me search the internet for you!

My name is Roger Williams and I have a lot of free time which I need to fill by doing something constructive. At St Dunstan's recently, it was suggested that I offer my time to other St Dunstaners and do some searching on the internet for those who don't have access or have difficulty in searching. So if you have a query that you would like to be resolved, please give me a ring on

01446 732032 and we can discuss your requirements.

I am looking for something that is not too complicated, (like as a family history) but something straight forward

like where to get hold of a medal ribbon bar or does somebody sell a particular product? If you think I can help please give me a call.

**Roger Williams,
Barry, South Wales**

Thank you for birthday wishes!

I would like to say thank you to the Chairman of St Dunstan's for his letter of best wishes and also for the basket of beautiful flowers that I received on the occasion of my 80th birthday.

Kathleen Simpson, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

St Dunstan's continuing bond with Chindits!

I was accepted into the membership of St Dunstan's in 2006 and I would like to record through the **St Dunstan's Review** my appreciation of the tremendous work that the whole team is doing.

My introductory visit to St Dunstan's Ovingdean helped me rebuild my confidence levels after losing my sight and I have enjoyed two further visits over the last 18 months. On my first visit I was introduced to a fellow Chindit who served on the same column as me in 1944 which was a marvellous thing.

On my last visit in May, I was delighted to present to Ovingdean Manager Dick Lake, a Chindit plaque to serve as a continuing bond between two great bodies, St Dunstan's and The Chindits.

**Bernard Gascoigne,
Balderton,
Newark-on-Trent,
Nottinghamshire**

The colour of our guns



Gunner Billy back in his environment.

Having just read last month's issue of **St Dunstan's Review**, I feel it is my duty as a gunner to inform your readers about the article about the cheque presentation at the Defence Academy at Shrivenham where I was photographed stood in front of a so-called Abbot Tank. Please allow me to explain my rantings, the colours of the Royal Regiment of Artillery are its guns, unlike most military units the gunners serve on their colours being that of their guns. So you can imagine my horror in hearing that I was stood in front of an Abbot Tank. Now please allow me to put this right, the Abbot Self Propelled Gun to the untrained eye may indeed look like a tank, being armoured, having a turret

with a long barrel. But that is where the similarity ends, you see a gun can only fire from a static position and is mainly used for indirect fire, where as a tank can fire when it is still moving, and mainly at direct targets. I will not bore you with anymore technical details but I think you get the picture. I feel a lot better having got this off my chest, so please take care to research correct descriptions of military equipment to save ruffling peoples feathers. I would only be too happy to give you extra gun drill at the back of the sheds. Yours sincerely
Staff Sergeant Billy Baxter,
1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery, retired of course.

**Andrew Baxter,
Haddenham, Ely,
Cambridgeshire**

Balancing the Books

Ted Bunting gives his opinion on a biography

Moab is my washpot

Author: Stephen Fry

Reader: Stephen Fry

Duration: 11 hours, 41 minutes

Catalogue number: 11490

This is a boring, rather distasteful book about and by a thoroughly obnoxious character. It is the autobiography of Stephen Fry, writer, actor, purveyor of filth, a liar, thief and cheat, who never the less comes over as a highly self-satisfied clever-dick. "Bordering on genius," he says, then immediately claims that "bordering" does him an injustice. Commercial consideration aside, I ask myself why anyone would write such a book. It seems inconceivable that Fry can be proud of his dishonesty, his pilfering, snooping and use of foul language, but there he is parading his manifold blemishes like some sort of verbal flasher. I am not saying he tries to excuse his attitudes and appalling behaviour but hangs all his faults out as if in his case they maybe justified. Perhaps he derives some perverse pleasure from knowing his readers will view him with loathing and disgust. If that was his intention it has worked in my case. How I pity his poor parents.

Ten questions on

Harry Beevers tunes into the wireless

- 1) Which series did Kirstie Young take over from Sue Lawley in 2006?
- 2) Which long-running Radio 4 programme has Chopin's *Minute Waltz* as the theme music?
- 3) Which comedy series written by Frank Muir and Denis Norden and starring Jimmy Edwards and Dick Bentley featured the Glum family?
- 4) In January 2002 readers of the *Radio Times* voted which Irish broadcaster as having British radio's best male voice?
- 5) In which programme does the presenter choose highlights from programmes heard in the previous seven days?
- 6) Which disc jockey presented the first programme heard on Radio 1 in 1967?
- 7) In America, panic ensued during a 1938 radio play which announced that New Jersey had been attacked by invaders from where?
- 8) When the opera singer Elisabeth Schwarzkopf appeared on *Desert Island Discs*, seven of her eight record choices were by which artiste?
- 9) Heard several times each day, what will celebrate its 84th birthday on 4 February 2008?
- 10) What was the name of the military man portrayed by Peter Sellers in *The Goon Show*? The character was described as "a member of the 5th Battalion Zsa Zsa Gabor's Ex-Husbands and the 16th Regiment of Regular Deserters".

Answers can be found on page 40.

Operation Banner comes to an end!

St Dunstaners who served on the longest continuous deployment in British military history discuss their experiences and feelings

On 31 July 2007, Operation Banner, Britain's military involvement in Northern Ireland, came to a formal end.

During the 38 years of the operation, some 13 ex-Service people and three RUC Officers were admitted to St Dunstan's. Overall, 651 service personnel were killed and 6,307 were wounded.

The Troubles began in 1969, when sectarian violence broke out in Northern Ireland. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), a mainly Protestant force, were accused of brutality in putting down the riots. The situation escalated and the already distrust, enmity and confrontation between Protestant and Catholic spilled into open violence. Children and teenagers were egged on by elder militants. The early stages of stone

throwing soon turned into bombs and shooting.

A few St Dunstaners have kindly agreed to share their experiences and feelings. We print these in tribute to all who served in Northern Ireland over those years.



Lookout Block C (also known as The Hump) in Strabane overlooking Lifford.

Ex-Corporal Ray Peart who served from 1966 to 1974 in the 1st Gloucestershire Regiment completed three tours in Northern Ireland in 1969, 1972 and 1973.

"In 1969 we were called to Londonderry to protect the Catholics from the Protestants, sailing from Southampton to Belfast and then on to HMS *Sea Eagle* in Londonderry. From the naval base we were dispersed on to the streets of Londonderry, carrying out street patrols and vehicle searches. We stayed in a derelict prison which still had dungeons and the hangman's drop, having to adapt as best we could. Life was pretty mundane until the arrest of Bernadette Devlin, which triggered riots. Almost overnight the situation changed and we were protecting the Protestants from the rioting



Bomb disposal officers search through the rubble of a booby-trapped junction box in Divis flats. The explosion killed Privates Geoffrey Breakwell, 20, and Christopher Brady, 21, and blinded St Dunstaner Ray Peart in 1973.

Catholics. We were under attack from bottles, stones, rocks, and anything else that could be wielded, with only very basic riot gear for protection. The advantage of patrolling the city wall was that we could observe the Bogside where most of the problems were. In 1972, we were stationed at Percy Street on the Peace Line carrying out vehicle and house checks and dealing with the occasional riot and shooting. I spent one week with bomb disposal seeing controlled explosions and the remains of bomb makers whose bombs detonated prematurely. In 1973 I was stationed at Albert Street Mill,

patrolling The Reservation and Divis flats, where on 17th July 1973 I was blinded in a booby trap bomb which claimed two of my patrol and injured one other. Now 34 years later there is not a day that passes that I picture my dead comrades and wonder what might have been. I am relieved that the problems are over but sad that so many paid a high price for peace."

Steve Pendleton served in The Royal Green Jackets from 1990 to 1994.

"Operation Banner officially ended on the 31st July 2007, and with increased tourism the future for Northern

Ireland looks extremely rosy! Well, all I can say to that is that I hope so, I really do, but I can't help being a little bit sceptical though. I can't help wondering when a new radical splinter group of the IRA or the UVF or perhaps the INLA or even the UFF, will get upset about something, and start some trouble! But I really hope from the bottom of my heart that this will not happen.

"As a young lad, I remember watching the TV news and hearing the stories coming out of Northern Ireland. I remember looking at these images and thinking to myself, 'What a dreary looking place, so grey and miserable looking.'

"When I joined the army my first posting was to the



A Royal Green Jacket on patrol in Northern Ireland.



Rifleman Pendleton.

Province, and as soon as the plane touched down at Aldergrove Airport, Belfast, I saw for myself! Northern Ireland is a grey miserable dreary sort of place. In all the time I spent in the Province, I don't think the sun shone once! Although the weather is completely horrible out there, the scenery is really beautiful. I will remember the sight of the Mourne Mountains running down to the sea for the rest of my life. But in contrast, I will also never forget the grey tower blocks of the Divis flats, and all the anti-British murals on the walls. Another thing I used to admire when on foot patrols, was just how stunning the women were out there! I don't think I have been to many places where the young ladies are

so stunningly beautiful, and their accent only enhanced this for me, that lovely Irish lilt was something else, especially when reciting those immortal words 'Go home, you British bastards!' Oh such memories!

"My time in the Province was, without doubt, one of the best periods of my life. I was doing a job which I loved. I found being on active service extremely exciting stuff. I had a rifle with real bullets. I had the best bunch of mates I have ever had in my life. Real mates who would look out for you and vice versa. In short, I found serving in the Province exhilarating,

exciting, exhausting, sometimes stressful and occasionally terrifying. But I never found it boring.

"One emotion that did catch me out regarding Northern Ireland though, happened to me only a couple of months ago. I was listening to the television, Ian Paisley was being sworn in as the top man in Northern Ireland and Martin McGuinness was being appointed his deputy. This was definitely the end of the Troubles. These two guys wouldn't be shaking hands and talking like they were if it was not the end! I couldn't help but think to myself, 'It's ok for you guys, after 38 years you are now



Stephen Pendleton's time in Northern Ireland came to an end when this Lynx helicopter crashed in Gortin Glen Forest Park.

mates, the Troubles are over. But I have still got a false leg and I will never see my wife and children.'

"That thought only lasted for a couple of seconds. I am not at all selfish, the thought just came to me in that split second. So I suppose, that Op Banner will be with me for the rest of my life."

Moira McGrath, served in the Ulster Defence Regiment.

"I served nine years here in Northern Ireland which I called the Dark Days. I call it this because life here in Northern Ireland was so tense. Never knowing when the next attack might happen, always having to watch who you spoke to and what you spoke of. Never being able to go out to enjoy yourself as there were certain places you were not allowed to go to. Lying about what you did for a job to other people. Northern Ireland was like a country which had a bad smell. Everyone knew what was causing it but no-one could agree how to treat it.

"I am very glad to see that over the last few years life here has changed. People have come together to

Photograph: Simon Rogers



Moira McGrath.

achieve one common goal. There has been a rebirth throughout Northern Ireland. People can go about everyday life without fear of being attacked or killed. I can only hope and pray that this goes from strength to strength. And my child will never have to witness rioting and bombing and killing



Photograph courtesy of Ray Hazan

Ray Hazan, second from left, with his unit in Londonderry not long before he was blinded by a parcel bomb.

like I did. The only regret is that the peace we have now took so long to achieve. That friends and workmates never made it to see the change in life here."

Ray Hazan, served in the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

"My first tour took place on the Ballymurphy Estate in Belfast in November 1970, just six weeks after I was first married. My abiding memory is, above all, the feeling of unreality; in a city resembling any on the mainland, with its red double decker buses and familiar shops, but Christmas shopping with a loaded pistol on your belt. The

Colonel returning to base after a search of the estate, covered with spittle, for such was the way the women expressed their feelings. A young pregnant girl on the Turf Lodge Estate being set upon by neighbours and losing her baby – her crime being that she was married to a British soldier. These were the events behind the everyday stone throwing and general rioting. To this had to be added the frustration of knowing it was an insuperable task; we were piggy-in-the-middle between two communities.

"The second tour in Londonderry was spent in the warehouse of a factory. It had been partitioned into living areas. Showers in a wet and slimy tented area. Two months of 12-14 hour days in the operations room with never a break. Then the moment I lost a colleague, my sight, a hand, hearing, and a career, but I gained St Dunstan's! There is no feeling of bitterness, for that does not restore sight."

Andy Bull was 20 years old when first posted to Northern Ireland in November 1983. "I was Serving with the 1st Battalion, Royal Regiment

of Wales, it was my first tour of duty having missed out in 1981 on a spearhead tour during the IRA hunger strikers campaign; at that particular time I was only 17 years old and the requisite age for serving in Ulster at that time was 18 years old.

"We were to be stationed at Macrory Park Police Station in West Belfast, just off the Falls Road. The Falls Road, Springfield Road, Andersonstown and the Ballymurphy were predominantly Roman Catholic, and the heartlands and hardcore of the IRA.

"We were transported from Aldergrove Airport to West Belfast in 4-ton Bedford lorries, and it is fair to say for many of us there was a lot of adrenalin pumping, also an atmosphere of nervous anticipation for the expected and unexpected.

"Our accommodation for the next four-and-a-half months would consist of living behind a fortified police station, and living in a portable cabin housing eight soldiers and their equipment. There were several portable cabins housing Charlie Company, as well as the RUC. Vehicles and

portable cabins were spread over a small area across our concrete compound.

"As you can imagine, our quarters were very cramped especially with all our equipment, so mostly you were either lying on your bunk bed or sitting on it with a nice brew. When you were not on patrol you took advantage of a nice hot shower or the washrooms to do your laundry, or depending on what time you got back you would get your head down and catch up on some serious sleep. Sometimes sleep would prove very difficult because the armoured vehicles commonly known as "pigs", would be constantly roaring in and out of the fortified camp as well as the armoured Land Rovers.

"I can remember my very first patrol; the butterflies and adrenalin that was coursing through my body at that particular time. When you were in the briefing room and the Intelligence Officer was showing you photographs and video footage of the IRA members, it suddenly dawned on you that this was the real thing and that there was a great expectancy on you not to

let your comrades down. I remember vividly seeing the high heavy reinforced camp double gates being pulled open, and thinking to myself 'here we go,' and the next moment I was sprinting and zigzagging out into the streets of Belfast. I can remember the strange feeling of nakedness and awkwardness as I saw members of the public walking towards me for the very first time, even though I was armed with an SLR rifle at the time.

"For me this was my first patrol and I was like a coiled spring, not knowing if at any moment a sniper's rifle would ring out overhead or if a car would suddenly explode. As the patrol continued I slowly started to relax and to take in my surroundings. I ran a critical eye over the painted tricolours and murals depicting IRA weapons on the walls and houses nearby. The civilian population paid us no heed during the day, but at night you were constantly abused verbally by drunks and gangs of youths looking for trouble.

"As the days and weeks went by you patrolled whether it rained, hailed or



Photograph: David Castleton

Andy Bull during a mobility lesson shortly after being blinded.

snowed, you found yourself becoming a part of Belfast, seeing the same people on a regular basis, knowing all the street names, knowing where all the different shops lay, a feeling as if you had been born or lived in Belfast all your life. However you knew this was not true as the hard reality and brutal violence of the IRA would soon bloody the streets of Belfast once again.

"Sometimes on patrol we would escort the RUC and follow them into the pubs and clubs, especially if they

were looking for a wanted IRA player as they were commonly known. This was a dangerous time and the atmosphere of the pub would quickly change to hostility on seeing our presence, my comrades and I would take up our designated positions in the pub and take up a firing position to protect the policemen in the event of an incident. If hatred could be a living thing you definitely saw it live and breathe in the eyes of those men in that pub that day. You knew from that moment on should you ever have the misfortune to fall

into their hands you would certainly be shown no mercy.

"On November 23, 1983, just two months into our tour, whilst escorting two members of the RUC along the Falls Road, West Belfast, an IRA bomb exploded severely injuring myself and wounding my comrades and several civilians in the immediate vicinity. I was very fortunate that the Royal Victoria Hospital was very near by, and I know that had it not been for their medical and

surgical skills that day I would not be writing this account today. As a result of that terrorist bomb it was to end my Army career, and to rob me of my precious sight therefore leaving me to enter civilian life as a blind man.

"I owe my life to the Royal Victoria Hospital and to the doctors and nurses for saving my life that day, unlike so many others that did not come back. Unfortunately over the years so many brave men and women have sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom

so that others may live in peace and harmony. I thought this lament by John Potter was very appropriate."

**As poppy petals gently fall
Remember us who gave our all
Not in the mud of foreign lands
Nor buried in the desert sands.**

**In Ulster field and farm and town
Fermanagh's lanes and Drumlin'd Down
We died that violent death should cease
And Ulster might live in peace.**

**We did not serve because we hate
Nor bitterness our hearts dictate
But we were they who must aspire
To quench the flame of terror's fire.**

**As buglers sound and pipers play
The proud battalions march away
Now may the weary violence cease.
And let Ulster live in peace.**

Eyes are open in Margate

ST DUNSTAN'S joined other organisations in Margate at the Kent Association for the Blind's Local-Eyes open day and exhibition on 27 June. St Dunstaner Gerry Jackson and his wife Maureen manned the St Dunstan's stand with Jen Shannon. They were visited by local WAAF St Dunstaner Penny Markham who was very interested to learn of technological developments in the computer and



telephone world advised by Gerry. Gerry worked for Orange before losing his sight but remains in touch and is a member of a working group looking at a voice activated telephones for the blind. Some potential

St Dunstaners were, encouraged by Penny's enthusiasm for the activities into which they could throw themselves. Organisations represented included the Queen Alexandra College, Dolphin Software, Optelec Ltd, British Wireless for the Blind Fund and RNIB. There was a steady stream of visitors throughout the day. Mayor of Ramsgate Steve Ward also visited the open day, talking with exhibitors.

From sweets to blackmail!

Donna Vaughan reports on the latest Writers Forum weekend

JOHN O'DONOGHUE, writer and Open University lecturer, joined the Writers' Forum for a morning of taste and sound as he evoked memories of the past. He asked us to think of the sweets we ate as children: the gobstoppers and lemon sherbets. How did they taste, how did they feel, and what did we remember when we thought back to these sugary delights?

We listened to songs from decades past, from the 30s to the 90s and John again asked us about the memories that were stirred by the music.

For Arthur Branson, the workshop brought back memories of his days in the RAF. He said that his Bomb Aimer would stand outside their Lancaster Bomber, look up at the cockpit with arms outstretched and sing. At which point Arthur sang at the top of his voice and with his arms outstretched: "We sing as we fly with our head in the clouds and we dream of the girl on the ground!"



John O'Donoghue.

Nancy Chadwick took us back to her courting days when she and Frank would sit in his mother's front parlour. To hide the fact that they were having a cuddle, she played: *You are the Promised Kiss of Springtime* on the piano with one hand over the back of the sofa!

Peter James, the bestselling author of novels including *Dead Simple*, and his latest *Not Dead Enough*, joined us in the afternoon to talk about creating believable characters. He said, "One of the ways to get people to like your character is to give your character someone to love."

Peter said that the television programme, *Who Wants*

to be a Millionaire? is an excellent example of how to manipulate an audience. "Whether you hate it or like it. It has been one of the most successful shows ever. The reason is this: *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* isn't really a quiz show it's a drama.

"You are introduced to somebody by Chris Tarrant and within sixty seconds, he has you rooting for someone you have never met before in your life – you want them to win the money.

"That's because, in that sixty seconds of introduction, Chris Tarrant is very clever, he finds out what that person wants to do with the money, gets all sorts of biographical details, he gets the audience engaged with that person."

He said, "That's what a good writer does. That is very much the story teller's craft: Introduce the character and engage the reader."

Peter said that one of the best writers in the world for learning the craft is

Graham Green who wrote his personal favourite novel, *Brighton Rock*.

On Saturday morning it was the turn of the writers to show what they could do. One of the newest members of the group, Tom Jones, recited a tale about his childhood in Wales. Tom told us how he was introduced to the oral story telling tradition by his adopted grandfather. We also listened to a story about the early life of Eddie Dunn's wife, Maria who spent her childhood on Malta.

The writer, actor and director Chris Orr, came along in the afternoon to talk about how to change the status of characters in our writing. He asked us to think about how relationships between people often involve differences in status, for example employer and employee, mother and

child, and then to think about a turning point in the relationship that might cause a change in that status.

Chris suggested that in a parent-child relationship, when the parent reaches old-age, he or she might be cared for by her child, in which case the status reverses with the child becoming the carer.

Chris presented several scenarios in which status plays an important part such as the relationship between an older very conservative bishop and his younger, more modern priest; an upper class boss with a working class employee, and asked us to think of situations that might force a change in status between the two characters.

One group suggested that the older priest might be

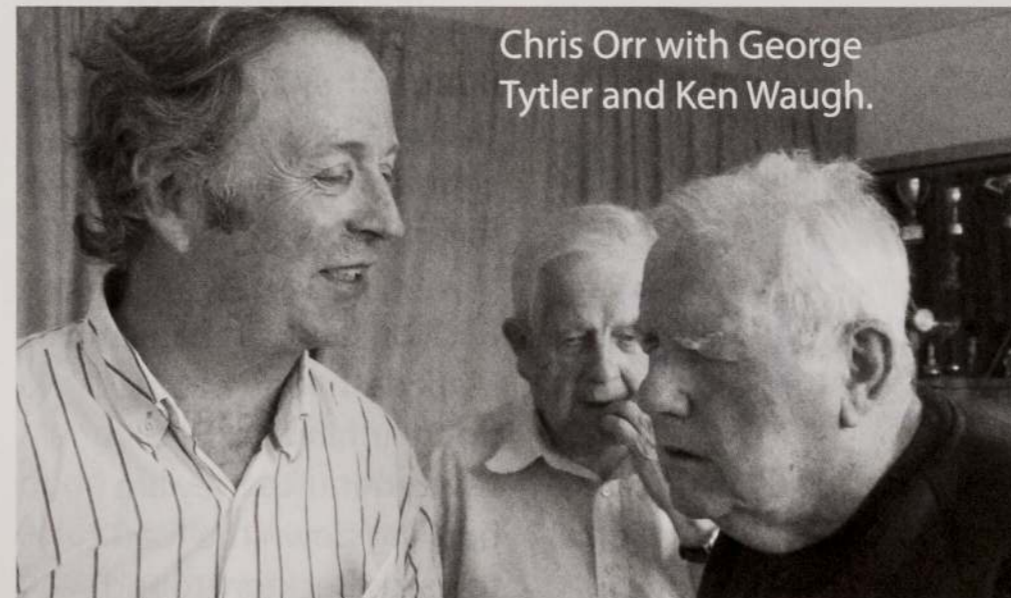


Nancy Chadwick presents Peter James with a gift.

gay and that the younger priest might find out and use that knowledge to the detriment of the older man; another thought that the working class employee might have bought shares in the company giving him the upper hand.

Yet another group, that included Harry Beevers and Jack Durban, went for a blackmail scenario in which the boss was having an affair with his secretary. In fact, the group seemed to like the boss-secretary affair so much they used it several times - much to the amusement of the rest of us.

The group gets bigger and better each year. Will there be enough space for us in 2008? Maybe we should think about hiring the Albert Hall.



Chris Orr with George Tytler and Ken Waugh.

Graham to tri-hard for GB!



Graham and Mark swim in the docks.

Photographs: Simon Rogers



Graham and Mark race through Custom House.

A ST DUNSTANER is representing Great Britain this month in one of the fastest growing sports in the world – triathlon – a combination of swim, bike ride and run! Graham Kiff, aged 39, broke through his estimated time when he joined 10,000 other participants in the London Triathlon on 6 August and is following that by representing the nation in the World Championships in Hamburg, Germany on 2 September. He is competing in the AWAD (Athlete with a Disability) category.

Father-of-four Graham, who served in the Royal Air Force, completed the London

Triathlon in the Mixed Olympic category with Mark Brownlow from St Dunstan's Sports and Recreation department. Starting at the Excell exhibition centre in the capital's Docklands, they leapt into the murky Royal Victoria Dock opposite Spillers Millennium Mill to swim roughly half-a-mile towards Connaught Bridge. They circled round to come back to the Excell centre, 1,500m in total, in 42 minutes and 48 seconds.

Back on land, Graham and Mark dash inside to pick up their tandem. Within seven minutes they are hurtling down the road towards Beckton, round

the roundabout, back up past Canary Wharf through Limehouse, by the Rotherhithe Tunnel and on to Tower Bridge. Hitting speeds of up to 40 miles-per-hour, their first lap takes 33 minutes and 56 seconds. However, they have to repeat this circuit and the second lap takes them 34 minutes and 49 seconds. They cycled just over 24 miles in this time, 38.7km.

With little time to spare, Graham and Mark are back on their feet and set off on a run. The course takes them around the outskirts of the Royal Victoria Dock which is lined with towering cranes, a relic of the area's industrial past. The first lap takes them 28 minutes and 26 seconds, the second lap 27 minutes, 19 seconds. When this is added up, Graham and Mark finished the event in two hours, 56 minutes and 33 seconds.

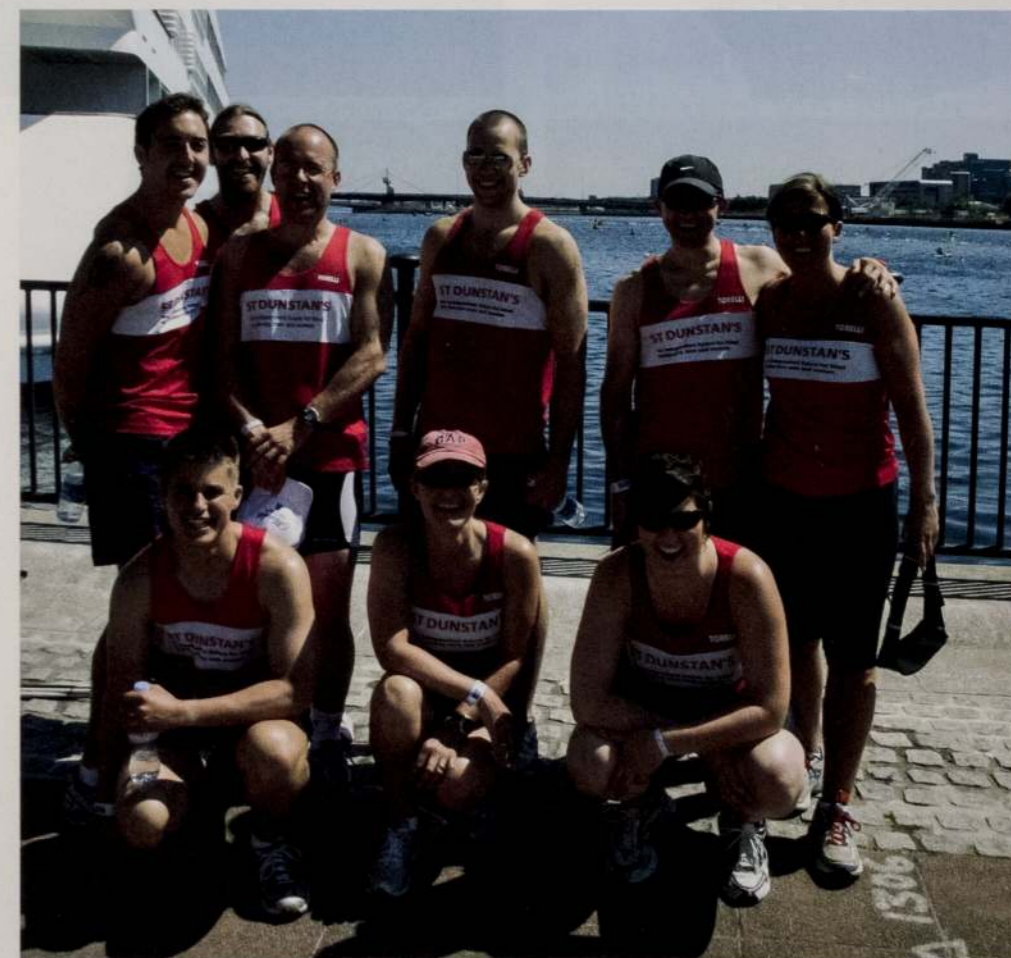
Jamie Aspin was leading the field for St Dunstan's team, completing in 2:34:58, coming 60th in the Mixed Olympic category. Andy Alliston clocked up 2:51:19, Adam Finch 3:00:25, Louise Timms came in at 3:25:50, Lyn Mullins at 3:34:16 and Mandy Fermer at 3:57:48. A dodgy bike pedal robbed Andy Mullins of an official finishing time.



Graham keeps on the move.



Jamie runs for St Dunstan's.



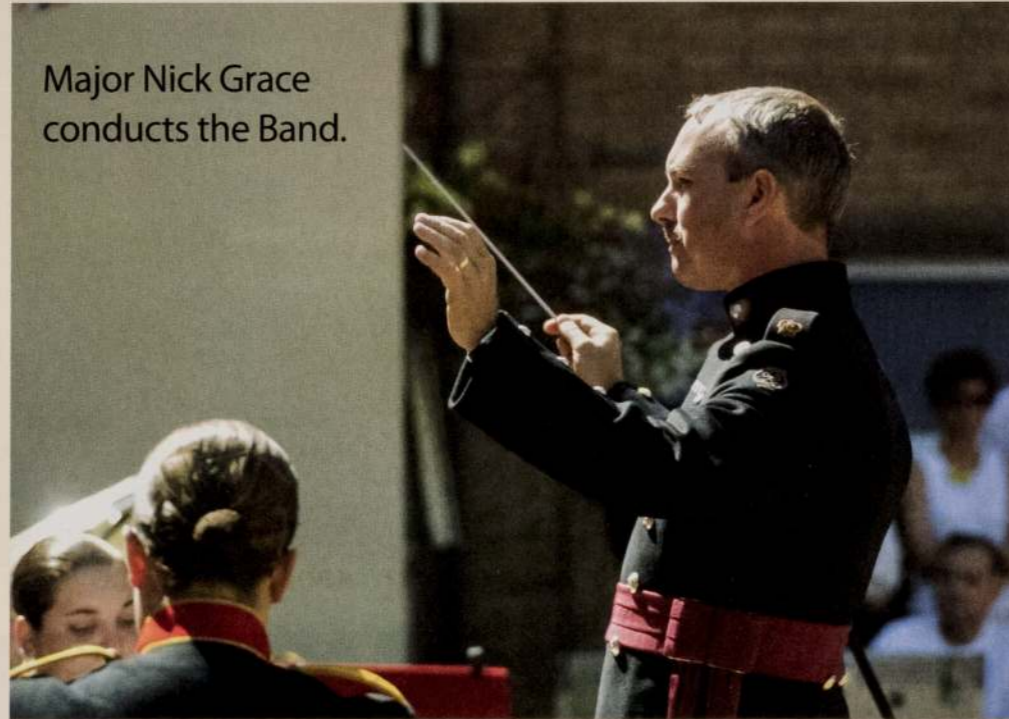
Mark, Andy Mullins, St Dunstaner Graham Kiff, Adam Finch, Jamie Aspin, Louise, Andy, Lyn and Mandy on the dockside. Other competitors are in the water behind them.

Simon Rogers documents the highly anticipated return of The Band of the Royal Marines to St Dunstan's Ovingdean

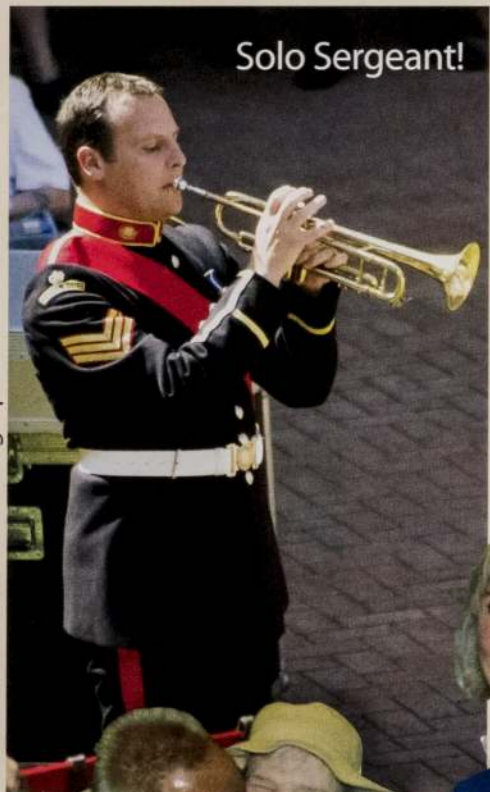
We're sure it was lovely



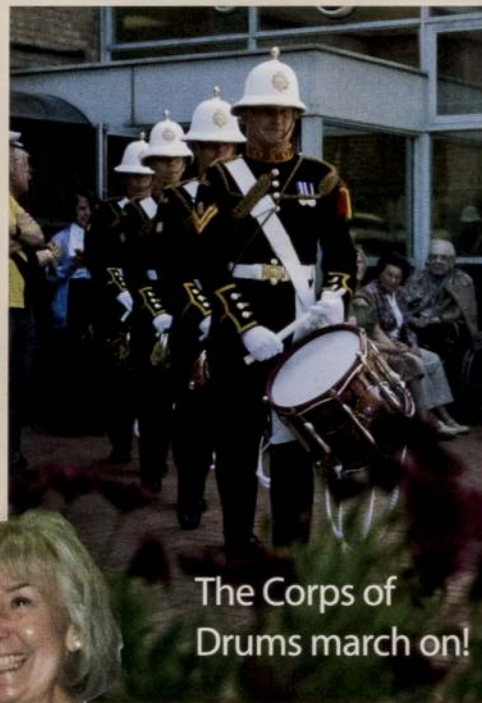
Steve Hall on xylophone.



Major Nick Grace conducts the Band.



Solo Sergeant!



The Corps of Drums march on!

Photograph: Ron Charlton



PBK's Paul James has a surprise welcome for Elsie Aldred.

THE BAND OF the Royal Marines (Portsmouth) made an outstanding return to St Dunstan's Ovingdean for a concert on 18 July. Led by Director of Music Major Nick Grace, BMus (Hons), FLCM, LRSM, RM, they bucked the rainy trend to play in the sun, with a selection of classical and popular favourites that embraced the tastes of all three services. They also ventured into showtune territory with a medley from *My Fair Lady*. The audience listened with deep appreciation, some from beneath the protection of several strategic gazebos.



George Tytler shows his appreciation after one rousing number



Photograph: Ron Charlton

Michael Lennon and Alf Waters were amongst the audience.



Jim Hetherington took the Royal Box for the concert.



The band played a variety of tunes with something for everyone in the garden.



Sam Geyer, aged 3 from Germany, meets St Dunstaner Henry Allingham aged 111. Sam attended the concert while staying with his grandparents Alan and Joan Wortley.

Jump with the Devils

A RMY St Dunstaner Gerry Jones dropped in to his old camp at Netheravon on 31 July - from 13,000ft! Gerry and Harry Beevers joined four cadets from South East London Army Cadet Force who had elected to jump with the Red Devils - the Army's parachute display team - as their venture in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge. Naturally, Gerry and Harry opted to jump as well.

Gerry and Harry had fortified themselves with a glass of wine the night before, appropriately Leopard's Leap! Words like dive, drop, and plummet seemed to come into conversation a little too easily. However, they were in good hands since Corporal Billy Blanchard of the Red Devils had already jumped with one St Dunstaner. He dropped into Arnhem with Ray Sheriff last year.

From South East London Army Cadet Force were Cadet Sgt James Whitney of 94 RRF, Blackheath, S/Sgt Sean Staden of 96RA at Grove Park, Sgt Penny O'Hare of the Sharp Shooting Yeomanry, Eltham and CSM Danny Stockton, again of Grove Park's 96RA.

Our St Dunstaners and cadets were filtered into a mix of others, civilians and service men and women making jumps with the Red Devils. They were flown to their jump point in a Cessna aircraft, a journey of about 15 to 20 minutes. The jumpers, harnessed to a Red Devil would have shuffled to the edge of the plane, wind blowing through the open door. Gerry and Harry would have been unaware of the abstract green and brown patchwork quilt beneath them - country fields some 13,000ft below. And those little blobs of cotton in between, those are clouds! Spectators on the ground would have heard the drone of the plane stall for a moment and then a dark spot would appear at one side. Gerry, aged 68, as our first jumper, came out head over heels, hands on harness. A tap on the shoulder and its hands up as Gerry and Bill fall downwards. Another tap on the shoulder and its hands on harness again as there is a



sharp jolt as the 'chute opens and the pair are seemingly pulled back up. A few tugs on the guide ropes and they turn towards the airfield positioning for landing. They come in fast, raising their legs to slide down on the grass.

After a couple of hours, punctuated by other jumpers, Harry, aged 78, joins Bill on the plane. They exit with consummate grace - a cry of "Geronimo!" Back on terra firma, Harry gives a thumbs up. "That really is quite unlike anything I have ever done before," he said.



Sgt Penny O'Hare during freefall over Netheravon.



Cadet Sergeant Major Danny Stockton dives into the ether.



St Dunstaner Harry and Red Devil Bill on the ground.



Thumbs up from S/Sgt Sean Staden after his jump.



C/Sgt James Whitney came in to land smoothly.

Simon Rogers rejoins the 2007 Cadet Challenge trail in Kent Forward with Strood ACF



Mayor of Swale, Councillor John Morris wishes Strood Army Cadet Force all the best before they start on their challenge.

STROOD PLATOON, ACF laid their claim on St Dunstan's 'Go the Distance' Cadet Challenge on 28 July. Eighteen cadets and four adult instructors mustered in the Man of Kent territory by the Long Hop public house in Sittingbourne. Meanwhile, local St Dunstaner Stephen Pendleton, Pauline Vincent and Cadet William Webster were setting up a Tombola stand at Angel Corner in Strood, just over the River Medway in the Kentish Man side of the county.

Joining the cadets were the

Mayor of Medway, Councillor Val Goulden and the Mayor of Swale, Councillor John Morris and his Mayoress, wife Ann. He set our Men and Maids, aged between 12 and 16, off on their walk along with St Dunstaner Colin Williamson and his wife Brenda.

Their path took them up through Rainham, into Gillingham where Sgt Bob Vincent was found injured on the roadside. Lance Corporal Regan Richards and Cadet Hannah Wellington responded to the challenge and applied first aid,

bandage and sling, for their wounded Sergeant.

The walk continued but not everyone seemed sure about challenges ahead. "We are going to have to do part of this blindfold," said Cadet Nathan Lee. "I just don't know how we are going to do that?"

"How do you think Colin does it?" "He's had special training!" replied Cadet Lee.

As it happens, although guided by their fellows the blindfold cadets move through Chatham in



Regan and Hannah apply first aid to their wounded Sergeant.

"peeking" fashion. Coming into historic Rochester, the blindfolds were surrendered to a single-file crocodile formation emulating First World War troops wounded in the trenches. After a couple of false starts, the cadets got an even rhythm going as they headed towards the Medway.

Crossing the river, another challenge came into play as they carried one of their number in a stretcher towards Strood Market Place. They were greeted by applause from friends and family. Three cadets-in-waiting, Ben James, Jordan Boyes and Callum Vincent held up a St Dunstan's banner as they saluted the incoming platoon. Mayor of Medway Cllr Val Goulden offered a word of commendation, presenting Strood AFC with a Medway plaque. Stephen Pendleton added that he was proud of the way in which they had completed the challenge.

Mayor Goulden also started off the draw for raffle prizes which had been donated by the local community to support St Dunstan's blind ex-service men and women. In final tally, the Strood Cadets raised over £1,500 for St Dunstan's!



The cadets make their "war-walk" through historic Rochester.



Three happy cadets ready for the blindfold challenge.



Mayor Val Goulden congratulates the cadets in Strood.

Simon Rogers follows Hastings ATC on their Cadet Challenge

Following the Conqueror!

HASTINGS AIR Training Corps followed in the footsteps of William the Conqueror for their chosen endeavour in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge on 29 July. They gathered in Pevensey, East Sussex along with St Dunstaner Colin Williamson, his wife Brenda, Win Jordan, wife of St Dunstaner Chris Jordon, and Stan Bowers, much in the same way that William had gathered his armies there before heading out to confront King Harold.

A little while after they set off, half the cadets put on blindfolds and submitted to being guided by their fellows. Cadets Kyle Hill and Paul Smart took the lead, followed by Kara Jeffrey and Rebecca Beaton, they moved through fields, over styles and gates, through muddy tracks. Cadets George Willard and James Gray were close behind. While some were concerned about the relative distance of a nearby stream, the blindfolds stayed firmly on for the next hour. Some of the cadets, such as



Diligent blindfold guiding was observed by Hastings ATC.



Carly Harrison tries to make use of a tactile sign post.

Carly Harrison and Bradley Herbert discovered that signposts on the route had a tactile dimension. There was an arrow carved into the post, a clue about which way they should be heading.

When the first hour was up, they swapped the blindfolds over and the guides became the guided for a further sixty minutes. The cadets also took turns at orienteering, checking their route against a map. They moved on to Herstmonceux, through Boreham and the ominously named Brownbread Street. There was some speculation about the age of a fallen oak tree, though for some it was a great thing to climb on.

Kyle Hill demonstrated hidden talents as a horse whisperer, gently distracting some foals while the others passed through their field. Since the route passed through prime farmland, the group encountered horses, sheep, cows and bulls (more in It Strikes Me on page 41).

Their walk came to a close in Catsfield, Battle and while they only need to clock up 13.1 miles for the challenge it seems probable that they covered much more. Well done all!



Tim Welsh has a few pointers on map reading for the cadets.



The group made friends wherever they went.



Who gave Colin the map? Hastings ATC ponder their direction.

Jax Whiteley reports on the Aldershot Army Show in July

Kind weather at Army show!

WITH AN appalling weather forecast and no little trepidation, we set out with others from the awareness team to brave whatever Aldershot was going to throw at us. But apart from a short shower on the Sunday afternoon, the weather was kind to us the whole time.

We met hundreds of people, some of whom had actually searched the showground to find us, having seen the advertisement about St Who?? in the programme. No small feat as the show covered about 14 acres. One of our visitors was Gerald Howarth, MP for Aldershot, and Shadow Defence Minister. He was very encouraging about St Dunstan's, and was full of praise for the work we do.

We met one lady, who said that her father was blind, but that she didn't feel St Dunstan's would help him, because he had "only" served in WWII and not as a regular soldier. We were pleased to put her right, and she left the tent with several leaflets, and the number for admissions.



St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley, Gerald Howarth, MP and Irene.

The team were Jen Shannon, Irene Loucas, Steve McColm, Ron Jones, Nigel Whiteley, and myself. Nigel demonstrated liquid level indicators and colour detectors all day. Dozens

of youngsters wanted to have a go at blindfold golf, or shape sorting. Many of whom were ably assisted by St Dunstaner Ron Jones. Visitors included medics from Keogh Barracks.

RNAS Air Day with Bomb Alley author

THE AUTHOR of a Falklands history book joined St Dunstan's Awareness Team at RNAS Yeovilton's Air Day in July. David Yates, author of Bomb Alley joined St Dunstaner Eric Powell, his wife Maureen who were part of our team manning a stand at the air show. St Dunstaner Gerry

Jones also got to examine a SeaKing helicopter up close after AET Matt Smith of 771 Squadron, usually based at Culdrose, visited the stand with his family. He asked the pilots if Gerry Jones could step inside their cordon. They were only too happy to oblige and so Gerry had a private guided tour.

REASONS TO WONDER!

Sid 'Badgie' Hoyle recalls being near to death in Burma-Siam

REFERRING TO STRANGE and mysterious events, I recall 1943 easily the worst year of my life. Serving in the 85th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery, I was a Prisoner of War, handed over to the Japanese at Singapore in February 1942, sent to slave on the murderous Burma-Siam railway. After day in and day out digging out cuttings, felling huge trees, building high bankings and bridges 12-16 hours a day in the terrible heat of the sun (120°F in the shade) on a handful of rice and greens of a kind, covered in jungle sores, ringworm and ulcers, men were dropping with malaria, dysentery, beriberi and sheer fatigue, there were no medical supplies at all.

Every day there was death, and only bug ridden bamboo slats to rest our sore and weary bodies on at night, along with vicious guards handing out beatings at the slightest mishap.

We were now 211 kilometres up the line, after 10 months of slogging and moving

from one camp to another the monsoons broke and along came the cholera with it. Our starved bodies made us vulnerable to any disease that was going. Of the 450 or so of us over 200 gallant men died in this hell hole by the name of Takanun.

After the cholera subsided a Japanese doctor arrived from somewhere, sorted about 50 of us out who he thought looked like the worst and sent them 150 kilometres down the line to a so-called hospital camp called Kanchanburi. I was very lucky to be one of the 50. The journey down is another story, yet it was a very sad time for me, my very close friend Alwyn Barry was lying sick and too ill to move, we had been together since outbreak of war in 1939. We were like brothers, there was no chance to say goodbye, the sorrow of it all was intense for both.

The 50 of us arrived at the hospital camp, some more dead than alive. The day after we all arrived I collapsed outside the hut.

I was carried away to a sick hut where I lay in a kind of coma. I was paralysed, I could not move my arms, legs or head, I just lay there staring upwards. I could not eat or swallow anything. I lay there for days, no-one knew what the hell was wrong with me. I can remember someone trying to get rice down my throat and someone saying "The Padre is here to see you Sid." I could not see his face, my eyesight had deteriorated badly (never to be normal again). I did not realise then that I was at death's door. I was told afterwards that I was not expected to see the next day. I was isolated from the others, I'm not surprised at that. The rice sack I had under and over me was crawling with lice. I had no clothes only a 'G' string.

I must have passed out, the next thing I knew I was on the floor of the hut. The fall from the bamboo slats had opened my bowels and whatever was wrong with me must have come out with the mess. I was put back on my bed by the

orderlies and I found my senses returning. I could move my limbs although I was far too weak to do anything with them, so the night I was supposed to die I came back to life. How? A paralysed skeleton of a man who had not moved a limb for two weeks, too weak to lift a finger, managed to roll over two or three times and crash onto the floor, and the most amazing thing of all, bash open his bowels, forcing out the killer that was inside him, as if prodded by an invisible surgeon.

Some almighty power had taken a hand here, but I did not realise it at the time, I was too shocked at the sight of my body, skin and bone. I was thin when I arrived here but now I was just a bloody bag of bones. I could not sit up without assistance. I was weeks learning to walk and help myself. My body was crying out for food and all that was available was a cup of wet rice and greens three times a day. It was a terrible, painful period that I shall never forget.

I was moved into a workers hut after I had gathered enough strength to get about as the hospital huts here were full of sick and

dying men, many in far worse condition than I was at the time. The Cemetery next to the camp already had over 3,000 British and Australian soldiers buried there, or what was left of them.

The grave that was dug for me was occupied by some unfortunate man who did not have a miracle to work for him, and I have never stopped counting my blessings for the wonderful thing that happened for me.

In this workers hut were men like myself, recovering from illness. We were not much more than strangers to each other and the work we were given to do was very heavy for men in our condition, loading sacks of rice onto trains for up country, but we had bigger rice rations at meal time which was something.

After work one night I was laid on my bamboo bed, about a 3ft wide space for each of us. I was wide awake in the pitch black darkness of the hut, there was no such thing as lights. I was thinking of home and good food and the fact that I had just discovered that my 21st birthday had just passed me by whilst I was in the sick

hut. I was suddenly startled by a voice loud and clear, "Badgie!" I sat straight up and called out "Who is it?"

There was no reply except a guy across saying "Get to bloody sleep!" No-one in that hut knew me by that name, it was a nickname my close comrades called me by and there were none in this hut. I was mystified, I could not explain it to anyone, it troubled me for days after.

A few weeks later a group of men came down from the Chunkai base camp. One man was from my Regiment, he told me there had been many deaths of men who had been brought down the railway in terrible condition and that my dear friend Alwyn Barry was one of them. I was devastated. I was choked with grief, my morale was dented, but there was no time to dwell on it in this bloody hell. I lay on my bed that night thinking how I promised his parents I would look after him, when suddenly I remembered the night in the workers hut. Alwyn's death was just about the same time as the voice that called out to me "Badgie" that uncanny night. This connection has been with me ever since. I was

sent back up the railway for more punishment a few weeks later.

It was whilst I was in a certain hut one night after work that to entertain ourselves different men would give a talk on their work in civilian life, by the light of a boot polish tin with oil and a piece of string stuck in it. A certain Australian gave a talk one night, as a Government warden of some kind he had to do with checking out on the Aborigines movements or something like that. He went on "I was with a tribe of Aborigines one evening along with my interpreter. They were enjoying a festival of some kind, when suddenly one of the elders stood up and shouted out and everything went to an uncanny silence. I asked my interpreter what was happening, he said the head man has just stopped the rejoicing as a mark of respect. He says that Chief Abula has just died, his spirit had just passed over the camp. I was dumbfounded. 'Well, how far away are the Abula tribe' I said. He said about 200 miles. 'Ridiculous' I said, but the interpreter was adamant that I would find the head man right. I made a

note of the date and vowed I would investigate. Six weeks later I found the Abula tribe and to my absolute amazement their Chief Abula had died the same day as I had recorded." After hearing this, it rekindled my belief in the voice that called out to me that night in the working hut was that of my pal Alwyn Barry, I am convinced it could not be anything else.

This is the first time I have ever told anyone about these experiences. I have lived with it for 52 years and I shall die with it. There must

be others who have had strange experiences, but there are none luckier than I.

This is a very brief and true story of certain events that took place in 1943 without any exaggeration. It was far worse than I could ever describe. There are 10,000 British and Australian glorious dead buried in the two cemeteries at the foot of this murderous bloody railway. But for the mysterious and powerful forces we do not understand there would have been many more.

May they rest in peace.

Billy at Burma Star!



FEPOW St Dunstaner Billy Griffiths, MBE met up with Viscount Slim, OBE, DL and Countess Mountbatten of Burma, CBE, CD, JP, DL at the 21st Burma Star Reunion Weekend in Blackpool, Lancashire on 22-24 June.

The third prize winner in the **Review's** Story Writing Competition as judged by Journey into Space creator Charles Chilton, MBE

Perchance to dream

By Mellor

(Betty Parkin)

"RING ME AS SOON as you've told the boy", and the car door slammed.

The boy, Dad only called me that when I've done something wrong. I scrambled into my clothes, took the stairs in my usual two leaps and had finished my cereal before.

Mum came, pulled a chair close and ----told me.

Why? Why Jason? I repeated the words over and over. Why was it Jason that was killed on that bus? Jason, my friend. My mother wept with me, hugged and comforted me as if her only child was a baby again.

We had met at the school gate, two five year olds. "New? Well stick by me, I'm Jason, my two brothers are in class four so I know all about school."

"Mike," I nodded and moved closer to this sturdy boy with ruffled red hair.

Together we had moved through the school, good terms, bad terms, cricket honours for him, the swimming cup for me and our next stop, university.

A black cloud of depression hit me despite the love, the kindness of people and friends that sought to cheer me with little effect, until I found help from Jason's twin brothers and his Uncle Noel. I shared their sorrow, their memories until we were all laughing again as if Jason was with us, his positive views stretching the discussion.

Noel Benn had adopted me as a nephew in spite of my awe of a man who had driven space-craft, had walked in space.

When on leave from USA he spent much time with his sister, Jason's mum, and walked for miles on the fells. Whenever school allowed we walked with him pestering

him as to whether he thought there were other worlds, other people in space.

He was patient, yes he believed there was much more to learn about space. Yes sometimes he did feel as though there were other people, other things out there, pressing close to him, not speaking in words yet communicating to each other, not to him. Perhaps they had some form of advanced telepathy.

Telepathy is a new word to me. "What is it," I asked? "The dictionary says, communication between two minds other than by known senses. Jason's brothers do it often, it's easier for twins but Jason and you are such good friends you should do well. Try it, think of a number think hard, come back and tell what it is."

Beginners luck, we laughed at our success, but that was

how it started, our game, our secret game that we played to fill the idle hours.

Now suddenly without me realising it exams had been passed, and the entry to the career of my choice, following my veterinary father, had begun. Lectures, tutorials and the whole strange world of university life filled the next years, now it was ending, as I awaited my degree results.

Years of singing in the church choir and now a passable tenor had given me entry into the choral society and much of my spare time had been spent at concerts, singing festivals and special church services.

Sadly this would be my last "sing" with my group, we were joining the celebrations at another university of the restoration of their chapel.

We set off cheerfully despite a bad weather forecast. The storm broke as the service ended thunder crashed overhead with the final amens and torrential rain lashed down.

A college official offered me a share of his umbrella and

a short cut to the supper room. A brisk run and we neared a small door in a tower. "Dodge round this scaffolding, the workmen have a tight schedule to repair these roofs now the students have left on vacation. They were going to finish this scaffolding before nightfall, but now this rain has delayed work". He apologised for heavy equipment etc. in the passage of what appeared a residential block and showed me to a room where people had already started at a buffet. With mention of "special duties", he left me.

Only a few minutes later there was a call for silence and a policeman announced the closure of the nearby motorway owing to an accident and falling trees. Everyone would have to remain here, possibly over night. Other rooms with comfortable chairs were made available. I was still sitting near the passage and saw my "umbrella friend" struggling with a carton with large books bursting from it. I went to help. "Rain's getting the library, I'm taking these for safety, my office is along the passage."

A door unlocked, curtains

pulled over a window blocked by scaffolding, books safely stacked and the official paused to give his thanks. As he left to return to the library he stopped, "That chair is very comfortable - I chose it specially and the sound system is on, if you'd like to stay, you will hear any announcements. There's an evening paper, milk, tea and coffee help yourself."

Too good to refuse, I thanked him, took off jacket and shoes and tested that comfortable chair.

Perhaps the tower was not lifted up, twirled around twice before settling back but that was how it felt as the tornado hit it. I awakened to see lightning rip across the room.

Grabbing for my jacket and shoes I felt the cut and bruise of stones, glass and ivy as the window burst inwards and with it came the metallic rasp of scaffolding coming to entrap me.

As I made towards the door the lights went out. I felt along the wall, pushed a heavy desk baring my way -I pushed, oh if I had Jason's strength, pushed again and a thin strip of

bright-blue green silvery light lit up the door handle as another push moved the desk forward. I reached it, turned it and tumbled into the passage. Not the passage I had seen before, but a mass of splintered wood, glass and dust blowing in broken windows and swinging doors. Did I remember where the outer door was? I gave a yell as cut hands touched the stair rail. Stairs? I remembered them near the door.

The strange silvery light was moving again. In front of me up and down the stairs and back again. There was a voice calling - a girl's voice "Anyone there? I need help."

I shouted, "I'm by the stairs, Where are you? I thought this place was empty."

"At the top there's a gap - I can't get down."

The light, the arrow, pointed up the stairs above me, "I'll try to come up - shine that torch downwards and keep talking."

"I've no torch, no light up here." Her voice went on steadily as I hauled and crawled my way up splintered, broken treads until they stopped and

the arrow flickered as it measured the gap.

Joy, she had told me was a 2nd year student whose flight home for holiday was delayed. "Joy, slide down the banister, it seems firm enough, as far as you can and I think I can reach you."

That grab, the fall or roll down the stairs are lost to both of us. I remember only my blind faith in following that arrow, until stumbling, crawling, dragging the girl, I saw the handle of the door encircled before me.

Rain and wind swept over us, people, flashing torches and a voice calling, "Hold on mate, we see you, Fire Service here." Jason's words so often shouted as I swam length after length "Come on Mike you can do it - of course you can" stopped ringing round and round my head.

Cuts bruises and lacerations take time to heal. Time for my mother to pamper me, to visit Joy, "poor girl and all her family in Australia," time for me to get to know Joy until, as in romantic fiction, I married the girl.

And now-

That's the oldest house I've ever seen, "What about a ghost?" my eight year old son asked getting into the car.

"Ghosts? Well," I was marshalling my words carefully.

"Watch out! There's glass gleaming in the road."

I had seen it too recognised the colour only it was not a silver arrow but a dainty ball of mist, "a will-o-the-wisp, flitting merrily before us and the breeze blew like a chuckle on my bare arm.

"Ghosts," I went on, "Don't worry me, I believe like Shakespeare that there are more things in heaven and earth than we can dream about."

The question mark that will-o-wisp was writing on the windscreen burst into a myriad of bubbles of joy. The sound of Jason's laughter that had been ringing through my mind faded as it joined with the breeze to waft will-o-wisp and her bubbles up to the space waiting above.

"Shakespeare, yes I've heard of him," said Tom, "But it's Mum's W.I. evening tonight, that's a special early tea for us. Step on it, please Dad, for I'm -starving."

REUNION ROUND-UP Reports on the most recent area reunions

THERE WERE 23 St Dunstaners and one widow at the Llandudno Reunion on 11 July. St Dunstaner David Stuttard was the Member of Council presiding at the Imperial Hotel, Llandudno, Conwy. St Dunstaner William Parry made the reply on behalf of those present. "Mae'n bleser mawr gennyf i, fel aelod o St Dunstan's i roi croeso i Gyngor St Dunstan's I Llandudno yng Ngogledd Cymru am y tro cyntaf erioed, a gobeithio y byddent yn gallu dod yn aml yn y dyfodol," he said. "It is with great pleasure for me to welcome the St Dunstan's Council to Llandudno in North Wales for the first time ever, and hoping they can continue to come in the future."

The Liverpool Reunion held this year on 12 July at the Marriot Hotel, Liverpool was quite possibly the largest assembly of the season with over 140 people present. There were 50 St Dunstaners and nine widows at the gathering. Rev Paul Taylor, son of Nancy and late



Good health from Fred and Joan Baker on Merseyside.

St Dunstaner Tom Taylor said grace. St Dunstaner David Stuttard was the Member of Council presiding and Ken Seaman made the reply on behalf of those present. The day was enlivened by music from West End Girls who emulated the Andrews Sisters, while President Ray and Roberta Hazan were amongst those who ventured on the dance floor for a twirl.



Joe Cousineu and his grandfather at Liverpool.

The Cardiff Reunion held on 17 July at the St Melons Hotel, St Melons, Cardiff brought together 21 St Dunstaners, six widows and "two new guide dogs." St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-

Lennox, RN presided and St Dunstaner Norman Hopkins made the reply on behalf of those present.

The North Hampshire at the Tylney Hall Hotel, Rotherwick, Hook, Hampshire united 12 St Dunstaners and three widows on 24 July. Timothy Bacon was the Member of Council presiding, while St Dunstaner Norman Kerslake responded on behalf of those present.

There were 34 St Dunstaners and three widows at the Newcastle Reunion on 31 July at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Major General David Joliffe, CB, FRCP was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding. The reply was made by St Dunstaner Colin Williamson.

Major General Joliffe also presided at the Durham Reunion on 1 August at the Ramside Hall Hotel, Carrville, Durham. There were 27 St Dunstaners and three widows present and St Dunstaner Steve Nixon gave a vote of thanks on behalf of everyone.

Welcome to St Dunstan's

Gwynneth Aston of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1946.

Frederick Blanshard of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria served in the Merchant Navy and Royal Navy between 1941 and 1953.

Henry Bracewell of Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1946.

Kenneth Brown of Romford, Essex served in Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1952.

Gerald Burridge of Elstree, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1946 to 1948.

Henry Bull of Sittingbourne, Kent served in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry from 1940 to 1946.

Ernest Chadwick of Bakewell, Derbyshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Ordnance Corps between 1943 and 1947.

Thomas Christie of Leeds, West Yorkshire served in the

Royal Army Medical Corps and the Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buff's, The Duke of Albany's) between 1935 and 1936. He also served in the Corps of Military Police from 1940 to 1946.

Mary Clouston of Builth Wells, Powys served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

Estelle Cole of Brighton served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1944 and the Women's Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1953.

Irene Cotter of Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Betty Deacon of Brighton served as Petty Officer in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1941 to 1945.

Leslie Dobson of Washington, Tyne and Wear served in the Corps of Royal Military Police from 1950 to 1953 and the Royal Artillery (TA) until 1956.

Graham Dower of Exeter, Devon served in the Royal Navy from 1947 and 1956.

Ronald Duncombe of Lancing, West Sussex served as Able Seaman in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Olga Eagle of Barnby Dun, Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1954.

Robert Eddison of Marylebone, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

Kathleen Evans of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

Charles Ewen of East Kilbride, Glasgow served first in the Royal Air Force, then in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and finally in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1941 and 1946.

Joan Garten of Brighton served as Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

John Geddes of Witton Gilbert, Durham, County Durham served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

James Greenwood of Ashted, Surrey served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946 when he was discharged as Captain.

Eric Hedderick of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Irish Guards during 1957.

Francis Hindle of Halifax, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

George Howe of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan served as LAC in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1942.

Ada Hughes of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland served as Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Hilda Humphries of Hailsham, East Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1946.

Elsie Hunter of Kirkcaldy, Fife served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1950.

David Jenkins of Mayfield, East Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Richard Kelly of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the 10th Royal

Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own) and the Royal Artillery between 1949 and 1968.

Harry Kendall of Lewes, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1949 to 1952.

John Letties of Wigan, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1954.

William Longstaff of Shildon, County Durham served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Trevor Macpherson of Llandrindod Wells, Powys served in the Royal Signals from 1945 to 1948.

Joseph Massey of Rowley Regis, West Midlands served as Trooper in the 1st Household Cavalry Regiment and then The Life Guards between 1941 and 1946.

Alfred Morley of Hove, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Harry Mullane of Bexleyheath, Kent served in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps and then the Royal Engineers between 1940 and 1946.

Douglas Perkins of Crawley,

West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Philip Plummer of Woodside, London served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Robert Richards of Wrexham, Flintshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1956 to 1983.

Harold Rickard of Helston, Cornwall served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals between 1944 and 1948.

Raymond Robinson of Gateshead, Tyne & Wear served in the Royal Engineers from 1962 to 1966.

Donald Rowe of Melksham, Wiltshire served in the Royal Ulster Rifles and the Corps of Royal Military Police between 1953 and 1957.

Walter Savage of Raynes Park, London served as Corporal in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1948.

James Scott of Rochester, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Stephen Shepherd of Netherfield, Nottingham,

Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1974 to 1986.

Cyril Smith of St Asaph, Clwyd served in the Merchant Navy from 1941 to 1947.

Francis Swalwell of Cayton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire served in The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment) from 1935 to 1946.

Alexander Thomson of Dundee, Angus served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

David Underwood of Woking, Surrey served as Gunner in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Allen Vickers of East Looe, Cornwall served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1954.

Martin Walsh of Wigan, Lancashire served as Rifleman in the Royal Ulster Rifles from 1955 to 1961.

George Walter of Wyberton, Boston, Lincolnshire served in the Lincolnshire Regiment from 1940 to 1946.

James Ward of Romford,

Essex served in the Royal Marines from 1941 to 1946.

Alma Weeden of Teddington, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

Frederick Willcox of Woolton, Liverpool served as Sergeant in the Royal Signals from 1943 to 1947.

Dennis Williams of Rhyl, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Lewis Williams of Birmingham, West Midlands served in the Royal Signals from 1939 to 1946.

BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Williamson

Pauwel Kwak

The distinctive glass that this superb Belgian beer comes in is probably more better known than the beer itself. The vessel is modelled on a stirrup cup from the days of horse drawn coaches. According to brewer Bosteels, Pauwel Kwak was owner of De Hoorn in Dendermonde. Mail coaches stopped there everyday, but coachmen were not allowed to leave their horses. Kwak had the special glass blown so that the coachmen could hang it on the side of their coach. The brew is made from three malts and a small quantity of white candy sugar. It has a brandyish warming finish to it and is toffee, malty and nougat like. Its alcohol content is eight per cent ABV.



Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 10.

- 1) *Desert Island Discs*;
- 2) *Just a Minute*;
- 3) *Take it from here*;
- 4) Terry Wogan;
- 5) *Pick of the Week*;
- 6) Tony Blackburn;
- 7) Mars, it was during a production of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* directed by Orson Wells
- 8) Elisabeth Schwarzkopf;
- 9) Time signal pips;
- 10) Major Dennis Bloodnock, OBE (bankrupt).

It strikes me...

The incorrigible Gog and Magog are on the loose once more!

GOG HEARS of an act of unparalleled bravery during Hastings ATC's attempt on St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge. Livestock took little notice of the cadets when they passed through one field. However, St Dunstaner Colin Williamson, his wife Brenda, Win Jordan, wife of St Dunstaner Chris Jordan, and driver Stan Bowyers were a different matter. The resident herd of bulls, who all know a thing or two about branding, decided they should investigate our friends – all wearing bright red t-shirts and fleeces!



Colin followed by some bovine friends.

Magog has news that might be useful to poultry keeping St Dunstaners. Scientists in Ontario, Canada have determined that blind chickens – known as Smokey

Joes – lay more eggs than their sighted counterparts.

Gog learns that Johnny Depp is to play Sweeny Todd in a film of the musical. It reminds him that the real-life demon barber was caught because he left his victims' remains in the crypt at St Dunstan's

Magog, meanwhile, hears that Rolf Harris was shocked when St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley asked to see his Coogee Bear. It was a bit of a didgeridoo, but the sun arose when Rolf pegged that our little boy was intrigued by his koala pal and not out to pinch his winkles. And on that note, we tie our kangaroo down for the month.



Rolf is shocked that Nigel can't tell what it is yet

Family News



CHRISTENINGS

Congratulations to:

Zoe, 15, Charlie, 11, Bethany, 4, and Harry, one-year-old this month, who were christened in St Dunstan's Chapel on 21 July. St Dunstan's Chaplain Father Martin Morgan conducted the ceremony, witnessed by Matthew and Michelle Rhodes of Telscombe Cliffs, East Sussex and godparents who included Sylvia Burton, widow of St Dunstaner Ken Burton.

SILVER ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Lewis and Rosemary Smith of Hull, East Yorkshire on 9 August.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Alfred and Doll Butler of Birmingham, West Midlands on 20 July.

Brian and Rita Turner of Hull, East Yorkshire on 27 July.

Geoff and Val Collins of Hove, East Sussex on 10 August.

Derrick and Chris Taylor of Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire on 17 August.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Eric and Patricia Prior of Kidderminster, Worcestershire on 24 July.

Douglas and Nancy Lindley of Kilnhurst, Rotherham, Yorkshire on 26 July.

Eric and Dorothy Aitken of Bawley Point, New South Wales, Australia on 9 August.

Michael and Sybil Hansen of Lancaster, Lancashire on 16 August.

Albert and Vera Richardson of Spennymoor, County Durham on 16 August.

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Ray and Jeannie Ball of Fleetwood, Lancashire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 20 July.

William and Joyce Burchell of Brighton who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 21 July.

Harold and Joan Sparrey of Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire who celebrated 68 years of marriage on 21 July.

Norman and Anne Walker of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 22 July

Victor and Margaret Morgan of Stalmine, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire who celebrated 71 years of marriage on 25 July.

James and Eileen Davis of Long Stratton, Norfolk who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 27 July.

Donald and Betty Lorenz of Blofield, Norwich, Norfolk who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 27 July.

John and Mary Painter of Birdham, West Sussex who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 1 August.

Ronald and Mil Ballard of Horley, Surrey who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 2 August.

Leonard and Marge Bragg of Basingstoke, Hampshire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 2 August.

Edgar and Ellen Gilert of Doncaster, South Yorkshire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 3 August.

Arthur and Laura Hodges of South Bretton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 10 August.

Alfred and Audrey Waters of East Sussex who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 11 August.

William and Lilian Miles of Leyland, Lancashire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 12 August.

Ronald and Phyllis Cozens of Southampton, Hampshire who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 14 August.

Matthew and Gladys Carroll of Holbrook, Ipswich, Suffolk who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 15 August.

Denis and Connie Blow of East Grinstead, West Sussex who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 17 August.

Joe and Alice Pontin of Nailsworth, Gloucestershire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 18 August.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

St Dunstaner Iain Millard of Saltdean, Brighton on passing his Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT) Level 3 Certificate in Swedish Body Massage. He has also passed the VTCT Level 3 Diploma in Anatomy and Physiology complementing previous qualifications in therapeutic disciplines.

Rebecca Sían Dafydd on gaining a first class honours degree in Law at The School of Law, University of Wales, Bangor. She also won a scholarship prize for academic achievement from the Barristers' Chambers in Chester. She is the granddaughter of William and Maureen Parry of Porthmadog, Gwynedd.

Steven Orr who graduated from Queen's University, Belfast on 5 July with a 2:1 BSc (Hons) in Archaeology & Palaeoecology. He is the son of David and June Orr of Kilkeel, County Down.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Marie Salmon on 11 July. She was the wife of Thomas Salmon of Helston, Cornwall.

Audrey Broughton in August. She was the wife of St Dunstaner Lionel Broughton of Rugby, Warwickshire.

Margery Stead of Kingsbridge, Devon on 10 July. She was the widow of John Stead.

Peggy Giffard of East Preston, West Sussex on 14 July. She was the widow of Dennis Giffard.

Kathleen Bailey of Guildford, Surrey on 18 July. She was the widow of John Bailey.

Josephine Cattell of New Dunston, Northamptonshire on 7 August. She was the widow of George Cattell.

Denise on 10 July. She was the daughter of Denis and Joan Noone of Birch Green, Skelmersdale.

Our sympathy goes to their family and friends.

In Memory

It is with deep regret that we have to record the deaths of the following St Dunstaners and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, family and friends.

Eva Stephenson

Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Eva Stephenson, nee Coates of Blackburn, Lancashire died in March, aged 88. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and trained as a teleprinter operator. She was discharged as Leading Aircraftwoman in 1943. She was a Special Police Constable in Burnley for 13 years. Her interests included sewing, gardening and caravanning. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

Graham Palmer

2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion

Graham Cecil Palmer of Gorokan, New South Wales, Australia died on 3 June, aged 83. He was an electrician in civilian life

and served in the 2/24 Australian Infantry Battalion from 1942 to 1946. Our sympathy goes to his widow Phyllis and all the family.

George Larkin

2/1 Battalion, Australian Infantry

George Larkin of Bradbury, New South Wales died on 20 June, aged 91. He was a farmer before joining the Australian Infantry in 1940. He was taken prisoner by Japanese forces and contracted beri-beri during his captivity. He was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joan and all members of the family.

Olive Harmes

Women's Royal Naval Service

Olive Primrose Harmes, nee Walker, of Brixham, Devon died on 10 July, aged 87, following a traffic accident. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943. After training at Mill Hill and Wimbledon, she was posted to Scotland. Discharged in 1945, she worked at a London police station. Moving to Devon, she and her husband ran the station café at Totnes for ten years. She was also a keep-fit teacher for over 40 years and was reckoned by many to have been the oldest working keep-fit teacher in the country. Her interests included reading and knitting and she worked in a charity shop. Our sympathy goes to her son Colin, daughter Lyn and all members of the family.

Michael Watts

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment

Michael Savage Watts of Blackheath, London died on 14 July, aged 89. He joined the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment as 2nd Lieutenant in 1940 and deployed to Norway as a cipher officer. Deploying to Singapore, he was wounded

and taken prisoner by the Japanese. While a prisoner, working on the Burma-Siam railway, he accepted the responsibility of smuggling messages to the Thai underground. He was mentioned in dispatches for gallant and distinguished service in Malaya in 1942, though this commendation was not made until after his discharge in 1946. He spoke Russian, Japanese, Thai, German and Greek and joined the World Service, working as Russian Editor on the Monitoring Service and as a political commentator. He became Head of the Thai service and also lectured on tours to Japan, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Austria, and Berlin. Later, he was a freelance writer and broadcaster. He was a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and compiled a highly regarded bibliography of Thailand, covering population, economics, politics and environmental issues.

Arthur Knowles

Royal Air Force

Arthur Knowles of Preston, Lancashire died on 15 July, aged 92. He worked in a cotton mill before joining the Royal Air Force in 1939. He served in the UK, France, India and Singapore. Rising to Sergeant, he was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1961. Discharged in 1970, he became accommodation manager at Preston Polytechnic and in retirement he was a lollipop man. He enjoyed walking in the Lake District and supported Bolton Wanderers. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Jennifer and all of the family.

Michael Ryan

Royal Air Force

Michael Robert Ryan of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 15 July, aged 46. He joined

the Royal Air Force in 1978 served in the UK and Germany. Having completed driver training and reaching the rank of Senior Aircraftman, he underwent surgery to remove two brain tumours. Subsequently, he suffered facial paralysis, loss of sight and loss of hearing and was discharged in 1985. Initially, he set up a business, The Write Place, creating letterheads and other stationery items but deteriorating health prevented him continuing in this line. He remained a keen supporter of Liverpool FC. His interests included woodwork, computers and military history. He visited several First World War battlefields and also made a trip to Lourdes. He studied Moon. Our sympathy goes to his sons James, Benjamin and Luke, and all of the family.

Robert Illingworth

Royal Air Force

Robert Illingworth of Eaton, Norwich, Norfolk died on 19 July, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939 as an administrator. He served in Egypt, Aden and Norway before being discharged as Flight Sergeant in 1948. In civilian life, he taught at secondary schools in Darlington and Cambridge. His interests included fell walking, swimming, nature photography and reading military fiction. Our sympathy goes to his widow Audrey, daughters Elizabeth, Janet and Ruth and all the family.

Arthur Dickison

Royal Navy

Arthur Pirie Dickison of Honiton, Devon died on 21 July, aged 86. He joined the Royal Navy at HMS *Pembroke*, Chatham, Kent in 1940. After training as a telegraphist he was assigned to HMS *Dolphin* where he discovered that he had been drafted into

the submarine service. Posted to the Isle of Bute, he served on three H class boats all built at the end of the First World war and then HMS *Sealion*. In 1942, he was sent to Liverpool to join the crew of a new S class boat, Job Number J3164. During sea trials, he encountered officers from another submarine tethered to depot ship HMS *Forth*. He saluted, adding "Good hunting, Sir." Only later did he realise that it was actor John Mills who had been filming *We Dive at Dawn*. The salute remained in the movie when released. Trials over, the boat was dubbed HMSP211 and sailed for Gibraltar. Patrolling the Mediterranean, the boat was deemed the "most hated and unpopular submarine" by the Italians, though shortly after this it became HMS *Safari*. The crew recorded 58 sinkings, facilitated a series of commando landings and acted as a guide for troops during the invasion of Sicily. They returned to the UK in 1943 to form a training flotilla. He remained with the Submarine service, notably on HMS *Thermopylae*, until 1951 when he joined the regulatory branch. He served on HMS *Bulwark* in Belfast where he was Acting Master of Arms and later in Singapore. Discharged in 1962 as Regulating Petty Officer, he joined the Atomic Energy Group as a supervisor in their computer department. He was also a member of the Dorset Police Special Constabulary. During the war, Arthur kept a diary (against regulations) and this became the basis of a book *Crash Dive: In action with HMS Safari 1942-1943* which was first published in 1999. Our sympathy goes to his widow Clare and all members of the family.

Joseph Reeve

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

Joseph Edward Reeve of Solihull, West

Midlands died on 24 July, aged 92. He was a draughtsman and engineer and also served with the National Fire Service before joining the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in 1944. He served in the North Atlantic and was discharged as Sub Lieutenant in 1946. His interests included playing the piano, watercolour and oil painting. Our sympathy goes to his widow Winnifred, sons John and Colin, and all members of the family.

Ben Whitehouse

Royal Navy

James Benjamin Whitehouse of Plungington, Preston, Lancashire died on 24 July, aged 86. He had completed an apprenticeship at Vickers in Barrow-in-Furness before joining the Royal Navy in 1942. Qualifying as an Engine Room Artificer, he served on the U class submarines that had been built in the yards where he previously worked. He sailed the Mediterranean before being demobbed in 1946. In civilian life, he became a fitter with an engineering firm. Our sympathy goes to his son George, daughter Carol, and all members of the family.

Ronald Mills

Royal Signals

Ronald Murray George Mills of Rushden, Northamptonshire died on 26 July, aged 86. He enlisted in the Royal Signals in 1941 and trained in Egham, Surrey. He served in the Middle East. After the War, he was proud to be one of Field Marshal Montgomery's motorcycle outriders at a Victory Parade. He was discharged to the reserves in 1946 and became a draughtsman, working for a firm producing heat exchangers. He was a keen cyclist, pedal and motor, and enjoyed sailing with Sailability. Our sympathy goes to his

widow Doris, sons and daughters and all members of the family.

Walter Prestidge

Royal Engineers

Walter Thomas Prestidge of Woolston, Southampton died on 3 August, aged 93. He worked as a Steward's boy sailing to Australia and New Zealand where he settled for awhile. Returning to the UK, he worked for J. Lyons. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1940 and transferred to the Royal Engineers the following year. He served in Holland, Germany, Belgium and France and landed in Normandy on D-Day. Discharged as Sergeant in 1948, he rejoined J. Lyons and became manager at Wimbledon. He catered for the Queen Mother during the tennis tournament. His interests included swimming, and ballroom dancing. Our sympathy goes to his sons and all members of the family.

Thomas Hancock

Royal Pioneer Corps

Thomas Albert Hancock of Durrington, Worthing, Surrey died on 5 August, aged 83. He studied engineering before joining an aircraft factory in Willesden. Later, he volunteered for the Royal Navy but became a Bevin Boy in the Durham coal mines until 1945. In 1946, he joined the General Service Corps and shortly thereafter, transferred to the Pioneer Corps which gained its Royal prefix two weeks later. After training at Catterick, he was posted to Ledbury as an Orderly Room Corporal in an old POW camp. Discharged in 1948, he resumed engineering as a career, initially with his old employer, but later with ENV, a subsidiary of Westland Helicopters. He worked on developing gears for the Sea King. His

interests included rugby and cricket and he was a member of Worthing Bowling Club. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Patricia, grandson Dean and all of the family.

Dennis Brown

Royal Air Force

Dennis Harry Brown of Linden Village, Buckinghamshire died on 7 August, aged 86. He was an electrician before joining the Royal Air Force in 1942. He served as Leading Aircraftman and was discharged in 1946. In civilian life he was an electronics engineer. After losing his sight, he became coordinator of the local Voluntary Transport Service and was also involved in the production of a local magazine for disabled people. He was a member of Toc H and Vice President of the local RAF Association. His interests included toymaking, chess, music, CB radio, and he was a member of St Dunstan's Archery Club. Our sympathy goes to his widow Joan, daughters Janet, Heather, and Wendy, and all of the family.

William Stephen

Royal Air Force

William Sydney Stephen of Stourbridge, West Midlands died on 30 May, aged 87. He worked for ICI before joining the Royal Air Force in 1940. He trained as a wireless operator and as an air gunner. He was taken prisoner in 1942 after his Manchester bomber came down off the Friesian Islands. As a POW, he was held in Germany and later Poland. He was moved out on "The Long March" when German forces retreated from the advancing Russians. Discharged as Sergeant in 1946, he returned to ICI. His interests included walking, gardening and reading. Our sympathy goes to his son John and all members of the family.

Bryan races the waves!



Bryan Durber of Halesowen, West Midlands takes control of the Tresca.



ST DUNSTANER Bryan Durber braved gale force winds to race an ocean going yacht with the Gwennili Trust during their Blind Sailing Week in July. "It was an ocean going 60-footer," said Bryan. "That's was quite hairy, quite exhilarating!"

The week was distinguished by awful weather but that didn't dampen Bryan's enthusiasm for life before the mast. "What a fantastic time we had on *Tresca* during blind week sailing. I was sailing with the boys from BLESMA," he said. "We embarked at Gosport on Friday afternoon, got our stores and gear aboard and then motored over to Gun Wharf Quay for our first run ashore.

"Next morning, some what the worst for wear, we had a leisurely sail round to the Royal Southampton yacht club for a welcome dinner and the itinerary for the week, East Cowes, Yarmouth, Gosport, a super evening at the RAF Club Hamble, with a special thank you to the staff for their help and support. The weather meant we couldn't go long distance, but it was still exciting. Our last night was at RYC Southampton for the farewell dinner and roundup of the week. "I must say a heartfelt thank you to skipper Dave Baker and crew Tom, Nigel, and Ed for looking after us in some scary sailing conditions, force 6-7 at times! It was very wet, but we're dressed for that!"

Seven shots to victory!

Stuart Semple and Mike Mayo.



ST DUNSTANER Mike Mayo won the British Blind Masters Golf Tournament by seven shots in July. The event was played at Patshull Park Golf Club in Wolverhaston 23-26 July. "It is the longest blind golf competition in the world and I have won three times in five years," said Mike who had Lanark Junior Champion Stuart Semple as his caddy. St Dunstaner Derek Roden came fourth in a Stableford contest played at the same time. Mike followed his Masters success with the British Blind Open at Fulford Golf Club in York on 6-8 August. He came second, claiming best gross for B3 and overall. "What a season I have had!" he said.