March 2008

# St Dunstan's



St Dunstaner Maria Pikulski is down in the Dolomites during the annual skiing week, 19-26 January! More on page 16.



St Dunstan's

An independent future for blind ex-Service men and women

Have a good Easter Clocks spring forward on 30 March

Master thriller writer selects top tales in contest!

TALES OF TREACHERY AND TRAGEDY

Silent screams

Silent Screams booklet inside!



#### ACCOMMODATION RATES

REVISED CHARGES: In accordance with our desire to keep charges at St Dunstan's Ovingdean related to the economy, new prices will come into effect from 1 April for our short stay visitors. As ever, the charge includes full board and accommodation as well as participation in the activities programme and your transport to and from St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

Holiday (all visitors) £168 (including VAT)
Residential Care £266
Nursing Care £357

Port Hall, Beacon Hill,

or Sheffield £133 (including VAT)

All prices listed are per week.

There will be no increase in care rates for war-blinded St Dunstaners.

Dick Lake, Ovingdean Manager

### KEEPING ST DUNSTAN'S MOVING ON THE ROAD FOR YOU

BUSIER THAN EVER: The St Dunstan's
Transport department carried 35,749
passengers and covered 660,335 miles
in 2007 which is 1,000 passengers and
83,000 miles more than in 2006. You can
imagine what the bill is and this is why
it is imperative that we make the most
cost-effective use of our vehicles. The use
of people carriers is inevitable as is sharing

the vehicle with other St Dunstaners, collecting or dropping folk off as the journey progresses. Although we aim to travel in a timely manner, we cannot do anything about prevailing traffic conditions or the increasing volume of vehicles on the roads. We will put in comfort stops en route, including stopping for a light meal when appropriate, which will be when travelling over the lunch hour and haven't provided a packed lunch as we can do for trips from St Dunstan's Ovingdean. We can always stop at a shop on the way home so that you can buy the milk and other essentials you need before getting into the house.

Dick Lake, Ovingdean Manager

#### SEATING IN THE DINING ROOM

PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU: The dining room is often very busy these days, especially during popular theme weeks. Despite this, we have always tried to be flexible about where people sit but, on some occasions, this relaxed approach has led to an element of confusion as to where users of the dining room should be as well an element of competition for particular tables. Occasionally, because guests have seated themselves inappropriately, other people have had to wait for a spare place on the round tables at the top end of the room or couples have had sit separately even at breakfast time.

The type of booking that you make when you come to St Dunstan's Ovingdean

(Holiday, Training or Respite Care) and thus the amount of support that we give you, will dictate where you will be invited to sit for your meals. This is the usual state of affairs during stays at Ovingdean:

The far end of the room on the round tables served by PBK: Those who do not require our support, eg holiday makers, permanent residents with visitors, trainees or respite care visitors with spouses or carers.

Rectangular tables, served by the Residential Care Staff, seat permanent residents (unless with visitors), unaccompanied trainees and respite care visitors.

The rectangular tables adjacent to the entrance of the Dining Room are normally reserved for wheelchair users regardless of the category of stay that they are in and whether or not they are accompanied.

We are in the process of introducing a new computerised booking system which will enable the dining room staff to plan and book seating in advance of your arrival using the principles outlined above. Where individuals state a preference, for example unaccompanied visitors or groups of St Dunstaners wishing to sit together at round tables or join others already there, we will try and facilitate this unless space dictates otherwise if we are requested in advance of coming into St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

On getting to the dining room, it may appear that a table other than the one allocated to you is free and preferable, but

its places may already be designated for another diner so, please, check with dining room supervisory staff before you take it. They will do their best to try and sit you where you would like to be seated for the duration of your stay but, I stress, only if space permits. Table hopping between meals or over the days of your visit would make it almost impossible for us to give you a consistent service including providing the meal that you actually ordered!

Dick Lake, Ovingdean Manager

#### MARILYN BAKER CONCERT

GOSPEL SINGER AT ST DUNSTAN'S
OVINGDEAN: Marilyn Baker, the blind
gospel singer and Premier Radio presenter
is performing a free concert at St Dunstan's
Ovingdean on the evening of Friday 14
March. Any local St Dunstaners or Gubbay
Trust Beneficiary who would like to attend
should obtain a ticket from Activities
Coordinator Lyn Mullins.

#### GOLF DATE CHANGES

WILDWOOD INVITATION DAY MOVES
BACK A WEEK: The St Dunstan's Golf Club
Invitation Day scheduled for 15 June at
Wildwood Golf Club will now be held on 22
June. Contact Secretary Les Trout on 01989
763011 any evening after 19:00. Please
leave a message with name and contact
telephone number if there is no reply.

#### TROOPING THE COLOUR

DRAW ON TICKET ALLOCATION: Trooping the Colour will take place on 14 June. It is possible that St Dunstan's will be allocated tickets. Any St Dunstaner or Gubbay Trust Beneficiary wishing to go should send their name and address to Lisa Coyle, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 30 May. A draw will determine the final allocation of tickets. Those attending will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses.

#### RAF NEWSLETTERS ON CD

NIGHTJAR AND HEREWARD: There is the possibility of putting the following two RAF News magazines on CD if there is sufficient demand. Both are published twice a year.

The first, Nightjar, is the newsletter of No 241 (FMS) Squadron Association, while Hereward is the newsletter of No11 (AC) Squadron Association.

Will anyone interested in receiving these items please contact either Ray Hazan or Simon Rogers at St Dunstan's Headquarters.

#### SAPPER ON TAPE

ROYAL ENGINEERS MAGAZINE: Sapper Magazine is available on audio tape. Contact Simon Rogers at St Dunstan's on 020 7723 5021 if you would like to receive a copy.

#### AWARD WINNING MAGAZINE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CLOSES

LAST SOUNDINGS AT END OF MARCH: Soundings Magazine and its associated online support services for visually impaired people will close at the end of March. For nearly two decades, Roland Myers, John Henty and other members of the Soundings team have offered impartial and relevant information for blind and partially-sighted people in the United Kingdom in audio format. The magazine was entirely funded by voluntary donation and had recently won the National Federation of the Blind's Paul Otten Memorial Award for best audio publication for blind and partially sighted people.

#### INFOSOUND NOW ONLINE

INFORMATION ABOUT LIVING WITH SIGHT LOSS: A new audio bulletin offering free and relevant information to visually impaired people across the UK is now available on the internet. Infosound aims to help those who live with sight loss to be better informed about help, advice, products and services available to them.

"We can enable those who offer support to get their message out and, just as importantly, we want to encourage those who live with sight loss to share their own experiences, knowledge and ideas," they said. "We are a strictly impartial and noncommercial free public service."

Infosound is currently an online-only service and individual blind and partiallysighted people, as well as their families and friends, can access current and credible information from this website. Bulletins, roughly 15 minutes in length, will be posted monthly for download or playback on Windows Media Player.

The service, which succeeds Soundings, can be found on www.infosound.org.uk and the organisers welcome feedback.

#### NEW BADGE HONOURS THE LAND GIRLS AND LUMBER JILLS

COMMEMORATING THE LADIES WHO FED THE NATION: The tremendous efforts of the Women's Land Army and Women's Timber Corps is hailed by a specially designed badge commemorating their service and acknowledging the debt that the country owes to them. Members of the Women's Land Army and Women's Timber Corps who served during either the First or Second World Wars are eligible to apply.

Badges will be awarded to surviving members but not to spouses or families of deceased members, except where death has occurred after 6 December 2007. The scheme is administered by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Applicants will need to supply their date of birth, approximate dates of service in the Women's Land Army or Women's

Timber Corps, and the location at which they were stationed. A form can be obtained online at www.defra.gov.uk/ farm/working/wla, by writing to Defra, 5E, Millbank, c/o 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. E-mail womenslandarmy @defra.gsi.gov.uk or telephone the Defra Helpline on 08459 335577.

The badge is being specially designed by the Garter King of Arms and will bear the Royal Crown. A copy of the design will be put on the website. Currently, there is no exact date for when the badges will be available, but Defra hope some will be ready for summer presentations.

The Women's Land Army (WLA), colloquially known as the Land Girls, was formed at the outbreak of World War II to work on the land, freeing male workers to go to war. By 1943, there were some 80,000 young women working in every aspect of agriculture to feed the nation. With their uniform of green ties and jumpers and brown felt slouch hats, they worked from dawn to dusk each day, milking cows, digging ditches, sowing seeds and harvesting crops.

The Women's Timber Corps (WTC), also known as the Lumber Jills worked tirelessly in the forests to provide timber for the war effort, felling trees, sawing timber and sharpening saws.

With the restoration of peace, the WLA remained in existence doing vital jobs on the land until demobilisation was complete.

### OVER 60s AND DISABLED BUS PASS EXTENDED ACROSS ENGLAND

FREE OFF-PEAK BUS TRAVEL ANYWHERE IN ENGLAND: Residents of England aged 60 plus and eligible disabled people will be granted free off-peak local bus travel anywhere in England from 1 April. Off-peak is 9.30am to 11pm on weekdays and anytime on weekends and Bank Holidays.

The England bus concession covers free off-peak local bus travel in England for people aged 60 and over and eligible disabled people. It does not cover national coach travel or other modes of transport. However, individual Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs), usually the local council, are able to extend the travel benefits (such as tubes, trams, trains and all day travel) at their own discretion. These additional benefits are funded by the relevant authority and so are likely to be available only to people living in that area.

Outside London, eligible concessionaires will need to replace their existing local bus passes with new England-wide passes. These will be issued by their local authority. Some will be upgrading passes automatically - so if they've already contacted you to advise that you fall into that category, you won't need to do anything.

Other local authorities have already written to their residents asking them to return application forms. If you've received one, make sure you return it promptly to ensure

you receive your new pass in good time. As part of the application you will also need to:

- prove your eligibility
- prove that you're a permanent resident of your area
- supply a recent passport-style photograph for your new pass

As a consequence, some local authorities may be withdrawing token or voucher schemes that subsidised taxi or minicab travel in rural areas. Again, check with your local authority to find out their arrangements.

In London, concessionaires will not get a new pass. Instead, their existing Freedom Pass will be re-stickered with the England concessionary logo in order to show eligibility for the England wide bus concession. London concessionaires will continue to enjoy the same benefits as they currently do when travelling within London. When travelling in England outside London their pass will be valid only for off-peak local bus travel. Concessionary pass holders from outside London would, when in London, enjoy free travel only on buses.

Similar schemes have operated in Scotland since last year and in Wales since 2002. Residents in border areas are advised to check with their local authority to find out if any reciprocal arrangements have been established. In Northern Ireland free bus and train travel is available to people over 65 who are resident for over three months. They will also be allowed

free travel within the Republic of Ireland. The travel concession is also available to registered blind people and holders of a war disablement pension under 65 years of age. However, while they can travel free point-to-point across the border, Northern Ireland blind and war pensioner concessionaires are not entitled to free travel within the Republic of Ireland.

#### RECOGNISE A STROKE FAST

PROMPT ACTION CAN BE A LIFE SAVER: With over 150,000 people in the UK having a stroke every year, the Stroke Association say it is imperative that people can recognise a stroke when it's happening and take prompt action. A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when the blood supply to the brain is disrupted. Most strokes occur when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain. Some strokes are caused by bleeding in or around the brain from a burst blood vessel.

To help people recognise the symptoms of stroke quickly, The Stroke Association has developed FAST - the Face Arm Speech Test - which is used by paramedics to diagnose stroke prior to a person being admitted to hospital. By diagnosing the possibility of stroke before reaching hospital, it is possible for appropriate referral to a stroke unit to be made as quickly as possible.

FAST requires an assessment of three specific symptoms of stroke.

Facial weakness - can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

Arm weakness - can the person raise both arms?

Speech problems - can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

Test all three symptoms.

If the person has failed any one of these tests, call 999. Stroke is a medical emergency and by calling 999 you can help someone reach hospital quickly and receive the early treatment they need. Prompt action can prevent further damage to the brain and help someone make a full recovery. Delay can result in death or major long-term disabilities, such as paralysis, severe memory loss and communication problems. A Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA), sometimes called a mini-stroke, is similar to a full stroke but the symptoms may only last a few minutes and will have completely gone within 24 hours. Don't ignore it. It could lead to a major stroke. See your GP as soon as possible and ask to be referred to a specialist stroke service. This should happen within seven days.

#### DAB HAND FOR FORCES RADIO

DIGITAL LINK FOR BFBS: British Forces
Broadcasting Service (BFBS)is now available
as a digital radio service across the UK
mainland. BFBS Radio can now be heard
on-air in Great Britain via DAB (Digital
Audio Broadcasting) Digital Radio. BFBS
Radio has been broadcasting since 1943.

### MOBILE SIGHT LOSS INFORMAITON SERVICE

IMPARTIAL ADVICE: Action for Blind
People's three mobile information units
will be visiting venues across the UK during
March. The units offer a wide selection of
daily living aids to try, including talking
clocks, watches and assistive technology,
as well as free and impartial information
about local and national services.

March stops include Oxfordshire at the invitation of the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind on 4-6 March. The location is still to be confirmed.

Another unit will be visiting
Northumberland at the invitation of
Northumberland Blind Association on
4 March. It will be located on Wentworth
Car Park, Alemouth Road Hexham NE46
3NP between 10am-12noon.

Also on 4 March, but between 14:00-16:00hrs, the Mobile will be at Haltwhisltle War Memorial Hospital Car Park, Westgate, Haltwhistle NE49 9AJ.

On 5 March between 10:00-16:00 hours, it will be at at Northumberland County Blind Association, Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth NE61 1TD.

On 6 March it will move on to Market Place, Alnwick between 10am and 12 noon and then between 14:00-16:00 it will be at Castle Gate Car Park, Berwick. It will also be visiting Tameside at the invitation of the Tameside Sensory Team, Social Services on 11 March. Between 10:00 and 16:00 it will be at the Tesco Car Park, Trinity Street, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 2BJ.

On 12 March between 10:00-16:00 it moves to the market square (opposite B&M Supermarket) Ashton-Under-Lyne OL5 7RX.

Then on 13 March between 10:00-16:00 it will be at ASDA car park, Greenfield Street, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 1BD.

A visit to the West Midlands between 11-13 March is still to be confirmed, as is a visit to Catford, London on 19 March. For up to the minute details contact 020 7635 4926 or go online at www.actionforblind people.org.uk.

#### SAVETHAT CASSETTE COLLECTION

TRANSFER TO DVD OR CD: Many people have a considerable library of cassettes, which are very important to them. Catch 22 Media provides a copying service. A cassette can be transferred to DVD or CD in a variety of formats, or sent by e-mail as an MP3 file. The sound is "cleaned up" during the transfer, removing unwanted pops, crackles or hiss. Just one cassette will cost £15, but this rate reduces as numbers rise. Please contact Bobby Cole at Catch 22 Media to discuss formats and to obtain a quotation. Telephone 020 8571 1197 or call his mobile 07982 252765.

E-mail: info@catch22media.co.uk. Website: www.catch22media.co.uk.

### RACING SIGHT OPENS SPOTLIGHT ON THE SPORT OF KINGS

TIPS, FIXTURES AND NEWS FROM THE TRACK: A comprehensive guide to horse racing is being set up online by St Dunstaner Edd Francis. Daily racing tips, racing fixtures and ante post betting are all covered at www.racingsight.co.uk. The website is visually impaired friendly

#### RUNNYMEDE RIVER TRIP

NAME WILL BE DRAWN FROM HAT: The Not Forgotten Association organise various activities throughout the country for the disabled ex-service community. They have offered two St Dunstaners (with their escorts) a river trip from Runnymede, Berkshire on Wednesday, 14 May 2008, with a buffet lunch and tea and biscuits. The New Queen of The Thames departs from Runnymede Landing Stage at 12:00 noon, returning at 15:30 approximately.

The Not Forgotten Association do not provide transport, and therefore the St Dunstaner and escort must be able to make their own arrangements in this respect. On 24 March names will be drawn from a hat and those selected will be informed.

If you are interested in this trip, then please contact Barbara Sweeney at St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD, telephone 020 7616 7922 or e-mail barbara.sweeney@st-dunstans.org.uk.

#### SAIL AWAY WITH GWENNILI TRUST

SAILING PROGRAMME FOR DISABLED: We have recently been sent details of the 2008 sailing programme being offered by the Gwennili Trust.

The trust exists to provide relief to the disabled (ex-service personnel are among their core client base) through the provision of nautical, recreational and educational facilities on specially chartered yachts, or any similar vessel or training facility.

Among the programmes on offer are:

- 10 individual day sails from Port
   Solent on Spirit of Scott Bader which
   has excellent facilities for those that
   are wheelchair bound or have
   limited mobility.
- 2, 3 and 7 day cruises on Outreach II, a conventional yacht suitable for the more active disabled.
- Training opportunities for Competent Crew, Day Skipper and Coastal Skipper.

They also run an annual "Blind Week" in Falmouth at the end of June.

For more information, application and booking forms as well as accounts from previous cruises go to their website

– www.gwtrust.org.uk – or have a chat with the Sport & Recreation department at St Dunstan's Ovingdean.

Andrew Seivewright Sport & Recreation Department A selection of your comments drawn from The Editor's postbag

# Letters

Letters to The Editor are always welcome. Write to St Dunstan's Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. E-mail ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk.

#### LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### Fantastic time in Italy

I have just returned from the skiing trip in Italy, and as one of the new boys on the block I must take this opportunity of thanking every one concerned for the fantastic week we all had.

Apart from some luggage being left at Birmingham airport, we all arrived safe and sound at the resort. We could not have asked for a better weather as we only had one day with a cold wind. Other than that, the sun shone on us most of the time.

Like all good things, they come to an end so quickly. But the memory of my first time on a pair of skis will remain with me for ever.

Thanks to St Dunstaner Gerry Jones and all the fantastic guides I could never have achieved the excitement of skiing down a piste in Italy with just the little bit of sight I have remaining.

I now look forward to next



John, Vicky, Vince, Gerry and John Gasston on the piste.

year when we can all meet up again and improve on our new found skills, and maybe have a little drink in the evening!

John Taylor,

#### Thank you for fixing my sick computer

I would like to publicly thank the staff of the IT department at St Dunstan's Ovingdean for their recent unstinting help to fix my sick computer. I realised how much I have grown to rely

upon it when it was being difficult recently. It is such a large part of my life.

Within a day or two, Teresa, Mike and other members Findon, West Sussex of staff at St Dunstan's Ovingdean had fixed the problem and also given me defence against viral invasion, which I didn't have before and was lucky not to have been mortally wounded!

Thank you all.

Alan Wortley, Eastbourne, East Sussex

#### A vision to run

I lost my sight just over four years ago, a devastating experience, which left me very down and not wanting to do anything, I piled on five stone in weight and got up to a size 22. With the help of Kim at Leyland WeightWatchers, and the three charities which have helped me through sight loss, I conquered my own mountain. I lost weight and regained my independence. I went from a size 22 to a size 12 in 14 months, so I have decided to do the London Marathon to raise money for the three charities which helped me through my sight loss and to raise money to help and say a big thank you to them.

> Maria Pikulski, Preston, Lancashire

Anyone wishing to support Maria on her run for St Dunstan's can do so online at www.justgiving.com/ mariapikulski.

#### Audio appreciation

I am writing on behalf of the Library at 4Sight in Bognor Regis. Recently someone from St Dunstan's has sent us four very large boxes of audio books. We want to say a very big thank you to you, it was very kind and we really appreciate them and they are now out in our library being issued to our members who appreciate this service so much.

> Carol Green (Mrs) Volunteer Librarian, 4Sight

### Ten questions on...

#### Take your pick!

Harry Beevers is in a mischevious mood

- On what date does St. David's Day fall, 1 March or 24 May?
- Which queen of England acceded to the throne at the age of 25, Queen Elizabeth I or Queen Elizabeth II?
- What is a bongo, an African antelope or a small drum?
- In the film Iris released in the year 2002 who plays the title role, Kate Winslett or Judy Dench?
- At which sport did the West Indian Viv Richards play at international level, cricket or association football?
- Which political party did Winston Churchill represent as an MP, Liberal or Conservative?
- Who was dropped from the England test cricket team in the 1960's for scoring a century "too slowly", Ken Barrington of Surrey or Geoffrey Boycott of Yorkshire?
- Which actor played James Bond on seven occasions, Sean Connery or Roger Moore?
- When in 1917 did Russia's October Revolution begin, October or November?
- 10) Who shot the outlaw Billy the Kid in 1881, Pat Garrett or Lesley Garrett?

Answers can be found on page 32.

# Balancing the Books

#### Ted Bunting finds mystery protagonist in the penalty zone

#### No Return Ticket

Author: Martin Russell Reader: John Richmond. Catalogue No: 123 Duration: 6 hours, 45 minutes

When Bill Mason awoke (or perhaps I should say "came to") the time was approaching midnight and he found himself alone in a railway carriage thundering through the night. In his wallet was a solitary tenshilling note but in his briefcase, under a packet of sandwiches, was seven thousand pounds in neat bundles. How had it got there? He really doesn't know. How had he got there? And where was he going? Well the last bit is soon answered because

the train hurtles through a tunnel and a few minutes later draws to a halt on a platform of Brighton station. "No return ticket" the title says, but of course Bill has no ticket of any description and has to "borrow" a fiver from the briefcase and pay at the barrier. This seems to annoy the ticket collector as it takes all his change, and he also informs Bill that that the waiting room is unavailable. Initially Bill decided his best plan of action is to wait for morning and the first train back to London. However from the Ladies' Room where he shares his sandwiches with a down and out, he sees the disgruntled ticket collector speaking to a policeman,

so he sneaks out of the station and makes off. Now why he runs away and why the constable chases after him are just two of the hundreds of questions that require an answer in the early chapters? Where, is the room over an Italian restaurant where Bill claims to have spent the rest of the night? And when and by whom were banknotes removed and replaced by newspaper? If you possess an enquiring mind, you will probably do as I did and continue to listen in the hope of arriving at the mystery's solution. You will find one too, of sorts, but this is the longest garden path that I have ever been led down, and no mistake.

### Over 14,000 Talking Books are available

ALL OF THE books reviewed by St Dunstaner Ted Bunting are available through the RNIB's Talking Book Service which provides an extensive range of audio books, paid for by annual subscription and delivered through the

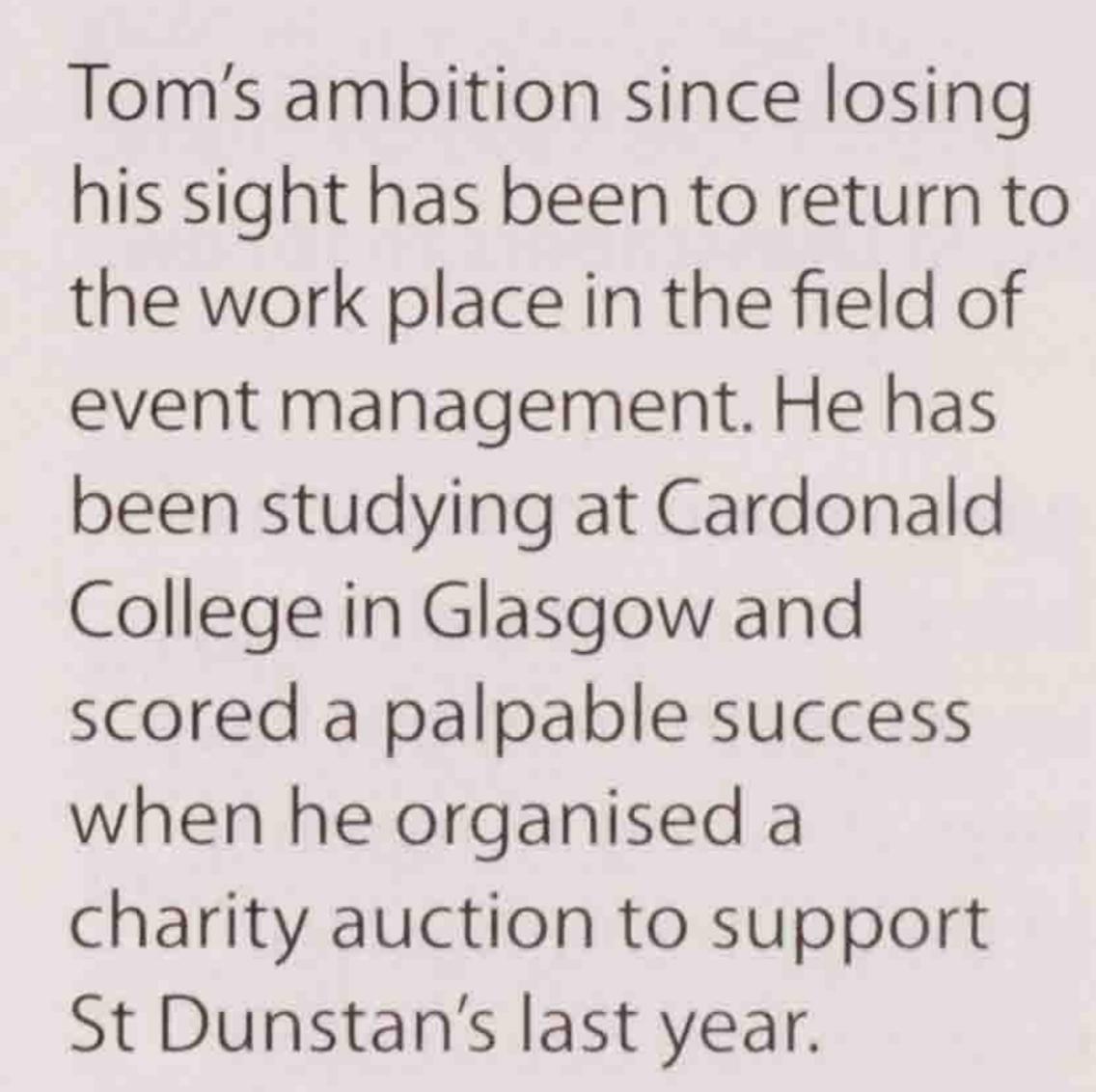
post. Over 14,000 titles are available including classic and popular fiction and nonfiction for all ages. Using DAISY technology it is easy to skip to a new chapter or insert a bookmark, in the same way a print reader

can. DAISY players are lightweight and easy to use with accessible controls. Contact Talking Books on 0845 762 6843 or e-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk to find out more about joining the Talking Book Service.

## Planning corporate events points an eye to Tom's future

LOBAL INVESTMENT Bank Lehman

Brothers provided a St Dunstaner with useful experience for his chosen career in January. Royal Navy St Dunstaner Tom Boal joined the financial giant at their London Docklands office in for a two-week dive-in-the-deepend work placement with their Corporate Events and Corporate Philanthropy departments.



"It really has been an eyeopener," said Tom, aged 36. "There are so many things to think about when running an event." In his first week, Tom was involved with the launch of a publication promoting Lehman Brothers charitable work. In the second week, he his research project.



Tom Boal gained valuable experience from Lehman Bros.

was deployed researching areas where extra support might make a difference to local communities. Some of his enquiries were on an international level. His office computer was enhanced with Zoom, software combining speech

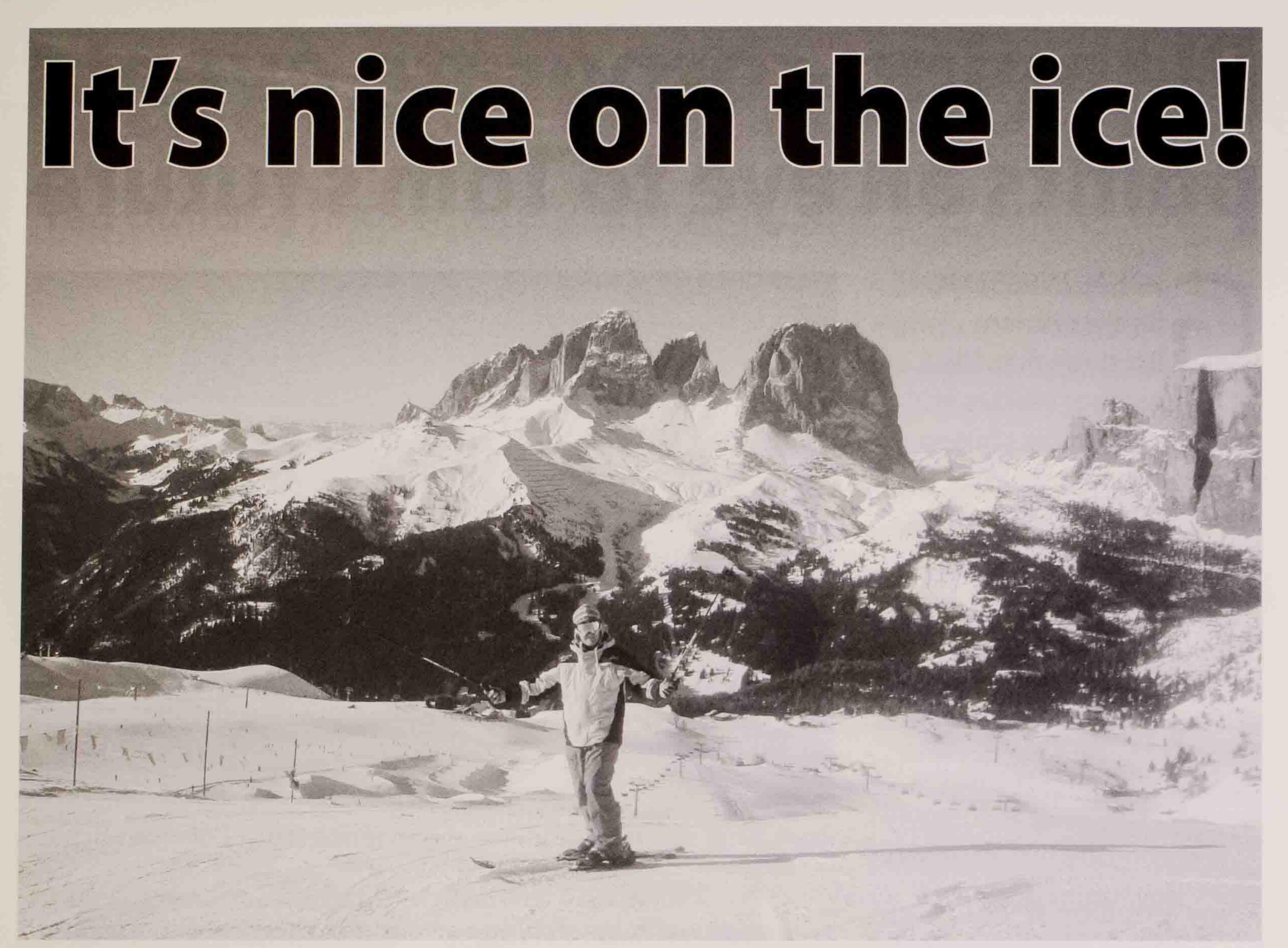


Tom updates Lehman Bros' Melanie on the progress of

and magnification options. Tom finished his placement energised and enthusiastic.

The placement was arranged by St Dunstan's Employment Advisor Dan Green, working closely with Civvy Street, a Forces resettlement initiative led by the British Legion.

"Tom has been enthusiastic and has shown that he can work on his own initiative," said Director of Corporate Philanthropy Melanie Freedman. "He has handled his disability well and has been quick to feedback on things that might be a problem which is good."



Guide Dusty Miller slides backwards on the slopes, encouraging St Dunstaners to follow.

January, the ski party of 31 were sitting down to their first evening meal at El Ciasel, Canazei.
Due to some slick admin the Guides had already organised rooms, skis, boots and, of course, lift passes. All that remained was the first of the Stavely awards and an early night! Well that would have been the sensible thing to do, but of course there was a lot of catching up to do and new St Dunstaners

# Gerry Jones reports on the antics of the latest skiing expedition

John, John and John must have been bewildered by people coming at them from all directions. They actually became known as John, Geordie and Rhodes. New guide Stewart Graham was soon put at his ease, well he gave a good impression of being at his ease, although underneath he might have been thinking all manner of things. His father Neil Graham had been called to Iraq on the previous Monday, had failed to make it back, but finally joined us on Tuesday via Innsbruck and being picked up by Alessandro our Italian military liaison.

Generally the weather was superb and a small group

set off to do the Sella Ronda, some 38km on Tuesday. Sparky insisted that they do it in fine weather unlike the previous year. They started in glorious weather, but by 11am a fierce wind came in with snow showers. They arrived back at 4pm, very cold and although having completed the route seemed a little fed up. This group of Cam, Stewart, Tom and Danny Webster and St Dunstaners Mark, Sparky and Leon did the job in wonderful sunshine on the Thursday, but less Leon who unfortunately had by then broken a rib, achieved whilst tangling himself with a piest pole at the giddy speed of 3mph. All the nasty mishaps seem to happen whilst stationary or travelling slowly on the flat.

All the novice skiers achieved well, making the button lift on the nursery slope at Champac and John Taylor received the old cow bell as the most improved skier. He had struggled all week, walking up the slope 50 yards and skiing down with a definite left hand bent. His guide, Vince Stone, was as determined as he was to succeed and get him up that button drag lift, and was seen on Friday morning

dosing him up with double rations of gluvine! There were several contenders for the Bell, four in total, with Maria being a close runner up, having left the nursery slopes reached the main slopes and skied most of the Red runs.

The skiing conditions were the best we had encountered for many a year and the sun shone every day, how could we possibly not enjoy ourselves? Great skiing, great company, superb banter and constant humour, everyone contributing. By day four there were 24 Staveley nominations, so we were obviously all getting along famously with each other!

We presented the Hotel with Polo shirts with the Ski Club logo and two days later we received in return El Ciasel ski caps. A big thank you to the Hotel for making us so welcome, to Mario the restaurant owner at Champac who made those skiing there so welcome and provided much reduced price food and drink and as a token of gratitude for the past six years we presented him with an xxxl ski jacket and I do mean huge jacket. A big thank you from us all to Martin Blank who organised

the Birmingham flights and transport. It goes without saying that this skiing would not be possible without the massive contribution of our Guides whom we all come to love and trust. Besides guiding they all have that extra quality which is constantly being on the look out for any difficulties and how they can best be overcome.

Mick Shepley with Peter Zamudio sort out which guide goes with whom and Mic also plays a big hand at Gatwick; he also moved extremely quickly and with the help of Louise got the medics involved with Leon on Friday evening when it seemed he might have suffered more than just broken bones. The three of them were moved by ambulance to Cavalasie about 30k distance and reported back regularly. They all reappeared at about 11pm gasping for a drink giving a big thumbs up. Cam also got involved in a big way at both check in desks at the airports. Arthur Bloomfield joined at Brighton and made himself in charge of the ski jackets and distribution at Canazei. Dusty Miller took care of the Staveley hat for a year



A St Dunstaner improvises on methods of descent.

and had a good time skiing around with Rhodes. Eddie introduced us to a relative, Simon, who resides 6k from the village, speaks fluent Italian and is a ski instructor in both Italy and France, a very useful contact; he also took Eddie off for a morning of extreme skiing which sounded horrific.

Vicky was once again with us and will not have any St Dunstaner beat her and she also kept an eye on our young ladies whilst out gallivanting at nights. Tom's forte was organising Spoof in a manner which bore some resemblance to Peter Sellers doing his Major Bloodnok and instructing

family and friends after
Leon got himself sidelined.
Stewart was thrown in at
the deep end with Mark and
survived (even at Spoof)!

St Dunstan's play their part, for without the support we could not get the guides in situ, so a big thanks for that most essential contribution. Our thanks also go to Babs and Brian Druce for their generous friendship. We parted with a drink to absent friends and hope to see them back again next year.

The dates for next year are 17-24 January, all interested should contact Ray Hazan or Gerry Jones by 1 April 2008 with a deposit of £150.

St Dunstaner John Gasston (John Rhodie to his fellow skiers) reveals his feelings about his first experience of skiing.

AVING CAREFULLY avoided most forms of strenuous exercise for over 35 years, my wife's suggestion that I might consider going on the St Dunstan's Skiing trip filled me with apprehension. However, I decided that since I had started going to St Dunstan's Ovingdean once a week, I could use my time in the Gym to get my flabby bits back into working order. So it was, the gym staff saw to it that I did more than just "posing" there and by Christmas I was in better shape.

Skiing in the Dolomites was also a quantum leap from my normal comfort zone of home and familiar surroundings. Who would look after me, would I like the food (not a Pasta eater normally), what would I wear, would it be very cold? All sorts of silly scenarios popped into my head and my apprehension grew as the departure date approached.

In the event, we met up at Gatwick with those from

the southern part of the country and right from the off, the guides and helpers steered us through all the formalities and onto the plane. The cabin staff were very considerate and helped when needed. At Marco Polo Airport, Venice, the guides made sure we were reunited with our bags and saw them and us onto the coach to Canazei. The three hour transfer was comfortable and uneventful, some of the hairpin bends were very "hairy" with precipitous drops and lots of snow lying at the roadside.

We debussed right on schedule, stowed our kit in our rooms and with our allocated guides went out in the afternoon to collect skis and boots etc.

After that it was a question of settling into a rough routine as regards, meal times and getting booted up etc. I had the pleasure of having "Dusty" Miller as my guide and as a bonus was often accompanied by his charming fiancée, Vanessa. We all got along famously.

Sunday saw us on the nursery slope and after some preliminary instruction; I was introduced

to the Button Lift. This I promptly managed to fall off and cracked a rib into the bargain, not an auspicious start! I mastered the button lift quite quickly but parting with it at the top and going into an immediate snowplough stop took a bit longer. It's rather like exiting a Travelator or Escalator

The next hang-up was traversing the width of the slope near the top which together with an adverse camber, conspired to put the frighteners on me and was the scene of several undignified pile-ups. You name it, I fell on it, head, shoulder, both arms, ribs (again – ouch), bum, skinned my arm with my watch strap and simultaneously sprained the pinky on that side. On the brighter side, I did manage to spread these events over six days.

Traversing the slope lower down was much less painful and taking regular refreshments, gluvines, Cokes, soup and chips and meeting up with like minded St Dunstaners and their guides went on all day, every day.

The button lift was mastered completely and I used it successfully up to

eight times a day, gradually learning to relax, lean back and enjoy it, only tensing for the last 3-2-1 NOW! bit at the drop-off.

On the final day, I managed to ski from top to bottom of the nursery slope, without stopping (or falling off) whilst being continuously videoed by Dusty. Who says men can't multi-task? He was skiing, giving instructions and directions and filming all at once! Well done Dusty.

The conditions all week were superb only a brief snow flurry one day and very little in the way of wind at all. No snow fell at night and the temperatures were never extreme.

The hotel provided the most fabulous food with a wide choice of dishes and more than adequate portions. The service both in the dining room and in the bar was first class. The girls tried their hardest to understand our requirements and usually got it right in the end. Their English was better by far than my Italian. Even the chambermaids went out of their way to guide us past cleaning trolleys and other obstacles in the corridors.



St Dunstaner John Gasston makes the most of a new experience as he finds his ski legs.



Annie and Leah shadow Maria on the slopes.

Most of the après ski socialising was in the hotel bar, where we would gather after supper for the nightly ritual of awarding the Staveley hat amongst much ribald comment and raucous laughter. People then got down to the serious business of bonding and recounting their personal experiences both on and off Piste, often into the small hours.

After a 05:00hrs alarm call on the last day, there was a quick bite to eat and

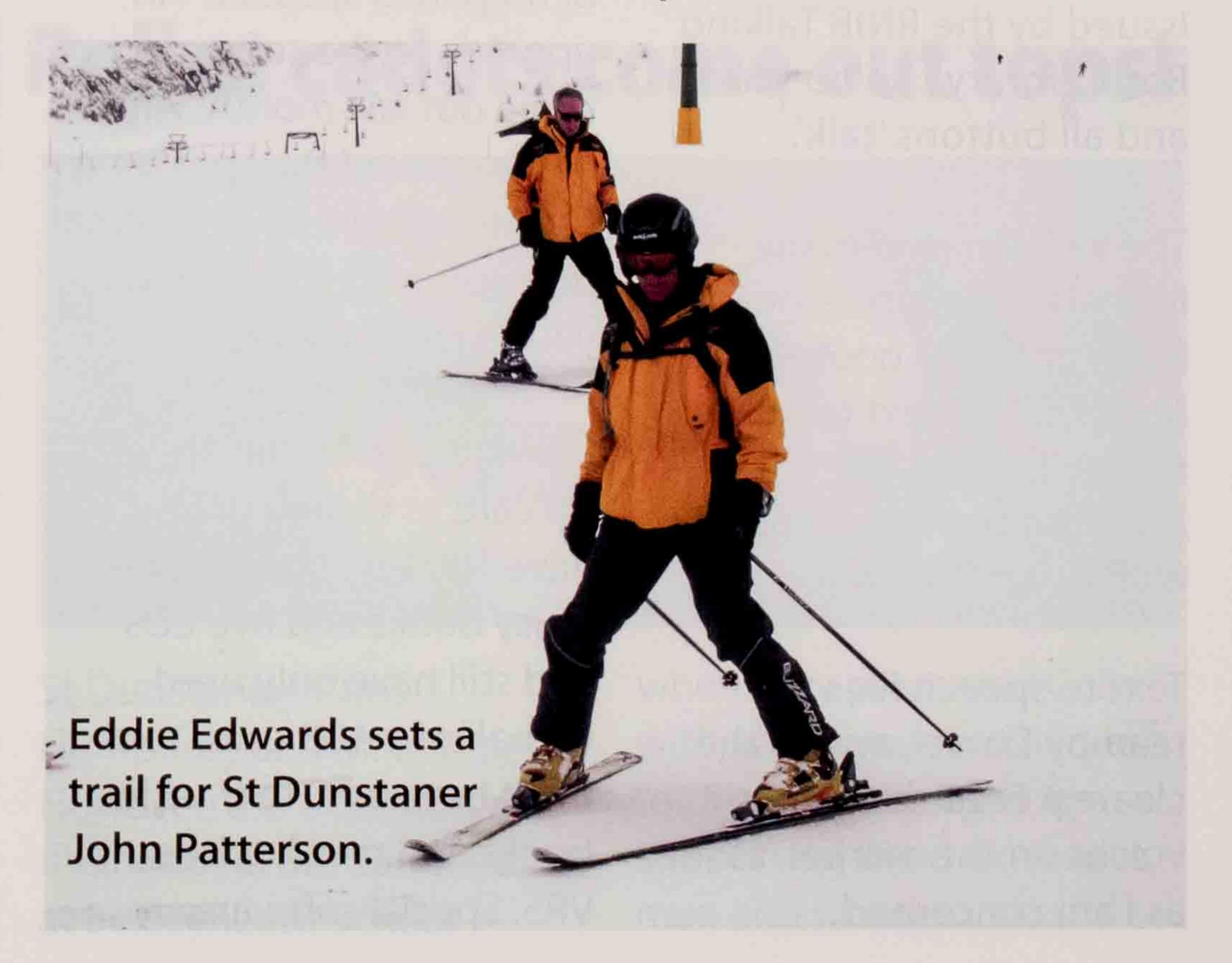
then onto the coaches for Venice and Bolzano. No long goodbyes as we had to be on the road by 06:00 hrs – latest at least for the Venice flight. It was minus four degrees centigrade at the hotel and as low as minus ten along the way. A slight delay at checkin resulted in a later takeoff but after a very smooth flight, landed at Gatwick about five minutes late.

We said our farewells and scattered in all different directions having made new friends, learnt new skills, made lots of pleasant memories and vowing to come back for more of the same next year, God willing, I know I will.

Special thanks to Gerry and his wife and helpers for all the hard work in organising the event. Also to all the guides for their patience, forbearance and understanding and their willingness to put all St Dunstaners needs before their own. A special thank you to Babs and Brian Druce for their kind generosity; To St Dunstan's for their backing and support in so many ways without which this very successful annual event might never have got off the ground.



The Gang's all here! Guides Martin Blank, Michael Shepley, Peter Zamudio, Mark Edwards, Neil Graham, Vince Stone, Vicky Stewart, Arthur Bloomfield, Thomas Paterson, Dusty Miller, Stewart Graham, Ewen Cameron and other friends with St Dunstaners Mark Brewin, Gerry Jones, Maria Pikulski, Charles Daly, Julia Kane, Leon Haskey, John Patterson, Stephen Sparkes, John Gaston, and John Taylor. They were also joined on piste by Ian Hill, Kelly Daly, Norah Patterson, Michelle Daly, Geoffrey Wherry, Danniell Webster, Annie Jewell, Leah Kate Watts-Green, Vanessa Marquis and Alessandro Sierra.



# All buttons talk on the new Victor Reader Stream

Ray Hazan tries out a new multi-purpose reading device

F YOU ARE looking for a comprehensive talking book and document reader, music player and note taker, all combined in one, then the Victor Reader Stream (VRS) may well satisfy your needs.

The device is a little larger than a packet of cigarettes (some 4 x 3 x 1 inches) and has been specially designed for the visually impaired by Humanware of Canada, makers of one of the Daisy book players issued by the RNIB Talking Book Library. So no screen and all buttons 'talk'.

The VRS can read many formats – human recorded Daisy and MP3 books. It has a built-in text to speech reader, thus txt, html and XML files can also be played with its artificial voice.

Text to speech files are read by Daniel, one of the clearest English synthetic voices on the market, as far as I am concerned.

If anyone has used the Victor
Reader Classic, issued by the
RNIB Talking Book Library,
then they will be already
familiar with the functions
– comprehensive navigation,
bookmarks, time elapsed and
remaining, sleep timer, speed,
tone and volume adjustments
and battery level indicator.
Additionally, there are 'Go To'
and 'Where Am I?' keys.

There is a small speaker on the device, but it is best listened to on headphones or amplified speaker. An upgrade to the software came out last month, which has improved the speaker quality. A built-in or external microphone socket allows you to record notes.

Storage is either on an SD card or thumb drive. I have 100 text books, three Daisy books and five CDs and still have only used up half of a 4GB card! You must have a PC to transfer books and music to the VRS. Special software,

freely downloadable from the Humanware web site, facilitates the copying of Daisy books to your storage medium, though it is not essential. You can copy files to the SD card via Windows Explorer, and ideally a card reader makes the process that much quicker. The User manual is already on the VRS but is also downloadable from the website. Each type of book or file goes into a specific folder on the SD card, so that the VRS can read through these 'bookshelves'. Each book, music track or file name is read out before being played.

The battery is charged in the unit, and a four hour charge will give you some 12-15 hours of play time. The device gives you four levels of battery state: high, medium, low, and very low. Even if the battery discharges completely, stored data is not lost. The device will remember where you were in each book or file and carry on

from there the next time you access the unit.

The VRS comes with a carrying case, belt clip, earphones, mains adapter, connection lead for thumb drive, and connection to PC. Improvements and enhancements to the system are carried out via software upgrades.

The unit feels solid and well built. Keys are well laid out. The '5' key could have more prominent markings, but this could be enhanced by using 'bump-ons' of small size.

The cost is £190, plus £10 postage if purchased from Humanware, or Freepost if from RNIB Customer



Services. Registered disabled purchasers are excused VAT.

It is a neat, compact and comprehensive device which should satisfy all your listening needs. Holidays, journeys by plane, train, bus or car can take on a different meaning! I would contend that the visually impaired now have the march on sighted people. Where else would you have access to

so many different resources

- 'listen again' or recorded
radio and TV programmes,
music, books, newspapers
and magazines – all in one
small portable device?

Humanware UK, Rushden, Northamptonshire can be contacted by telephone on 01933 415 800, by e-mail on eu.info@humanware.com or via their website which is at www.humanware.com

RNIB Customer Services can be telephoned on 07847 023 15 or found online at www. rnib.org.uk/shop.

In a future issue, we shall describe the VIPlayer, a similar device, incorporating an FM radio as well.

### Underground Police cadets come out tops!

Cadets had a welcome surprise for St Dunstaner Colin Williamson when he presented them with certificates of achievement on 24 January. Last year, the cadets had tackled a treasure hunt style challenge travelling a half-marathon distance station-to-station on London Underground's tube network. They were accompanied by



St Dunstaners Chris
Humphrey and Mike Tetley.
However, the true fruits of
their endeavour surfaced
at Bexleyheath School

when they presented Colin with an impressive cheque for £1,000 to be used in supporting blind ex-service men and women.

## Archers get back in the game

#### Patrick Sidnell reports on the latest blind archery week

HE FIRST ARCHERY
week of 2008 started
on 23 January when we
set up in the McKinley Sports
Hall where equipment was
checked and adjusted.

Sunday was used as a coaching day, and it also gave those archers who do not get the opportunity to shoot very often the chance to get back into it.

Monday started with the club members shooting for the Longhill Trophy
Overall positions were:

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding2nd David Poyner3rd Ron Jones

#### **B1**

1st Peter Hammond2nd Clive Jones

#### Tactile

1st David Poyner 2nd Patrick Sidnell

#### Bowsight

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding

Monday evening, we were visited for the first time by

Archery Club, who were captained by Rob King, a long time friend of Clickers Archery and of St Dunstan's Archery Club. Graham Harris and Kieran Carr turned up from Norwich to surprise and catch up with Rob as they have not seen each other for a few years. A Portsmouth round was shot and the results are below:-

Southampton University Archery Club 5866 St Dunstan's 5799

Southampton Archery Club won by 67 points. Congratulations!

It was good to make some new friends who enjoyed the shooting as much as we did; they enjoyed it so much they have asked if they can return in the summer to shoot against us outdoors.

Tuesday the Club match was a Portsmouth round:Overall positions were:

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding2nd Peter Hammond3rd Patrick Sidnell

#### **B**1

1st Peter Hammond 2nd Clive Jones

#### Tactile

1st Patrick Sidnell 2nd David Poyner

#### Bowsight

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding

Wednesday's match was a FITA 18. Overall positions were:

#### Equal 1st

Keith Lanchester-Harding
Eileen Thompson
3rd Peter Hammond

In the evening Ditchling Archery Club visited and the round was a FITA 18:

Ditchling 5811
St Dunstan's 5845

A win for St Dunstan's by 34 points. Well done St Dunstan's Team, each time the score gets closer we will have to improve before our next match against them at the outdoor shoot.

Thursday, the St Dunstan's Club shot for the Laurie Austin Trophy.

FITA 18: Overall positions were:

1st Clive Jones2nd Keith Lanchester-Harding3rd Eileen Thompson

#### 31

1st Peter Hammond 2nd Clive Jones

#### Tactile

1st David Poyner 2nd Patrick Sidnell

#### Bowsight

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding

Friday morning was Norman Perry's shoot for those archers with a handicap of below 70 from the past 12 months.

FITA 25: Overall positions were:

1st Keith Lanchester-Harding2nd Norman Perry.3rd David Poyner.

Friday afternoon we welcomed the Club President Major(Rtd) Wendy Le Gassik, MBE who chaired the Clubs AGM in the Winter Gardens.

Wendy welcomed Eileen Thompson to the Club.

Last year's committee was voted in again. They would like to take this opportunity to thank the Membership for yet again having the confidence in the committee.

The committee members are:
David Poyner Chairman
Clive Jones Vice-Chairman
Nigel Whitely
Patrick Sidnell
Keith Lanchester-Harding
Peter Hammond

All the members were pleased to see Doug Rogers back on his feet after his long illness. A kit model ship had been sent to Doug from the Club after his operation.

Doug presented the finished article, which he had built during his recovery, to the Club as a token of his appreciation.

In the evening the Club's President acted as Lady Paramount to present the medals and trophies.

The Gaygan Gold (for scoring the most gold's over the past 12 months) was awarded to Steve Moseley.

Tactile Gold's Trophy was awarded to Peter Hammond.

The Longhill Trophy was awarded to Keith Lanchester-Harding.

The Laurie Austin Trophy was awarded to Clive Jones.

The Handicap Medal (for the highest reduction in handicap over the past 12 month's) was awarded to Keith Lanchester-Harding. Wendy then presented
Spotter's certificates to
Wendy Jefferson and Ron
Price. To obtain these
certificates each had to
spend a great deal of their
own time training. We
welcome them to the team,
well done to both.

Saturday we were pleased to welcome Hellingly Archery Club. The match was a FITA 25.

Hellingly 5739
St Dunstan's 5832

A win for St Dunstan's by 102 points, well done team.

Keith shot extremely well during the week reducing his handicap by 30 points. I think there will be some worried bowsight archers at the outdoor shoot.

Well done also to Clive, Eileen and the entire team of archer's for raising the shooting standard's during the week.

But the biggest thanks must go to our coaches, spotter's, scorer, equipment officer, range captain and all those who gave up their free time to make the week once again great. Without the hard work and time given by them the shoots would not be able to take place. Thank you all.



### Henry promotes Gad's Hill cadets

PUPILS AT GAD'S HILL SCHOOL in Higham, Kent saw members of their Combined Cadet Force receive their stripes from a founding member of the Royal Air Force. St Dunstaner Henry Allingham visited the school on 21 January and spent a couple of hours telling classes of his time in the Royal Naval Air Service and RAF as well as presenting promotions to a handful or the cadets. As ever, he offered sage advice. "Learning is the key to everything, said Henry. "I have always wanted to learn and if there was something I didn't understand I went out and found out how to understand it, you must learn, learn, learn and always do what your Mum tells you."

### Delivery service is a winner!

by Jax Whiteley

it takes to get a bunch of youngsters motivated and moving in December. No, not the hope of goodies from Santa, but the desire to help other people.

Youngsters between the ages of 10 and 14, all members of the Horsted Keynes Crew volunteered to deliver Christmas cards round their village to raise funds for St Dunstan's.

We were pleased to be invited to collect the



The Horstead Keynes Crew present Nigel Whiteley with a very special delivery for blind ex-Service men and women.

donation on behalf of St Dunstan's on 30 January.

However, we were made more than welcome, and the boys and girls listened while Nigel told them a little bit about the charity.
With the card delivery service and a raffle, they managed to raise £100 for St Dunstan's. Well done!

# Calling last ship from Battle of Atlantic back to Liverpool

St Dunstaner Vic Wainwright explains why U-boat hunting HMS Whimbrel deserves her place in maritime history

received an invitation from the Duke of
Westminster to attend the launching of a fundraising event at Liverpool. Arriving at the station along with seven other shipmates, I was met by the organisers and taken to a hotel. In the evening we were taken to the Athenium Club for a first-class dinner after which we returned to the hotel for a nightcap and a good night's sleep.

Next day, we were transported to HMS Eaglet RN shore base. Rig of the day was blue blazers and medals had to be worn. We were ushered into the Officer's Mess where we were bombarded by the press, BBC NW news and several local dignitaries including the Mayor of Liverpool also Vice Admiral Michael Gretton who is chairman of the project. We were treated like royalty and it was all rather overwhelming. Once again we were fed and watered



Vic Wainwright and Vice Admiral Michael Gretton at the launch of a campaign to bring HMS Whimbrel back to the UK.

before leaving and we arrived home later that evening in the South-east Asia area feeling tired but good.

1946 at Brisbane. We stayed in the South-east Asia area and carried out various

To explain the purpose of the event, we all served at varying times on a sloop HMS Whimbrel. When the Pacific war ended I left the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious and eventually joined Whimbrel in January

in the South-east Asia area and carried out various duties before returning to UK towards the end of the year. In 1949 Whimbrel was sold to the Egyptian navy up until a few years ago when she finally became redundant. Since then every effort has been made to have the ship returned to

the UK as she is the only Black Swan class sloop still afloat. To this end money has already been donated by the Duke of Westminster, Liverpool City Council and many others. It is proposed that Whimbrel will return to Liverpool and be berthed in Canning Dock as a permanent memorial to The Battle of the Atlantic where she served under the command of the famous Captain Johnnie Walker as part of his hunterkiller flotilla. Significantly, she was also one of the representatives of the British Pacific Fleet at the surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay in September 1945.

After being spruced up Whimbrel will be opened to the public and to make this all possible £2,000,000 will be needed. Meanwhile, we ex-crew members who are still left hope that HMS Whimbrel will return home and that we will be able to travel once again to Liverpool and walk the decks of the old ship once more, though I fear with less agility than before and maybe needing just a little assistance here and there.

The campaign can be followed at www.hmswhimbrel.org.

### ASK ROD

Your questions and queries answered by the ROVI (Rehabilitation Officer for the Visually Impaired) on Duty Tel: 01273 391447

E-mail: rovionduty@st-dunstans.org.uk

#### Getting on with Gardening

The new, expanded edition of Getting on with Gardening is now available. Based on the book Gardening without Sight by Kathleen Fleet, it contains ideas and contributions from many blind and partially sighted gardeners. It is interspersed with top tips from experienced gardeners, many of whom are members of the National Blind Gardeners' Club.

Volume 1 is an introduction, whilst Volume 2 covers taking cuttings, container growing, gardening outside, growing under cover, pruning, lawn care and pests and diseases. Copies are available in a variety of formats from Thrive, a national charity that makes use of gardening to change the lives of people with disabilities. Thrive can be contacted by ringing 0118 988 5688, or by e-mailing info@thrive. org.uk. Their address is The

Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading RG7 2AT.

The National Blind Gardeners'
Club, which supports blind
and partially sighted people
who want to take up or
continue gardening, runs
road shows and residential
courses, and provides a
quarterly magazine, access
to a specialist gardening
library and a range of
booklets. Contact Thrive for
details of how to join.

Don't forget St Dunstan's annual Gardening Week at Ovingdean, which in 2008 runs from 1-7 June. It provides the opportunity to visit local gardens, attend practical gardening sessions, pick up advice and information and take part in a poetry competition and other gardening themed activities. Contact Lyn Mullins at St Dunstan's Ovingdean for further details or book a place through Jackie Castle.

## Welcome to St Dunstan's

Philip Baldwin of Hove, East Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1950.

Dennis Barrow of New Cross Gate, London served in the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) from 1939 to 1946.

Raymond Beer of Crawley, West Sussex served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Ordnance Corps between 1946 and 1948.

#### Corporal Simon Brown

of Morley, Leeds, West Yorkshire joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1997.

Michael Bruton of Berkeley, Gloucestershire served in the General Service Corps, the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment, Devonshire Regiment, and the York & Lancaster Regiment between 1942 and 1947.

Edward Butcher of Wimbledon, London served in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1947.

Mark Canning of Hoxene, Eye, Suffolk served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1984 to 1985.

Ernest Cook of Banstead, Surrey served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

Jack Cottam of Leigh,
Lancashire served as
Sergeant in the Royal Air
Force from 1941 to 1946.
Gerald Crossin of Luton,
Bedfordshire served as
Aircraftman II in the Royal
Air Force from 1944 to 1948.

#### **Doris Cutler** of

Berkhampsted,
Hertfordshire served in the
Auxiliary Territorial service
from 1948 to 1950 and then
in the Women's Royal Army
Corps from 1951 to 1975.

Bernard Fowkes of Beeston, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance

John Freeman of Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Corps from 1940 to 1946.

John Glynn of Covingham, Swindon, Wiltshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1952 to 1961. Patrick Goggins of Bury, Lancashire served as Signalman in the Royal Signals from 1953 to 1958.

Roy Groves of Woodley, Stockport, Cheshire served as a Stoker in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Sidney Guy of Basildon, Essex served in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment from 1940 to 1946.

Stanley Hall of Consett, County Durham served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1938 to 1946.

Mark Harden of Epsom, Surrey served in the East Surrey Regiment in 1950.

**Grace Hay** of Kings Knowe, Edinburgh served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1945.

Sheila Hennessey of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and the Women's Royal Air Force between 1942 and 1950.

Elsie Hetherington of Fleetwood, Lancashire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

Harry Howarth of Burnley, Lancashire served in the Cheshire Regiment and then the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers between 1939 and 1946. He was a Far East Prisoner of War.

David Hughes of Whiston, Rotherham, South Yorkshire served as Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1952.

James C James, MBE of Staithes, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Denis Kitson of Llanidoes, Powys served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1944 to 1948.

Freda Lace of Bootle, Millom, Cumbria served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Irene La Touche of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Jack Lillington of Poole, Dorset served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Service Corps between 1947 and 1949.

Esther McFarlane of

Bromley, Kent served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1946.

William McNaughton of Tuebrook, Liverpool served in the Merchant Navy from 1942 to 1954.

Bruce Mackenzie of Blackheath, London served in the Royal Engineers from 1938 to 1940.

Anthony Metcalf of Cannock, Staffordshire served in the North Staffordshire Regiment (TA) from 1963 to 1966 and then the Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's) from 1967 to 1968.

John Moir of Bideford, Devon served first in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1939 to 1942 and then the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers until 1967.

Bernard Nolan of Southport, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Service Corps between 1942 and 1947.

**David Oakley** of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

Mieczyslaw Pachowski

of Leicester, Leicestershire served in the Polish Air Force from 1942 to 1949.

**Stanley Paine** of Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent served in The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) from 1940 to 1946.

Margaret Riach from Coventry, West Midlands served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Pamela Reed of Tonbridge, Kent served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1941 to 1946.

Patricia Ricketts of Norwich, Norfolk served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Pamela Robinson of Yarm, Cleveland served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1965 to 1966.

Ronald Robinson of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Stanley Romaine of Rainham, Essex served in the General Service Corps, Essex Regiment and Army Catering Corps between 1946 and 1948. Lilly Rounsfell of Exeter, Devon served as Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

John Scaife of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Michael Scholes of Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1979 to 1980.

Oliver Skinner of Solihul, West Midlands served in the Royal Artillery, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1939 and 1946.

**George Smith** of Romford, Essex served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

John Snodgrass of Omagh, County Tyrone served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1972 and the Ulster Defence Regiment from 1975 to 1983.

Ronald Stapleton of Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Ivan Thornton of

Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1948.

Frederick Tree of Luton, Bedfordshire served in the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) from 1933 to 1945.

Kenneth Tyler of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire served in the General Service Corps, Gloucestershire Regiment, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, Royal Engineers and Army Catering Corps between 1944 and 1953.

Lady Anne Wake-Walker of Colchester, Essex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945.

Randolph Watson of Murton, Seaham, County Durham served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1965.

John Watts of Aston Clinton,

Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1953 to 1956.

Alan Wearn of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

John Williams of Pontardawe, Swansea, West Glamorgan served as Warrant Officer in the Welch Regiment from 1940 to 1946.

Frank Wilmore of Camberley, Surrey served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1942.

Geraldyne Wiltshire of Brighton served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

Pauline Wise of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

### BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Williamson

Hasen Brau (Easter Beer) is a seasonal treat from Germany. This golden dark ale has a distinctive malty flavour and pleasant aromas of hops and cereals. At 5 per cent ABV it is a lively beer, very refreshing when cold but not so drinkable when lukewarm. The label depicts an Easter Bunny. History actually suggests that the Easter Bunny was originally a hare. In pagan mythology, the hare represented love, growth and fertility.



### Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 13.

- 1) There are two saints named David who have days devoted to them, one in Wales on 1 March and another in Scotland whose saint's day is 24 May. So both answers are correct!
- 2) Both Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II acceded to the throne at the age of 25. So whatever you pick you are again correct!
- 3) A bongo is both an African antelope and a small drum.
- 4) They both do, one as a young woman and the other when she is older.
- 5) Viv Richards is well-known as an international test cricketer for the West Indies but he also appeared in a Soccer World Cup series.
- 6) At different times during his career he represented both Liberals and Conservatives.
- 7) They were both dropped.
- 8) You are correct, they both played James Bond seven times.
- 9) It all depends on which calendar you are using. The Russians were still using the Julian Calendar in 1917 so the revolution took place there in October. However, most other countries were at that time using the Gregorian Calendar which dated the revolution in November. Have a point for either October or November.
- 10) It was Sheriff Pat Garrett, Lesley may have a role in the musical!

### Family News

#### **GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES**

Congratulations to:

Ronald and Gladys Oakley of Angmering, Littlehampton, West Sussex on 21 February.

#### DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Robert and Mary Horrocks of Ponteland, Northumberland on 10 February.

Ronald and Jean Girling of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 14 February.

#### SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

William and Molly Magrath of Salisbury, Wiltshire who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 19 January.

Charles and Phyllis Thorn of Doddington Park, Lincoln, Lincolnshire who celebrated 71 years of marriage on 23 January.

Geoffrey and Gladys Jones of Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 25 January.

Tom and Shelagh Owen of Theescombe, Amberley, Gloucestershire who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 26 January.

Bernard and Dorothy Pitcher of Cullompton, Devon who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 26 January.

Christopher and Doris Spellacy of West Kingsdown, Kent who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 26 January. Charles and Olive Grealy of Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 28 January.

Victor and Edna Brown of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 1 February.

Marjorie and Paul Pendleton of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 5 February.

Evelyn and Patrick Casey of Sanderstead, Surrey who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 6 February.

Leonard and Joy Dunn of Eastbourne, East Sussex who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 8 February.

Thomas and Peggy Lukes of Old Colwyn, Clwyd who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 8 February.

Joseph and Myrtle Hirsh of Chiswick, London who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 10 February.

George and Perl Bell of Langney, Eastbourne, East Sussex who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 15 February.

John and Betty Roebuck of Ormskirk, Lancashire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 15 February.

Charles and Peggy Blockley of Sileby, Leicestershire who celebrated 67 years of marriage on 19 February.

#### DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of: Mike Fisher on 20 January after a long battle with multiple sclerosis. He was the son of Cliff and Phyllis Fisher of Ower, Romsey, Hampshire.

Irene Reck on 28 November 2007. She was the wife of Joseph Reck of Liverpool, Merseyside.

Lillian Pecket on 29 January. She was the wife of Joseph Pecket of Gorton, Greater Manchester.

Irene Allen on 5 February. She was the wife of John Allen of Paignton, Devon.

Jessie Breeden on 7 February. She was the wife of George Breeden of Braintree, Essex.

Violet Cookson of Bognor Regis, West Sussex on 18 January. She was the widow of Ernie Cookson.

Edna Ward-Rowe of Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire on 3 February. She was the widow of Eric Ward-Rowe.

Bryn Thomas Lukes, aged 23, on 15 July 2007. He was the grandson of Tom and Peggy Lukes of Old Colwyn, Clwyd.

# 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.

#### Douglas Hinde Royal Regiment of Artillery

Douglas Hinde of Sheffield, Yorkshire died on 9 January, aged 90. He joined the Royal Regiment of Artillery at Woolwich in 1934 and was posted to India for six years. After WWII started, he was deployed to Cairo where his battery were the first to fight in North Africa. He served in Sudan, Eritrea and Suez where he was injured. Shrapnel lodged in his arm would bedevil him for the rest of his days. After recovering, he was posted to Baghdad and later to Germany. Released to the reserve in 1946, he became an apprentice with Firth Brown Tools, later working for Davy United and Lacocks engineering firms. He enjoyed cricket, supported Sheffield United FC, and played bowls.

#### **Marion Soep**

#### Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve

Marion Winton Soep, SRN, SCM, nee Roger of Greenock, Inverclyde died on 15 January, aged 94. She trained as a nurse at St Bartholomew's (Barts) Hospital, London and later qualified as a midwife at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. She moved to Cape Town but returned to the UK in 1940 to join the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve. She trained at Aldershot and was commissioned in 1941. The following year, she was sent out to India with 9 Casualty Clearing Station treating up to a thousand patients with limited supplies. Later, she joined the Hospital Ship Melchior Treub taking patients from Chittagong to Calcutta and later Madras. The Chief Officer was one Bernard Soep who helped with the acquisition of medical supplies, providing an even keel during a storm as an amputation was in progress, and donated blood to the recovering amputee. A three week stop for repairs in the Himalayas coincided with a bout of amoebic dysentery and then cholera. Towards the end of the war, she was involved with the repatriation

of Far East Prisoners of War. Discharged in 1946, she married Bernard on the Isle of Arran and became a wife and mother. Later, she resumed nursing as a midwifery sister at Rankin Maternity Hospital. She was instrumental in raising funds that would allow Ardgowan Hospice to develop its services. Active in local Girl Guides groups, she also set up a help group for people who had developed macular degeneration. Three years ago, she received an Adult Learners award after studying computer skills at James Watt College. Last year, she returned to Burma, retracing her wartime experiences which she also detailed in a book entitled Our Sister Sahib. Our sympathy goes to her sons Roger and John, and all members of the family.

### Charles Booth-Jones Royal Corps of Signals

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Ellison Booth-Jones of Hentsridge, Templecombe, Somerset died on 16 January, aged 88. He joined the Army in 1938 and went to Woolwich for officer training. Commissioned into the Corps of Royal Signals the following year, he served in stations in Palestine, Iraq, Persia and Italy. He was promoted to Captain in 1946 while stationed in the Dodecanese. Returning to the UK, he served in Cambridge and Larkhill. Promoted to Major in 1952, he volunteered for service in Korea and was later deployed to Singapore which was followed by two years at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in France. Discharged as honorary Lieutenant Colonel in 1961, he became a school master teaching mathematics. The subject had long been an interest and he also enjoyed military history. Our sympathy goes to his widow Anthea and all the family.

#### Pamela Webster

#### Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Doris Pamela Webster nee Davidson of Saxmundham, Suffolk died on 16 January, aged 84. She worked at Marshall & Snelgrove in London's Oxford Street while studying art at Regent Street Polytechnic. With the outbreak of war, she became part of a Civil Defence group in Hackney before joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942. She trained as a radar operator and plotter. Discharged in 1946, she worked in a nursery and trained as a teacher. While teaching in Hampstead, she studied history, psychology and philosophy and also became a family therapist. She had an interest in unifying sciences and philosophies related to the human condition. Our sympathy goes to her widower Harry, son Sebastian, daughter Lucy and all members of the family.

# Gladys Mark-Herbert Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps

Gladys Taba Mark-Herbert of Kentish Town, London died on 16 January, aged 73. Born on Bonny Island in the Niger Delta, she joined the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps as a nursing sister and was commissioned in 1962. Serving in Hong Kong with the Far East Land Force for three years, she was promoted to Captain in 1964. After being released to the Reserve in 1966, she moved to Bahamas to set up a new health clinic. She worked in the UK and America in nursing, working as a midwife and training junior nurses to set up trauma clinics. Her interests included tennis, athletics, skating and walking, though many activities were curtailed when she developed rheumatoid arthritis.

#### Sybil Zuryk

#### Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Sybil Zuryk nee Coward of Bristol, Avon died on 17 January, aged 88. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941. Having served in Gloucester, she was discharged as Corporal in 1943. Our sympathy goes to her son Paul and all members of the family.

#### Percy Hayfield Royal Navy

Percival Edward Hayfield of Oakdale, Poole, Dorset died on 18 January, aged 86. He worked in South Wales coal mines before joining the Royal Navy in 1940. He served on HMS *Abatross*, a seaplane carrier operating on the African Coast, then later joined HMS *Resolution*, operating out of Mombassa. Discharged in 1946, he trained as a carpenter, working in particular for John Mowlem. He enjoyed visiting clubs and playing cards. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

#### William Mullins

#### East Lancashire Regiment

William Mullins of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 18 January, aged 91. He worked on his family's drapery stall in Oldham Market before joining the East Lancashire Regiment in 1940. Early on, he lost two knuckles in a motorcycle accident. Later on, now serving as Corporal, his brengun carrier came under attack while crossing a bridge near Bremen in Germany. He lost his left eye and temporarily lost sight in his right eye. Discharged in 1945, he returned to the family business. He passed the drapers' stall on to his daughter in 1983, but continued to work there until he retired at the age of 78. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Audrey and all other members of the family.

#### William Nelson

#### Merchant Navy

William Lynn Nelson of Chipstead, Surrey died on 18 January, aged 87. He became a radio operator with the International Maritime Radio Company and deployed on merchant vessels during the Second World War. In civilian life, he was a production engineer in the oil industry. He enjoyed golf and Probus meetings and was active in Macular Disease Society. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Hetty and all other members of the family.

#### Ken Morgan Royal Welch Fusiliers

Thomas Kenneth Morgan of Carmarthen, Dyfed died on 20 January, aged 88. He worked for Braclays Bank before joining the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1940. He served in Madagascar, India, Arakan and Burma, contracting malaria whilst overseas. Demobbed in 1946, he rejoined the bank, later becoming manager of his local branch. His interests included football, cricket and tennis and he was a past chairman of the local Royal British Legion. He was also treasurer of the local farmer's hunt and fishing club. Our sympathy goes to his widow Ann and all members of the family.

#### Bill Stocker Royal Navy

William Stocker of Newtown, Disley,
Stockport, Cheshire died on 21 January,
aged 82. He was a butcher's boy before
joining the Royal Navy in 1943. He trained
at HMS Raleigh and was then sent to
HMS Pasco in Strachur, Argyll to train as
a signalman. Posted to Calcutta, he took
part in operations off the Burma coast until
VJ Day. Demobbed in 1946, he turned to

stone sawing and quarry work but later completed an apprenticeship as a printer. He briefly emigrated to Canada. For a time, he was chairman of the local Royal Naval Association and was a member of the White Ensign Association. Our sympathy goes to his sons Darryl and Derek, daughter Kathleen and all members of the family.

#### Colin Johnston, MBE Royal Australian Air Force

Colin Edwin Johnston, MBE of Wheelers Hill, Victoria, Australia died on 22 January, aged 86. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1955. He worked for a manufacturing chemist before joining the Royal Australian Air Force in 1941. He flew fighters and dive bombers in the Middle East and over Italy before being discharged as Flight Lieutenant in 1945. In 1956, he moved his family from Queensland, Australia to Cricklewood in London and studied with St Dunstan's to be a physiotherapist. When he returned to Australia, he became Victoria's first blind physiotherapist and established a practice which ran for 20 years. He was active in areas of welfare for ex-Service men, particularly with the Australian Blinded Soldiers Association, becoming their President in 1975 as they adopted the name Blinded Soldiers of St Dunstan's, Australia. His work for the ex-Service community was recognised in June 1981 when he was awarded the MBE. He was a keen Rotarian and was made a Paul Harris Fellow. Other activities included gardening, bushwalking, swimming, rug making, and he played bowls, establishing the Queensland Blind Bowlers' Association after he retired. Our sympathy goes to his widow Elizabeth, sons David and Stephen and all members of the family.

#### John Underwood Royal Artillery

David John Underwood of Woking, Surrey died on 22 January, aged 89. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1939 and was posted to the Middle East, serving in Sudan and Ethiopia. Moving onto the Western Desert, he took part in the battle of El Alamein. Discharged in 1946, he worked for a medical supply company. His interests included football and gardening. Our sympathy goes to his widow Rosie, sons John and Terrance and all members of the family.

#### John Carr Fleet Air Arm

Anthony John Carr of Acocks Green, Birmingham died on 24 January, aged 71. He worked for Guest, Keen and Nettleford making nuts and bolts before joining the Royal Navy in 1953. As part of the Fleet Air Arm, he qualified as an Aircraft Electrical Mechanic serving in the UK and overseas. He joined the crew of aircraft carrier HMS Warrior and was involved with Operation Grapple, Britain's first megaton nuclear bomb test on Christmas Island in 1957. Discharged in 1961, he sold industrial equipment and later worked for a company making wooden packing cases for the motor trade. His interests included football, cricket and squash. He was instrumental in the foundation of HMS Warrior (R31) 1946-1958, an association which continues to reunite crew from his old ship. Our sympathy goes to his widow Linda and all other members of the family.

#### Gertrude Thomas

#### Women's Royal Air Force

Gertrude Patricia Thomas nee Lunt of Aberporth, Cardigan, Dyfed died on 26

January, aged 77. She trained as a shorthand typist, working at a picture and reference library in Liverpool and then branched into estate management with a relative. Joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1947, she became a clerk at RAF Innsworth. She left the reformed Women's Royal Air Force to join the Land Army in 1949. She later worked in the Civil Service, but left to become a wife and mother. She resumed work with the Department of the Environment but had to leave to care for her husband when he was invalided. Her interests included driving, fly fishing, knitting and embroidery. Our sympathy goes to her daughter Jennifer and all other members of the family.

#### James Macmillan Royal Signals

James Alexander Macmillan of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 29 January, aged 71. He served in the Royal Signals at Catterick and other bases between 1962 and 1964. In civilian life, he worked on his parents' croft in the Shetland Islands and in the building trade on the mainland.

#### Raymond Brookes

#### Royal Air Force

Raymond Alfred Brookes of Oldbury,
West Midlands died on 31 January, aged
71. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1955
and trained in Shropshire. Stationed in
Blackpool, he maintained safety equipment
until an off-duty motorcycle accident forced
his medical discharge. He then became a
toolmaker, working in heavy engineering
around Birmingham. He enjoyed the
countryside, including activities such as
fishing, shooting, swimming and rowing.
Our sympathy goes to his son David, sister
Olwen and all members of the family.

#### Marjorie Ball

#### **Auxiliary Territorial Service**

Marjorie Ball of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 1 February, aged 89. She had been a St Dunstaner since 1960. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941, but after a year began experiencing difficulties with her vision. Eventually, this led to her being invalided out in 1945. In civilian life, she was a comptometer operator utilising a 72-key calculating device for office calculations. Later, she was a shop assistant. After her sight failed, she trained at St Dunstan's in telephony and took up a position with an insurance company in Leeds. Over the years, she regularly attended the Ladies Reunion, participated in the Gardening Club and tried her hand at bridge. She enjoyed talking books. In 1996, she was made an Honorary member of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

#### Wilfred Franklin Royal Air Force

Wilfred Arthur George Franklin of Quenington, Cirencester, Gloucestershire died on 2 February, aged 80. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945, training as a cook at Wilmslow, Cheshire before being posted to India. He also served as Aircraftman I in Singapore and Malaya. Discharged in 1948, he worked in the building trade and as a lorry driver. His interests included woodwork and gardening and he was a member of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. Our sympathy goes to his widow Cath and all members of the family.

### Thomas Scourfield Royal Navy

Thomas Isaac Scourfield of Bridgewater, Somerset died on 3 February, aged 79. He was an apprentice painter before joining the Royal Navy in 1946. He trained at HMS Royal Arthur and was then posted to HMS Drake where he worked in the Officers' wardroom kitchen. He also served on HMS Vulture and HMS Glory. Discharged in 1948, he completed his apprenticeship then joined British Railways in Camborne. He worked in the building industry for local firms and government and later for the Central Electricity Generating Board. His interests included bowling. Our sympathy goes to his widow Doris, daughter Sharon, and all other members of the family.

#### Roy French

#### Cambridgeshire Regiment

Roy Verdun George French of Port Shepstone, Natal, South Africa died on 4 February, aged 91. He was a warehouse clerk before joining the Cambridgeshire Regiment (TA) in 1939. He was posted to their 1st Battalion and spent the first year of the war on defence duties in Norfolk. After a period training in Scotland, they embarked for the Middle East but were diverted to India. The stay was short as they were sent on to Singapore which was already in the throes of battle. After a two day siege, he was taken prisoner by Japanese forces when Singapore fell in 1942. During his captivity, he suffered from beri-beri, dysentery and malaria. His sight began to fail in 1943, though he still had another two years of privation ahead of him. Discharged in 1946, he became a St Dunstaner, studying Braille and physiotherapy. After he qualified in 1951, he sailed for South Africa where set up practice in Krugersdorp. He sold his business in 1963 after a spell of illness but was then asked to open a physiotherapy department at Ladysmith Hospital the following year. He was actively involved

with the Cripple Care Association, the South African Legion, St Dunstan's South Africa, and was a member of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats. Our sympathy goes to his widow Pauline, daughter Alexandra, and all members of the family.

#### **Peter Harry**

#### Royal Welch Fusiliers

Peter Miles Harry of Trerulefoot, Saltash, Cornwall died on 4 February, aged 74. He studied agricultural science before joining the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1950. Posted to their 2nd Battalion, he was stationed in Germany but was injured in a car accident during 1953. Discharged in 1954, he returned to the UK and became a St Dunstaner in 1955, taking up training as a physiotherapist. In 1960, he took over his father's practice in Bridgend, developing it to the point where he may well have been the busiest physio in St Dunstan's. He also developed an interest in breeding horses and ponies, many of which won prizes when shown at county fairs. For many years, he owned a stud farm. After nearly 30 years in practice, he reluctantly withdrew from physiotherapy when the onset of arthritis forced his retirement. A man of diverse interests, he was a member of the London Welsh Society, enjoyed Rugby, gardening, sailing, music, and keeping birds. Our sympathy goes to his widow Denise, son Paul, daughter Amanda, and all other members of the family.

#### John Trent

#### Pioneer Corps

John Kenneth Trent of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 4 February, aged 94. Born Jankel Ben Schrager into a Jewish family in Vienna, Austria, he left the country four months before the Anschluss in 1938. He came to the UK intending to join relatives in America but war was declared before his visa could be arranged. Enlisting with the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps in 1939, he served in France and Belgium. He had made Lance Corporal by the time the regiment reformed as the Pioneer Corps in 1940. Back in the UK, he was posted to Scotland but was injured on exercise when a steel rope hit him in the eye. After a failed operation in which the retina became detached he was invalided out in 1943. In civilian life, he became a salesman for Phillips, eventually leaving to set up an export business dealing in Phillips products. He participated in several of the Christmas shows at Ovingdean, taking to the stage to entertain the audience with his singing. Our sympathy goes to his daughters Susan and Doreen and all members of the family.

#### Frank Jameson Royal Air Force

Frank Jameson of Darlington, County Durham died on 5 February, aged 84. He worked for his father's fruit and vegetable business and later Rington's Tea Merchants before joining the Royal Air Force in 1942. He served in the UK, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Discharged as Corporal in 1947, he became an insurance agent, but then joined the London Newcastle Eastern Railway. At various times, he was a signalman, station supervisor and later a clerical officer. His interests included bowls, driving and touring. He learnt Braille and taught himself how to touch type. He was a founder member of the Darlington Macular Disease support group. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dorothy and all members of the family.

## Atlantic Alan's rowboat is finer!

ROYAL NAVY St Dunstaner
Alan Lock and Matt
Boreham embarked on an
epic challenge to row the
Atlantic on 11 January.
They are hoping to draw
attention to the charity
Sense which cares for deafblind people.

Their journey started in San Sebastian de la Gomera, Canary Islands with each



stroke directing them 2,931 miles towards English Harbour in Antigua.

At press time, the duo had

been at sea for around 35 days and had endured stormy seas, encountered curious whales and fishing vessels oblivious to their presence. Alan celebrated his 28th birthday on 1 February with muesli and cold water.

It is possible to check on their progress online at www. atlanticrow4sense.com and e-mail good luck messages.

### Eric returns to his old school!

LD MEMORIES were revived for one St Dunstaner during a school's presentation on 31 January. Eric Sayce visited the Christopher Whitehead School, Worcester to talk with 12-13- year-old pupils about life with visual impairment. However, 61 years ago he was a pupil there himself.

"It was strange going back to the old school," said Eric. "The buildings and the corridors were the same, but it has doubled in size. Back then it was also split into a boys' school and a girls' school. They were always trying to keep us apart. Now they are all together."

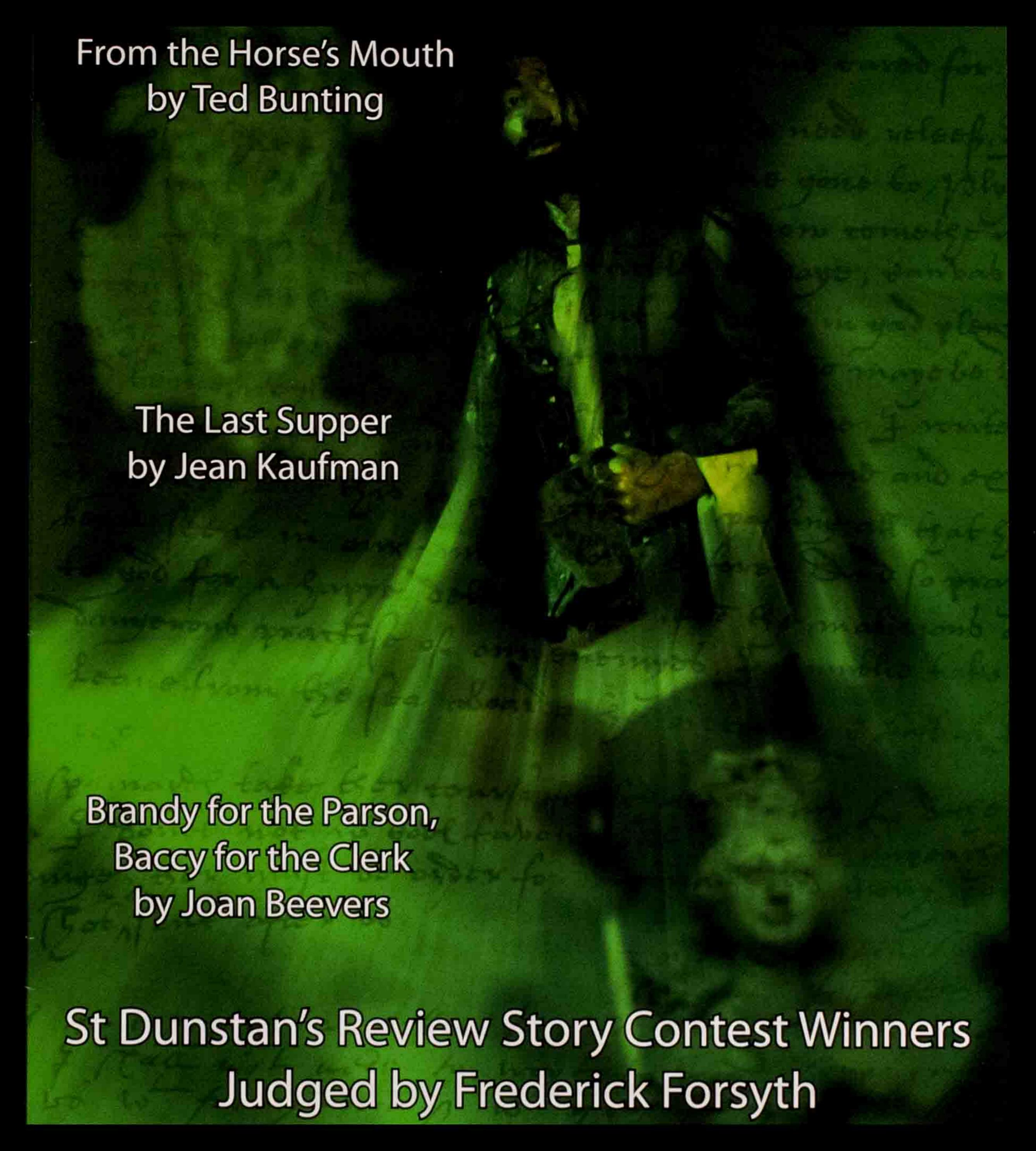


Dinner is served. A pupil takes over from Elsie the Waitress.

Eric also found himself wondering about references to "whiteboards", the old blackboard and chalk having been replaced by an easywipe marker pen alternative. Role play formed a central part of Eric's presentation, in

which his co-presenter Elsie plays a less than sympathetic waitress. Having insulted Eric, she steps aside to allow some of the pupils to demonstrate how she should have served dinner to a visually impaired person.

Photograph courtesy of Paul Green



# Silent screams

### "He screamed silently as the pain began to take hold..."

SOMETIMES it starts with a theme, sometimes with a setting. This year it started with a sentence! Each year St Dunstan's Review challenges blind ex-Service men and women, their wives, husbands, and widows to unleash their creative talents in a story writing contest. In October 2007, we set the condition that the story should start with ten little words. What followed was left to our readers to decide. We are grateful to acclaimed author Frederick Forsyth who judged the entrants, selecting the three tales of terror, treachery and tragedy collected in this volume.

#### St Dunstan's Review March 2008

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

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First prize (£50) was won by St Dunstaner Ted Bunting from Scarborough, Yorkshire. He served as Corporal in the Royal Engineers from 1959 to 1965.

# From the Horse's Mouth

By R S. Upward (Ted Bunting)

e screamed silently as the pain began to take hold and his knuckles crunched like brittle walnut shells in the giant's steel vice of a grip. But as ever Dick Chapman managed a broad smile of welcome and received in return a glimpse of the torturer's' jagged incisors and twisted canines.

"It's a real pleasure to see you again, Captain" he lied. It was true that Nathan Black brought a lot of silver into Chapman's London tavern "The Longbow"; he was worth a dozen ordinary customers in fact, but this handshake ritual was taking years off him, he thought. And it wasn't a case of Black not knowing his own strength... he knew it only too well; he just enjoyed hurting people; and the beauty of it (but only from his point of view) was that he was paid to do it. "I'm in intelligence work," he had once replied to Chapman's enquiry, though one look at his caveman profile ensured that nobody would ever guess.

Warren the pot boy placed a foaming tankard on the trestle table in front of the big man. Warren was a cripple, having been under the wheels of a carriage as a child. Amazingly, Nathan Black seemed almost fond of the youth.

"Have you had a good day, Captain?" asked Chapman as the pot boy hobbled away. "It's been a lovely bright one and hot too, even for August." Black's harsh laugh shook his prehistoric shoulders. "I've not seen much of the sun today, I'm afraid, Dick, having been toiling in the bowels of the Earth as you might say." He picked up the tankard, drained in one unending swallow, wiped his mouth with a ham-like forearm and added, as if in explanation, "In the dungeons under Tyburn; there's never much sun there." The ever-attentive Warren exchanged the empty pewter for a full one, from which Black sucked a more than generous sample and then went on. "I've been having a

few words with a certain Derbyshire gentleman from a place called Matlock," he said. "They are supposed to be strong and silent types up there, or so I've heard, but don't you believe a word of it; this one didn't have the strength of this ale of yours. He was squealing like a stuck pig before we had him shackled to the wall and when we had his breeches off and I put a few polite questions to him you could have heard his yells down at Greenwich." Dick Chapman's mouth twitched nervously and his eyes darted involuntarily to the wicked-looking hooked knife that lived on Black's belt. He fancied he could see blood on it. Black noticed the glance and treated the landlord to another sight of his mined teeth.

"The gentleman's name is Anthony Babington," continued Black. "Sir Anthony if you please, the treacherous dog. He's been in the pay of the Spaniards I wouldn't wonder, and he was in league with a pack of other scurvy dogs with evil in their minds, gentlemen all according to rank but the scum of the earth should the truth be known. You may even have heard of them though I doubt if they'd visit a place like this. There was Ballard and Habingdon and Tichbourne to name just a few, oh aye, and Bellamy from Harrow was another. Their plan, though we've scotched it now," (here he punctuated the sentence with a further long pull at the tankard) "was high treason; it was to murder our good Queen Bess and replace her on the throne of England with that Mary of Scots as we now have safely locked away in Fotheringhay Castle." Warren the pot boy approached once again and Black, as good as gold, said, "Hey? A drop more ale? Well go on then, it's not bad stuff this."

There then followed the usual large gulp and the wiping of the lips before Black took up his tale once more. "Now my master, Sir Francis..." Is that the Queen's secretary, Captain?" interposed Dick Chapman. "Aye one of 'em," agreed Black, "Sir Francis Walsingham, the spy master, that's right. Well he's had his eye on them all for many a month now; you can bet there wouldn't have been a single letter written between 'em that he hadn't read before it was delivered. He is the cleverest man in England is my master, and he's got the best team of agents in the whole world."

Chapman, though somewhat incredulous, made no comment at this claim although it occurred to him that every farmer needs his carthorses. "So you can see," said Black with a wink and another swallow, "that in the fullness of time he had all the evidence he needed to prove their guilt. And that's how we were able to spring the trap this very week. We've got them all now, every one, and the full story too you may be sure. What's left of Babington will be dispatched tomorrow morning and the rest will go to the traitors' death they deserve by and by. My master Sir Francis knows full well how to deal with papists. And mark my words, Dick my friend, we'll have the head off that Mary of Scots too, before very long, queen or no queen.

"Here, refill this tankard will you, Warren my boy? It's thirsty work protecting our sovereign Lady."

# The Queen and the clock

**By Simon Rogers** 

ed Bunting draws on real-life conspiracy to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I for his story. Sir Anthony Babington and his cohorts were executed in 1586 though related intrigues would inevitably set England at war with Spain. By coincidence, 1586 is reckoned to be the year that London's only statue of the Virgin Queen was sculpted. It is believed to be the only remaining statue made during her lifetime.

She stands raised above a doorway, adjacent to statues of the legendary ancient King Lud and his sons, at the Fleet



Street church of St Dunstan's-in-the-West. At the front of the church, the herculean figures of Gog and Magog stand above a clock where they mark quarter hours and half hours by striking a bell with their cudgels. On the hour, they do battle with St George who emerges from the inner mechanisms. The clock is significant to horologists because it was the first public clock to have a minute hand. It is also significant for imparting its name to a certain charitable organisation caring for blind ex-Service men and women. The clock dates from 1671, built by Thomas Harries, and commissioned as a token of thanks for surviving the Great Fire of London. In 1830, the clock was purchased for £200 and relocated to Lord Aldenham's villa in Regent's Park. The building became known as St Dunstan's and in 1915 Sir Arthur Pearson convinced the owner Otto Khan to let him use the premises for the rehabilitation and care of Service men blinded in the trenches. The rest, as they say, is history! The clock was restored to its original home in 1935.



The clock that gave St Dunstan's its name, and Elizabeth I.

Second prize (£30) was won by Jean Koefman of Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset. She is the widow of St Dunstaner Doc Koefman who served in the United States Air Force.

# THE LAST SUPPER

By Isobel (Jean Koefman)

e screamed silently as the pain began to take hold. His hands pressed against the sides of his head to contain the explosion that he felt erupting inside his brain.

are you?"

own at the T-bone steak with all its gagged and pushed the plate away. He It the eyes of his forced companion boring laughable. Where the hell did Jack think windows barred, doors locked and jailers. umble, Jack was a good chap and after all, oing his job...huh, making sure he didn't ade the hangman's noose.

ast Supper. Christ, I know how you felt two rs ago; you were also innocent and going to eathing deeply, his head dropped onto his be strong, he thought, only a few more hours

nate? You don't look any too good?" Jack oved toward Ben. "Eat your grub, it's too and you've had nothing all day."

As fine as anyone can be at his last supper, ce food. Why don't you have it? A pity to ou'll be doing me a favour. I always believed te, not any more. How could that Jury think murdering. . .my. . .my wife?"

Ben. We'd hoped that a reprieve would e Home Office, especially as there were rcumstances."

"Extenuating circumstances - Good God, man, surely you must believe by now that I didn't kill her. She must have got the morphine from someone, but it wasn't me. I don't care what that doctor said, all I know is that I didn't give it to her."

The warder gently touched Ben's shoulder. "I understand, mate. Wish there was more I could do. What about a game of draughts, take your mind of things for a while, eh?"

"I know you're just a cog in the wheel, but why won't anyone, listen to me?" Ben looked round his cell. Could anything be more depressing?" Four walls, a window and a door. The furniture spartan, a wooden table and two chairs and of course his bed - not exactly five star comfort. A wry smile appeared on his face, he supposed he was lucky; at least he had his own lavatory and basin. His fingers felt the various names and dates etched by previous prisoners on the wooden table. He'd already added his, Ben Knox 1952 - Innocent.

The happenings of the past months kept running through his mind. His arrest two days after the funeral. Stunned, he'd had no idea that murder was even suspected. Penny had suffered enough and when she died he was relived that her pain and suffering was ended. She'd pleaded with him to help her end everything, but he couldn't, he just couldn't. The cancer was eating her up and her hair, her crowning glory, gorgeous, thick auburn curls, his fingers moved as if he could still feel its softness, had all disappeared from the chemo treatment. The flesh had

dropped from her already slim frame and her features had taken on a skeletal, waxy appearance ready for her final journey. "Penny, I can't kill you. You've got to fight, my darling, fight. I can't lose you. It's the chemo that's making you talk like this. You've got to fight, fight to live." He felt his chest tighten as he remembered. There was that blinding headache again and he shook his head trying to rid himself of the memories.

"Ben, my darling, Ben, we both know I'm dying. I can't eat without throwing up, I'm no use as a wife, I don't even look like me anymore. Please, Ben, help me I'm begging you. I can't live like this any longer. I can't." He remembered her thin body racked with sobbing, his own tears mingled with hers as he held her close. "Darling, I can't do what you ask. The doctors say you could have a remission and I must hold on to that hope. You know we've had this discussion before and the next day you've felt better."

Penny had cut him short. "I'm dying; I want out before things get beyond my control. I'm tired, Ben. I'm tired of fighting and if you won't help me I'll find someone who will." She'd kissed him and had whispered, "I love you, but you've got to let me go." Two weeks later she was dead. Verdict, an overdose of morphine.

"What about that game of draughts, Ben?" Jack interrupted his thoughts.

Ben forced himself back to the present. "If it's alright with

you I'd rather just talk. A cuppa would be appreciated if you can manage it?"

Jack pressed a bell and another warder appeared at the door. "Be a good mate, Joe. Get us some char. Think it's going to be a long night."

"What time is it Jack?"

"Just turned ten. Time you made tracks for bed."

"No. No point. I won't be able to sleep. I've only got a few hours left on this earth and I don't want to waste them sleeping. I'm at peace now and I'm not worried about dying. My conscience is clear. My one regret is that I never said goodbye to Penny. Tell her that I understood and loved her enough to let her go. She was both my friend and my lover - she was my whole life."

Only in jails did one hear the clanging of metal doors vibrating throughout the building. Prisoners incarcerated for the night. It was a sound Ben would not miss. A just punishment for the guilty but hell for the innocent, and he was innocent.

The clink of keys heralded Joe with a jug of tea. "We'll be needing plenty of this tonight," Jack said, as he joined Ben at the table. "You'd better bring us another jug in a couple of hours, Joe."

"Och, man, I'll be doing that alright. I just wish....." he stopped as he saw Jack shake his head. "Oh well, I'll be away. I'll see you later, Ben."

Jack pulled his chair closer to the table. "You say you didn't give her the overdose, and I believe you, not that it helps. Have you no idea where and how she got it?"

"No," Ben shook his head. "I've wracked my brains. I just can't seem to work it out. None of our friends would have known where to get it, anyway, it's too late now."

Ben and Jack talked throughout the night. They covered all manner of subjects. Jack was convinced that Ben was innocent and had not murdered his wife, even as a mercy killing. Seven sharp - breakfast was delivered- what is known as a 'Full English Breakfast'.

"The condemned man eats his last meal," Ben smiled weakly. "Why do they bother, in an hour I'll be dead. Oh what the hell." He picked up a piece of buttered toast and added some marmalade. "Don't think I can stomach those two eggs. Bit like two eyes watching me!" He pushed the plate away and rose from the table carrying his mug of tea. "You know, Jack, this cell is exactly four strides each way. I've walked it so often I must have left a worn path. I hope the next bugger who inhabits this cell is luckier than me." He stood behind Jack. "You and Joe have helped to make the last few days bearable and the fact that you believe me innocent has helped."

The door opened and the Prison Chaplain entered. Jack stepped outside even though he should by rights have remained. "Shall we pray Ben, and forgive those who have sinned?" The minister had become a sincere friend during the last weeks. Like Jack, he was convinced of Ben's innocence.

"If you wish, Reverend, not that I feel much like praying. God hasn't answered my prayers recently." He smiled. "Never mind, I'll be seeing him in person very soon. They do say that only the good die young and I'm about to find out why?"

Ten minutes to eight and Ben was told to prepare himself for his last walk. "You mean my walk to the gallows'?" Jack obviously wished himself anywhere but where he was. "Don't worry, Jack. I know your heart isn't in it. Only another few minutes and I'll be joining Penny and then maybe I'll understand what all this has been about. Come on, let's get it over with."

#### Epilogue

Eighteen months later Dr Raymond Grey was arrested. He admitted to helping twenty-three patients commit suicide. Mercy killing, he called it.

St Dunstaner Harry Beevers who served in the Royal Army Educational Corps.

# Brandy for the parson, Baccy for the clerk...

by J. Tregorran (Joan Beevers)

e screamed silently as the pain began to take hold. Tom knew that if he allowed himself even one groan he was done for. He was lucky to have escaped and reached a hiding place such as this.

A small buttress of rock hid him well from the men at the

the annique, canning to each other as they searched for him.

"I think he came this way," shouted one.

"Of course he did, there's nowhere else for him to go," answered another.

"I'm sure I got the rogue with my musket," called the leader, "he'll not get far with a ball lodged in him."

"Aye," thought Tom, gritting his teeth against the pain, "you hit me, but you're not going to find me!"

"Over here!" called one of his pursuers, "it looks like blood on this rock, we're on his trail."

Tom shrank back against the cold damp wall as a faint glimmer of light broke the solid darkness of his hiding place. The light wavered as the man at the mouth of the cave swung the lantern from side to side.

"Can't see anything Guv," he called, "shall I go further in?"

"No," the leader answered, "the tide's coming in fast. We'll search the rest of the bay before we have to get off the beach. He could be in any one of these caves. If we don't find him the sea can have him. If he drowns, good riddance! If he lives, we'll make him give up the rest of his law-breaking cronies."

Tom heard the sound of feet receding on the shingle and black darkness engulfed him once more. He still fought the urge to groan with pain, knowing that one of them could have stayed behind listening quietly for any give-away noises. After long minutes of straining his ears into the night Tom risked moving into a slightly more comfortable position but only just managed not to scream as the pain from the wound in his thigh seared through his body.

Gasping for breath he knew he had to do something to help his chances of survival. Being careful not to move his injured leg he tore a strip off the hem of his shirt and wrapped it round the wound, tying it tight to stop the bleeding.

Pain and loss of blood combined had weakened him considerably and he fought against losing his senses. If he became delirious he might shout out and draw the attention of the Excise men; but if he allowed the blackness to overtake him he would be free of this lifesapping pain. He slipped in and out of consciousness and his mind replayed the events which had brought him to this wretched end.

Since he was a lad Tom had worked for Squire Ledston who was the local magistrate and known as a fair administrator of the law. All the more surprising then when he approached Tom with a special job.

The coastline not a quarter of a mile from the Hall was made up of cliffs forming small bays, each one riddled

with clefts and caves, and each with its own tiny shingle beach. Some were approachable only from the sea while others could be reached by steep paths, treacherous to the unwary. Here was the ideal place for smugglers to land their contraband and hide it away from the eyes of Excise men. It was whispered that underground passages led inland from some caves, but no one searched for them if they had any sense.

The Squire's job for Tom - the first of a series of such tasks, was to help some of the farm hands bring in a cart full of boxes. He was told to mind his own business and keep his mouth shut at all times about what he saw and did.

That first job was easy and all he had to do was obey orders. For the next few days he felt himself being watched, although he never actually caught anyone spying on him. A week later there was a little extra for him on pay-day.

He was glad to find that Jack, his best friend, was also one of the Squire's specially trusted workers. Together they gradually learned their new trade and became an indispensable part of the team. As they proved themselves to be reliable so the jobs became more dangerous until they were trusted to meet the little boats which brought the contraband goods at dead of night, unloading them and carrying the wines, tobacco and tea to safe hiding places in the caves. The real skill was in evading the Excise men who seemed to have a sixth sense (or good informants) about where and when the illicit trade would

take place. Tom and Jack's local knowledge stood them in good stead.

By now they knew every path and crevice along this stretch of coast and could navigate them on the darkest night without using a light. Lights were needed however to signal between the boats and the shore, and the Excise men were constantly on the lookout for them.

On this latest escapade Tom, Jack and the rest met under cover of darkness at the appointed bay. The sea was calm and they expected no trouble. They stood on the beach and strained their eyes waiting for the signal from the sea.

At last it came, the glow of a lantern for a count of three. Jack signalled back, then they waited, watched and listened. The sound of oars dipping into water was barely detectable as the tender approached. Eager hands held the boat fast while boxes were unloaded as quickly and quietly as they could.

The empty boat was about to push off again when there was a great shout as Excise men came charging down the beach towards them. It was what the smugglers always dreaded, but they were ready for just such an emergency.

Those who could leapt into the boat, took up the oars and pulled away into the darkness. A loud bang came from a musket and a ball flew across the waves, but there was no cry of pain or sound of splintering wood as the men

made their getaway. Half a dozen Excise men were bearing down on the four smugglers left on the beach. These four sped off across the shingle in different directions. They had no need of lanterns but their pursuers were slowed by the need to light their way. Three smugglers gained the cliff path and made their silent escape. Tom was last and his feet on the shingle gave away his position. There was another bang as he leapt towards the entrance of the nearest cave, but too late! The missile hit his leg, knocking him off his feet. Tom stifled the scream and dragged himself into the cave. In agony he crept as fast as he could into shelter. The Excise men ran past the cave's entrance giving him time to crawl behind the buttress. Now, unable to move, he lay not knowing what might happen to him as consciousness left him.

A lantern was shining and Tom turned away his eyes from the brightness. He had been discovered! His dull senses heard voices and he felt himself being lifted, the pain in his leg driving him back into the comforting darkness again.

The lantern was shining in his eyes once more and as he murmured his discomfort a voice spoke to him.

"It's all right lad. Squire sent for the doctor and he got the ball out of your leg. Sleep if you can, you're safe now."

At last Tom came back to his senses. The sun was shining through a window into the hay-loft where he lay on a blanket. His leg was heavily bandaged but gave him no

pain if he remained still. Jack sat close by watching him and grinned as Tom asked, "Where am I?"

"You're safe in one of Squire's barns," answered his mate, "if the King's men come snooping around looking for an injured man you can trust the Squire to lead them astray."

"How did I get here, why didn't I drown?" asked Tom.

"Those rumours about hidden passages were true," Jack laughed. "One of them led from the barn into the back of the cave where you hid. We came straight back for you and got you out just as the sea was lapping your ankles.

"We salvaged some of Squire's stuff too so he's not too displeased. He reckons he'll find the traitor in good time and give him his just desserts. Some of our just desserts are right here. Try this, it'll put strength back into you."

Jack held a cup to Tom's lips and spilled a little of Squire's brandy into his mouth. Tom spluttered and forced a grin as Jack lifted his cup and cried, "Confusion to all Excise men."

# Afferword

### "Please congratulate all your entrants on a very high standard"

THE REASON I singled out these three stories is because, basically, I was looking for a neat little story with a bit of surprise or a twist in the tale. I thought the ingenuity of introducing apparently as pub drinker, a man who turned out to be one of Sir Francis Walsingham's interrogators very clever, even more so when it transpired he had broken the Babington plot against Queen Elizabeth I.

Ditto number two, when the real murderer was exposed at the very end, even though it would have been more mordant had the poisoner actually been the prison doctor. Never mind.

Lastly, number three, I thought evoked Romney Marsh where I was raised and where legends of smugglers still exist. Please congratulate all your entrants on a very high standard.

> Frederick Forsyth January 2008

the latest St Dunstan's Review Story Contest.

Readers were asked to start their story with the words "He screamed silently as the pain began to take hold..." They were asked to decide what happens next.

Three tales of terror, treachery and tragedy were selected from the submitted entries by the Master of the Thriller and are collected in this souvenir volume.



