

St Dunstan's

March 2009

Review

Photograph copyright: Sally Hancox



St Dunstan's

An independent future for blind
ex-Service men and women

St Dunstan's Review

an independent future for blind ex-Service Men and Women

March 2009

No 988

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

New readers start here:

Large print

St Dunstan's Review is available in a variety of accessible formats. The text in this large print copy is published using 16pt Myriad Pro on 20pt lead.

Braille

Also available in tactile form with the text rendered in British Braille.

Compact Disc

An audio version of the Review comes on an MP3CD. It is produced with Talking Book machines in mind but can be used on players that are MP3

enabled. The ROVI on Duty can advise on RNIB Talking Book machines such as the Plectalk or Victor Classic devices. Telephone 01273 391447 or e-mail rovionduty@st-dunstans.org.uk. The Sony D-NE240 is a useful domestic alternative available from high street outlets or by mail order.

Your readers this month are Valerie Tomalin and Andrew Cooper.

E-mail and floppy-disc

The Review can also be sent by e-mail in the form of a word document. This is also available on floppy-disc for computer users.

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Vice-Patrons: Commodore Sir Donald Gosling, KCVO, RNR; Air Chief Marshal; Sir Roger Palin, KCB, OBE; Admiral Sir Jock Slater, GCB, LVO, DL; General Sir Peter de la Billiere, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC, DL

Founder: The late Sir Arthur Pearson, Bt., GBE
President: Raymond L. Hazan **Vice-Presidents** Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, GCB, DL; Sir Richard Pease, Bt, DL **Chairman:** Major General Andrew M. Keeling, RM, CB, CBE **Vice Chairman:** Timothy R. Bacon **Honorary Treasurer:** John S. Varley

St Dunstan's Review is published monthly by **St Dunstan's** an independent future for blind ex-Service men and women, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Website: www.st-dunstans.org.uk. A company limited by guarantee No. 189648, registered in England. Registered Charity No. 216227 (England & Wales) and SCO39411 (Scotland). **ISSN 0036-2808.** Unless otherwise stated all photographs are copyright of St Dunstan's. Printed by Newnorth.

Cover Story

Swans in flight

Jean Williams of Nachton, Ipswich, Suffolk visited St Dunstan's Ovingdean for training in sculpture and model-making. She continues this work at home and also visited the Craft Workshop during a holiday in February, where she finished this model of two swans in flight. It is made of a wire frame and mod-rock (plaster covered bandages) and has been painted. "I was quite satisfied with it in a way," said Jean. "But it's a bit solid. I do enjoy my time in the Craft Workshop it is my favourite place (at St Dunstan's Ovingdean)." Jean, who served in the Wrens from 1940 to 1945, has used the same technique on a model of a Heron and has plans to make a model of a swan positioned with feet out for landing. A keen ornithologist since childhood, her model is inspired by Whooper swans, a variety that comes to the UK from Siberia. "They arrive in the winter around October-November and will be leaving any time soon," she added. "They come in their thousands." Jean was in good company during her twitching days. She went birdwatching with naturalist Sir Peter Scott and also Prince Charles.



St Dunstan's Calendar

MARCH

Dance Week (I)	1-7
Writers Forum	7
Fishing (II)	9-13
Bowling Club (I)	15-28
Founder's Day Awards Presentation	18
Founder's Day	26
Clocks go forward	29

APRIL

Fly Navy 100 Golf Bonanza	3
Writers Forum	4
Ex-POW Reunion	3-6
Widows' Week (I)	8-15
Golf (I)	18-19
Masonic Weekend	24-27
Anzac Day	25
Flora London Marathon	26

MAY

Writers Forum	2
Gardening Week	3-9
Fishing (III)	4-8
Handless Reunion	6-12
VE Day	8
Golf (II)	16-17
Feast of St Dunstan	19
Archery Club (II)	23-31

JUNE

Bisley Shooting Contest	3
Writers Forum	6
Ladies' Week	14-20
50 Year Badge Holders	18-21



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed forests, controlled sources and recycled wood or fibre

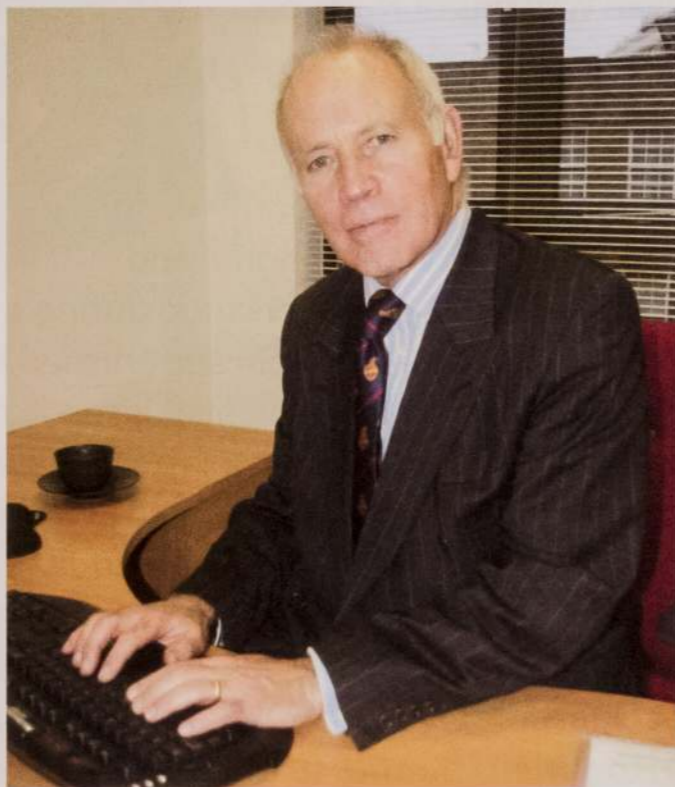
www.fsc.org Cert no. TT-COC-002444
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

Your message from St Dunstan's Chairman, Andrew Keeling

From the Chairman

I want to touch on two recent important news stories – President Obama, and the annual St Dunstan's skiing trip. Is there a connection? Probably not!

President Obama's inauguration provides the opportunity for a significant and very welcome turn in world events. Whether or not Western society smartens up its act as he believes we should remains to be seen, and if it does it certainly remains to be seen how long that will take. Meanwhile we are all confronted with a much less rosy financial picture. This affects most of us personally, and it certainly affects St Dunstan's as a whole. With money invested on the stock market we are significantly less well off now than we were a year ago, meaning that month by month we have less to spend. This will of course affect the whole organisation, beneficiaries and staff alike. So I ask you to be patient as we all wrestle with the harsh reality of having to spread the jam a little thinner than before. Rest assured that whatever decisions are made will be the result of careful thought and consideration, and that Trustees and senior management will do all they can to protect the standards of service and essential family ethos of St Dunstan's.



Photograph: Simon Rogers

Turning to the skiing, this year's group was the largest ever with an age range from one to over 70! It was also a most enjoyable and successful trip for all concerned. I'd like to say a special Thank-You to the guides who make such a huge contribution to this exciting and adventurous week, and also create a wonderful opportunity for a very special kind of bond of trust and confidence with their respective skiers. I feel sure this experience is a hugely valuable one for those St Dunstaners who are able to benefit from it.

Noticeboard

FOUNDER'S DAY AWARD WINNERS UNVEILED

IN MEMORY OF SIR ARTHUR: The first St Dunstan's Founder's Day Awards have been selected in memory of Sir Arthur Pearson. When the former newspaper baron launched an organisation dedicated to the welfare of blind ex-Service men in 1915, he infused it with his own enthusiasm and a dedicated belief that visual impairment was an obstacle that could be overcome. His own experience after losing his sight gave way to the revelation that he could continue to enjoy a meaningful life. He determined that he would become "the blind man" championing a series of initiatives that would benefit blind people in the early decades of the 20th century. With the outbreak of the First World War, he was struck by the plight of wounded soldiers returning from the trenches.

The Founder's Day Awards have been established in Sir Arthur's memory, saluting a group of individuals who have embodied the spirit that he encouraged, either through their own achievement, activity or helping others fulfil their ambitions. Those terms are not necessarily exclusive.

The Adjudicators discussed the nominations in a heated debate, finally emerging with ten names. The winners will be presented with their awards at St Dunstan's Sheffield on 18 March.

Special Achievement

Joan Osborne

Community Award

Revd David Youngson

Innovator of the Year

The Cornish Association of Woodturners

Sports Person of the Year

Alan Lock

Craft/Art/Music Award

Gordon Aston

Volunteer of the Year

Vera Bunker

Best Student

Dai Jones

Chairman's Commendation

Martin Shail, Janis Sharp, Louise Timms

A full report on the presentations will feature next month.

NEW RATES FROM 1 APRIL

ST DUNSTAN'S ACCOMMODATION AND CARE UPDATE: Accommodation and care are important aspects of the support offered by St Dunstan's. We strive to keep our standards high across these and all of our services and in doing so, our care and facilities are regularly assessed.

Following a recent assessment at St Dunstan's Ovingdean, we are pleased to inform you that St Dunstan's has achieved the maximum three star rating for excellence in quality from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). As much as we are delighted with the results, we also value the feedback from residents, holiday makers and their families which has consistently indicated a high satisfaction rate.

In continuing to meet these standards, we review the cost of permanent and respite care provision as well as holidays on an annual basis. This review ensures that we are charging a fair and sustainable rate and that we continue to provide an excellent level of service to our St Dunstaners.

With the increasing costs of living, the efficient use of our resources to support St Dunstaners has never been of greater importance. The changing economic climate has heightened

the need to continue to manage our resources effectively. By being prudent, we intend to meet our promise of lifelong commitment and maintain both the standard and range of services available. Through using a sustainable approach, we can help safeguard future residential care and holiday provision.

The latest review has concluded that we need to increase the contribution requested for respite or permanent care and holidays. Weekly charges will be increasing from 1 April 2009 as follows:

Ovingdean Charges for War Blind

Permanent Care

Nursing	£273
Residential	£210

Respite

Nursing	£273
Residential	£210

Holiday

Low Season (1 October–31 March) £175 including VAT at the relevant rate, currently 15 per cent.

High Season (1 April–30 September) £189 including VAT at the relevant rate, currently 15 per cent.

Ovingdean Charges for Non-War Blind

Permanent Care

Nursing	£518
Residential	£420

Respite

Nursing	£462
Residential	£336

Holiday

Low Season (1 October–31 March) £196 including VAT at the relevant rate, currently 15 per cent.

High Season (1 April–30 September) £252 including VAT at the relevant rate, currently 15 per cent.

Theme Weeks

£25 depending on the event plus the seasonal cost.

Annexes

Port Hall and Beacon Hill	£154
---------------------------	------

Introductory Week

St Dunstaners	Free
Spouses at Ovingdean	£90
Spouses at Sheffield	£60

Training

St Dunstaners	Free
Spouses at Ovingdean	rates will be set as per accommodation occupied.
Spouses at Sheffield	£84

FEPOW NEWSLETTER ON TAPE

NOW AVAILABLE: The Birmingham Association of Far East Prisoners of War newsletter is available on tape. If you would like to receive a copy, please call Simon Rogers on 020 7723 5021.

WAR PENSION CHANGES

PENSIONS SUPPLEMENT: Details of the War Pension rates that will come into effect on 6 April this year (an average increase of five per cent) can be obtained on request from Inderpal Kallah. Telephone him at St Dunstan's Headquarters on 020 7723 5021 or e-mail inderpal.kallah@st-dunstans.org.uk, stating if you prefer print, braille, tape, CD or electronic formats.

JOIN THE DANCE CLUB

MEMBERSHIP FORMS NOW AVAILABLE: St Dunstan's Dance Club are formalising their association for the Dance Weeks at St Dunstan's Ovingdean. If you would like to join the Dance Club, contact David Schofield on 0115 932 3517 to ask for an application form. Alternatively, speak to him in house from 1-7 March.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

DRAW: Trooping the Colour will be held on 13 June with the Irish Guards taking centre stage. It is possible that St Dunstan's will be allocated tickets. Any St Dunstaner or Gubbay Trust Beneficiary wishing to go should send their name and address to Lisa Coyle, St Dunstan's, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 29 May. A draw will determine the final allocation of tickets. Those attending will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses.

WILLS, TRUSTS AND LPA

CAN WE HELP YOU?: Making your Will is one of the most important things you can do to help your family. By making a Will, you will ensure that your wishes regarding what happens to your estate (property and belongings etc) are carried out as you have instructed. Completing a Will can help to avoid any additional upsets to your family at what is always a difficult time.

It is really quite straightforward to make a Will. Just telephone a firm of solicitors that you have used before or would be happy to use and make an appointment. When you meet with the solicitor, tell them your wishes and have ready the names, together with the current addresses of those who are to benefit and the amount or item you want to give to them. You will also need to let the solicitor have the name(s) of your Executor(s). Solicitors are, after all, just people who are trained in these matters and who are there to help and advise you – for a fee. If you do not know of a local firm of solicitors, St Dunstan's can provide you with details of approved firms. If you wish to name St Dunstan's as your Executors or act as Trustees should you establish a Trust under the terms of your Will, then we would be pleased to act in that capacity.

You might also like to consider completing a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) Form when you consult the

solicitor about your Will. This does not in any way diminish your control over your own affairs; it is a precaution in case help is needed later on, for example, due to problems with health that may prevent you from managing your affairs easily.

Should you wish to make an application for a grant towards the solicitor's costs for making a Will, or altering an existing Will by Codicil or completion of an LPA, please apply through your local Welfare Officer in the normal way.

If you do not have a solicitor or wish to discuss the matter (in total confidence), please do not hesitate to write to or telephone Mandy Markwick at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 01273 307811 who will be pleased to assist you.

CONTINUING TO MAKE GOOD USE OF EQUIPMENT

UNUSED EQUIPMENT: Do you have any equipment that was issued to you by St Dunstan's Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired (ROVIs) that you no longer use? Whether you need some assistance, instruction or simply no longer have a need for any items that we issued to you, contact the ROVI On Duty on 01273 391447 and we'll see if we can help. Many items can be reissued to another St Dunstaner if you no longer use them, but we'd like to make sure your needs are still being met as well.

FREE TRAVEL FOR VETERANS IN LONDON

CAPITAL CONCESSION FOR BUS, TUBE, DLR, TRAM AND LONDON OVERGROUND: The Veterans Concessionary Travel Scheme (VCTS) is available to those in receipt of an ongoing payment under the War Pensions Scheme or Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. War widows, war widowers and dependants in receipt of the same payments are also eligible. Applicants will be issued with an Oyster photocard which will enable them to travel free at any time within London on bus, Tube, DLR, tram and London Overground services.

This scheme is of particular benefit to veterans under 60 and those who live outside London who are not eligible for a Freedom Pass. (If you are 60 and over and live in London, you should apply for an Older Person's Freedom Pass which gives exactly the same travel benefits as the VCTS).

To apply for the VCTS Oyster photocard telephone Transport for London's helpline on 0845 331 9872. (Open 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday). When prompted, press 5 to speak to an operator. They will send an application form which you should complete and return with:

- A photocopy of your Awards

Notification or annual uprating letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA), showing your entitlement to an ongoing payment under the War Pensions Scheme or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

- A passport size photo

The eligibility criteria for this scheme has been agreed with the Ministry of Defence and the VCTS concession will be valid until 31 May 2012. If you live in London and will turn 60 before 31 May 2012, the concession will expire one month after your 60th birthday. Once you turn 60, you will be able to get a pass provided by your local authority.

To use the VCTS Oyster photocard on buses, touch the card flat on the yellow reader by the driver as you board (usually bottom left of the driver's kiosk or spaced throughout bendy-buses). You don't need to take it out of its wallet. Blind passengers travelling with a guide dog on buses are not required to show or validate their VCTS pass.

On the Tube, London Overground and National Rail, it is necessary to touch the card flat on the yellow reader at the gates at the beginning and end of the journey. Finally, when travelling on DLR and Tramlink, it is not necessary to touch the card on the yellow readers at DLR stations and Tramlink stops. However, you must show it to a member of staff if asked to do so.

DISABLED PERSONS' COUNCIL TAX RELIEF ON QUIET ROOMS

SET ASIDE SPACE FOR LOW VISION AIDS: If you have a disability or live with somebody who is disabled, you could be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax. The property concerned must be the disabled person's sole or main residence and should contain a room (not a bathroom, kitchen or lavatory) which is mainly used by and required to meet the needs of the disabled person. For a blind person, this might be a quiet room containing braille machines, talking books, or other low vision aids.

Similar criteria apply for dialysis machines, wheelchair users, or facilities for autistic children. Another qualifying factor is a bathroom or kitchen which is not the only bathroom or kitchen within the property and is mainly used by and required to meet the needs of the disabled person, for example, an extension at rear of kitchen containing a bedroom and shower).

To apply for the reduction, contact your local Council who will issue an application form. When it has been returned, they will arrange for a Local Taxation Services Inspector to visit the property and verify the application.

If the application is successful, the Council will issue an adjusted bill that is calculated on the next Valuation Band below the one at which the property is currently valued.

NATIONAL ARMED FORCES DAY TO BE HELD ON 27 JUNE

VETERANS MINISTER UNVEILS PLANS AT CHATHAM DOCKYARD: Plans for the first ever national Armed Forces Day to honour the UK's Service personnel, past, present and future, were launched by Veterans Minister Kevan Jones in Chatham, Kent on 22 January.

The first National Armed Forces Day will be held on 27 June this year and the Historic Dockyard Chatham has been selected to host the main event which will be complemented by hundreds of smaller events in towns and cities across the nation. Armed Forces Day will be held annually on 27 June, providing the nation with a dedicated day when people can come together to show their appreciation and support of the Armed Forces. Speaking on board HMS *Gannet*, Mr Jones said: "Our Armed Forces and veterans rightly deserve the nation's support and recognition. They, and their families, have made, and continue to make, huge personal sacrifices to ensure the interests of our country are defended, and this day is our chance to say 'thank you'.

"We're encouraging all communities to put on some type of event in recognition of their Armed Forces, both past, present and future. They form an integral part of the community, and this day enables us to show our appreciation of them."

PUT YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS ON ICE

TOP TIP FOR MOBILE PHONE USERS: The ICE Campaign suggest a simple method of highlighting essential telephone numbers for emergency situations. All you need to do is store the number of a contact person (or persons) who should be called during emergency under the name "ICE" which stands for In Case of Emergency. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2, and ICE3, etc. In an emergency situation, Ambulance drivers, police or hospital staff will be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialling the number you have stored as "ICE".

MUSIC TAPES UP FOR GRABS

OLD FAVOURITES AND COMEDY: We have some music tapes available, courtesy of Mr Olsson of Reading. A three tape set, *I've Heard That Song Before...* collects old favourites such as *Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree* and *Moonlight Serenade*. A single tape, *The White Cliffs of Dover* features music from Vera Lynn, Glenn Miller and the Andrew Sisters. Finally, *Ha! Ha!* groups 24 comedy songs by the likes of Jimmy Durante, Max Miller and Gracie Fields. If you would like any of these titles, call Simon Rogers on 020 7723 5021. First come, first served.

SIGN UP FOR HMS SULTAN

THE DOGS ARE BACK: Anyone wishing to attend the Summer Camp at HMS *Sultan* should contact Organising Secretary Dave Burrows on 02392 550532 or e-mail DCB119399@aol.com. Dates for the Camp are Friday, 31 July to Saturday, 8 August 2009. The closing date for applications is 1 May.

HUGS FOR FALKLANDS VETS

HS UGANDA REUNION : Veterans who served, sailed or were patients on HS *Uganda* are inviting St Dunstaners who served in the Falklands Conflict to join them at a reunion in Southampton on 18 April.

The Hospital Ship Uganda Reunion 2009 (HUGS) will be held at the Premier Inn Southampton North. An overnight accommodation package is available. Dress is smart casual. Admission is £15 a head. Applications to attend should be made by 27 March. For more details of the occasion contact Nicci Pugh by e-mailing n_pugh@btinternet.com.

SAPPER ON TAPE

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

BLIND SAILING WEEK

SIGN UP AS YACHT CREW: Gwennili Trust are entering a yacht in the annual Blind Week hosted by The Royal Southampton Yacht Club and organised through Sporting Activities for the Disabled Charitable Trust. It will run from 27 June to 3 July. The week costs £160 which contributes solely towards food and other overheads as every skipper and boat comes on an entirely voluntary basis.

If you are visually impaired, and would like to apply for a place to crew on a yacht for the week please contact Grant Morris by the end of March. Sailing experience is not necessary as beginners are most welcome. For more details contact Grant by e-mail on Foxys@ukgateway.net.

CHINTZ EXHIBIT AT V&A

FREE TOUCH TOUR: Christina Shannon will lead a touch tour examining some stunning examples of Indian Chintz on display at London's V&A Museum.

The tour will be held on 22 March and lasts about an hour. It starts from the Meeting Point by the Grand Entrance at 14:30. The tour is free, but advanced booking is essential. Telephone the Museum on 020 7942 2211 or e-mail bookings.office@vam.ac.uk.

REVIEW DERBY SWEEPSTAKE

SWEEPSTAKE 2009: The Epsom Vodafone Derby will be held on 6 June. As usual, the **Review** is running its annual Sweepstake. The draw is open to all St Dunstaners, beneficiaries of the Diana Gubbay Trust, widows and widowers. Tickets remain 30p each and will be issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (costing £7.50). Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. We are unable to take orders by telephone. The closing date is 3 June and the draw will be made that day.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and a stamped addressed envelope, to Simon Rogers, Derby Sweepstake Department, **St Dunstan's Review**, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Prize money will be distributed amongst the winners with **50 per cent** going to the holder of the ticket drawing the winning horse; **20 per cent** to the holder of the ticket drawing the second horse; **10 per cent** to the holder of the ticket drawing the third horse; and **20 per cent** to be divided equally among those drawing a horse which actually starts the race. No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold.

AUDIO DESCRIBED SHOWS COMING YOUR WAY

THE LATEST HITS ON STAGE: Audio Description (AD) aims to enhance stage productions for visually impaired patrons by adding details of action, scenery or costume during the performance. Many shows add a Touch Tour allowing the blind theatre goers to visit the set, feel props and touch the actors' costumes before hand.

The Theatre Royal, Stratford East will have AD and a Touch Tour for *Where's My Desi Soulmate* on 26 March. The tour is at 18:30 and the show starts at 19:30. Contact Angela Frost on 020 8279 1118 or e-mail afrost@stratfordeast.com for details.

Jonathan Nash and Julia Grundy will provide AD for *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Birmingham Hippodrome on 27 March at 19:15. The show will be preceded by a Touch Tour. Call the Box Office on 0844 338 5000.

Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* will have AD by Irene Richards at the Grand Theatre, Leeds on 26 March (Box Office: 0870 121 4901). She will also describe the performance at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham on 4 April at 14:30 (Box Office: 0115 989 5555) and at the New Victoria Theatre, Woking on 15 April (Box Office: 0871 297 5454). Jonathan Nash and Margaret Spittles will describe the show at Birmingham Hippodrome at 19:30 on 30 April (Box Office: 0844 338 5000).

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE WINNERS

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ST DUNSTAN'S: Congratulations to the winners of the 2008 St Dunstan's Christmas Raffle and thank you to everyone who took part. Your support through each ticket sold has helped to raise funds for the important services that make a real difference to the lives of ex-Service men and women suffering from loss of sight.

First prize, (£8,500 cash or a Vauxhall Corsa) was won by RSM Carter from Wallington, while the second prize (£1,000 cash or Tenerife holiday) was won by Mr R. Bettney from Sheffield.

There was also a third prize of 20 Intempo digital portable radios. The following people each received one of these must-have devices:

Mrs E.J. Floyd, London, Miss S. Walters, Carmarthenshire, Mrs J. Hill, Midlothian, Mr J. Meeds, Boston, Mrs B. Hounslow, Sherborne, Mr J. Beeney, Eastbourne, Mrs E.D. Lupton, Middlesbrough, Mr W.L.J. Fields, Doncaster, Mrs J.M. Girdwood, Hindhead, Mrs P.L. Williams, Llanelli, Mr S.L. Bailey, Birmingham, Mrs J. Byers, Walsall, Mrs Lawson, Sheffield, Mr J. A. Dodd, Warrington, Mr R. Woollen, Witney, Mrs V. Wright, Lancing, Mrs J. Griffiths, Stoke-on-Trent, Mrs M. Watson, Durham, Miss L. Johnson, Birmingham, and finally, Mr C. Mallock, Stockbridge.

A selection of your comments drawn from The Editor's postbag

Letters to the Editor

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

Thank you for sharing my sorrows

After two years of extraordinary happiness, my wife Eileen passed away. This all came so suddenly and within a few hours. I am writing to express, my deepest gratitude to all at Ian Fraser House. I cannot say how much this stay has meant to me. These times are not easy at the best of times, and having St Dunstan's share my sorrows, has really benefited me. I have done Training, been involved in different activities during this stay and on this occasion was much needed. I would also at this time like to thank my friend Marie Thomas, also David Richards, who have been my supporters at the end of a phone call.

Ralph Pacitti,
Weymouth, Dorset

Overloon correction

Thank you for the article regarding my visit to Overloon. One details was wrong as I was 17 years old at the time and it was 1943 not 1942. Also in 1943, I was transferred to the RASC 310 Ammo Coy, Guards Armoured Division.

Ted Ellerton,
Dronfield,
Derbyshire

JourneyCare were a great help

Thank you for the article about assistance when travelling (Ask ROD, December Review). I have used Virgin Trains JourneyCare twice recently, once to London for the Remembrance Day parade and once to Chippenham for a funeral which involved five changes of train. I was looked after from start to finish. Their

telephone number is 08457 44 33 66 and the service is free.

Frank Hookham,
Clayton le Dale,
Blackburn, Lancashire

Copier friendly

I've just opened my Review and see that it less glossy and is reduced in size. This will be better for me when I am occasionally asked for information and photocopy some of the pages (pages of the previous issues have been too large to fit my A4 photocopier). Wonder what others will think?

Sally Westlake,
Liskeard, Cornwall

We have also heard from ...

St Dunstaners Henry Hall, Vera Everatt, and David Youngson and thank them for their comments.

Balancing the Books

Ted Bunting reads a disturbing yet compelling book

Alone With The Devil

Author: Ronald Markman And Dominick Bosco

Reader: John Rye

Catalogue number 8781

Duration: 14 hours, 47 minutes

This is totally compelling yet profoundly disturbing, and the most remarkable book I've heard for many a long day. I don't think I will ever forget it. Doctor Markman is an American forensic psychiatrist, and the "devil" of the title is the homicidal spirit he claims is alive and well in us all. During a career in excess of twenty years at publication, he has certainly encountered some of the worst murderers that even California has produced, but whether his testimony has ever really served the cause of justice is quite another matter. In some of the cases the crimes are so cruel, brutal and inhuman as to beggar belief yet the legal system ensures that the defence lawyer will try just as hard to get his client acquitted as the prosecution will try for a conviction. This almost always produces an unsatisfactory result. Dr Markman admits that the scales are weighted to the detriment of the victim and he seems frustrated too,

that plea-bargaining and the almost endless avenues of appeal can render a sentence more or less meaningless. However, he never questions the validity of the phrase "not guilty on grounds of insanity", although I know a lot of people who do. My farmer friend, Paddy, for instance, says, "If we agree it's wrong to shoot a mad dog we are all crazy." Irish logic it may be but I can't fault it.

The RNIB Talking Book Service

All titles featured in Balancing the Books are available from the RNIB Talking Book Service which provides an extensive range of over 15,500 audio books, paid for by annual subscription and delivered through the post. Talking Books are in the Daisy format which lets you skip to a new chapter or insert a bookmark (in the same way a print reader can) using a lightweight player with accessible controls. The full loan annual subscription, which includes the loan of a player, costs £76, while a books only annual subscription costs £50. More details can be obtained on 0845 762 6843 or 01733 37 53 50, or e-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk.

Ten questions on...

The subject of England

It's a new angle from **Harry Beevers!**

- 1) On 10 August 2003 in which airport was the first ever recording of 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Britain?
- 2) Which is the only English city beginning with the letter K?
- 3) Which town that has a team in the Scottish Football League is the most northerly English town on the East coast?
- 4) Which county lies directly north of the Isle of Wight?
- 5) The ports of Grimsby and Immingham are on the estuary of which river?
- 6) The coastline of which county faces Norfolk across the bay called the Wash?
- 7) The cave known as Wookey Hole calved out by the River Axe is in which county?
- 8) Opened in 1844, Winsford Rock in Cheshire is claimed as Britain's oldest working mine and the only one of its kind in the country. What kind of mine is it?
- 9) Which is England's southernmost city, the only one beginning with the letter T?
- 10) A popular spot with bird watchers, Gibraltar Point is in which English county?

Answers can be found on page 42.

Best wishes for Eileen



Photograph: Simon Rogers

Chief Executive Robert Leader wishes Eileen Mobsby all the best in her retirement.

Eileen Mobsby retired at the end of January after nearly 30 years with St Dunstan's. She joined the charity in 1979 as a cleaner in what she thought was a temporary job. She went on to work in Housekeeping and administration at St Dunstan's Ovingdean. "It's a very friendly place to work," she said, "Though it has gone through a lot of changes." In 1996, she became Wills and Trusts Coordinator advising St Dunstaners and their families on making legal provisions to cover a variety of situations.

Oscar's night is crowning glory for 177 Blackpool Air Cadets

BLACKPOOL AIR CADETS were able to report an exceptional year when they celebrated their 69th anniversary on 13 February. The members of 177 (Blackpool Airport) Squadron, ATC had won the Corps Media prize for the newspaper coverage generated by their roller coaster entry in St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge last year. They were also feted for supporting Veterans Day, the Poppy Appeal, a cancer charity, and Xmas packages for troops stationed overseas. St Dunstaner Colin Williamson presented participating cadets and instructors with certificates of commendation. There was also a special prize for Cadet Oscar Marshall, deemed by his peers to have been the most outstanding cadet on the day of the challenge.



Photograph: Simon Rogers

Colin presents Oscar with the Most Outstanding Cadet Award.

St Dunstan's tutors shortlisted for prestigious IT award

THE IT INSTRUCTORS from St Dunstan's Rehabilitation and Training department were shortlisted for an award from the Institute of IT Training. They were in the running for The Training Department of the Year (Public Sector) Award. They were pipped at the post on 5 February when Cheshire ICT Service won the award at London's Dorchester Hotel.



Photograph copyright: Bob Saunders

Some of St Dunstan's ace IT instructors at the awards night: Teresa Morgan-Gane, Michael Crawford, Donna Vaughan, Janis Sharp, David Dent and Gaye Staff.

Poole salutes Don's achievement

A ST DUNSTANER was amongst a group hailed as "the selfless six" by Poole Borough Council on 16 January. Don Planner, blinded while serving in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, was feted for a lifetime raising funds for St Dunstan's and other charities. He received a Poole Pottery carrying the borough crest and inscribed with his name. The Poole Achievement Awards recognises individuals and groups who have given total commitment to their cause, made a difference to the everyday life



The Mayor of Poole, Cllr Joyce Lavender, commended Don on his work for charities such as St Dunstan's.

of others and been exemplary in their achievements. The Mayor of Poole, Cllr Joyce Lavender, said: "I would like to thank all those people nominated and

offer my congratulations to the winners, all of whom have given much of their time to help others without expectation of any reward or publicity. Well done!"

Cheshire smile for St Dunstan's

Members of The Chester Branch of the Cheshire Regiment Association organised raffles and functions to support blind ex-Servicemen and women throughout last year. Their efforts were feted when £1,400 was presented at their AGM on 17 January. St Dunstaner David Stuttard applauded their labours when he accepted the donation from their president Bill Helliwell. Four lady members of the Association had raised £300 alone by



knitting and selling decorated Easter Chicks and Snowmen. David thanked them on behalf of all St Dunstaners.



Worthing dancers have raised £1,200 to help blind ex-Service men and women. Sue and Roger Turnbull of Partner's Dancing at Worthing Pavilion presented a cheque to St Dunstaner Nigel Whiteley at a Tea dance in January. Nigel thanked everyone for their generosity.



RAF St Dunstaner Stanley Woster passed away last year, aged 100. Stan's family asked friends to make a donation in lieu of flowers. His eldest son Roy presented a cheque for £653.60 to St Dunstan's which was accepted by Welfare Officer Rachel Jennings. The presentation was made at Stan's local, the Old Waggon & Horses, next door to his home of some 70 years in Wribbenhall, Worcestershire. Roy and his wife Irene were joined by Steve and Denise Eaton from the pub.

Well done C Company

THERE WAS an exceptional Christmas present for St Dunstan's from C Coy, North Devon Army Cadet Force in December. St Dunstaner Eric Powell of Northam, North Devon joined the cadets for a Carol Service at Fremington Camp, North Devon. However, he was soon singing their praises when CO Major Joe Martin presented a cheque for £1,000.

The funds were raised by the cadets through sponsorship of their attempt on the 13-mile St Dunstan's Cadet Challenge. They did a "lying-down" relay at RM Chivenor last year. Standing in single file, one cadet ran to the front of the line and then lay down on the ground until the next man ran from the back to replace him.

Patrick Sidnell reports on the latest archery contests

Keith gets the Gaygan Gold

THE 2009 INDOOR Club Archery Competition took place at St Dunstan's Ovingdean on the 17-25 January. We were pleased to welcome new members and spotters, Dennis and Grace Cook, John and Joyce Bower, and Adrian Neat.

The Saturday was spent setting up and checking equipment and meeting the new members. On the Monday evening, the club AGM took place and we were all pleased to welcome back our Club President, Major (Rtd) Wendy Le Gassik, MBE.

Club competitions were held over the rest of the week. When the Presentations took place on Friday evening, we were pleased to greet Kerry Lade who was Lady Paramount presenting the trophies and medals. Keith Lanchester-Harding won a trio of



Photograph copyright: Jax Whiteley

Clive Jones, Patrick Sidnell, Marjorie Scott, Keith Lanchester-Harding, Doug Rogers, Norman Perry, Eileen Thompson, Adrian Neat, Peter Hammond, Kerry Lade, David Poyner and John Bower.

hotly contested trophies: The Gaygan Gold for most golds scored over the year, The Laurie Austin Trophy, and the Handicap Medal for best-reduced handicap over the past 12 months.

Peter Hammond won the Tactile Gold Trophy for the most golds by a tactile archer. Peter

is out of action at the moment after a shoulder operation, we all wish him well and look forward to him returning to archery.

Gold medals were won by Keith Lanchester-Harding, Adrian Neat, Eileen Thompson, John Bower, Doug Rogers, and Patrick Sidnell who broke a Club tactile recurve record.

A special Gold medal was presented to Dennis Cook who shot bare bow (no sight) all week and hit the target, which is not easy to do when you cannot see where it is.

Well done to Adrian Neat and John Bower for some good shooting in their first club indoor shoot.

On the Saturday, Ditchling Archery Club visited for a match against us. After a recount it was found that Ditchling had won. Well done Ditchling.

Once again, we must thank all the coaching staff, field captains, and volunteers for all their hard work in making this indoor archery week so enjoyable. A special thanks must go to Grace and Joyce for their efforts in selling all the raffle tickets.

We now look forward to the 2009 Indoor BBS National Championships and the first outdoor archery week at St Dunstan's in May.

Top Guns of Wavy Navy



Photographs copyright: Wavy Navy

The lads of the Wavy Navy recreate HMS Belfast's finest hour bearing down on the Scharnhorst.

THE WAVY NAVY re-enactment group put on a display every year to commemorate HMS Belfast's part in sinking the *Scharnhorst* at the Battle of North Cape. From a complement of 1,963 men, only 36 survived. The group actively support St Dunstan's, collecting after shows and running a "NAAFI" for their audience. They stage a six act play onboard HMS Belfast, following the action in different parts of the ship. During



Gerry thanks Pauline of the Wavy Navy.

the play one of the four inch guns used in the engagement is fired. St Dunstaner Gerry Jackson was on hand to thank the Wavy Navy for their continued support.

Patricia Walton reports on international tributes to the creativity of Louis Braille as witnessed by a St Dunstaner

The world salutes Braille

ST DUNSTANER Norman Walton flew to Paris for Louis Braille's Bicentenary celebrations in January.

"I owe Louis Braille a lot," said Norman. "If it wasn't for him I would not be able to study and work. When I lost my sight as a 19-year-old in the Army, I got stuck into Braille. The army gave me a job as shorthand typist in the Ministry of War. Bosses would ask for my services and were disappointed when I wasn't a dolly bird. I worked near the London School of Economics and went part time to do a degree. There were no computers and audio in those days. Braille gave me access to the course work. After years of study I got a BA, BSc and Engineering Degrees together with a Surveyors' qualification. So I worked for 25 years

as a Senior Lecturer in Economics at Hammersmith College. Braille also helped me as a Dancing Teacher and musician. I must honour Louis Braille."

He was born on 4 January 1809 and 200 years to the day, we attended the service in the chapel of the National Institute for the Young Blind in Paris. It was a beautifully sung mass and afterwards we went to the reception. There was a wreath laying on Louis Braille's tomb in the Pantheon. After the great and good had paid their respects, the blind were allowed into the crypt where Braille lies alongside notables such as Zola.

That evening, we were invited to an organ recital by a blind musician in Notre Dame Cathedral.

He played the works of blind composers for an hour and was asked to do an encore. This he did for another 40 minutes! The seats were very hard and the cathedral was very cold by the end of the performance.

There then followed three days of conference at the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) building in Paris. David Blunkett gave his usual entertaining speech. Sadly RNIB Chairman Lord Low of Dalston was unable to attend but blind people from 46 countries came. The speeches were very moving, especially from African countries where even in this day and age the blind are looked on as a curse. Some blind children are chained in their rooms or murdered.

Their families regard them as an unnecessary mouth to feed. However, in areas where missionaries introduced Braille blind children are not looked on as a burden.

President Sarkozy sent no representative from the French government to the conference but the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, himself visually impaired, gave a speech. He sympathised with the blind having to contend with the heavy fall of snow. He invited all the blind to dinner in the Paris City Hall – a sumptuous building.

Another highlight of the celebrations was the opening of the New Media Library of the Valentin Haüy Association. This showed many advances in technology for the blind.

Last, but not least, was the visit to Coupvray where Louis Braille was born and is now a museum. Again, a very moving experience. We saw the kind of tools Louis Braille's father used to make saddles and how as a three year old Louis Braille had been playing with them. One struck him in the eye and with

no antibiotics to prevent the spread of infection into his remaining good eye, he was blind by the time he was five years old.

It isn't just Norman Walton who owes Louis Braille a lot. We all do. Braille's system enabled the blind to be educated, to have access to information, to communicate. In fact, everyone's basic human right. Louis Braille also furthered the cause of justice for the disabled. Braille has benefited countless people. He is the greatest Frenchman who ever lived!

Matron Jean Blackford

Mrs N. J. Blackford passed away on 26 January. She was Matron of St Dunstan's Ovingdean for 14 years, from 1963 to 1977. During the war she served in the WAAF, rising to the rank of Squadron Officer. Her years of service with St Dunstan's included a difficult period of reconstruction and

during that time she took over Northgate House where elderly and infirm St Dunstaners were looked after while Pearson House was used for training and convalescence. She carried on working beyond her scheduled retirement to ensure a smooth transition.



Never dull in the Dolomites

Gerry Jones and Alan Lock report on some St D's on skis



Photograph copyright: Martin Blank

Our St Dunstaners line up in ready expectation of a good day's skiing.

THE LARGEST PARTY of St Dunstaners, Guides, family and friends arrived at El Ciasel Hotel, Canazei on 17 January for a weeks skiing. There were two new St Dunstaners taking to the slopes, one of them, Alan Lock had skied before his eyesight

failed him, but Charlie Eastwood had never put on the cumbersome kit before, but by the end of the week he had cracked the basics and got annoyed whenever he had a fall. Alan soon got his confidence back and became one of the young bucks. Us older

ones took life a little more sedately and just skied from bar to bar and then after a little rest went from bar to bar for the second time. Thirsty work this skiing!

In all we had a marvellous week, plenty of snow, not a great deal



All down hill from here, Maria.

Photograph copyright: Maria Pikulski

of sunshine, but then the tan is just a bonus. This is not a cheap holiday and this year caught everyone out with the Pound losing its grip of the Euro. Sufficient to say the Hotel had not put its prices up from last year, so we just blamed our Government. Some of the group had saved their spending money and could handle the extra required.

The St Dunstan's skiers could not do this trip without the help of St Dunstan's paying for the Guides, and we could not do this trip without our Guides. They not only look after us on the slopes, but help to sort out our admin and generally join in to make sure that we have a great time. Without them our skiing trip would disappear like the snow at the end of April. As a group, we thank Brian and Babs Druce for their generous help.

Alan Lock adds: Being the 'newbie' on the St Dunstan's 2009 Ski trip,

I was duly volunteered to write a brief article on the week! I certainly have no shortage of anecdotes, but I'll try and give my perspective on the trip.

I arrived at Gatwick with a few nerves, since this would be my first time skiing since my sight loss. I had done about eight days on the slopes prior to this during a military adventure training course in 2000, and I was concerned about how much my body would remember. Any fears I had about not being able to find my St Dunstan's colleagues however were soon allayed. I followed my gut instinct and checked in the airport bar. Sure enough, I found a strong contingent taking advantage of sterling prices on premium lagers, before the strong Euro kicked in Italy!

Upon arrival in Italy we were efficiently transported into the Dolomites along snow covered roads which gave us some

spectacular views of the mountains. The hotel was well accustomed to the annual St Dunstan's pilgrimage to the mountains and we received a warm welcome together with the assurance that the larder and beer cellar had been well provisioned.

We were soon paired up with our guides for the week, and I was fortunate enough to have Vince Stone – a former Army ski instructor – assigned to me. Our first day was on the relatively gentle slopes at Champac, a brief bus ride away from the hotel. I had a crash refresher course off Vince and I was amazed to see that most of what I had learnt eight years previously came back pretty quickly. The hardest thing to do was simply have the faith to follow Vince over a white landscape in which I could make out no defined detail. It was a little unnerving when you cannot anticipate a steep drop or a mogul field, but as Gerry Jones

Photograph copyright: Martin Blank



This trip united the largest group of St Dunstaners skiing at Canazei to date.

rushed past me with virtually no vision at all I reflected I had nothing to complain about!

Following the first day, the week settled down into a tiring, but a hugely enjoyable schedule of skiing, après ski and après après ski (aka the hotel bar). Most of our time was spent up in the valley at Canazei. It was hugely inspiring to see everyone advancing in their abilities and confidence as the week

progressed. Although the perpetual snow and low cloud prevented us from completing the Sella Ronda, many of the St Dunstaners and their guides were able to coordinate a 'formation skiing team' on our travels around the valley.

Apparently many of the other skiers were dumfounded as they saw a stream of blind skiers nip past in perfect unison, a testament to the skill of our guides indeed.

There were some memorable moments on and off the slopes, from Mark 'Sparky' Evans off piste forays to Jamie Weller finding out he was going to be a dad (again). For me one of the most important experiences was completing (well, falling/skiing) one of the runs with a blindfold. Although I have lost my central vision, my sight is relatively good in St Dunstan's terms and undertaking the blindfolded ski

rammed home to me the challenge that many of the totally blind St Dunstaners overcome each day on the slopes. I take my hat off to them and their guides as I can say I'm not sure I would have the guts to barrel down a red slope as they do!

All too soon the week was over. We had all had a tremendous week each St Dunstaner had progressed hugely. Gary Lomas in particular was highlighted for his efforts on the slopes (and all that in spite of his one line jokes unashamedly pinched from Jimmy Carr ...). We had also done our bit to stave off the effects of the credit crunch on the hotel – their week long spike in bar sales should ensure they ride out the economic storm.

I look forward to going back again next year, and it only leaves me to say a huge thank you on behalf of everyone to all our guides and to the legendary Gerry Jones

for organizing such a successful trip.

Finally, Maria Pikulski was delighted to receive the following letter from Mara at El Ciasel:

"I must thank you that you give us a great joy,

when you come here in my house is like having lots of friends. I am very lucky to have known you and I do appreciate it even more with your life happiness. The only thing that every year is always more difficult it is to say goodbye until next year."

Whisky galore for Syd

HILLWALKERS in Scotland have been paying tribute to the memory of St Dunstaner Syd Scroggie with a wee dram. A whisky glass has been left on his grave in Glen Cova, Angus and visitors are keeping it topped up with a malt. Syd, who passed away aged 86 in 2006, never let the

loss of his sight and a leg keep him from Scotland's mountains. He even scaled 1,320ft Balluderon Hill when he was 81 for the unveiling of a cairn dedicated to his name. Having distilled his love for the hills in numerous poems and other writings, he remains a legend amongst the hill walking community.

Norman's flying high

St Dunstaner Norman Walton of Southfields, London took a flight on one of Richard Branson's Virgin balloons last year. His friend Peggy Astley, a sprightly 93-year-old, had wanted to make a freefall parachute jump on her birthday. Her doctor declared an emphatic no to the suggestion. However, a balloon flight seemed an adventurous alternative and Norman accompanied Peggy, also blind, on the trip.

Caring - A 24 hour job!

St Dunstan's Welfare Officer **Hilary Brown** discusses areas of support for those who do the supporting

A CARER IS anyone who looks after sick, frail or disabled relative or friend. A carer's role is not always recognised by others. Some people do not always understand the demands made on a carer or the contribution they give to society.

In the UK, there are an estimated six million carers. A carer's duties can vary depending on the needs of the person they care for. Being a carer is mostly a 24-hour job and can be quite difficult and tiring. If the disability of the person cared for is loss of sight this can present many challenges for the carer. This situation is as new for them as it is for the St Dunstaner.

A sight loss affects all the family. Some people care for partners or friends with additional disabilities to the sight loss. Carers are not only partners of St Dunstaners, some St Dunstaners are themselves carers.

Being a carer leaves little time for yourself. You usually have to see to the needs of the person you are caring for before your own. There are usually more than usual medical appointments to keep. If you are not careful, Carers

own needs can go on a back boiler and health problems are not always addressed as soon as they should be. Carers are important and the carer needs to take care of their own health both emotionally and physically.

Did you know that a carer is entitled to an assessment of their own needs from their local authority Social Services department? One of the needs that may be identified may be respite care. Everyone needs a break to recharge their batteries. Your local authority may help with the cost of respite care either at St Dunstan's Ovingdean or somewhere in your locality.

In recognition of the great contribution carers make, the present government have started a ten-year plan to improve the lives of carers which should be in operation by 2018. There are also current changes in the law to address some of the problems of discrimination that a person with a disability and their carer may face. There is a very real issue of the persistent discrimination faced by carers that comes in many forms, including from employers, public authorities and other service providers. The changes in legislation may mean

that those carers who are of working age and want to work from home might find employers more ready to arrange that, and many carers who have felt juggling the demands of paid work and caring were too much, might feel returning to employment becomes a real possibility.

Carers UK are a useful organisation. They have a help line and also a regular newsletter and locally organise Carers Support Groups throughout UK. Some people can be a little anxious about going to such a group. Don't be, the people that attend are people in a similar situation to yourself so will understand your position. You will also gain information that may be helpful.

If you cannot attend a group Carers UK also offer advice and information via the telephone. You may ask how you can attend a meeting when you have a caring responsibility. If the person you care for cannot be left for a few hours there are agencies like "Crossroads" who will keep the person you are caring for company. Crossroads may also be able to offer a regular slot of respite care maybe for an afternoon or an evening so you can have some free time. Some areas also have volunteers who could do this, for example Age Concern or your local Volunteer Bureau.

Local services should be able to offer the carer and the person they care for, support to make life a little easier such as:

- Health services - Carrying out home visits to you or the person you care for, if your caring role makes it difficult to attend appointments at the surgery.
- Health Centres - Arranging appointments for you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid visiting the surgery twice. Arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy.
- Other sources of support and advice. This could include the Social Services department and local voluntary agencies.

To start an application for assistance first contact your local Social Services department to ask for a "Community Care Assessment" for the person you look after. Your local Social Services may be able to offer various support. This could include home care to help with some of the practical tasks of looking after someone such as assistance with getting washed and dressed in the morning, making meals or making sure the person is safe. They may also be able to help with equipment which may make life easier such as a bath seat.

- Your local surgery should be able to provide information on services provided by the NHS, such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointments.

- Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau should be able to assist with advice and claims for benefits like Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance.

If you do not want to have an assessment by your local Social Services there will be details of private caring agencies in your area providing help at home, available from your social services department and listed in *Yellow Pages* and other directories.

A carer is usually entitled to claim Carers Allowance. There is no longer any age restriction on claiming for this benefit. Every year £740 million of carers' benefits are unclaimed. Any local Citizens' Advice Bureau should be able to help you explain the benefit to you and help with the claim form. Or you can contact the Department for Work and Pensions Carers Allowance department on the telephone number below. You may find that even if you do already get a pension you may still end up being better off claiming Carer's Allowance. Also if you are eligible for Pension Credit and are eligible for Carers Allowance you will receive an extra payment.

A carer may find difficulties with getting out and about with the person they care for transport is not always accessible. In some areas local buses have lower entrances and taxis which can take wheelchairs but this

is not universal so any journey can be difficult. However there are some services that may assist such as your local community transport scheme, volunteer driver schemes, assisted service on trains and planes, etc.

Your welfare officer should be able to give you information on most of the services mentioned in this article

Useful telephone numbers

Carers UK

Telephone: 0808 808 7777
(Advisors give advice on Wednesday and Thursday, 10:00-12:00 and again from 14:00 to 16:00, other times you will be asked to leave a message).

Crossroads National Office

Telephone: 0845 450 0350

Carers Allowance Unit

Telephone: 01253 856123
or e-mail cau.customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Age Concern

Free helpline 0800 00 99 66

Assisted Travel – Contact your local transport provider for details.

Carers Week takes place from 8-14 June with the theme "Carers...the UK's secret service". Carers groups will be highlighting the huge contribution that carers make although often unrecognised by society.

Do we have a blockbuster?

THE LATEST St Dunstan's Review story competition was judged by Sarah Harrison, author of over 20 novels such as *Rose Petal Soup*, *A Spell of Swallows*, and *The Nightingale's Nest*. She also wrote the self help guide *How to Write a Blockbuster* as well as several children's books.

"I have spent a very happy evening reading and poring over the short stories," said Sarah. "It seemed to me that three of them (*David and Goliath*, *The Referee is Always Right* and *My Sporting Fight-back*) were definitely memoirs rather than

fiction, so although they made fascinating reading they were outside the brief. That left me with the others of which one, *Reaching For Success*, was also borderline. My first choice, therefore, is *The Bigger They Are* by Harry Beevers, which had atmosphere,

characterisation, a good sense of time and place and emotional pull. Second is Roy Ramsay's *The Gastronomer Club's Hunt*, was funny and inventive and written with great brio. Third is *The Tea Break* by Joan Beevers, the plotting of which I particularly admired."

Harry's story, winning the £50 first prize is published this issue, with the runners up who won £30 and £20 following in April and May.

The bigger they are ...

by Harry Beevers

JOE STIMSON was an excited twelve-year old schoolboy. Christmas was just a week away and the day had arrived for the opening of the annual Winter fair in the small industrial town Joe called home. Christmas looked like being a Spartan affair for the Stimson family. Joe's father, injured at work a fortnight earlier, would be unable to re-join his workmates at the local mill for at least another three weeks. These were pre-

Welfare State days and the family's only income for the time being were the few shillings provided by the Union sickness fund. Despite this, Joe knew that both he and his five-year old sister would wake up to stockings on Christmas morning. They would receive their apple and orange, new pennies, some chocolate money and one or two small presents. There would be no turkey for dinner but Christmas would be a happy time for theirs was a loving home.

The Winter fair was eagerly anticipated by Joe and all his classmates at school. Despite financial stringencies Joe prepared well for the big event. He earned a penny here and a penny there running errands for neighbours. He obtained from one or two friendly market traders a number of empty wooden boxes. After reducing these to bundles of kindling, more coppers were added to Joe's "Fair Fund". He even raised a little revenue carol singing but realised that much of this income was given sympathetically rather than in recognition of his choral endeavours. Nevertheless, every little helped and now the time had finally arrived. Four shillings in a small purse were tucked safely in his pocket. It was 7pm, the festivities would now be in full swing. Promising his mother he would not be late, he set off on the short walk to the fair.

Joe joined an increasing number of townsfolk flocking towards the large field where the event was traditionally held. A few minutes before arriving he could see the bright lights and hear the sound of a steam engine thumping out "Entry of the Gladiators".

A little nearer he was assailed by smells delicious and tempting. Baked potatoes, the tang of onions, hot peas and the whiff of brandy snap all filled the air.

Joe was not tempted. His precious savings were for better things and he

decided to wander through the crowds planning carefully how best to eke out his funds. He watched Dodgems, dart throwers and rifles rumoured to be equipped with bent sights. There were stalls galore where one rolled down pennies hoping to hit a winning square or cover a silver threepenny bit or sixpence. These attractions were not for Joe and neither were visits to sideshows featuring a tattooed lady or three-headed cat.

Reaching the far corner of the field Joe spotted a large crowd in front of an impressive looking marquee. Emblazoned in large letters were the words, "Professor Benson's Boxing Emporium". On a small stage Joe could see two broad-shouldered men in vests, shorts and boxing gloves. The men looked tough. Their heads were shaved but their faces weren't. There was scar tissue round their eyes and their ears were large and shapeless. Professor Benson, complete with loud-hailer was trying to persuade the locals to take up the challenge.

"Three rounds only gentlemen," he cried, "£5 if you win and a pound if you are still on your feet at the end". There were no takers. Standing next to the two bruisers was a boy who appeared to be a miniature version of the pugilists. His hair was cropped, his eyes were mean and his only movements were the champ, champ of his jaws as he chewed a mouthful of gum.

Joe gazed around and spotted a number of his classmates, most of them his friends. However, there was one exception, George (known as Jud) Crawley, the school bully, flanked by a couple of his cronies. They turned and faced Joe as he approached.

"Come to challenge the Kid?" jeered Jud. Joe ignored him.

"Five shillings if you beat him" continued Jud "but I reckon you're scared." Joe remained silent.

"Tell you what" said Jud in a stage whisper, "I don't suppose you have any cash. I have ten bob from my Dad. If you take on the Kid and beat him I'll give you the lot."

The provocation was getting to Joe and his response was robust.

"I notice you aren't making a challenge", he snapped, "you're the one supposed to be the tough guy."

Jud flushed angrily and Joe saw a flash of something else in Jud's eyes. It was fear. The Professor, now getting desperate, pointed to the boys and shouted, "Any of you like to take on the Kid?"

For a moment Joe hesitated. Then, his hand shot up, "I'll take him on" he cried followed by a cheer of support from the crowd of onlookers. Obviously spurred on by Joe's decision, a couple

of brawny locals also accepted the challenge of the gruesome twosome. The bill for the first session of the night was now complete. The crowd surged forward to the two cash-desks to pay their one shilling entrance fees.

Inside the marquee the air was thick with smoke as Joe settled down in one corner of the ring. One of his mates took temporary charge of his jacket and money for he was to be first on the bill. The Kid was bigger and heavier than Joe but Joe was quick on his feet and planned to adopt hit and run tactics. The bell sounded and the Kid shuffled slowly forward swinging his fists clumsily. His jaw was still working on the gum as Joe easily evaded the attempted blows.

Again and again the Kid thrust forward whilst Joe ducked and dodged keeping well out of harms way. Frustrated, the Kid leapt forward and pinning Joe's arm to his side began pummelling his body. Suddenly, without warning, the Kid's head jerked downwards savagely hitting Joe above the eye. The crowd began to boo as Joe felt a trickle of blood coursing down his cheek. The referee made no effort to break the clinch and in desperation Joe jerked his right fist upward just as the Kid attempted another head-butt. Joe's fist connected with the Kid's nose which suddenly adopted a most unusual angle. More blood was now in evidence but this time it wasn't Joe's.

The Kid's jaw stopped champing. The gum was gone. Joe became aware that the crowd were chanting his name. "Joe-Joe-Joe" went up the cry as the Kid's face flushed with fury. He hurled himself at his opponent as Joe flung out a stiff right arm. He felt his glove sink deeply into the Kid's midriff. A perfect solar plexus punch, made doubly devastating because of the way the Kid hurtled forward. Joe had never heard of a solar plexus blow. It was a punch which incapacitated Gentleman Jim Corbett in his title fight with Cornishman Bob Fitzsimmons in 1897. It was a tactical weapon mastered by just a few world champions in the past and Joe had executed the coup de grace flawlessly.

The Kid stopped in his tracks. He fought furiously for breath but the blow temporarily paralysed his whole being. Like a felled tree he toppled to the canvas. The crowd took up the count.

"One-two-three." The referee looked sheepishly at Professor Benson and shrugged. "Four-five-six," howled the crowd. The Kid made one final attempt to rise but too late. "Seven-eight-nine-out."

Joe raised his arm and pennies began to fly into the ring. They were followed by showers of silver coins and soon the whole ring was covered with a carpet of money. Three of the locals leapt in, took off their caps and swept the money into them. Finally when it had

all been collected and tipped into a cheap leather bag it was handed to Joe by a grinning youth. "Well done Joe," he shouted, "you've earned it."

"What about the prize money?" thundered a voice from the crowd, and Professor Benson duly stepped forward dropping two shining half-crowns into Joe's bag. In a dream-like trance Joe climbed out of the ring pushing his way to the exit. His shoulders were slapped by cheering admirers with cries of "Well done young 'un." Joe had a quick glimpse of Jud Crawley looking really sick amidst his cronies. Their eyes met for an instant before Jud looked away.

It was barely 8 o'clock when Joe returned home. In an excited voice he told his parents of his night's escapade. His mother dabbed iodine on his eyebrow whilst his Dad proudly gave him a fatherly hug.

Eight pounds and 19 shillings were counted out and Joe knew that Christmas for the Stimsons wouldn't be too bad after all.

As he lay in bed his final thoughts were of Jud. "He won't pay up," he thought. "But his reputation has been badly dented. He won't be throwing his weight about in future."

And Joe was right.

Next month: The Gastronomer Club's Hunt by St Dunstaner Roy Ramsay

ASK ROD

Your queries answered
by the ROVI on Duty

ROVI on Duty Tel: 01273 391447 E-mail: rovi@dunstan.org.uk

Radio Controlled Timepieces

Have you ever passed Rugby on the M1 and wondered what all the masts are doing by the side of the road? It was a transmitting area, which came into service in 1926. The original purpose was to transmit telegraph messages to the Commonwealth and provide a commercial telephone service across the Atlantic (callsign GBR). In 1927, a time signal from the Royal Observatory was added and it became home to the signal that radio controlled timepieces keep their time by. Time has literally moved on because the transmitter was relocated to Anthorn, North West Cumbria in 2007. But what has all this got to do with keeping a watch on time?

More accurate than the Earth

The transmitting station at Anthorn has two caesium atomic clocks installed by the National Physical Laboratory. An atomic clock is very precise because it uses the properties of atoms to keep time. If you have a group of grandfather clocks, using a pendulum, they will lose or gain time after running for a week, with say a minute's difference between each clock. In a quartz timepiece, the difference will be within ten seconds a week, but atomic clocks will agree within ten millionths of a second. That is

more accurate than the spinning of the Earth. The clocks are very accurate and can remain so for thousands of years.

The time from the Anthorn clocks is used to control a binary code signal broadcast every second, every hour, every day, week, and month throughout the year. The radio station has the callsign MSF which is sometimes referred to as Master Standard Frequency. However, apart from the M identifying it as being British, the letters do not stand for anything. The MSF signal is monitored against seven more atomic clocks at the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington, Middlesex and GPS satellites to ensure the precision of the measurement. The signal can be picked up by special timepieces which use the transmission to keep them accurate. The timepiece has a radio receiver in it which is tuned to the transmitted frequency, a low 60 kHz.

Domestic watches and clocks do not keep a check on this signal every second, as this would use up battery power. Most commercial products will check for this signal maybe once or twice a day; enough to keep the timepiece and you on time.

If you have one of these clocks, it will conveniently reset itself when the clocks go forward an hour on 29 March as British Summer Time begins.

Summer Time but no Zones

There are similar transmitters in Germany, the USA, and Japan. The German transmitter (callsign DCF-77) is always one-hour ahead of the UK. This will assist keeping the timepiece on time over the whole of Europe.

One disadvantage to the system is that it does not account for time zones. If you are in a country that does not follow European Summer Time, you have to add or subtract hours manually. Iceland, for example, uses GMT all year round. Outside the reach of the transmitter signal the timepiece will operate as a normal watch. When you return to the UK and Europe and are in reach of the signal, the timepiece will automatically start to pick up the signal on its next check.

Signal strength may also vary at night, during the winter or in periods of strong solar activity. One tip for watch users is to leave it upside down by a window overnight to ensure the time is correctly updated.

Types of equipment

Radio controlled timepieces include watches and clocks. The choice is yours. Everything comes in different styles, shapes and colours. When choosing a

clock or watch, make sure the hands and numbers are big and bold. This will help make the time easier to see. There is a radio controlled, easy to see, wall clock. These come in large and small sizes.

There are also radio controlled clocks and watches that talk; some include a bold LCD display. St Dunstan's ROVIs can demonstrate the Science Museum Radio Controlled Watch and the "Atomic" Radio Controlled Alarm Clock. These watches and clocks have date and alarm functions. Very important to make sure you get up on time. Some will also speak the temperature and humidity, other models include FM and AM radios.

All these items are available from the RNIB, Cobolt Systems, Amazon and other stockists. The cost of these timepieces is slightly more expensive than conventional watches or clocks, but if accurate time is important to you, then radio controlled time is the answer.

TOP TIP

St Dunstaner Elsie Hall of Fortrose, Ross-shire was delighted when a friend sent her a bouquet of flowers, but not so happy when she knocked the vase over. Luckily, she found a simple solution. A few blobs of Blu Tack on the bottom of the vase fixed it to the window ledge firmly enough so that it cannot be knocked over.

DO IT? ASK IT?

IT Help Telephone: 01273 391432 E-mail: rehabit@st-dunstans.org.uk

About Rehabilitation and Training's IT Helpline

Many of you reading this will have had IT training at St Dunstan's either at Ovingdean or Sheffield, and this is to explain and remind you about the Support Helpline – how it works, how to use it and what we can help you with.

Support is provided by the instructors who spend much of their day teaching, so your call will be connected to an answerphone. Please leave a message giving your name, telephone number and a brief summary of the problem. The number is 01273 391432 or you can e-mail rehabit@st-dunstans.org.uk.

Please do not contact individual instructors directly, as all enquiries have to be routed through to the Helpline and each instructor takes a turn on 'support duty' on a weekly rota basis. The calls are listened to and logged during the day by the Training Assistant who may contact you for a few more details, or if, for some reason, the instructor on support duty is not be able to respond that day, or maybe for a few more details.

The Support answerphone is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We, on the other hand, are allowed some time off, so calls can only be logged and

dealt with Monday-Friday between 09:00hrs and 16:00hrs. Please be patient, because as mentioned above most of the day is spent with St Dunstaners on training.

With regards to what we can help you with, we will answer any queries relating to the training received at St Dunstan's. We will also try to help or advise on computer equipment problems, but it may be that the supplier of the equipment is better able to help.

Any problems with broadband and internet connection are sometimes best dealt with by your ISP (Internet Service Provider) Support Team.

Here are the telephone numbers for other sources of help:

Software Express

Telephone: 0845 22 55 005
for those using Guide or who have purchased Guide pc systems

Dolphin Computer Access

Telephone: 0845 130 5353
for Hal or Supernova problems

RNIB Volunteer Service

Telephone: 0845 604 2341
For computer equipment problems

Welcome to St Dunstan's

Alan Banton of Guernsey, Channel Isles served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

George Bell of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

Charles Bibb of Erdington, Birmingham served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1942 to 1946.

Joseph Byas of Benfleet, Essex served in the Royal Ulster Rifles from 1952 to 1955

Henry Chester of Twyford, Banbury, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

Gordon Clarke of Pyle, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan served in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and Royal Artillery between 1941 and 1946.

John Cockcroft of Chelmsford, Essex served as Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1958.

Erna Connick of Birkenhead, Merseyside served in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Fred Conway of Egremont, Cumbria served as Signaller in the Royal Signals from 1951 to 1953.

Herbert Cross of Homerton, London served in the General Service Corps and the Black Watch between 1945 and 1950.

Mark Cunningham of Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1951 to 1957.

Joyce Davies of St Ives, Cambridgeshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Muriel Dennison of Walthamstow, London served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1946.

Douglas French of Fovant, Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the Royal Hampshire Regiment from 1933 to 1947.

John Fulton of Lowton, Warrington, Cheshire served in the Royal Air Force Police from 1957 to 1959.

Betty Gale of Romford, Essex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service at Lancaster and Lewisham from 1942 to 1946.

Alfred Gates of Pimlico, London, served in the Royal Navy from 1934 to 1946.

Edith Gray of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1940 to 1950.

Albert Hardie of Bexleyheath, Kent served in the Royal Signals as a Driver from 1954 to 1956.

Frank Holmsted of Bookham, Leatherhead, Surrey served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps from 1937 to 1946.

Geoffrey Horne of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Military Police from 1966 to 1970.

James Hunt of Lewes, East Sussex served as Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

George Hutchins of Builth Wells, Powys served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Ronald Jones of Asburton, Newton Abbot, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1936 to 1948.

Harold Leishman of Whitleigh, Plymouth, Devon served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1955.

Jack Leonard of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1947.

Robert Main of Bute Wynd, Kirkcaldy, Fife served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Alfred Mason of Falmer, Brighton served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1947 to 1949.

James Moore of Mayfield, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Artillery between 1939 and 1950.

Frederick Palmer of Hunstanton, Norfolk served in the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

John Price of Barking, Essex served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1947.

Henry Roberts of Bognor Regis, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Thomas Seaton of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry from 1940 to 1941 and then the Royal Artillery until 1943.

Bertie Stephens of Billingham, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Brian Taylor of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 to 1959.

Sarah Thornhill of Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Thomas Webb of Hull, North Humberside served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

Stanley Winter of Orpington, Kent served in The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and Royal Engineers between 1951 and 1956.

Atherlie Wood of Coventry, West Midlands served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Family News

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of:

Edward Thomas Britain on 12 January. He is the great-grandson of Marjorie Lockley of Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire.

Masie on 6 February. She is the granddaughter of Nigel and Jacquie Whiteley of Peacehaven, East Sussex.

SILVER ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Norman and Terri McKean of Seaford, East Sussex on 14 February.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Raymond and Abigail Jones of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan on 3 February.

William and Pauline Taylor of Burscough, Ormskirk, Lancashire on 7 February.

Ron and Margaret Wilson of Leeds, West Yorkshire on 14 February.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Stewart and Margaret Bugby of Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire on 5 February.

BLUE SAPPHIRE ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Harry and Peggy Taylor of Billingham, Cleveland on 17 February.

Robert and Dee Chandler of Seaford, East Sussex on 26 February.

Douglas and Nancy Hale of Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside on 26 February.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

David Farish last year. He was the husband of St Dunstaner Yvonne Farish of Lichfield, Staffordshire.

Mary Hindle of Llandudno Junction, Gwynedd on 29 December. She was the wife of Lawrence Hindle.

Marie Hamilton of Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire on 23 January. She was the widow of Francis Hamilton.

Dorothy Harvie of Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex on 29 January. She was the widow of John Harvie.

John Livermore of Porchester, Fareham, Hampshire on 29 January. The son of late Army St Dunstaner Frederick Livermore, he served in the Royal Navy and had helped as an escort for many years.

Herbert Davies on 2 February. He was the husband of St Dunstaner Violet Davies of Folkestone, Kent.

Catherine Leslie of Brighton on 5 February. She was the widow of St Dunstaner Hamish Leslie.

Edna Lumsden on 6 February. She was the wife of St Dunstaner James Lumsden of Norwich, Norfolk.

Frank Bloss of Leiston, Suffolk on 6 February. He was the stepson of late St Dunstaner Percy Carman.

Doris Reynolds of Colchester, Essex on 9 February. She was the widow of St Dunstaner Reginald Reynolds.

BEER OF THE MONTH by Colin Williamson

Cameron's Monkey Stout

ABV 4.4 per cent. This brew has a rich black colour and chocolate aroma. The chocolate malts give this stout a roasted taste with an excellent bitter sweet balance. This is a must try for all stout drinkers. This beer also invokes a great legend, arguably the most famous story connected with Hartlepool. During the Napoleonic Wars a French ship was wrecked off the Hartlepool coast. There was a fear of a French invasion of Britain and much public concern about the possibility of French infiltrators and spies. Local fishermen fearing an invasion kept a close watch on the French vessel as it struggled against the storm but when the vessel was severely battered and sunk they

turned their attention to the wreckage washed ashore. Among the wreckage lay one wet and sorrowful looking survivor, the ship's pet monkey dressed to amuse in a military style uniform. The fishermen apparently questioned the monkey and held a beach-based trial. Unfamiliar with what a Frenchman looked like they came to the conclusion that this monkey was a French spy and should be sentenced to death.

The unfortunate creature was to die by hanging, with the mast of a fishing boat providing a convenient gallows.

Monkey Stout is available from Tesco's in the Newcastle area as well as the visitor centre at Cameron's Lion Brewery in Hartlepool.

Ten Answers

Answers to quiz on page 16.

- 1) Heathrow; 2) Kingston-upon-Hull;
- 3) Berwick-on-Tweed; 4) Hampshire;
- 5) River Humber; 6) Lincolnshire;
- 7) Somerset; 8) Salt; 9) Truro; and
- 10) Lincolnshire.

Inconvenience

An announcement from the driver of the train from Preston: "We are now approaching London Euston, arriving 15 minutes earlier than scheduled. We apologise for any inconvenience."

In Memory

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

Philip Baldwin

Royal Navy

Philip Charles Baldwin of Arundel, West Sussex died on 5 August, aged 83. He joined the Royal Navy in 1944 and served in the UK and Far East. Discharged in 1950, he worked as a policeman and an undertaker. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Major Basil Tolputt

Royal Artillery

Basil Vaughan Tolputt of Seaford, East Sussex died on 18 December, aged 90. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1939 and was commissioned the following year. He served in Europe and the Middle East. He retired as Major in 1960 and then joined the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in London. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Thomas Sharpe

Royal Artillery

Thomas Edward Sharpe of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 23 December, aged 91. He joined the TA in 1937 and was mobilised in the Royal Artillery in 1939. Demobbed as Sergeant in 1946, in civilian life he worked for an agricultural engineering company.

Arnold Colthart

Royal Navy

Arnold Henry Colthart of Glenrothes, Fife died on 7 January, aged 75. He joined the Royal Navy as a boy seaman in 1948. Serving on fishery and coastal protection, he was discharged in 1973. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

April Hoar

Women's Auxiliary Air Force

April Hoar of Petworth, West Sussex died on 9 January, aged 84. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1944. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Ted Stratton

Royal Air Force

Arnold Edwin Stratton of Alvechurch, Worcestershire died on 9 January, aged 96. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and maintained Spitfires on the north east coast. Discharged in 1946, he worked in the building trade. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Eric Davies

Royal Air Force

Eric Vincent Davies of Welshpool, Powys died on 12 January, aged 75. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1951, serving in

Melksham and Bristol on police flights. Discharged in 1953, he worked for the GPO and British Telecom. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Michael Jephson

8 Hussars, Royal Armoured Corps

Michael John Ernest Jephson of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 15 January, aged 84. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1942 and was commissioned into the 8 Hussars the following year. Demobbed in 1946, he went to live in Kenya. Our sympathy goes to his widow Alison and all members of the family.

Ronald Syrett

Royal Artillery

Ronald George Syrett of Brockworth, Gloucestershire died on 17 January, aged 84. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1942, and trained as a technical assistant. Demobbed in 1947, he worked for the Ministry of Defence. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

Ernie Bruce

Intelligence Corps

Henry Ernest Bruce of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 20 January, aged 90. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1939, transferring to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1942. He moved to the Intelligence Corps in 1943 serving in France and Germany. Discharged in 1946, he resumed work in the Civil Service. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Charles Leat

Royal Army Medical Corps

Charles Alfred Leat of Grafty Green, Maidstone, Kent died on 24 January, aged 95. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1941, serving in Algiers, Italy, and Austria. Demobbed in 1946, he became a chartered accountant and was later Chairman of Copydex. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dora and all the family.

Thomas Rush

Irish Guards

Thomas Charles Rush of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire died on 26 January, aged 82. He joined the Irish Guards in 1944 and served in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Discharged in 1946, he worked in manufacturing and eventually became a transport manager. Our sympathy goes to his widow Nina and all the family.

Benjamin Dyer

Royal Navy

Benjamin Edward Dyer of Angmering, Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 27 January, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and trained as a telegraphist. Discharged in 1946, he taught Physics at a girls' school. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Sidney Baldwin

Royal Signals

Sidney Baldwin of Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire died on 28 January, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals and served

in Austria, Egypt and Italy. Discharged in 1946, he became a solicitor, later working for the County Council. Our sympathy goes to his widow Gertrude and all the family.

Dick Hall

Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Richard Charles Hall of Haywards Heath, West Sussex died on 29 January, aged 91. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1974. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps at Lewisham in 1940. Serving as Sergeant, he was wounded in Egypt in 1945. Discharged in 1946, he entered the field of catering and became Managing Director of Redball catering which included St Dunstan's amongst its clients. His interests included gardening. Our sympathy goes to his widow Bet and all the family.

Bill Billings

Royal Army Service Corps

William Billings of Coulsdon, Surrey died on 30 January, aged 90. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1939 serving in France, the Western Desert and India. In civilian life, he was a bus driver and also worked for the Post Office. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Sydney Spring

King's Own Royal Regiment

Sydney Harold Spring of Amersham, Buckinghamshire died on 30 January, aged 92. He joined the 1st Battalion, King's Own Royal Regiment in 1939 and served in France, Malta, Egypt,

Palestine, Syria and Italy. Discharged in 1946, he worked for the GPO. Our sympathy goes to his widow Sandy and family and friends.

Bill Glenn

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

William Denis Glenn of Sidley, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex died on 31 January, aged 78. He served in the Royal Air Force as a mechanic from 1947 to 1953, and again until 1959. In 1960, he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and was discharged as Corporal in 1969. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

Herbert Downward

Royal Air Force

Herbert Downward of Ovingdean, Brighton died on 2 February, aged 88. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1944. He was an assistant to an outfitter before joining the Royal Air Force in 1940. He served in the UK as Leading Aircraftman until disease damaged his eyesight in 1944. After training as a physiotherapist at St Dunstan's, he took up a position at the Royal Infirmary, Gloucester in 1947 and later became their senior physiotherapist. He also developed a busy private practice. A keen brailist, he studied French, Latin and literature. Other interests included carpentry, gardening and music. He played violin and saxophone. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

Roy Glover
Civil Defence

Bernard William Roy Glover of Waterlooville, Hampshire died on 3 February, aged 87. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1948. Originally a Ship's wheelwright, he was working in the Dockyard on Civil Defence when caught by bomb blast. Initially, he became a shop keeper but began playing the accordion at concerts in the evening. He developed his musical skills as an organist and over the next few decades would play at Butlins, the Savoy, and other seaside resorts. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jean and all members of the family.

Edwin Wright
Royal Signals

Edwin Wright of Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 6 February, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals in 1940 and served in the UK, North Africa, India, Ceylon, and Burma. Discharged in 1946, he worked for the Post Office. Our sympathy goes to all members of the family.

Arthur Richardson
Pioneer Corps

Arthur Richardson of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 7 February, aged 86. He joined the Pioneer Corps in 1942 and served in North Africa, France, Germany and Denmark. Discharged in 1947, he became a driver and later made crankshafts. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Reginald Miller
Royal Air Force

Reginald Miller of Clayton Le Moors, Accrington, Lancashire died on 8 February, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 and served with a Lancaster Squadron at Mildenhall. Discharged in 1949, he worked for GEC and later a telephone manufacturer. Our sympathy goes to his widow Dorothy and all the family.

Gerald Marsh
Royal Air Force

Gerald Lincoln Marsh of East Cowes, Isle of Wight died on 10 February, aged 84. He was a messenger with Air Raid precautions before joining the Royal Air Force in 1942. Training as an armourer, he was sent to India. Discharged in 1947, he worked as a bus conductor, butcher, newsagent and also ran pubs. Our sympathy goes to his widow Kathie and all the family.

William Williams
Royal Signals

William Walter Williams of Snettisham, Norfolk died on 30 January, aged 88. He joined the Royal Signals in 1941 and served in India, Malaya, and Singapore. Discharged in 1947, he worked in fields diverse as ice cream making and aircraft manufacturing. Our sympathy goes to all the family.

Ronald Topping
Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Ronald Topping of Combe Florey, Taunton, Somerset died on 14 February, aged 90. He joined the Royal Engineers

(TA) in 1938 and was embodied on the outbreak of war. He transferred to the Royal Artillery in 1940, and then to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1944 where he became a small arms instructor. Discharged in 1946, he worked in the steel industry. Our sympathy goes to his widow Sheila and all the family.

Bill Shea
Royal Marines

William Frederick Shea of Great Totham, Essex died on 15 February, aged 87. In his own words, Bill was born in the Corps, specifically at the Royal Marine Artillery Barracks at Eastney, Portsmouth where his father was stationed. Enlisting in the Royal Marines as a 17-year-old, he passed out as a King's Badge man and became a Military Training Instructor. That became a secondary function when he volunteered for Commando duty. He was deployed to Holland for the extraction of the Dutch Royal Family and later to West Africa. By January 1944, he was serving as Sergeant in Italy where his unit penetrated enemy lines to deal with a gun battery at Castleforte. Enemy forces were heavier than expected and the Marines came under fire as they attempted a retreat. One of Bill's men then trod on a landmine. The blast killed two men and injured Bill who was bandaged and dosed with morphine although his remaining men were unable to carry him on their escape. Eventually, he was picked by men who were not speaking English. Initial fears that he had been captured by the Germans were unfounded as a Polish Troop carried him back

across the River Garig. After a spell of hospitalisation, he was returned to the UK, coincidentally on the same ship repatriating POW St Dunstaners. Studying Braille at St Dunstan's in Church Stretton, he settled on physiotherapy as a career leading to an initial appointment at Birmingham City General Hospital and then Queen Elizabeth Medical Hospital. In 1952, he moved to Huntingdon, working for the local hospital and also setting up a successful private practice. His patients included several heavyweight boxers and shot put champion Geoff Capes. Cheekily, he would add that his clientele included a Foreign Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister. "Though of course, they were all the same person – John Major!" Bill also served as Chairman of St Dunstan's Physiotherapists group. Maintaining an interest in the activities and history of the Royal Marines, he became Vice-President of 40 Royal Marines Commando (1942-1946) Association. He also participated in St Dunstan's tandem riding, skiing, and climbing activities as well as the camps at Lee-on-Solent and Warminster. However, it was in the field of amateur radio that he found his milieu. As Chairman of St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society for over 30 years, he was an enthusiastic advocate of the medium, callsign G4AUJ. Quite apart from making contact with people across the world, he also organised trips overseas for the SDARS, notably to Jordan. Our sympathy goes to his daughter Jane and all members of the family.

Snowy start for epic walk

Field Gunner Ges Laker and his dogs embark on 7,000 mile coastal walk as worst weather in a decade hits the UK

FORMER FIELD Gunner Ges Laker and his two dogs Phoebe and Sumo have endured some of the worst weather of recent memory since setting off to walk around Britain's coast in order to raise funds for blind ex-Service men and women at St Dunstan's. They set off from Warsash, Hampshire on 31 January with a soiree of supporters who accompanied them for the first 15 miles. By the morning of 2 February they were walking through snow, rain and biting cold winds. A cold walk round Eastney led on to a cold camp at Lanstone. However, they have carried on regardless, cheered on by supporters. Heading in an anti-clockwise direction, Ges and his dogs reached St Dunstan's Ovingdean on 9 February. There he



Photographs copyright: Jax Whiteley

Gerry Jackson wishes Ges, Phoebe and Sumo all the best on their continuing walk around Britain.



Gerry and Nigel introduce Ges to Manager Helen Emmerson and Chairman Andrew Keeling.

was greeted by Gerry Jackson and Nigel Whiteley. As the Review went to press, Ges had reached the bleak

expanse of Dungeness in Kent and he was moving on to Hythe. His progress can be checked online at www.lakerscoastline.org.