

# St Dunstan's Review

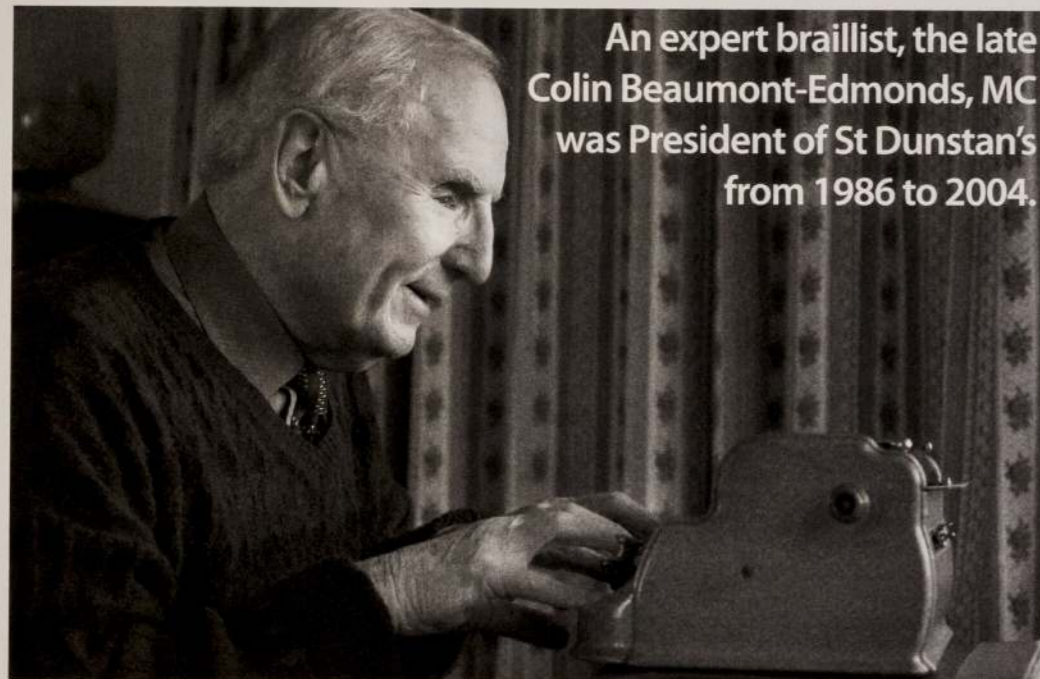
**It's a Bootie thing** (so why do we have a Pongo on the cover?)

Photograph: Simon Rogers

RHA St Dunstaner Billy Baxter and Buddie tracked their way over country trails during the Once A Marine Always A Marine Dartmoor Yomp. Around 200 people, many Royal Marines, walked 12 miles of moorland in support of Servicemen and women injured in recent conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

# Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, MC (1922-2008)

We pay tribute to the memory of a man who took the spirit of St Dunstan's to heart, serving as the Charity's President for 18 years



An expert brailist, the late Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, MC was President of St Dunstan's from 1986 to 2004.

that handicap was indeed an "interruption" he had thoroughly overcome. All who met and knew him could not fail to be inspired by his approach to life.

As all St Dunstaners know, their achievements are not obtained by themselves. The support, love and assistance of their wives and family is an integral part of this achievement. Colin and Joyce's partnership and support for each other, was a fine example.

Our thoughts are with Joyce and his daughter, Felicia.

**Ray Hazan  
President, St Dunstan's**

Colin Beaumont-Edmonds passed away on 10 October, aged 85. Born in Streatham, London, in 1922 and educated at Marlborough College, he was planning to follow his father into a ship-broking business. Instead, in December 1940, he volunteered into the Young Soldiers' Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment. He was selected for cadet

training and commissioned into the 2nd/5th Queen's Royal Regiment, West Surreys, in July 1942.

His service abroad lasted a year and a day, taking him to Tunisia by a circuitous route via Freetown, Cape Town, Bombay, Basrah, Baghdad, Kirkuk, along the coast of North Africa to catch up, finally, with the Eighth Army, held up for the last time in the North African campaign. He was wounded at Enfidaville only three weeks before the end of that campaign in an action for which he was awarded the Military Cross. He described it as an incident that, "Would have appeared on the reports, probably, as 'All was fairly quiet except for patrol activity'.

"It was an Italian patrol and it just got where it ought not to be," he once recalled. "I was the front part of a company position with a small ridge to hold and I caught sight of the little Italian heads popping over the ridge, so promptly had to launch a counter-attack. With the help of another platoon we got rid of them. It was from the covering fire of the German mortars that a bit of metal came that just blinded me."

Returning to England, he went to St Dunstan's wartime training centre at Church Stretton, followed by two years at Magdalen College, Oxford reading Philosophy, Political Science and Economics.

"When I was blinded I did not know what the future had in store and I didn't know what a blind person could do. This was illustrated in quite a different way at Oxford when someone came in and asked me if I would row in the eight. I said I could not because I could not see, but the chap said, 'Well, you could if you were the stroke.' So I became the stroke of the third Magdalen eight."

Leaving Oxford with a Diploma, he joined the Personnel Department of ICI (Metals Division), Birmingham. He took on reception work looking after visitors to the factory, and arranging tours of departments, as well as lecturing on selection of personnel, various aspects of the factory and retirement.

It was through his work with the Young Conservatives that he met Joyce, his wife. He later stood for election on the local Council, starting



a 20 year career in local politics. In 1964 he was made Mayor of Sutton Coldfield. He also became the first blind District Commissioner in the Scout Movement.

After moving to Folkestone, he retrained as a telephonist and worked for the Nat West Bank in Canterbury. During this time, he helped revive the area's talking newspaper, good experience for launching a similar operation in Sidmouth which still provides news for 200 visually impaired people in Devon.

Colin became President of St Dunstan's in 1986 serving with diligence through rocky years and into a new period of expansion in the Charity's mission to help visually impaired Service men and women.

**C**OLIN WAS an immense inspiration to me as a new, young St Dunstaner trainee. I remember 'pestering' him with questions as to how he coped with his correspondence, or did a myriad of jobs, long before technology had raised its head.

On the surface, Colin was a mild, softly spoken, polite and enthusiastic person. Who could have told from his demeanour, he held the Military Cross for bravery when he led an assault on a machine gun position in Tunisia in 1943. I never heard Colin say an angry word, nor speak detrimentally of anyone.

But underneath that calm surface was a man of steel and determination, as

witnessed by his very many achievements – from being a Mayor, to a telephonist, from his involvement in Scouting to forming a local Talking Newspaper – to name but a few.

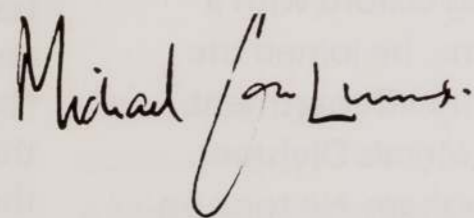
His election as President of St Dunstan's was the culmination of all his achievements since losing his sight. St Dunstan's could not have been represented by a more able person. He showed to all he met

Your message from St Dunstan's Chairman,  
Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN

## From the Chairman

AS WE APPROACH Remembrance Sunday, it is appropriate to mention the St Dunstan's pathway at the National Memorial Arboretum, which was reported in the October issue. I congratulate all those who were involved in designing and making the mosaic. This will be a very visible and timely reminder of our organisation for the many visitors to the Arboretum. The Director told me that next year they expect 325,000 visitors, most of whom will walk down that path!

On Sunday 9 November, we shall pay our respects to fallen comrades and to those St Dunstaners who gave their sight for their country. It is also an opportunity to remind people that St Dunstan's continues to help those who regrettably, are still being blinded in action.



## St Dunstan's Review November 2008, No 985

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**St Dunstan's Review** is also available in braille, on MP3CD or as a word document via e-mail or on floppy disc. Your readers this month are David Castleton and Valerie Tomalin.

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**Patron: Her Majesty The Queen**

## St Dunstan's Calendar

### NOVEMBER

Writers Forum	1
Bowling Club (II)	Until the 7
Founder's Memorial Day	8
Remembrance Sunday	9
Fishing	10-14
Armistice Day	11
Golf	15-16
Dancing Week	23-29
Christmas Craft Week	30-6 Dec

### DECEMBER

Christmas Craft Week	Until the 6
Writers Forum	6
St Dunstan's Day	9
Christmas Week	20/21-28
New Year Week	28-5 Jan 09

### 2009

### JANUARY

World Braille Day	4
Fishing (I)	12-16

### Forthcoming events and activities

# Noticeboard

## INCREASE OF CHARGES FOR TRIPS

### OUTINGS AT ST DUNSTAN'S OVINGDEAN:

A small increase in the cost of going on St Dunstan's trips came into effect on 1 October. This is the first increase for quite a few years and is caused by the rising prices charged by the venues we visit. In consequence, we have to increase our charges. I hope that you will agree that the trips still offer good value for money.

The following charges now apply:

Lunches	Local St Dunstaners to pay the cost of their meal
Teadrives	£3.00
Daytrips	£13.00

Shopping trips will still operate on a no charge basis with St Dunstaners paying for their own lunch.

Tickets for trips can still be purchased at Reception in the same way.

In addition, we have changed the meeting point for those going on trips. People going on trips will now assemble in the main lounge ten minutes prior to the trip leaving.

It is hoped that this arrangement will alleviate the problem of people sitting in cold draughts during the winter months

and also make it easier for people to meet up with their escorts.

I hope you will continue to enjoy the trips out and should you have any questions regarding this please contact myself on 01273 391426.

Lyn Mullins,  
Activities Coordinator

## HAPPY RETIREMENT PAT

NEW TOUCH ON BRAILLE REVIEW: We would like to wish a happy and healthy future to Patrick Larkin who retired last month. His name might not be readily familiar to readers of **St Dunstan's Review**, but for one group of St Dunstaners, Pat and his team at Techno-Vision in Northampton have been the unsung heroes of their favourite magazine. For nearly ten years they have dealt with the transcription and despatch of the Braille edition of the **Review**.

Before Pat and company took on the task, the Braille **Review** trailed dismally behind its print sister. This was a trend Pat quickly reversed and these days the Braille edition is frequently available before the other formats.

Having set the bar high, Pat is passing the baton over to SLSB Enterprises in Kendal, Cumbria starting with this issue.

## CAPTAIN'S DAY AT RUSPER

PRIZE EVENT: St Dunstan's Golf Club's final game at Rusper this year is the Captain's Day on 15 or 16 November. For all information relating to this event please telephone Mike Tumilson on 02476 714 922.

## A QUICK CHANGE OF STEP FOR THE NOVEMBER DANCE WEEK

FORTIES THEME POSTPONED: Would everyone who is attending the Dance Week at St Dunstan's Ovingdean in November please note that we shall be meeting in the Ballroom on Monday 24 November at 09:30. Get those sparkly shoes and dresses out – and the ladies are invited to dress up too! Bow ties optional. Regrettably I have had to postpone the intended 1940s theme for the dance on Friday 28 November. The dance itself will of course still go ahead. Any queries, contact St Dunstaner David Schofield, telephone 0115 932 3517.

## RUN THE LONDON TRIATHLON

AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE : If you feel able to brave the rigours of a 1,500m swim, followed by a 42km bike and a 10km run, then next year's London Triathlon is the event for you. It will be held over the weekend of 1-2 August next year with an estimated 8,000 people expected to take part. Anyone interested participating should contact Sports and Recreation Supervisor Louise Timms or Andrew Seivewright for more details and advice on how to prepare for the day. They can be contacted at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 01273 391465.

## JOLLY HOCKEY STICKS! IT'S THE RETURN OF THE STORY CONTEST

KICK-OFF FOR OLYMPIC WRITING CHALLENGE: We are ordering budding authors to the starter's gate for the latest **ST DUNSTAN'S Review** story writing competition. The content and title are yours to decide. However, the story should embrace a sporting theme. Can you conjure up the loneliness of the long distance runner, a tale of two halves, or a birdie on the wing? If you can master that bodyline and capture this sporting life, then put away that tennis racquet and get typing.

Submissions should not have been previously published. The competition is open to St Dunstaners, their wives, husbands, widows or widowers or members of the Diana Gubbay Trust.

Please follow these steps when submitting entries for the competition:

- 1) Entries should be typewritten and should not exceed 1,500 words.
- 2) Only one submission per person. Multiple entries will be disqualified.
- 3) Entries must be received by the Editor, **ST DUNSTAN'S Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 5 January 2009. Entries can also be submitted by e-mail to ray.hazan@st-dunstans.org.uk or other electronic media.

The winner will receive £50, second prize is £30 and the third will win £20. Winning stories will be published in the **Review**.

## IGNITING THE PAST

MEMOIR AND OTHER CREATIVE WRITING: Poet Alan Morrison recently became Coordinator of St Dunstan's Writers Forum. He is a widely published poet and some of his work can be found online at [www.alanmorrison.co.uk](http://www.alanmorrison.co.uk). From 2004-2006, he worked at Survivors' Poetry ([www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)), a mental health charity, where he was editor and designer of Poetry Express and Survivors' Press. He also coordinated their Mentoring Scheme, and personally mentored poets into publication. Having previously been Poet-in-Residence at Aldrington House Day Hospital, he is currently Writer-in-Residence at Mill View Psychiatric Hospital, running the Creative Writing Workshop. He is also a book designer for Waterloo Press ([www.waterloopress.hove.co.uk](http://www.waterloopress.hove.co.uk)).

Members of the Writers Forum are presently working on autobiography and memoir. Alan distinguishes the two saying "Autobiography is an account of one's entire life so far – normally chronological. Memoir is an account of a particular period in one's life which is of the most significance to the author, written in a more personal form. Both genres are autobiographical narratives. Some Forum members have already started, and are already producing some highly promising pieces of writing.

"What is wonderful about life writing is that it can jog old memories, pieces of a pattern that makes us who we are today. One of the reasons I am encouraging members to write about their lives is slightly selfish: I want to read them. I – and others of my generation – want to know about your life stories, since these can cast more light on a past of which

you were a part, a witness. I want your past to come back to life on the page. The most effective way to do this is by describing it, every detail you can remember, no matter how mundane it might seem to you. Future Forum exercises will be focusing on description in particular.

"For the month in between each Forum, the actual writing process comes in. This is for you to do in your spare time, whether by longhand, type, Dictaphone, or on computer. For those who write on computer, you are invited to e-mail me your works-in-progress for one-to-one feedback. For those of you who prefer writing in longhand, you are invited – as is every member – to bring your pieces in to share with the rest of the Forum for feedback. And there's always our Forum's tireless typist, Shirley, to type up your longhand manuscripts.

"I would like to invite any St Dunstaners who enjoy creative writing – whether prose or poetry – to come and join in with our Writers Forum on the first Saturday morning of each month. I know there are many budding poets and writers among you so don't be shy, there's a place waiting for you. For those of you who would like to be involved but have difficulties travelling in, you can still contribute to our monthly exercises and send me any works-in-progress you would like to feedback on via e-mail. So do drop me a line at [therecusant@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:therecusant@yahoo.co.uk) any time, or call me on 01273 693527, if you are not on e-mail. There's plenty of room, so I hope to hear from you soon."

Dates for next year's Writers Forum meetings will be included in the December issue of **St Dunstan's Review**.

## NEW VETERANS MINISTER

NEW FACES AT MOD: North Durham MP Kevan Jones was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Veterans in last month's shake up of Government responsibilities. The son of a miner, he was Deputy Leader of Newcastle City Council before becoming an MP. Since being elected he has served as a member of the Defence Select Committee and has visited Iraq and Afghanistan. He was responsible for legislation preventing big stores from opening on Christmas Day and as a keen golfer can probably expect an invitation to play with St Dunstan's Golf Club.

Other changes at the MOD include The Rt Hon John Hutton, MP who was appointed Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence. Previously, he has been Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and had also served as State Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Mr Hutton was made a member of the Privy Council in 2001 and in May 2005 entered the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Quentin Davies, MP has been appointed Minister for Defence Equipment and Support. He was first elected as a Conservative MP in 1987 but joined the Labour Party last year. He was named Backbencher of the Year by *The Spectator* in 1997.

The Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth, MP remains Minister of State for the Armed Forces and the Rt Hon Baroness Taylor of Bolton remains Minister of State for International Defence and Security.

Changes were also taking place at the Department of Work and Pensions.

Jonathan Shaw, MP was appointed Minister for Disabled People. Prior to this he was a Parliamentary Under Secretary at Defra where his responsibilities covered marine and fisheries, landscape, inland waterways, rural affairs and local environment quality. As an MP, he has been involved with Education and Skills and was an Assistant Government Whip as well as being a member of the Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee. Previously, he worked for Kent County Council in child protection, adoption, fostering and children leaving care. He is a qualified social worker and once worked as a fruit picker on Kent farms.

The Rt Hon Tony McNulty became Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform at the Department for Work and Pensions. He has been an MP since 1997 involved with immigration and transport matters. He was also Parliamentary Private Secretary to David Blunkett.

The Rt Hon Rosie Winterton, MP became Minister of State for Pensions Reform. She has also been involved with transport and health issues.

Burnley MP Kitty Ussher became Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Work and Pensions. She previously worked as Britain's chief economist in Europe.

The Rt Hon James Purnell, MP remains Secretary of state for Works and Pensions and Lord McKenzie of Luton continues as Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Lords

Over at the Department of Health, Phil Hope, MP became Minister of State for Care

Services. His previous positions in central government include: Minister for the Third Sector, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, and Private Secretary to former Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott.

The Rt Hon Alan Johnson, MP remains Secretary of State for Health, Ben Bradshaw, MP remains Minister of State for Health Services, the Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo, MP remains Minister of State for Public Health, while Anne Keen, MP and Professor The Lord Darzi of Denham both remain Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Health respectively in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

## ACTION FOR BLIND ON THE MOVE

OUT AND ABOUT: Action for Blind People's Mobile Sight Loss Information Service will be out and about in the following areas this month. In the week commencing 3 November they will be in Warwickshire, followed by Manchester in the Old Trafford, Sale and Timperley areas.

For the week commencing 10 November, they move to York and Selby, then the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Then week commencing 24 November sees them visit Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean, followed by Walkden, Greater Manchester and then Glossop

Full details for time and place for each location can be found on the AFB website [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk) or by checking with their National Helpline Number 0800 915 4666 nearer the time.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

GIVING YOU THE MAGAZINE YOU DESERVE: We would like to thank everyone who took part in the recent St Dunstan's Review survey. Your comments were very reaffirming of the decisions made each month in producing the magazine and we also look forward to incorporating your suggestions over the coming year. For example, we will revert to an A4 page in the new year. Computer training, gardening and handicrafts were widely cited as desirable features for the future.

The Ten most popular items in the October St Dunstan's Review were:

- 1) The Roedean Wren
- 2) Noticeboard and Founder's Day Awards
- 3) Letters
- 4) Schools programme
- 5) Penfold's Progress
- 6) Ten Questions
- 7) Royal Marines Band Concert
- 8) Ask ROD
- 9) Rock'n'Roll Concert
- 10) Poets' Corner

The least favourite items were:

- 1) Balancing the Books
- 2) Golf report
- 3) Rock'n'Roll Concert
- 4) Sheffield recycling
- 5) Chairman, Family News, Ten Questions, Reunion Round-Up, Poets' Corner, Writers' Forum and Beer of the Month

The draw winners were Arthur Turner of Leamington Spa, Randall Williams of Tiverton, and Thomas Smith of Stafford.

# 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

### Imperial to a point

I realise that it is only a minor point but a very confusing one. What a weird idea to describe the Christmas card sizes in Imperial inches to a decimal point, for example 4.76 by 6.76 inches which after much head scratching I think means to be a little over four and three-quarters and six and three-quarters inches, a tenth of an inch each way over I believe.

A more confusing one, which I am still working, is Ref: DUN24x, size 7.56 by 5.12 inches. I can usually work in Imperial or metric but combining the two makes my head hurt.

This letter should probably be addressed to the printers and I will make a point of telling them next time I am in Tonbridge. I suppose the only thing that matters is that the blooming things fit into the envelopes.

Vic Claridge,  
Orpington, Kent

• Strangely enough, the Review's Simon Rogers does own a ruler that divides inches into tenths rather than the usual eighths and sixteenths. However, when the Fundraising department submitted the Christmas Card copy he checked their measurements using a ruler marked in ems and ens.

The decimal divide was most likely introduced through using an online conversion engine which, being a computer, gives a decimal answer even when sixteenths would be better. Constraints on page space meant that we did not spell out the fractions in full.

### Well done Ted!

May I, if it's appropriate, redress the balance a fraction on *Balancing the Books* by saying a thank-you to Ted Bunting for carrying out his work as critic for so long. I think he has given a tremendous amount of thought to each critique, whether the books given to him for perusal, were

good, bad or indifferent. A thankless job sometimes, I'm sure. And anyway, selecting a book that will be liked by everybody, would be like writing up a menu for a battalion which doesn't produce a word of complaint!

Alan Wortley,  
Eastbourne, East Sussex

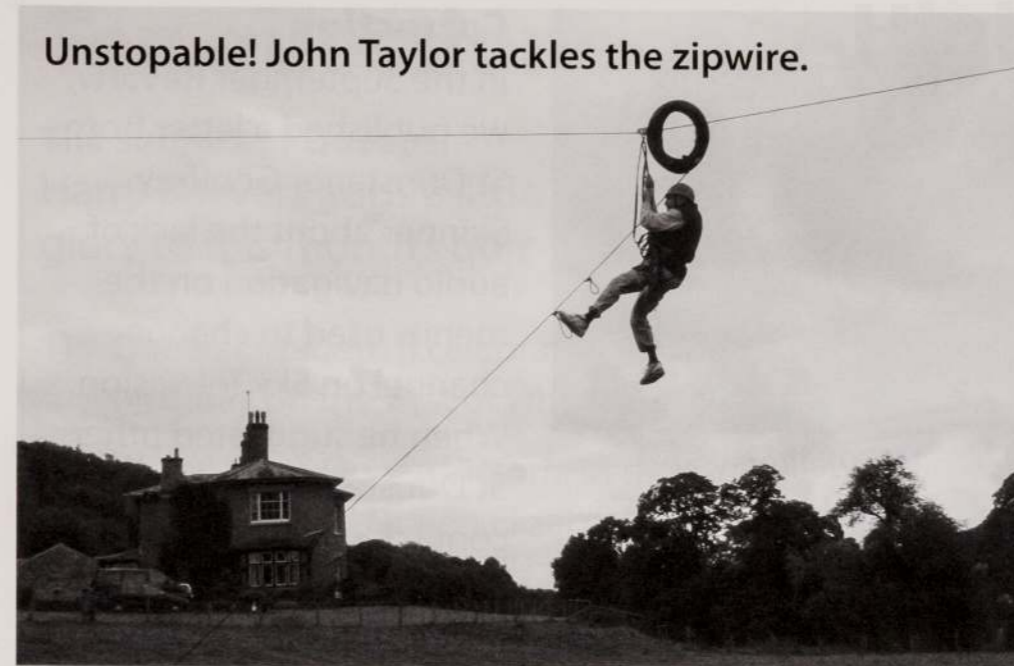


### In memory of Dorothy

We were sad to hear of Dorothy Wright passing. She was always a keen competitor in the air rifle matches we had with St Dunstan's Acoustic Rifle Club. Please accept our respectful condolences.

Patrick A Sidnell,  
Chairman,  
Wiltshire Acoustic  
Shooting Club

Unstoppable! John Taylor tackles the zipwire.



### Transforming the world for the future

Being made a St Dunstaner has been like joining an extended family with brothers, sisters, sons and daughters dotted all over the country.

When you loose your sight the world around you seems to be falling away into a bottomless pit, a situation you can see no way out of.

Becoming a St Dunstaner slowly transforms that into another world, a world where anything is possible. That's what's happened to me and I know for many other St Dunstaners alike.

Being a young and active 70 year old I was able to spend a week skiing in Italy last January, go up in a micro light aircraft from Popham Airfield in Hampshire, participate in the London to Brighton cycle ride raising

money for the British Heart Foundation, and have just returned from north Wales after a activity week where we water skied, canoed, went white water rafting, gorged walked shot down on the zip wire, walked a rope assault course, and shot a few arrows.

Our last day was spent in Surrey where we went off road driving in racing cars, four track land rover and clay pigeon shooting. I thought losing my sight was going to be the end but my life is so full that things could not be better.

I could not have done any of this without the help and support of the superb staff of St Dunstan's, thank you all for making my life happy and enjoyable despite my disability.

John Taylor,  
Findon, West Sussex

### The Oval Truth

I'm amazed at the controversy over the shape of the tables in the dining room at St Dunstan's Ovingdean. I have used both shaped tables, and I have found that the food tastes exactly the same.

I am blind in my left eye and deaf in my right ear, but I have never had difficulty holding conversation, whatever the shape of the tables. As for having round tables with white tablecloths, surely this is to make it look more like a restaurant than a workhouse?

The gentleman who suggested that the totally blind have difficulty finding the edge of a round table, this may be so, but these unfortunate people are always escorted to the right table and seated at the right seat. Surely the next complaint is not to be that the knives and forks are all right handed? So come on let us be thankful for the wonderful attention we are shown by the wonderful staff both in the dining room and elsewhere.

Finally, as a compromise, can we have oval tables? This should placate both sides!

Chris Spellacy  
Westkingsdown, Kent

### A fine memorial

I visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire on 28 September which I thoroughly enjoyed. The latest addition is the Memorial to all service personnel who died after the end of the Second World War. There is a memorial garden to every regiment and corps in the forces, even to a prisoner of war camp, also a section of the Burma railway. I also



visited the walkway and scented garden donated by St Dunstan's, this walkway leads from the main entrance to the chapel.

Ernest Dix,  
Great Haywood, Stafford

### Correction

In the September **Review**, we published a letter from St Dunstan's Geoffrey Skinner about the lack of audio navigation on the menus used to change channel on Sky Television. When he suggested other St Dunstaners might like to contact BSkyB to advocate audio menus the e-mail address should have read [accessiblecustomerservice@bskyb.com](mailto:accessiblecustomerservice@bskyb.com).

## Balancing the Books

**Ted Bunting** peers inside the surreal life of Robert Maxwell

### Maxwell: A Portrait of Power

Authors: Peter Thompson  
and Anthony Delano  
Reader: Alistair Maydon  
Catalogue No: 9665  
Duration: 12 hours, 53 minutes

History abounds with fat dictators. Take Mussolini, say, Idi Amin, or Henry VIII. No matter how many I might mention I expect you could easily suggest a couple more, each a greedy compulsive gambler loving secrecy, hating to be contradicted and holding scant regard for other people or his own stomach. Well now we can add Robert Maxwell to the list for he too ruled his empire with all the jealous ruthlessness of a Mao Tse Tung. A very complex character was "Captain Bob" as this splendidly informative book reveals. He was not so much a "self-made man"

as a self invented one; his very name was borrowed from the label on a coffee jar and I get the impression from his constant pretence that he himself didn't quite know who he was supposed to be. Maybe his monumental pomposity masked an underlying uncertainty. Without question a sense of the unreal pervades the whole Maxwell story; I found his habit of creating a series of companies and then robbing Peter to pay Paul particularly confusing though I must agree that the authors have tried valiantly to guide the reader through the maze. Without sacrificing truth, however, it would be impossible to disguise the fact that Robert Maxwell was a thoroughly obnoxious character. He was a fraud, a bully and a cheat so although his story is undoubtedly a fascinating one, I'm rather pleased I never met the bounder.

## Ten questions on...

### The subject of Queens

Harry Beevers adds a little crowning glory to this month's quiz

- 1) Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her real birthday on the 21st of which month?
- 2) Who played Queen Victoria in the film *Mrs Brown and Queen Elizabeth I in Shakespeare in Love*?
- 3) In which African country was Princess Elizabeth when she acceded to the throne in February 1952?
- 4) Which sporting event did Queen Elizabeth II attend on the 40th anniversary of her coronation?
- 5) In which of the services did the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, serve in World War II?
- 6) According to tradition, Queen Cleopatra is said to have bathed in the milk of which animal?
- 7) Which seaside resort has been described as "Queen of the Yorkshire coast"?
- 8) Queen Victoria went abroad for the first time when she made the first official visit by an English sovereign for over 300 years to which country?
- 9) What were presented for the first time to 62 men at Hyde Park on 26 June 1857 by Queen Victoria?
- 10) The composer Mozart is reported to have proposed marriage to which Austrian-born Queen when he was seven years old?

Answers can be found on page 39.

## High Sheriff visits



HIGH SHERIFF of East Sussex Hugh Burnett, OBE, DL, FCA and his wife returned to St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 18 September. They met with St Dunstaners who spoke of their lives during a tour of facilities at the training and residential centre. Pictured with Head of Care Jackie Greer and Chairman Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN, he became the first guest to have a consecutive entry in the Visitors' Book. He previously attended the concert performed by HM Band of the Royal Marines (Portsmouth).

## Blind Belgian sets new speed record

BELGIAN Luc Costermans, aged 43, has broken the world blind land speed record, on an airstrip in France. Mr Costermans topped 192 mph driving a Lamborghini Gallardo supercar at Istres, near Marseille, in southern France. He thanked his co-driver Guillaume Roman, saying: "I'm very, very happy. It's a team effort."

# Full house for Marines Band

by Simon Rogers

AROUND 600 people filled St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds for a bravura performance by The Band of the Royal Marines on 27 September. "It was absolutely fantastic," said St Dunstaner Tony Lee who organised the event with help from trustees and staff at the West Suffolk Voluntary Association for the Blind. Appreciative guests included

Deputy Lord Lieutenant Colonel Derek Bristow, the local High Sheriff, Lord Ivor, and the Mayor and Mayoress as well as St Dunstan's Chief Executive Robert Leader. Amongst the performers was one Sgt Ainsley who served on HS *Uganda* during the Falklands Crisis and had carried St Dunstaner Terry Bullingham into the surgeons when he was wounded. Tonight, however, it was his talent for playing

the trombone that was on display rather than his medical skills.

There was a proms-style element of pomp and circumstance as The Band of the Royal Marines played *Land of Hope and Glory* three times by popular acclaim with the audience waving St Dunstan's flags in appreciation. Such gusto assured the standing ovation that followed.

## A Century of TA



ONE HUNDRED years of the Territorial Army were celebrated at Preston Military Show on 20 September. St Dunstaner Bob Waller and his wife Margaret (above) were amongst visitors to St Dunstan's stand, as was St Dunstaner Dave Stuttard who served in the TA for 40 of those 100 years.

## Mad about the mud



Drivers Stan, Paul, Phil, Steve, and Gary, dragged Geraldine, Karen, Caroline, and Karen away from their duties at St Dunstan's Ovingdean for three-miles of mud, water and other obstacles. The team tackled the Royal Marine Commando Challenge near Exeter on 11 October.



## Duxford Air Show

Chris and Hazel Humphrey manned St Dunstan's trailer at the Duxford 90th Anniversary Air Show celebrating the early days of the Royal Air Force.

# Touch Wood bowlers do well in SpecSavers Stockport competition

IT'S EARLY DAYS, but a Crown Green bowling club for blind and partially sighted people recently finished as runners up in the SpecSavers sponsored competition at the Stockport Festival. The club is imaginatively called Touch Wood.



Touch Wood Bowlers proudly wear their medals awarded at the Stockport Festival in September.

Among the founder members is St Dunstaner Colin Gibbs, who is the Chairman. The club is affiliated to Parciau Bowling Club at Belle View Park in Wrexham. There are eight members and the club is actively trying to recruit more members.

The club began with a casual walk through the park by Colin and his wife,

Jenny and a challenge from Coach Martin Jones to have a go. They enjoyed it and were told by Martin that he was trying to introduce blind people to the sport. Colin advertised it to Vision Support in Wrexham and the club was formed.

Bowling takes place every Wednesday during the

season and there are four trained instructors to guide and care for the bowlers. At this point a 'Catch 22' comes into force because, coaching grants are only awarded as Start Up cost, and blind bowlers require coaches at every practise. The club has to raise £1,000 every season to reimburse its coaches, and is now launching a commercial and charity sponsorship scheme.



St Dunstaners Robert Richards and Colin Gibbs waiting their turn at a Touch Wood bowling match.

In September 2008 Touch Wood were the runners up in a competition, sponsored by SpecSavers, at the Stockport Festival. Next year they hope to have a sufficiently strong club to pick the winning side. If you live near enough to join Touch Wood, ring Colin on 01978 823550.



# World Sight Day turns out the lights for drawing competition

**W**ORLD SIGHT DAY 2008 on 9 October gave Year 9 school children from Notre Dame School an opportunity to experience life without sight at St Dunstan's Sheffield. They worked with REME St Dunstaner Simon Brown of Leeds on the latest Big Draw Challenge.



Simon makes suggestions on how to craft the poppies.

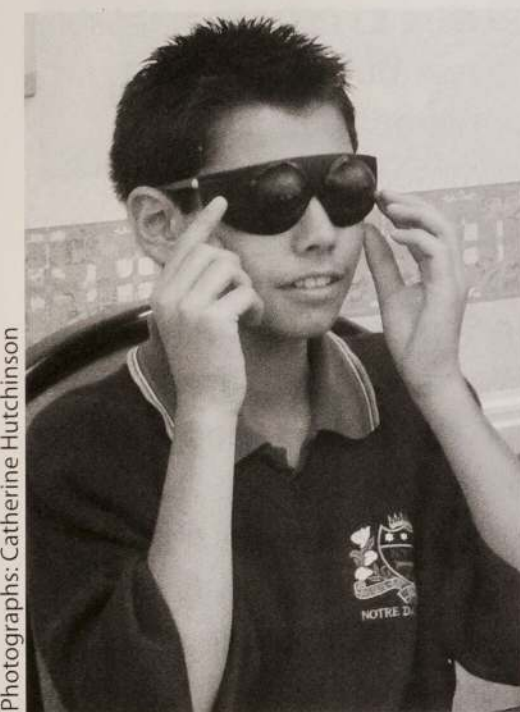
Pupils were hosted at the Sheffield Training Centre in a bid to raise awareness of the work St Dunstan's does and the importance of World Sight Day. This event came as the climax to a busy week where Billy Baxter had been

working in schools across Sheffield, raising awareness.

The session, delivered by Simon Brown and Education Project Officer Catherine Hutchinson, introduced the students to St Dunstan's. Despite their school being so close to the Sheffield centre, none of the pupils had ever heard of the charity! The children explored different forms of sight loss by trying Simulation Spectacles before embracing the Big Draw Challenge, as created by the staff at the Craft Workshop. The challenge required the students to make a crepe paper poppy whilst wearing a blind fold; they were not allowed to look at the equipment

or the finished product beforehand and had to just rely on their sense of touch and verbal instructions. The children said they "felt frustrated" and wanted to remove the blindfold. The event concluded with a question and answer session where a series of extremely thoughtful questions were directed at Simon.

"It was a great success; both fun and educational with students getting a true insight into how difficult it is to do simple tasks with no sight. It is so important that the younger generation are aware of the difficulties faced by those who are visually impaired," said Catherine Hutchinson.



Learning about life in a world without sight.

Photographs: Catherine Hutchinson

# Henry's life is now a best-seller

THE LONG LIFE of Henry Allingham is the subject of a new book co-written with Dennis Goodwin. Titled *Kitchener's Last Volunteer: The Life of Henry Allingham, Britain's Oldest Man and the oldest Surviving Veteran of the Great War*, the 240 page hardcover tome charts his life from the 19th century to the 21st. Usually priced £17.99, it can be bought for £10.79 on Amazon.co.uk.



Photograph: Leon Neal, PA Photos

Henry has recently been in the news, lending his voice along with that of actress Joanna Lumley in support of the Ghurkhas campaign for the right to live in the UK after their Service. The High Court decided in their favour on 29 September.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown meets St Dunstaner Henry Allingham, 112, one of only three surviving veterans of the First World War at the opening of the In Memoriam: Remembering the Great War exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London. Artefacts on display include the gun that was used to assassinate Archduke Ferdinand.

## Snowdrops on parade! Big salute!



Photograph: Bill Lyth

An arresting sight? Members, wives and guests of the newly formed South Downs Branch of the Royal Air Force Police Association visited St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 11 September. Some of them will be escorting St Dunstaners in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday.

THE BRITISH Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) called it the "Big Salute" and so it was! On 25 September they presented St Dunstan's with £15,129.41 raised by their listeners and viewers. St Dunstan's was one of five charities to benefit from the exercise, along with BLESMA, Veteran's Aid, Combat Stress and Headley Court.

# Edd's new vision for Racing Sight

Simon Rogers hears how one St Dunstaner wants to bring the thrills of horse racing to blind people in a stress free fashion



ONE ST DUNSTANER is making waves with a new online business, which he hopes will open up the thrills of "the sport of kings" to visually impaired people around the UK. He has combined his own passions for racing and computing in a venture that he hopes will eliminate the frustration that blind internet users experience if they attempt to use existing racing websites.

Sitting in the office that has become the hub of [www.racingsight.co.uk](http://www.racingsight.co.uk), Edd Francis of Washington, Tyne and Wear is anxious to make a point when he googles "racing UK" and calls up a sea of websites dedicated to the sport.

The Google bit is straightforward. Although Edd is unable to see the list of websites on his computer screen, his Jaws software reads them out in a fashion

that allows him to skip down the page with a few keystrokes. Settling on one link at random, he calls up a homepage covered in a dozen or more headlines, a couple of photographs and some advertising blocks placed left and right.

Except the blind web surfer will be greeted by a chant of "Blank line, blank line, blank line, blank line, blank line." This continues for a

while and is followed by something unintelligible. The blank lines resume and Edd is nowhere near hearing the headline of the hour.

"As a blind person, what am I supposed to do with that?" asks Edd. The answer was to launch his own website, a unique resource for the blind racing aficionado. "Because I had an interest in horse racing, once I learnt how to navigate the internet I used to go on to the internet sites and I just realised how difficult they are for someone who can't see to use," he said. "A lot of them are very complicated, a lot of them include photographs which don't explain what they are,

so you hit lots of blank spots on the internet site. A lot of them don't seem to lead together properly.

"I'll give you an example: most websites that you use, when you can see, they will have a home page and a list of things and when you press on one of the links all it does is drop some text into the bottom of the same page. Then that means you have to navigate all the way down to the bottom of the page to read it, which means if you can see and use a mouse you can navigate down just like that, but if you can't see, it becomes very difficult. You have to try and whiz through lots of other things to try and get to the text."

Edd served three years as a navigator in the Royal Air Force based in Germany and the UK. In civilian life, he trained as a journalist and became Newspaper Manager for the Newcastle Journal. However, he was seriously injured in a car accident, losing one eye. Initially, that didn't stop

him branching out in his own business publishing technical journals.

"Eventually I lost the sight in my other eye, so I wasn't able to continue," said Edd. "Luckily that's when St Dunstan's came along. I was living in pretty poor conditions with my family because having been unable to work we were in a dire financial situation.

"I was living in North Wales at the time and applied initially for a grant towards a computer system because I thought that was something I could do. Carol Henderson (Welfare Officer) came along and it all sort of developed from there. I've got to say that Carol saved my life in some respects because she got me into the St Dunstan's organisation and it went from there.

"I did the whole lot training wise but what I enjoyed was the computer work. I found it so interesting I kept developing my skills and just wanted to learn more and

more." As his plans for Racing Sight coalesced, the need for training increased and Edd tips his hat to some of St Dunstan's IT instructors.

"If it wasn't for Janis Sharp and David Hickey I wouldn't be at this position," he said. "Yes, I am keen to learn, but if it wasn't for Janis setting up the courses and David doing the work, I wouldn't be as good at navigating as I am. It is quite a complicated system and I still have to phone up for advice on occasion. I'm learning how to do new things on it everyday. It's only in the last month that I've learnt how to use a tabulated layout."

Edd has a master version of the website on a computer system in his office, using a combination of different software to create the pages that will be published online each and every day. "The original website was laid out as it would be in a Word document, but what we've done now is tabulate it so your heading goes in a certain place, your text goes in a certain place and you can put pictures in a certain place, and you can put margins in, but you need to learn how to navigate around them and keep a

## I've got to say that Carol saved my life

# We cover all of the race courses in the United Kingdom and Ireland

mental picture in your head of where you are.

"Which is not easy because Dolphin doesn't tell you where you are because it doesn't have the map files for Dreamweaver. I would love it if Dolphin came up with map files for Dreamweaver, but there are probably only a dozen people in the country who are blind and use Dreamweaver, so it's probably not economically worth their while. I suppose if I made enough money I would get a software engineer in to design the programme for me."

**D**espite the complications of setting up the pages for publication, Edd is adamant that he is creating a user-friendly product for his readers. "What I have tried to do with my website is design it in such a way that is easy for blind people to use it. It is link, link and you're there. There is nothing in between that's causing you problems, you can get to the text and read

it. I've also put in skip links so that people can move round and navigate around the site quickly, rather than having to up-arrow umpteen times to get where they want to be." So what will readers find if they log on to [www.racingsight.co.uk](http://www.racingsight.co.uk)? "We cover all of the race courses in the UK and Ireland, giving a full description going into the history and the layout. That's done in word pictures, so that if you are blind you can understand how the track is laid out. It explains where the jumps are, where the dips are, so you can create a mental picture in your mind. It also explains all the enclosures, the bars, the hospitality sections, it describes the disabled facilities at the track, it describes the fixtures for the year, the transport, how you get there, the accommodation, and this is something I'm developing now, it describes the local accommodation and we are starting to sell racing breaks and holidays. We've got together a stack of partnership hotels and the

vast majority have disabled facilities, so they will be user friendly for people who cannot see or are in a wheelchair.

"The beauty of what we're offering, we're calling it personalised racing breaks and holidays, is that it is all bespoke. So if you just want tickets, we can do that, if you want tickets and transport, we can arrange that. If it's a special occasion and you want a limousine, we can do that, if you want accommodation, we can do that. What we do is, we take all the worry of arranging it and we try to be as competitive as we can with all the prices of it as well.

"Hypothetically, if a St Dunstaner wanted to go from London to Haydock Park for a big race meeting, they wanted accommodation near the course and they wanted transport to take them backwards and forwards to the hotel, and they wanted tickets for the race course, we could take the worry of arranging that.



**St Dunstaner Edd Francis working hard at his computer to bring the latest racing news to his audience.**

"The website covers an awful lot more than just the racecourses. We've got a daily diary of race meetings and big races, we've got a regular news update everyday, we've got a betting update everyday, we've got a tipping system if people want to sign up for it, and we're developing a public notices section. So if race courses want to promote dinners or functions that are happening, they can do that through the website."

Anyone visiting the site will be greeted with a brief explanation of how to navigate around the site without using a mouse. "It's purely keyboard. If you can use a mouse you don't need

it, but this section will tell you how to get around the website quickly. If you have a problem, just come here and it tells you how you can do it."

Edd calls up his entry on Aintree and his screen reader commences to explain that the famous track is triangular in shape, has two ninety degree bends. "It's word pictures, you know there are 16 fences, that they have particular features. I've done that for every course. Edd taps another key and details of disabled parking are read out.

So where did this interest in racing come from? "Racing is in the family to a certain extent," reveals Edd. "My uncles were farmers and two

were involved with point-to-point and that sort of thing, and my father was always a keen follower of racing. He wasn't a gambler, he just enjoyed horse racing and right from when I was six or seven he used to take me to the local horse meetings, so I've always had an interest in it and that has developed over the years. I actually love the sport, it's not the gambling side though I do have a flutter from time to time, it's everything that goes with the sport that I find so fascinating.

"I have lots of poignant moments. I remember when I was about 11, my father and I went to Bangor-on-Dee Races in North Wales. He let me have a little bet on a horse and it was 15 lengths clear coming to the last fence; and it dropped dead over the last fence and died. That's something that sticks in my mind.

"I've seen some superb races that have been neck and neck but I think my favourite one was at York, the Juddmonte International and there were these two horses called Belmez and Snurge. They literally locked horns for the final three furlongs, you couldn't put

a paper between them, neither of them wanted to be headed. I think in terms of races I've seen when I could still see that was the best.

"But I've seen lots of races. That's what I love about it, the competition and the sport – and also the camaraderie. I find that racing people are very friendly and generous. I still go racing from time-to-time, not so much this year because the website is taking up much of my time but I hope as it develops I will get more time to do so. One of the things I am seriously looking at doing over the next 12 months is start up a horse racing club for blind and visually disabled people so that they can actually part own a horse, so that they can enjoy racing that way.

"I'm lucky in one sense in that I went to a lot of race tracks when I could see, so with some places I can remember what they look like and if the commentator says they are three furlongs from the finish I know where they are. So I can enjoy the race that way, but obviously I do miss immensely the cut and thrust of the end of it. In some cases I will end up saying to my wife 'Well who won?' You miss that visually

## I like any horse that gives 100 per cent

acuity, but I do love going to the races. I wouldn't miss it for the world.

"I've done maybe half of the 60 tracks in the UK. York is a favourite! I've had some fantastic days there. I have an affinity for York and the Yorkshire crowd is very knowledgeable, they know about their racing, so you are in good company. Actually the one track I would really like to go to isn't in this country, it's Galway. They have a seven-day festival which I am told is an experience. Ireland pretty much stops for the week and they expect crowds of 30-40,000. So it's a phenomenon. It's on the west coast of Ireland so you wouldn't think you would get the crowds going there but they do!"

What about the horse? "I like any horse that gives a hundred per cent. If you get that then you are getting value for money. It depends on the class of the race but you do get a lot of horses in the lower races that give

110 per cent, so I suppose you have an affinity for those horses as well. If I had to put my hand on one horse it would be Red Rum because I was at Liverpool when he won for the third time and like many people I had tears streaming down my face. It was an emotional experience. That was around 1977.

"There's a horse Aiden O'Brien's got, called Black Bear Island, it has only run twice and has won quite recently. It's a full brother to High Chaparral, the Derby winner. My spies tell me it's a very useful horse and I'm looking forward to that running as a three-year-old certainly."

And jockeys? "I've got a great deal of respect for Aiden O'Brien's stable jockey Johnny Murtagh. He has come back from immense difficulties, overweight, alcoholism, and he's probably now the finest jockey in Europe. So I've got a great deal of respect for him. If you go back through history, you've got Lester Piggot, Joe Mercer,

John Dunwoody... The list is endless. The thing is with these people it's not just what they do on the track. I mentioned John Dunwoody, he's just done that trek across the Antarctic to raise money for charity even though he quit racing years ago. These are real people who care about what they do. They care about everything. I think I admire people of that ilk who are prepared not only to put everything into their sport or what they do, but are prepared to put something back into society as well."

Developing the website has created an intense schedule for Edd. "There are a whole stack of things that we will be developing over the next 12-18 months - two years, but there is such a load of work already that I need to start making some serious money off the website before I get round to it," he said.

"The news section and anti-post betting section have to be updated everyday, but I have developed a good network of contacts throughout the industry, so I get updates from everybody from the British Horse racing association to most of the leading bookies. We get



dozens of press releases every day so we select what we want from that. I say 'we', I mean, I select what we want and promote it. I was trained as a journalist anyway, so I can write things in a way people will understand.

"One of the things we do on the news section and Anti-Post betting section is keep it brief. The difference between a newspaper or magazine and the internet is that the attention span is a lot shorter on the internet, so you have to keep it short and snappy."

Industry response has been positive. "It has been very well received," adds Edd. "I recently got in touch with Timeform, who deal with all the handicapping of horses, and wrote saying 'I don't know if you've heard of me, and they wrote back saying 'Oh yes, we've heard about you'. Once you become part of the establishment it is self-perpetuating, but you have to get there first. We haven't done any hard and

fast marketing yet, but we are getting thousands of hits each month, that's people who are visiting the website, going into and reading what they want, taking the information they need. It's gone up rather than down, so from that point I am very happy. It has been positive all the way, but I haven't done much promotion yet.

"I've tried to make the website user friendly. One of the advantages of being blind, and I know this sounds daft, but you have to set things up in a simple format if you are going to navigate them. Some websites are horrendous. The ones I hate the most are the ones that say 'If you go to the margin on the right ...' yes, but how do I get there? They don't give you advice on how you can get there. What I've tried to do is create a website that even a five year old child can navigate.

"Actually, a five-year-old child is probably better at navigating it than I am!"

# Dartmoor Yompers raise over £1,000 per mile!

Royal Marines group make marvellous effort for wounded Servicemen

St Dunstaner Andy Mahoney rejoices in the spirit of the Corps.

Simon Rogers reports

St Dunstaner Steve Sparkes kept a steady pace.



St Dunstaners Colin Williamson, Gerry Jones and Pete Walker with Jen and Martin Shannon.



Tony and Kosy Haskey were in the lead.



Billy and Barb on horseback



Arthur and crew make a determined effort on a steep and rocky hill.

**I**T'S A BOOTIE THING! I know that because a couple of people walked by wearing t-shirts saying just that. And pretty much everyone I speak to is a Royal Marine, or related to one, except Army St Dunstaner Billy Baxter is up at the front riding a delightful horse named Buddie, entrusted to him by Barbara Goss who is riding slightly ahead on Azzi. Just don't tell Steve Sparkes that Billy is the pathfinder.

We're out on Dartmoor on 27 September where the weather is being exceedingly kind, having burnt off the early morning fog leaving blue skies all the way. Around 200 people are walking 12 miles from RM Bickleigh, across undulating countryside that is home to ponies, sheep, cattle and probably a few other things.

This yomp is the result of a conversation at Spean Bridge earlier this year that lead organisers Bernie and Oonagh Reffell to stage a sponsored walk in aid of Service men and women injured in Iraq, Afghanistan and other current theatres of conflict. Members of the website Once A Marine Always A Marine have taken the idea to heart and turned

out in force. Oonagh and Bernie were pleasantly surprised that the funds raised have reached an estimated £12,800. They were also quite hospitable in welcoming a group of St Dunstaners into each assembled team of walkers.

For some it is a walk of honour in memory of a lost loved one, there is a consensus that the modern serviceman deserves a better lot. It's a response that Craig Lundberg inspired in some who made the Spean Bridge Speed March and a few people with connections to his regiment are out walking today.

As Billy and Barb ride into the distance, the walkers appear, following their trail. Royal Marine St Dunstaner Tony Haskey and his wife Kosy wave as a gentle walk down becomes a not-so gentle walk up. They even break into a run for a while.

St Dunstaner Andy Mahoney, having been re-acquainted with some embarrassing stories about his time in the Marines, is in his element and seems quite assured as he strides past the opening of an abandoned mine.

One young Marine, Arthur "Bungy" Williams leaves his own inspirational mark. After a car accident he was left without the use of his legs. While he's getting a friendly push on the slopes, the 21-year-old is putting a bit of welly into turning those wheels himself.

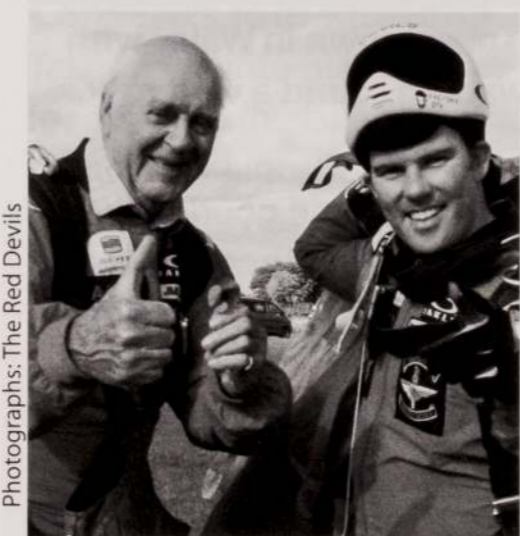
St Dunstaner Steve Sparkes comes through with a group that wisely leaves the map reading Richard McCrow from St Dunstan's Headquarters. Following up in the distance St Dunstaners Colin Williamson, Pete Walker, and Gerry Jones take the scenic route before they make it back to the Plume of Feathers in Princetown. A coach house since 1785, it was a welcoming weekend base for the walkers.

"You know when Billy came over the hilltop on that horse," says Taff, one former Royal Marine who was marshalling the first rendezvous point. "He was laughing and joking as he was riding and that felt great. I thought if he can do something like that despite being blind and if what we did today helps someone else do the same, it has got to be worthwhile."

# David jumps with the Devils

**T**HE SON of a First World War St Dunstaner made a parachute jump in aid of Help for Heroes on 9 October. David Owen made a tandem parachute jump with the Red Devils in Cirencester in aid of the charity which has been supporting the intensive care facilities at Headley Court in Surrey.

A former soldier himself, he was spurred on by what he considers to be a lack of official support for soldiers sent to warzones around the world. Describing himself as "nearly 80", he felt compelled to try and redress the balance and signed up for a 12,000ft jump with the Army's Parachute Display Team - The Red Devils.



David and Danny toast a successful mission.



David Owen in freefall with the Red Devils.

"We had about 40 seconds free fall reaching a speed of 120mph. At 5,000 feet we opened the parachute and glided down to earth. I wish that bit took longer," said David. "My co-pilot's name was Private Danny 'Tango' Wood of 1 Para and he had been with the Red Devils for about a year. I had specifically asked for a Tandem Master from 1 Para as I had a three year tour with them in the early 1950s. Private Wood will be rejoining 1 Para in December when they are to go on another six month tour of Afghanistan.

"You may note a poppy which was clenched in my teeth all the way down so as to support The Royal British Legion." David's jump has raised almost £17,000 in

sponsorship but he is already looking at ways of increasing that, including putting a team together for the Eggheads television quiz.

David's father was a St Dunstaner Captain William Owen of the South African Mounted Rifle Brigade, apparently the first South African soldier to be blinded during the First World War, certainly one of the early intake at Regents Park in 1915.

Anyone wishing to add to David's total can find out more online at [www.bmycharity.com/V2/davidsparajump](http://www.bmycharity.com/V2/davidsparajump) or write to him (cheques should be made out to Help for Heroes) at Southdown House, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3YL.

# It's a Rock and Rhyl lifestyle!

St Dunstaner Wendy Kane is over the moon as the exuberant anarchy of the Activity Week splashes down in North Wales



More Stingray than Starship, St Dunstan's Activity Week crew splashdown in Wales with Brian, Alex, James, John, Bill, Mike, Charlie, Maria and others wading round a waterfall.

## Starship St Dunstan's Captain's log: Sunday

ONCE AGAIN the Activity Week went off with a bang! Maria Pikulski and myself met in Chester at 3pm. We were to be picked up by the

rest of the crew travelling up from Brighton around 5pm. No where to leave our cases and it's raining. Oh where shall we take cover? Nice pub across the road for a weary traveller we both agree. Where does time go when your are enjoying good

company and good cheer? Lots of good cheer! Or beer, or maybe a G&T - or four!

St Dunstan's space shuttle arrives and off we go on our merry way into the unknown. Brian, our galactic space shuttle bus driver, who

can go where no other man has dared to go before (the intrepid warrior!) took us into the black hole. We felt a bit like Major Tom sitting in his tin can. Space shuttle has minor collateral damage! But we all land safe and well.

Arrive at Open Outdoors and all dive in bedrooms for best beds. Maria gave into me when I said I wanted to sleep near the window. Little did I know that when it came to retire, (Maria and Sue Eyles were fast asleep) creeping with Fred (Win Jordan), trying not to wake anyone, mine was like sleeping on a bed of nails! Every spring was digging into me. Trying to stop giggling and trying to half inch a duvet from spare bed which had everyone's luggage on was something else. Serves me right!

## Captain's log: Monday

Takes us all into planet Rhyl for a day on the lake, water skiing, kayaking, bombing around on a donut, great fun, first time for all doing the water skiing and its like falling off a log! Kill Bill, who had never been in the water for over 20 years, overcame his fears and did us all proud. The weather on planet Rhyl was cold and wet. Our



St Dunstaner Alan Sharp speeds over the waves with Alex.

oxygen supply depleted, we returned to base, and hot showers, good grub and evening entertainment from our Telly Tubbies (Sports & Rec department) for the annual trivia quiz. The Turretes v AA Turretes winning by a bleep bleep!

## Captain's log: Tuesday

Geared up once again in space suits and helmets (wet suits and hard hats) to explore the rocky terrain of Denbighshire's waterfalls and crags. Met one or two aliens on route but they all ignored us as they are used to lunatics invading and thought us no threat to their species.

Back to base at 14:00 hours, then onto the assault course for the afternoon.

This is where you need your strength to get over obstacles, like rope walking, climbing rickety ladders up 15 foot trees to jump off the top and land safely at the bottom no bones broken (much easier when we do it on the moon, less gravity and all that!). Lack of Earth's oxygen makes one do the most death defying things at times.

Spent the night in Star Wars bar, tasting some of planet Wales's real ale. Crew catching up on the day's events and looking forward to our next adventure into the unknown. Some of the crew go down with inter galactic space travel sickness, so a few men down on our tight ship for some white water rafting. Must be something in the water! Not

the real ale some tried and said it was a bit dodgy!!?

### **Captain's Log: Wednesday**

Off we all go in the shuttle pod (minibus) on our adventurous white water exploration. Kill Bill (Bill Godden), now very adept in holding his breath for hours on end, and ready to face the onslaught of the dreaded wet stuff once more, bless him. Yet again, we are packed into wet suits, helmets and bullet proof vests (life vests) same thing really! We were taken to our vessels in two groups, the weaker sex in one raft, and the women in the other! The captain of the vessel told us how to manoeuvre

the raft and how not to fall in the ever swirling torrent of white stuff. This all the crew did exceptionally and with great gusto as the captain hit his head on a low flying UFO (branch) and fell into the bubbling inferno, feeling decidedly stupid. We rescued him and with that he treated us all to a jolly good drowning. Back to base once again and the Star Wars bar for an evening of more of the other wet stuff.

### **Captain's log: Thursday**

Last day on planet Wales! Today's activity is team building. Still pouring it down on this lonely planet, even the sheep have got wellies on! The first lesson of the day is to try and blow

a whistle from outside a circle of radioactive waste (cow pat). The whistle is two foot above our heads and as soon as someone blew it, with hands tied behind their backs, it was raised once again another foot, and so on until we had to decide who was the lightest person to climb up onto all of us and blow that darned thing. Gemma said she was the lightest, and as we all have really bad eye sight who were we to disagree? Gemma you lied! Loose some weight girl!!

Our second-in-command Tony Watson had to go in his space buggy (wheelchair) across the rugged terrain, which was covered in space slime (mud). He ended up, or should I say down, on his rump and did an Olympic free fall slide to the bottom. Ten out of ten for that Tony. Finally got him back on his wheels and with some of our crew. Mike Scholes, the intrepid hot air balloonist, organised how we should get him back up to the top. Talk about team building! What a team! We didn't fly him up if that's what you are thinking, but it would have been a great idea. It would have been like an episode from *Little Britain*, with Tony saying something like "don't like it!"



Strangely dry, but not for long! Our intrepid St Dunstaners prepare themselves for some white-water rafting.



St Dunstaner Charlie Eastwood goes skiing while John Patterson, Mike Scholes and Sue Eyles wait their turn.

We had to climb a tree, and it was a big tree, to get onto the zip wire, which took us across the valley, and into what looked like a cliff face. John T did us proud as he always does, and with aplomb, good on you, our fellow nutter.

Time to say our farewells to the instructors at the centre. They gathered us all together and told us that it was an experience and a pleasure in meeting the St Dunstaners, adding that most times they have to encourage the groups that go there, but with us it was the exact opposite, and that they held their breaths at times and fingers crossed that we all

got to the other end. Now we are leaving planet Wales and returning to Earth, with our Captain Brian Crash em and Bash em, who is our pilot on Plummet Air Lines. He informed us that we would be cruising at an altitude of 3ft and travelling at about 60mph. We had to make a detour to drop off Jimmy McCann, who was feeling a bit poorly, so his son picked him up and took him home, hope your feeling better mate! Back to Brighton around eight hours later and into the bar.

### **Captain's log: Friday**

We all meet up in the foyer at 08:00 hrs, less Charlie Eastwood, who is the next



St Dunstaner Mike Scholes jumps in on the high wire.

casualty from dickey tum, sorry about that Charlie. We are going to Redhill in Surrey for a day of off road driving. We arrived to a great cooked breakfast, to set us up for the morning's fun.

One team went clay pigeon shooting and the other speeding around a dirt track in a buggy that we were informed had a Ferrari engine and did 0-60 in 3.5 seconds!! Our team (Wendy, Fred, Mike, James Poole, Gemma, Sue, and Kill Bill) went shooting first. Great stuff that was. Fred got them all, and we thought she did very well. As for me, I am glad I don't have to shoot my dinner or else I would starve.



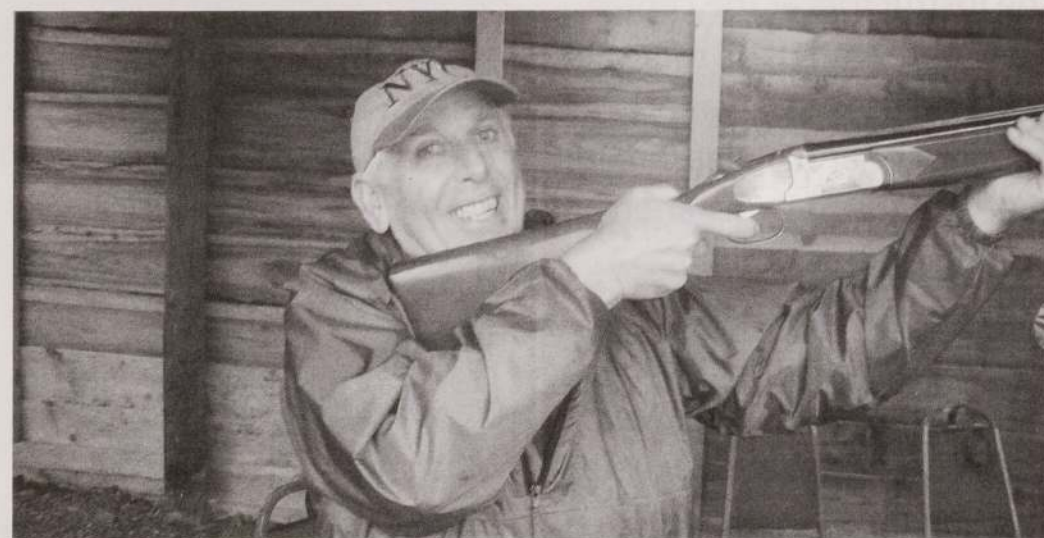


**Allegedly this is St Dunstaner Maria Pikulski after her drive.**

Back to base, and the other team return from dirt tracking. Well it looks like them, looked more like swamp monsters, eating mud, and covered from head to foot in the stuff. Oh my god! What have we let ourselves in for? As we walk across the muddy field we all feel in trepidation as to what we are about to let ourselves in for. I go first, and as I was a speed freak when I could drive I thought I would just go for it. I did, we belted around the track, kicking up mud and grass, doing 98 degree turns, and sliding around the track at what seemed like 100 mph. The poor instructor who had to sit with us lot every time took it in all good fun. James drove like a posh chauffeur, and really looked

the part. Win Jordan( Fred) was so funny and we all nearly died laughing when she got out the car.

Next is off roading in Discovery Land Rovers. Wow! To be back behind a wheel again is great. We all drove up hills that seemed impossible. It felt as though



**St Dunstaner John Taylor listens for those flying clays.**

we were upside down, then when we finally go to the top, it was feet off everything and down we went, just like being on a roller coaster, only we were the drivers (scary or what?). The two wheels on a slope that was 90 degrees and we all fell to one side and were waiting for the vehicle to tip over and we all would be crushed, but it never happened. Mike hit an old shed on the track, smashed the front light and dented the bumper, but don't tell him! All in all a fantastic day, we all thoroughly enjoyed our experiences of being able to drive once more. We thank you all at Priory Events

Back to Brighton, we were told that due to sickness, we were not able to go back to the big house, but it was arranged that we all stay off base and have our annual

fancy dress and dinner at the local Weatherspoons in Brighton Marina. What a great night we had, it was a Rock&Pop theme this year. A boat load of celebrities turned up for the nights event, including Rod Stewart, Frankie Vaughan, Iggy Pop, Cheeky Girls, Brittany Spears, Abba, Ozzy Osborne, and a few of the old rockers from the 60s and 70s. What a sight though, as we had to all get taxis to the place, and walk through the Marina in our gear. We must have looked pretty weird, or maybe not, after all it was Brighton and everything goes! We would like to thank all the sports department staff Louise, Alex, Steve (who informed us at the last minute it was his birthday, bless him), Gemma, Mandy, Andrew. Without you all it wouldn't have happened, and we were so glad it did! What a week! Also our fantastic driver Brian, who spurs everyone on, keeps us safe, (most of the time!) but keeps our spirits high and is a crucial part in Activity Week.

So until next year guys, take care, it was a pleasure to be with you all, through the tears and the laughter, it's what make us St Dunstaners proud to be part of a family.

## Amazing elephants

**Constance Halford-Thompson recalls witnessing an amazing polo match played on the backs of elephants**

**K**UNDON, our excellent courier, sought us out that night and said we were in luck. "Be out at eight for the Elephant polo, a film is being made to promote the hotel and they have laid on elephant polo." We were out on the dot!

Tables had been laid for a sumptuous breakfast, all in white with many blue ribbons festooning them, each decorated with bowls of white roses, and covered with blue and white striped awnings and ropes around the arena made of more white roses.

A most colourful band arranged themselves under a tree. The air was soft and warm and as the sun appeared, the cicadars were singing, the peacocks began to call with their eerie tone and, as the elephants lumbered in trumpeting, highly decorated with fantastic designs, followed by a couple of colourful camels, covered in gaudy tassels. It was magic. We

were asked to sit and eat, taking part in the film, while watching the amazing sight of the polo played with huge blue balls.

The players, armed with long polo sticks, mounted the half kneeling elephants and were very precariously balanced on their backs. We watched the amusing sight of the polo played with huge blue balls.

The elephants adored it and tried hard to either kick, pass or stamp on the ball. All this taking place in the lovely gardens. The sun was now overhead, so the slow and furious game ended. The music was fading and we then talked to the elephants until they were sadly taken away. A morning not to forget.

The World Elephant Polo Association Championship will be contested in Nepal, 30 November- 6 December. Current champions are Chopard from Hong Kong, but they face stiff competition from Scotland.

# It's the end of the Great War

Collections and Archives delve 90 years back into St Dunstan's Review's November 1918 issue to find out how news of the Armistice was greeted by blinded Servicemen at Regents Park

**A**LWAYS EBULLIENT, 11 November 1918 gave St Dunstan's Founder Sir Arthur Pearson exceptional news with which to start his regular *Notes to the Chief* column in **St Dunstan's Review**. He started with a simple headline: PEACE.

Ninety years ago this month, The Great War came to an end. Kaiser William abdicated on 9 November and two days later at the 11th hour of the 11th day, a cease fire brought a physical close to a conflict that had killed a generation.

Some ten million people were reckoned to have been killed and of the surviving British troops 13,011 officers and men had been pensioned for loss of sight from the outbreak of War to 31 December 1918.

Sir Arthur was keen for St Dunstaners to take pride in their military service and also in what



St Dunstaners poured out of classrooms and workshops cheering and whistling at the news of the Great War's End.

they might achieve in the future. "Though the actual details of Peace will not be completed for some time to come, the signing of the Armistice and the cessation of hostilities mean the end of the terrific struggle in which you men of St Dunstan's have played so prominent a part," he then wrote. "I know the tremendous enthusiasm which filled the heart of everyone of you when the great news came along, and

I think that I have entered sufficiently intimately into your lives and feelings to be able to really appreciate the extent of your triumphant joy. You fellows have given very much to attain the wonderful results which have been reached; and I believe your feeling of triumphant enthusiasm is in true relation to the extent of the sacrifice you made - in other words, I do not believe that any body of men living

to-day have more cause for jubilation at the magnificent success of our arms, or that any body of men are more sincerely stirred by this feeling of jubilation."

Despite the end of hostilities, Sir Arthur recognised that his Blind Army still had a more personal fight that would continue for years to come.

"Just as when you were in the War you fought gallantly until you could fight no more, so I am sure you will as gallantly continue the fight which you have begun against the new enemy who has assailed you. Blindness must be conquered by the St Dunstaner just as thoroughly and completely as he and his comrades conquered the Germans. It was British grit - and in the term British, I, of course, include the men from all over the Empire - which enabled the Allies to stick out the War until they triumphed. It is British grit which will enable every one of you to finish off this new fight just as completely and just as triumphantly.

"To the men who have left St Dunstan's; the men who are still here; and the men who are yet to come, I say: -

"Stick to your guns; hang on to your defences; repulse this spiritual foe when he attacks you with gloom and misgivings; attack him with persistent courage and cheerful determination, and "down him" as you and those who fought with you, "downed" the physical foe whom you have vanquished. Remember that we St Dunstaners are setting a great example to the whole world of the blind. Carry our banner high, and show the people who can see that, much as many of them seem to doubt the fact, a blind man can be a normal citizen in practically every sense of the term."

A few pages later, the **Review** turned to the reaction of St Dunstaners in an article titled Cessation of Hostilities, Excitement at St Dunstan's. "Nowhere, we feel sure, was the news of the signing of the armistice greeted with more enthusiasm," it opened. "The intelligence reached us over the telephone, and was quickly communicated, to classrooms, lecturer rooms, and workshops. Sir Arthur gave instructions that work was to cease for the day, and men began to pour out of the training rooms, shouting, cheering, and whistling.

All of St Dunstan's work is attended to promptly, and much of it is of an urgent nature, so that secretarial and after-care work continued until lunchtime, when the offices were closed for the day. Soon after 11 o'clock on Monday, when the maroons were heard to go off, the St Dunstan's band gathered themselves together and made a tour of the West End, adding much noise and happiness to the already deafening din and overwhelming joy of the streets, while a number of British and Colonial blinded men found their way to Buckingham Palace and were admitted through the dense crowds to the courtyard, where they were able to take a conspicuous part in the acclamations which were accorded their Majesties the King and Queen, who appeared on the balcony of the Palace. At St Dunstan's itself the pent-up enthusiasm of four years of waiting was let loose, and happiness and excitement were the order of the day."

It further revealed that Sir Arthur hosted a dinner at which the terms of the armistice were read from the evening paper, and heartily acclaimed by those present.

# St Dunstan's Archers win at British Blind Sport Outdoor Championships

Patrick Sidnell reports on the 2008 archery contest at Lilleshall

SIX ST DUNSTAN'S Archers competed in the British Blind Sport Outdoor Championships held at Lilleshall National Sports Centre on the 13-14 September. The BBS National Championships took place on the Saturday in bright sunshine, so the judges were stunned to see our coach Colin Dickinson wrapped up in so many layers to keep warm. As the day progressed and got warmer, a layer at a time came off and the pile of clothes by his chair got larger, however he did stop well before he got to his bare skin.

The match shot was a Burntwood FITA. A number of records were broken with three St Dunstan's archers winning their category.

In the Gents B1 Recurve Royal Signals St Dunstaner Harry Docherty of Lancaster came second with a score of 475.

Royal Artillery St Dunstaner Peter Hammond of Rottingdean won the Gents

B1 Compound bow section, breaking the National record with a score of 861.

Welsh Guards St Dunstaner Clive Jones of Market Drayton came third having only switched to a compound bow two weeks earlier.

St Dunstaner Patrick Sidnell of Chippenham, also a Welsh Guardsman, won the Gents B2/3 Recurve bow section with a score of 708, beating his personal best score by 141 points.

Royal Navy St Dunstaner David Poyner of Sale, Manchester won the Gents B2/3 Compound bow section with a score of 693.

In the Ladies B2/3 Recurve ATS St Dunstaner Marjorie Scott of Peacehaven came second with a score of 242.

RAF St Dunstaner Tom Roddy of Darlington, County Durham also shot well in the Gents VI open Recurve section coming second with a score of 935.

On the Sunday, the weather was foggy and misty and very cold which was fitting for the round being shot was a Frostbite (three dozen arrows at 30 metres).

In the British Blind Archery Cup Blackout section Peter won and was presented with the John and Margaret Schofield Cup.

Tom Roddy won the British Blind Archery Blinky Cup for the archers who were not blacked out.

Peter Hammond also won the David Christie Memorial Trophy for the best achiever, well done. We understand that Peter has to go into hospital for an operation on his shoulder, so he will not be taking part in any more competition until he recovers. We all wish you well and hope you have a speedy recovery.

Once again we must thank our coaching staff, spotters and driver for all their time and hard work.

# St Dunstan's Fishing Club is back!

Stan Bowers reports

**W**ATCH OUT FOLKS! The fishing club is back thanks to some great efforts by the Club's new Secretary St Dunstaner Peter Moore. On 9 September, Peter, fellow St Dunstaners Alan Mitchell, Ron Langley, Patrick Murphy and I headed down to Newhaven to be greeted by our skipper David and his dad Peter. Their boat Ocean Warrior III was ready and waiting for us. As we set off, it was obvious it was going to be a lively day. The sea was running very high, with the waves crashing over the boat, but we were determined to get out and catch our tea. We headed west towards Ovingdean to where the skipper was sure we would catch some Plaice or Dabs, just so we could get used to using our rods and reels again.

Unfortunately, the sea got the best of some of us. We had some nice fish here. As the sea dropped, we went further out, but the weather turned to heavy rain, so we came in. Wednesday looked good, but apparently the sea

was very rough out deep. Thursday was a better day and Mervyn Reeves joined us, but Peter and Alan could not make it, so armed with two packets of Kwells, we set off, on what was still a lively sea, but we all felt better and got on with some fishing, there were loads of Mackerel about, but not much else. Still, we all had a great time, getting our sea legs back. It was good to have the club out again. Sadly, some old members weren't with us but they were with us in spirit.

We are now looking forward to the next trip this month. Anybody who fancies a bit of fishing, don't delay, get in touch with Peter Moore On 07890 800730. We can always make room for another. There are lots of trips in the planning for next year.

If anyone has any sea fishing gear that they no longer need or use and could pass it on to a worthy cause, Peter Moore would very pleased to hear from you. Ring him on 07890 800730.

## From the Craft Workshop



REME St Dunstaner Ally Reid of Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire took up the opportunity to try some soapstone carving and picture framing during a training week at St Dunstan's Ovingdean. He carved a rabbit and two polar bears, one looking up and this one looking down. Soapstone is naturally soft and easy to carve even with hand tools. It is also cheaper than marble or sandstone and there is less chance of breaking your work while chipping away each layer.

# POETS' CORNER

Celebrating the turn of the season

## Welcome To Winter by Roy Ramsay

Blackbird calling  
Last fruit falling  
Monthly bills looming  
Few flowers blooming  
Gales lashing trees  
Trees shedding leaves  
Putting clocks back  
Scrape leaves into sack  
Gardening chap  
Puts on a Mac  
Cough reappears  
Renewing my fears  
Dark five o'clock  
To system a shock  
Storm clouds open wide  
Rush back inside  
Turn on central heating  
Winter chill beating  
Sitting in warm  
Listening to storm  
Slowly sup beer  
I like it here  
Turn on the news  
Gives you the blues  
First leaves on line  
Commuters' hard time  
Folks getting fired  
Glad I'm retired!

# 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

## Simple solutions!

Many things that can make life easier are already in your home. Some St Dunstaners regularly improvise with household items such as these.

## Paper clips and clothes pegs

These are ideal for individualising packets and keeping any opened packets closed. This is worth thinking about if you have bags of frozen vegetables in the freezer that will pour peas everywhere if knocked over. Folding the top over and putting a clothes peg on will avoid this problem. Clothes pegs can be used to mark a particular pair of shoes, useful if you have two different colours that are of a similar style.

## Spare Cardboard

Cutting out templates for various tasks can be useful. An obvious choice is a simple slot or angle that can

be placed on a cheque book or document by someone to provide a tactile illustration of where you need to sign. With a bit of work templates can be produced that have a stepped side matching the different height of bank notes. This can then be used to simply and reliably distinguish between the denominations.

## Cups and pots

With a little preparation a range of pots such as yogurt pots, could be used as a measuring aid. It does require some help to be able to establish how much it will hold first. This could then be written in large pen on the bottom of the pot or marked with bump-ons on the side. A range of varying size pots can be very beneficial.

Do you have any top tips? ROD would love to hear from you so please write in to the **Review**.

# REUNION ROUND-UP

St Dunstan's Chairman Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox, RN presided at the Aylesbury Reunion on 25 September. There were 46 St Dunstaners and five widows at the Holiday Inn, Aylesbury, Wiltshire and St Dunstaner Trevor Knight replied for those attending.

The Worcester Reunion on 7 October brought together 28 St Dunstaners and nine widows at The Whitehouse Hotel, Worcester. Major-General Andrew Keeling, CB,

CBE was the Member of St Dunstan's Council presiding and St Dunstaner George Johnston of Cheltenham responded for those present.

The Lady Walker presided at the Lanhydrock Reunion which united 22 St Dunstaners and five widows at the Lanhydrock Hotel & Golf Club, Lanhhydrock, Bodmin, Cornwall on 8 October. St Dunstaner John Hodgson of Frogpool, near Truro made an eloquent response.

## Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 13.

1) April; 2) Judy Dench; 3) Kenya; 4) The Epsom Derby; 5) ATS, Auxiliary Territorial Service; 6) Ass; 7) Scarborough; 8) France; 9) Victoria Cross; and 10) Queen Marie Antoinette. The proposal is said to have been made when Marie Antoinette helped the young Mozart back on his feet after he had slipped.

# BEER OF THE MONTH

by Colin Williamson

## 1648 Armistice Ale, 4.2 per cent ABV

Nice label isn't it? The Poppies, hops and wheat arranged around the crown and banner. The beer itself, made by 1648 Brewery in East Hoathley near Lewes, East Sussex is a full, rich flavoured ale using this seasons Burwash hops. The beer has a pleasant flowery aroma, well balanced with a soft sweet palate. An ideal session beer, 10 pence is donated to the Poppy Appeal for every bottle sold. Historians will note that the year 1648 had great significance for Charles I and it is fair to say this is a well executed ale.



Photograph: Claire Heard

Is this a record? One group of trainees at St Dunstan's Sheffield managed to stack Jenga bricks 27 layers high (two foot, three-and-a-half inches or 70cm). That's almost half way up St Dunstaner Bill Doran of Sunderland.



# Welcome to St Dunstan's

**Albert Adey** of Chester-le-Street, County Durham served in the General Service Corps and Royal Engineers between 1947 and 1953.

**Margaret Austin** of Dorking, Surrey served in the Auxiliary Territorial service from 1944 to 1947.

**Donald Bass** of Rushden, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**John Beauchamp** of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment (Middlesex Regiment) from 1939 to 1946.

**Norman Blundell** of Newick, Lewes, East Sussex served in the Home Guard from 1941 to 1945.

**Thomas Board** of Camden, London served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Medical Corps between 1947 and 1949.

**Dorothy Britton** of Kendal, Cumbria served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

**Maisie Brooks** of Lewes, East Sussex served in the

Women's Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

**George Brough** of Knotty Ash, Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1939 to 1945.

**Douglas Brown** of Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1952.

**Thomas Brown** of Stafford, Staffordshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1955.

**Mary Byham** of Felixstowe, Suffolk served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945.

**Keith Chilton** of Dewsbury, West Yorkshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Ordnance Corps between 1945 and 1948.

**Ernest Cook** of Polegate, East Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1948.

**Donald Curry** of Ashford, Middlesex served in the Army Catering Corps from 1952 to 1955.

**Arthur Dixon** of Stanley, County Durham served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1953 to 1955.

**Sir Frederick Drake** of Harpenden, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Elizabeth Duggan** of Aldwick-le-Street, Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1945 to 1947.

**William Eglon** of Bickley, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

**James Ellison** of Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1954.

**Barbara Evans** of Holbrook, Ipswich, Suffolk served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1946.

**Dennis Farbrother** of Hailsham, East Sussex served in the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1948.

**Frederick Farrow** of Dereham, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**William Fearnley** of Wirral, Merseyside served as Stoker Mechanic in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1949.

**Anthony Fitzsimmons** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's) from 1948 to 1953.

**Joseph Foggo** of Nuneaton, Warwickshire served in the Royal Navy from 1937 to 1938 and again from 1942 to 1946.

**Albert Garlick** of Morden, Surrey served in the General Service Corps and Royal Signals from 1946 to 1948.

**Major Patrick Green** of Felixstowe, Suffolk served in the Royal Army Pay Corps and the Royal Norfolk Regiment between 1937 and 1961.

**Rosalie Grimes** of New Addington, Croydon, Surrey served as Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1943.

**Allan Hacker** of Carterton, Oxfordshire served as Corporal in the Royal Air Force from 1983 to 1987.

**Jack Hargreaves** of Bingley, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1946.

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

**Beatrice Hudson** of Burgess Hill, West Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**Frank Hunt** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1939 and 1946.

**Hazel James** of Dereham, Norfolk served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Martin James** of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear served as Staff Sergeant in the Pioneer Corps from 1941 to 1946.

**Horace Jeffery** of Barton-on-Sea, New Milton, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

**Llewelyn Jones** of Llangollen, Clwyd served as Petty Officer in the Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1952.

**Rodney Jones** of Rhyl, Denbighshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1950 and again from 1953 to 1959.

**Harold Lockwood** of Lancaster, Lancashire served in the Royal Engineers from 1943 to 1947.

**Douglas Lofts** of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, served in the Corps of Military Police from 1940 to 1946.

**Harold Lovell** of Rosyth, Dunfermline, Fife served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1950.

**James McCarthy** of East Ham, London served in the Royal Engineers from 1938 to 1946.

**Thomas McNamara** of Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire served in the Royal Ulster Rifles and King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster) between 1954 and 1956.

**Derek Marland** of South Queensferry, West Lothian served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1954.

**Francis Marsh** of Radcliffe, Manchester served as Sergeant in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

**George Mason** of Donnington, Telford, Shropshire served in the Far East in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1957.

**Charles Miller** of Crowborough, East Sussex served in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1946.

**John Moonie** of Blantyre, Glasgow served in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1945.

**William Northeast** of Alderbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Artillery between 1947 to 1949.

**Isabella Oakton** of Bournemouth, Dorset served in the Women's Royal Naval service from 1942 to 1945.

**Eric Onslow** of Chorley, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1943 to 1947.

**Thomas Orton** of Tamworth, Staffordshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1945 to 1948.

**Elizabeth Paton** of Faifley, Clydebank served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

**Gordon Picken** of Oldbury, West Midlands served in the Coldstream Guards from 1956 to 1969.

**Ivor Price** of Shrewsbury, Shropshire served in the Royal Marines from 1940 to

1942 and then the Fleet Air Arm until 1946.

**Charles Reagan** of Acomb, York, North Yorkshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Engineers between 1942 and 1947.

**Daniel Rees** of Swansea, West Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

**Hannah Roberts** of Barmouth, Gwynedd served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1942.

**Robert Savage** of Nelson, Lancashire served as LAC in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

**Reginald Schofield** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Donald Scrimgeour** of Hull, North Humberside served in the Coldstream Guards and East Yorkshire Regiment (The Duke of York's Own) between 1941 and 1946.

**Terrence Setchell** of Leicester, Leicestershire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Service Corps between 1943 and 1946.

**Sydney Stevens** of Crawley, West Sussex served as Gunner in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1955.

**Dennis Temple** of Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

**Mary Vine** of Rottingdean, East Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1947.

**Jack Waterhouse** of Minehead, Somerset served in the Royal Artillery from 1941 to 1948.

**Robert Wildman** of Brighton served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1946.

**George Wilson** of Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire served in the General Service Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers between 1944 and 1948.

**Percy Wykes** of Coventry, West Midlands served as Artificer in the Royal Artillery from 1933 to 1946.

**For the record:**  
**Vera Everatt** of Llangadog, Dyfed served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as Aircraftwoman from 1942 to 1943 and then as Section Officer until 1945.

# Family News

## BIRTHS

**Congratulations on the birth of:**  
Dominic Mattheus Wright born in Llantrisant on 22 August. His cousin Tomas Wright was born on 1 May last year. The are both grandsons of Jan Wright of Sheperton, Middlesex and the late Jimmy Wright.

## SILVER ANNIVERSARIES

**Congratulations to:**  
Ray and Betty Sheriff of Rottingdean, East Sussex on 30 September.

## DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

**Congratulations to:**  
Ted and Hilda Storey of Carrville, Durham, County Durham on 25 September.

Gilbert and Laura Archer of Cudworth, Barnsley, South Yorkshire on 27 September.

Kieth and Marge Harrison of Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire on 28 September.

William and Muriel Hughes of Old Colwyn, Colwyn Bay on 2 October.

George and Mildred Pointer of Brookfield, Preston, Lancashire on 9 October.

William and Peg Edmonds of Welshpool, Powys on 16 October.

William and Esther Kirkup of Framwellgate Moor, Durham, County Durham on 20 October.

## SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

**Congratulations to:**  
Rita and George Copeman of Pulborough, West Sussex who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 23 September.

John and Florrie Glynn of Plymstock, Plymouth, Devon who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 26 September.

Leonard and Joyce Hassam of Warminster, Wiltshire who celebrated 66 years together on 26 September.

Charles and Gladys Coleman of Lawford, Manningtree, Essex who celebrated 64 years together on 30 September.

John and Betty O'Carroll of Hove, East Sussex who celebrated their 66th anniversary on 30 September.

Wallace and Jean Burnet-Smith of Brighton, East Sussex who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 3 October.

Margaret and George Bailey of Brighton, East Sussex who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 6 October.

James and Freda Conway of Liverpool, Merseyside who celebrated 62 years of marriage on 7 October.

Den and Beth Parrish of Woking, Surrey who celebrated 64 years of marriage on 7 October.

Desmond and Lillian Dowding of Ruislip, Middlesex who celebrated 66 years of marriage on 8 October.

John and Gladys Lane of South Shields, Tyne and Wear who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 8 October.

Jack and Kitty Blane of Stewartby, Bedfordshire who celebrated 68 years of marriage on 10 October.

William and Hildegard Carthy of Gloucester, Gloucestershire who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 11 October.

Bernard and Iris Sleath of Bispham, Blackpool who celebrated 61 years of marriage on 11 October.

Laurie and Queenie Johnson of Romford, Essex who celebrated 69 years of marriage on 15 October.

Leonard and Peggy Spendlove of Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands who celebrated 65 years of marriage on 16 October.

Ron and Kathleen Whittaker of Poynton, Cheshire who celebrated 65 years together on 16 October.

Jack and Marjorie Wakeford of Brighton who celebrated 63 years of marriage on 20 October.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Congratulations to:**

Katy at her graduation on 1 July at Queen's University Belfast. She graduated with a First Class honours degree BSc (Hons) in Biomedical Sciences. Katy is going back to Queen's University at the end of September for another year and studying for a Masters degree in the field of Cancer Research. She is the youngest daughter of David and June Orr of Kilkeel, County Down.

## **DEATHS**

### **We regret to announce the death of:**

Jean Rideout. She was the wife of Frederick Rideout of Broadstairs, Kent.

Audrey Bottomley on 30 August. She was the wife of Terry Bottomley of Seacroft, Leeds, Yorkshire.

Hilda Cook of Swindon in September. She was the daughter of Harry Green, a First World War St Dunstaner who lost his sight during the great Somme offensive of 1916 while serving with the Australian Imperial Forces. He trained at Regents Park as a basket maker.

Aileen Edmunds of Hove, East Sussex on 21 September. She was the widow of St Dunstaner Arthur Edmunds.

Betty Brittain of Ormesby, Middlesbrough, Cleveland on 26 September. She was the widow of Leo Brittain.

# **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.**

### **Bernard Boyle Royal Artillery**

Bernard James Boyle of Cleveland, Middlesbrough died on 17 September, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1991. He was an Apprentice Dental Mechanic when called up for Army service in 1941. Initially, he was posted to the Army Dental Corps, but soon transferred to the Royal Artillery. After training, he was posted to the Far East arriving in Singapore just as it fell to the Japanese. His years as a Far East Prisoner of War were marked with bouts of malaria, dysentery, and jaundice as well as malnutrition and privation. Discharged in 1946, he became an office worker and enjoyed gardening. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

### **Robert Parkinson Royal Artillery**

Robert Parkinson of Morecambe, Lancashire died on 21 September, aged 88. He joined the Royal Artillery (TA) in 1938 and was embodied on the outbreak of war. He served in France, Egypt, Greece and Crete. He was taken prisoner in 1941 and held in Germany until 1945. Discharged in 1946, he resumed work at an iron foundry but later worked as a hotel manager, bus driver and

qualified as a PSV driving instructor. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jenny and all other members of the family.

### **Herman Wessel Royal Netherlands Brigade (Princess Irene Brigade)**

Herman Wessel of Edgbaston, Birmingham died on 21 September, aged 100. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1988. Born in Antwerp, he studied chemistry and early travels included a period of scientific work in Mexico. With the rise of anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany, he managed to escape while other members of his family were condemned to die in the gas chambers. Arriving in Britain, he was imprisoned for four months, alongside Sir Oswald Mosley. In 1940, in the UK, he became part of a group known as the "Dutch Legion" which was then named the Princess Irene Brigade or Royal Netherlands Brigade as it came under Allied Command. As a Lance Corporal, he served in Wolverhampton, France and Holland. Towards the end of 1944, he was blown up in Senlis, France losing his right eye and suffering damage to his arm. Discharged in 1946, he subsequently set up a delicatessen business supplying shops, hotels and public institutions across the country. He continued to manage the business into the 1990s. In 1997, he was honoured by the French Government, a point of some bemusement since they had previously been anxious to deport him. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

### **Oswald Harrison Royal Navy**

Oswald Harrison of Hunslet, Leeds, West Yorkshire died on 23 September, aged 84. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and qualified as an Air Mechanic. Discharged in 1946, he worked as a cinema projectionist but later worked as a driver for Royal Mail. Our sympathy goes to all of the family.

### **Raymond John Royal Air Force**

Raymond Ashley John of Maidenhead, Berkshire died on 26 September, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and served in the UK, Ghana, Belgium and Oslo. Discharged in 1946, he worked in banking. Our sympathy goes to all of the family.

### **Richard Stephenson Royal Navy**

Richard Stephenson of Snainton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire died on 27 September, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy in 1936, sailing in the Mediterranean and Atlantic. He also spent time in the Far East and travelled to Australia. Discharged in 1947, he worked for the Forestry Commission and later as a quarryman and steel erector. Our sympathy goes to his widow Eileen and all the family.

### **John Pudney Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (TA)**

John Frederick Pudney of Nuneaton, Warwickshire died on 28 September, aged 82. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944 and transferred to the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment the following year. In 1946, he transferred to the Royal Signals as a driver. Discharged in 1948, he worked for Prudential but then joined the Royal Artillery (TA) in 1949, transferring to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (TA) in 1952. Discharged in 1957, he joined the BBC as a driver and became a transport manager. After losing his sight, he worked for the RNIB at Great Portland Street. Our sympathy goes to his widow Linda and all members of the family.

### **Alf Waters Royal Irish Fusiliers**

Alfred Percy Waters of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 28 September, aged 85. He had

been a St Dunstaner since 1944. He had been working as an engineer before enlisting on his 20th birthday with the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. He was posted to North Africa and on to Italy where he was wounded in action. Shrapnel would continue to torment him for years to come. After a spell at Church Stretton, he joined other St Dunstaners at South Mimms to train as a poultry farmer. He and his wife set up in a small holding in Norfolk, mixing the poultry business with tomato growing and breeding Alsations. In 1956, he became a capstan lathe operator, but resumed poultry farming in 1964. In later years, he took up basket making, tray and toy making, and joinery and also developed skills with wrought iron work and picture framing. In 1997, he received the Swim Fit award for swimming a cumulative 250 miles. Our sympathy goes to his widow Audrey and all other members of the family.

#### **David Douglas**

##### **Royal Army Service Corps**

David Stuart Sholto Douglas of Minehead, Somerset died on 1 October, aged 72. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1955 and, after training at Aldershot, was posted to Hong Kong. Discharged in 1957, he worked in banking. His interests included rugby, swimming and dancing. Our sympathy goes to his widow Thelma and all members of the family.

#### **Raymond Taylor**

##### **Royal Army Medical Corps**

Raymond Leopold Taylor of Kings Heath, Birmingham died on 2 October, aged 76. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1950 and served in Oldenbery with the British Army of the Rhine. Discharged in 1952, he became an engine tester with British Leyland. Our sympathy goes to his widow Hazel and all members of the family.

#### **Colin Fraser**

##### **Royal Pioneer Corps**

Colin Campbell Fraser of South Shields, Tyne and Wear died on 3 October, aged 82. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1948. He worked with his father as a boot repairer before joining the Pioneer Corps in 1944. He lost his sight after developing a tumour and was discharged in 1948. Initially, he trained in telephony and took up a position at London University, all the while fighting to gain a place on the physiotherapy training course, an ambition he achieved in 1953. In 1956, he started work as a physiotherapist at the Royal Infirmary, Sunderland and subsequently set up a private practice. He retired in 1998. He was also a St Dunstan's Speaker, talking to Women's Guilds, Rotary and other groups. His interests included computing and woodwork and he was involved with the Roundtable. Our sympathy goes to his widow Sylvia and all members of the family.

#### **Thomas Harrison**

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

Thomas Harrison of Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire died on 3 October, aged 88. He worked on the London, Midland, Scottish Railway before joining the Royal Air Force in 1941. He served in America, Africa and Italy. Discharged in 1946, he returned to LMS as a clerk but later worked for Social services in Lancashire. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

#### **Patrick Cox, MM**

##### **Scots Guards**

Patrick Gilchrist Cox of Hullbridge, Hockley, Essex died on 5 October, aged 91. He joined the Scots Guards in Dundee in 1935 and deployed to Palestine in 1936. In 1940, he

took part in the Norwegian Campaign and was later deployed to North Africa. In 1944, he was awarded the Military Medal for his part in taking out a machine gun nest and was later wounded in an explosion at Sarteno. Discharged in 1946, he worked on the railways, for Thomas Cook and later became a transport manager for Cheesemans. Our sympathy goes to his widow Ivy and all members of the family.

#### **James Ledgerwood**

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

James Ledgerwood of Luton, Bedfordshire died on 6 October, aged 72. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1954 and served as a cook. Discharged in 1956, he completed his apprenticeship as a turner and then joined the Merchant Navy. In later years he resumed engineering. His interests included bowling and classical music. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

#### **Samuel Martin**

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

Samuel Martin of Silverdale, Newcastle, Staffordshire died on 7 October, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939 and served in France. After Dunkirk, he was posted to India and Burma. Discharged in 1946, he became a kiln fireman. His interests included gardening. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

#### **John Richards**

##### **Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment**

John Richards of Walkden, Worsley, Manchester died on 8 October, aged 84. He joined the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment in 1945 serving in the UK and overseas. Discharged in 1947, he worked for London, Midland and Scottish Railways as a

fireman. Later, he became a bus driver. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

#### **George Sowter**

##### **Royal Norfolk Regiment**

George Sowter of Diss, Norfolk died on 8 October, aged 89. He served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment from 1939 to 1941. In civilian life, he worked as a train driver, telephonist and for a funeral director. Our sympathy goes to his widow Irene and all members of the family.

#### **John Workman**

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

Richard John Workman of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire died on 8 October, aged 85. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and trained as a Flight Engineer. Serving in the UK and Singapore, he retired as Chief Technician in 1966. In civilian life, he worked for de Havillands and British Aerospace. He enjoyed dancing, walking, classical music and opera. Our sympathy goes to his widow Olive and all members of the family.

#### **Colin Beaumont-Edmonds**

##### **Queen's Royal Regiment, West Surreys**

Colin Frederick Beaumont-Edmonds of Sidmouth, Devon died on 10 October, aged 85. A full obituary appears on page 2. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

#### **Frank Baldwin, BEM**

##### **Royal Navy**

Lt Cdr Frank Baldwin, BEM of Emsworth, Havent, Hampshire died on 13 October, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940, serving at home and in the Pacific. Commissioned in 1954, he specialised in supply. Discharged in 1970, he was awarded the British Empire Medal and became a school bursar. His interests included golf. Our sympathy goes to all the family.



# Dai excels in advanced IT skills

**A**N RAF St Dunstaner has become the first person to complete an advanced vocational computer studies certificate with IT Instructors at St Dunstan's Rehabilitation and Training department.

Dai Jones of Barmouth, Gwynedd has been awarded the advanced Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAiT) Level two certificate, more commonly referred to as CLAiT Plus. He first approached St Dunstan's IT Training Manager Janis Sharp back in December asking if he could do an Advanced CLAiT course. Having already passed the ordinary level, he was keen to add to his qualifications to improve his employment prospects.

Dai arrived at St Dunstan's Sheffield to start his training in March. Now six months later, following



Photograph: David Hickey

**IT Instructor Gaye Staff explains an exercise for Dai Jones during a lesson at St Dunstan's Sheffield.**

a lot of very hard work (especially for Manipulating Spreadsheets and Graphs) he has truly earned his CLAiT Plus Certificate success. Other units tested Dai on electronic communication and integrated e-document production.

"I take my hat off to him, this really was no mean feat

especially with Dai's degree of visual impairment," said IT Instructor Gaye Staff. "He had to do quite a lot of things in a very convoluted way and had to learn a lot that many of us take for granted."

Dai served in the Royal Air Force from 1966 to 1971 as Senior Aircraftman serving in the UK and overseas.



Photograph: Ken Durose

## Joe cracks the Great North

St Dunstaner Joe Elsander of Chester-le-Street, Durham, County Durham, pictured with escort Paul Wright, ran all 21km of the Great North Run in 2 hours, 44 minutes and eight seconds, averaging 7 minutes and 49 seconds for each kilometre. The Newcastle run on 5 October is the biggest half marathon in the world finishing in South Shields.