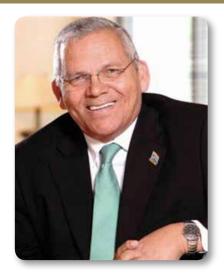


# Message from the Chairperson



**Dear Colleagues** 

It is with both sadness and gratitude that we said our final farewell to Mrs Simmers last month. As St Dunstans, we were very proud to have at one stage four living widows each in their nineties. In May Mrs Simmers was the last of theses widows to be put to rest. We thank God for the blessings bestowed on these families who enjoyed the benefits of longevity of their respective loved ones as mothers, grandmothers and in some cases great- grandmothers. St Dunstans is honoured to have been of service to these families

over such an extended period of time.

Later this year St Dunstans will be hosting Project Gemini in Cape Town. Project Gemini is a gathering of war-blinded veterans from various countries who gather for one week annually to share experiences, take part in activities and build comradery. A few years ago Veterans UK (which is the new name for St Dunstans in the UK) invited us to send a delegation to this event in the UK where it originated and was to be hosted. At the time that the invitation was extended to St Dunstans SA the board thoroughly debated the invitation and decided that we should provide our veterans with this opportunity to interact with other veterans and to expose our members to a world beyond South Africa. We decided to send two representatives per year and this arrangement has continued for some years.

Recently the UK organisers asked if we would consider hosting this event and after giving due consideration to the costs involved we indicated that we would host it. As a result St Dunstans SA will host Project Gemini in 2018. Our members will share some real South Africa hospitality with our visitors.

The event takes place in the year that St Dunstans SA will be celebrating 100 years of service to the war-blinded. This is an amazing achievement and we are all very proud to be a part of this wonderful caring organisation. The board and members have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the organisation remains able to continue to deliver this level of service for at least another 100 years.

On behalf of all the beneficiaries I would like to thank all those who went before us and built St Dunstans into the organisation that it is today.

Thank you for this wonderful legacy and God Bless.

Brian Figaji



Message from the Chairman

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1918-2018





Described as "the most horrific of all wars", the Great War of 1914–1918 saw more that 70 million people mobilised and in uniform, in a conflict that led to over 9 million military casualties and over 7 million civilian deaths. In Europe alone, another 7 million soldiers were permanently disabled and 15 million seriously injured, following the gruelling trench warfare with its bombs, artillery barrages, chlorine, mustard gas and nerve gas. Those who escaped the combat fallout had still to contend with the after-effects of food shortages, famine and disease.

When hostilities finally ceased, on Armistice Day – 11th November 1918 – the nations of Planet Earth involved in the conflict had to deal with the consequences of the slaughter and the carnage, the lives lost and the broken families, the physical injuries and the traumatic psychological impact ....

To adapt the words of historian Gardiner S. Mitchell writing on the 10th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (with the help of his great-uncle Jim Donaghy M.B.E. who had himself been in the trenches at the Somme):

"So many of the men who had enlisted had been killed or badly wounded. Many were disabled with loss of limbs, deafness, blindness, lungs destroyed with poisonous gases, faces disfigured. Even for those who returned physically untouched, everything for them had also changed ....

Many of the veterans couldn't or wouldn't talk about the War when they came home, even as the years and decades passed. Many just could not relive those horrific days, or couldn't talk to those who had not been there to experience the horrors, the suffering, the bloodshed, the terror, the anguish and the pain."



John Singer Sargent's painting of a line of blinded soldiers came to be known by a one word title: "Gassed."

#### The Birth of St Dunstan's and its Twinning in South Africa

On 29th January 1915, British publisher and philanthropist (later Sir) Arthur Pearson – who had himself lost his sight through glaucoma – founded "The Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee" for soldiers who had been blinded by gas attack or trauma during the war. The goal of the committee, radical for the times, was to provide vocational training rather than charity for invalided servicemen, and thus to enable them to have independent and productive lives.

lan Fraser was a Scottish peer who had spent his early childhood in Johannesburg his father was a South African businessman in the decade after the Anglo-Boer War. Serving in the British forces, he had been blinded on 23rd July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. After a spell in the Officers Ward of the London General Hospital and when his bandages were finally removed, it was found that he had lost the sight of both eyes. It was then that Sir Arthur Pearson wrote to him, explaining how he had himself gone blind in middle life and how he had "gotten on and made the best of it." Pearson invited



Founder of St Dunstan's in the UK and its first Chairman

Fraser to go to St Dunstan's to help train war-blinded men there. That's exactly what Ian Fraser did, for in 1917 he was placed in charge of Pearson's After-Care work – now known as the Welfare Department of Blind Veterans UK which continues to provide lifelong support and assistance for all blind veterans following their initial training and rehabilitation activities.

What Ian Fraser also did was to fall in love with the lady who had delivered Pearson's letter to him – Irene Mace whom he later married and called "Chips". He always said she had had the smoothest and most beautiful kid gloves that he had ever felt!

In 1921, when Sir Arthur Pearson died after an accident in his bathroom,



Lord Fraser became the organisation's 2nd Chairman, a post he held for 52 years until his own death in 1974.



lan Fraser, Baron Fraser of Lonsdale, 2nd Chairman of St. Dunstan's in the UK

In 1920, the Committee held its first reunion meeting of blind veterans who had completed their training at their centre in Regent's Park, London. The reunion took place in Bristol, and was followed by many more throughout the country. Reunion meetings have been held regularly ever since and continue to be regarded as a vital facet of rehabilitation and support.



St Dunstaners at the first "St Dunstan's Reunion", held in Bristol in 1920

#### The Birth of St Dunstan's and its Twinning in South Africa

In 1923, under Ian Fraser's leadership, Sir Arthur Pearson's "Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee" was rebranded as "St Dunstan's", the name by which the committee had generally been known, with the formal objective of providing rehabilitation, training and lifelong support for all those who had been blinded in the First World War.

# Memorandum

AND

# Articles of Association

OF

# ST. DUNSTAN'S.

Memorandum and Articles of Association of St Dunstan's in the UK, incorporated ca. 1923

St Dunstan was a 10th century bishop who had been minister of state to several English kings, also archbishop of Canterbury. He was later canonised as a saint for his many acts of charity which included the establishment of schools and special efforts to defend widows and orphans, and he was generally revered for his efforts to promote peace and enforce respect for purity and fairmindedness. St. Dunstan was no walk-over either – he held his own in pursuing reforms and persuading (or outwitting) the kings of those times, even overcoming the Devil himself according to a late 11th-century legend as remembered in this folk rhyme:

"St Dunstan, as the story goes, Once pull'd the devil by the nose With red-hot tongs, which made him roar, That he was heard three miles or more."

One story relates how Dunstan nailed a horseshoe to the Devil's foot when he was asked to re-shoe the Devil's cloven hoof. This caused



the Devil great pain, and Dunstan only agreed to remove the shoe and release the Devil after he had promised never to enter a place where a horseshoe is over the door. This tale is now claimed as the origin of the belief in the lucky horseshoe!

In 2012, the name of the UK organisation was formally changed again, to "Blind Veterans UK" to help ensure that the organisation and its work was "better recognised and understood".

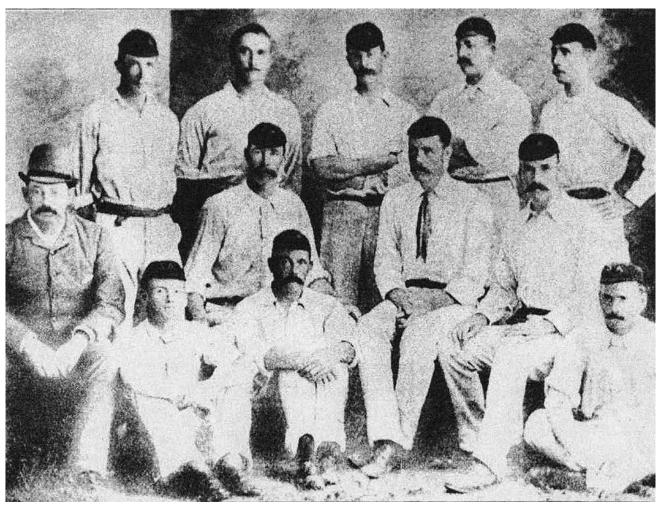
Meanwhile in South Africa, a similar "Blinded Soldiers After Care Committee" was established in George, in the Western Cape, during the closing months of 1918. The first committee members were Charles Henry Vintcent and his wife Lilian, and the Anglican Bishop of George. Initial funding came from London, and the Fund was to be "administered in sympathy with the St Dunstan's organisation in London established by the late Sir Arthur Pearson."

Extra funding was soon obtained from the Governor General's Fund with express Government support, and in 1926 a formal deed of donation and trust was recorded for "The St Dunstan's After-Care Fund for South African Blinded Soldiers" with the inclusion of additional committee members appointed by the Governor General's Fund in the persons of Col. Henry Benjamin Shawe and Lt.Col. George Stratford Mardall, as well as Sir Herbert Cecil Sloley.

Charles Henry Vintcent served as a St. Dunstan's committee member until his death in 1943. According to a Wikipedia article, he was a South African cricketer who played as a left-handed batsman and left arm medium pace bowler for Transvaal and South Western Districts, also in 3 tests for our national side 1889 - 1892. These were the first-ever tests played by a South African cricket team! He also captained the Transvaal Association Football XI in 1890. He was a popular man with both players and spectators alike due to his cheerful disposition on the field. Born in Mossel Bay and educated in Cape Town and then Charterhouse School, in England, Charlie Vintcent was without doubt the most versatile South African sportsman of his time. He excelled

#### The Birth of St Dunstan's and its Twinning in South Africa

in the many sports he played, representing both Western Province and Transvaal at rugby, obtaining his national colours for soccer (a sport he did much to promote on the Reef), and as an athlete he was for three years the Transvaal sprint champion in events from the 100 yards to 440 yards, besides being competitive at both long jump and high jump. As a left-handed all-rounder he played in both tests in the first home series against England in 1889 as well as the only test of the 1891/92 series against the second English touring side, scoring 26 runs and taking 4 wickets.



The South African Cricket team for its first Test in 1889, against England at Port Elizabeth.

Charlie Vintcent is in the back row, second from right.

The other committee members were prominent military personnel or retired civil servants. Col. Henry Benjamin Shawe was a senior official in the Colonial Secretary's Office, becoming Under Colonial



Secretary in 1902 and retiring as Secretary for the Interior. During the Anglo-Boer War, he acted as

Paymaster to the Colonial Volunteers and was later also Chairman of the Junior Civil Service Club in Cape Town.

Lt. Col. George Stratford Mardall had served in the Natal Mounted Police, which he had joined as a 19 year old trooper in 1879. He went on to be Inspector of Prisons and was also a Justice of the Peace. In October 1918, when he was awarded an O.B.E., he was described as being "[Chairman] of the Comforts Committee and the

Disabled Soldiers Board, Cape Town."

Col. H. B. Shawe

Sir Herbert Cecil Sloley, K.C.M.G., was a distinguished soldier who aged 20 had left a position with the London and Westminster Bank to enlist with the Cape Mounted Rifles. When hostilities ceased, he transferred to the Cape Police and then to the Basutoland Mounted Police, later serving as Resident Commissioner for Basutoland (and this for more than one stint) building four new hospitals, extending the railway line to Maseru and establishing the Lerotholi Technical School. He was known as "the chief who understands how to be still", that is, who listens and judges quietly. In 1909, he led the delegation of Basuto chiefs to the British Parliament to put their case against incorporation into the proposed Union of South Africa. His son 2/Lt. Robert H. Sloley was a fighter pilot with the Royal Flying Corps who had been killed in action on 1st October 1917.

These then were the men (and one woman) whose energy, judgement, sense of responsibility and sense of compassion were at the helm in shaping St. Dunstan's in South Africa through its formative years.

One might well ask why the "Blinded Soldiers After-Care Committee" established in George was so named, and was formally renamed as "The St Dunstan's After-Care Fund for South African Blinded Soldiers".

#### The Birth of St Dunstan's and its Twinning in South Africa

Were South African sailors not cared for too, in 1926, as they were in the UK? The omission was deliberate and is easily explained. Although a very small S. A. Naval Service dates from 1921, South Africa had no sailors who had seen war service. Our sailors who had served had been in the Royal Navy – the South African Navy as we know it today was effectively established only in 1942, during World War II.

In 1944, legislation was passed in South Africa prohibiting foreign-based trustees from serving on South African boards, as had hitherto been permissible. In the process, the South African committee was formally constituted as a section 21 company under the Companies Act, as an "incorporated association not for gain", and its name was formally changed to "St Dunstan's South Africa". This was later expanded to "St. Dunstan's Association for South African War-Blinded Veterans", the name we are still using today.

In 1965, St. Dunstan's in the UK who had been collaborating closely with institutions in the United States in the development of a new "long cane" walking stick, worked with the Royal National Institute for the Blind on the introduction of the long cane into the UK. This initiative

spread quickly to South Africa, and St Dunstan's South Africa was soon proactively promoting the use of the long cane not only to war-blinded veterans but also to assist all blind and sight-impaired persons with their independence and mobility.

Sir John Ellerman was a 2nd-generation British shipping magnate who



St Dunstaners on a station near Portslade and Brighton, UK, ca. 1965



with his wife Esther spent much of their time in South Africa. His passion was natural history, studying rodents, and he also had a strong philanthropic streak, donating money to charities working with disabled groups both in South Africa and the UK. One for example, was the Rachel Swart Fund for disabled people, which was named after a young woman born without arms or legs whose courage especially impressed him. Sir John and Esther had a particular concern for the mobility of persons who became blind in later life and in helping them to adapt to their new circumstances. Sir John and Esther had no children. Shortly before his death in 1973 he established two grantmaking trusts, the Moorgate Trust Fund (1970) and the New Moorgate Trust Fund (1971), which in 1992 were merged into the John Ellerman Foundation.

Both Sir John and Esther Ellerman served as directors of St Dunstan's South Africa. In January 1974 the Board of directors, in partnership with the New Moorgate Trust in London, decided to establish "The John & Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust" to promote the training of O. & M. (orientation and mobility) instructors throughout the country.

In February 1976, following the death of Sir Ian Fraser, the directors decided to establish also "The Ian Fraser Memorial Bursary Fund" in his memory and so as to recognise his special contribution towards the work of St Dunstan's. This was also supported by the New Moorgate Trust in London. This fund provides assistance both practically and financially to any blind or sight-impaired persons who wish to embark on or continue with relevant tertiary studies to enhance their independence and self-fulfilment, that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

Now in its 100th year, St Dunstan's South Africa continues to care for South African war-blinded veterans, their families and dependents and to support the activities of the two ancillary trusts. As part of its centenary celebrations St. Dunstan's will host delegates from Blind Veterans UK for a special "Project Gemini Week" in Cape Town in the first week of October (this being held for the first time in South

#### The Birth of St Dunstan's and its Twinning in South Africa

Africa). A Centenary Long Cane Rally will be held at Muizenberg on the morning of Saturday 13th October.

As we tap out these steps at the start of our 101st year, we may remember and be encouraged by those who walked the trail to bring us to this moment. We are not alone. No one is alone.

Lt.Col. Dave Mitchell
St. Dunstan's Association
for South African War-Blinded Veterans NPC

#### Acknowledgements:

▶ Blind Veterans UK, their website at https://www.blindveterans.org. uk and especially at

https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/about-us/our-history/timeline/

- ► "Three Cheers for the Derrys!", A History off the 10th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in the 1914-18 War, p. 174, Gardner S. Mitchell, Londonderry, N. Ireland, 1991 & 2008
- ► Wikipedia articles on World War I, Sir Arthur Pearson, Ian Fraser, Blind Veterans UK, St. Dunstan, Charles Henry Vincent, Sir John Ellerman.
- ▶ St Dunstan's South Africa, Paper: Brief historical overview, Dr C. Dickson, 24 October 2016
- ▶ Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol. III, p. 742, article on Sir Herbert Cecil Sloley.
- ► Article on Col. Henry Bernard Shawe, Ancestors South Africa (Genealogical Research Services).
- ► Supplement to the London Gazette, 4 October 1918, Entry for Lt. Col. George Stratford Mardall, OBE, https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/30935/supplement/11774/data.pdf



# Chess on Skype

Written by: George de Nobrega

In 2010 Chess was started on Skype for the blind in four chess groups, FTP (USA), Tournoiskype (France), USBCA (USA) and Skype\_chess (Austria). The games were played making use of a chessboard until in January 2018 George de Nobrega launched a new tournament called "The Battle of the Brains", the first Skype-based chess game without a chessboard. This is achieved by playing the game in one's head. Is this possible? Yes, one has to witness it to believe it. George is the tournament director and arbiter to a number of these games. He was amazed at the high level of play in which eleven top-rated brave blind players from five different countries; USA, Argentina, Turkey, Scotland and India took the opportunity to participate in this board-less tournament.

This was a four round Swiss and a total of twenty games were played. Averages of thirty one moves were made per game and the average game lasted just over two hours. Selim Altinok, the Turkish player with a rating of 1 850 took first place.

The duty of an arbiter is to connect both players in a conference, notate the moves, control the time of both players and to follow the game on a chessboard should there be any disputes and to remind

the players of the board position when asked to do so.

The time control provides for more time per player compared to a normal game. A player must make thirty moves in sixty minutes with an additional hour after every thirty moves to the accumulated time in the first hour. The player who fails to make thirty moves in the remaining time loses the game on time.

Some of the comments that came from the players were that of the American chess teacher Jim Thoun (Hadley school for the Blind), he described the experience as scary. The Indian player Siddharth felt that by playing this type of game, the thinking ability, visualisation power and concentration levels would increase. The Turkish player Orhan, indicated that one advantage is that it's not necessary to carry a chessboard around; all he does all day is think about chess and this could be the same for the rest of the players to be able to play the game at this level.

Anyone who is interested in learning how to play chess can register online at the Hadley School for the Blind which is based in the USA. It is a free correspondence school. They offer a course for beginners consisting of two modules. The study material is posted or emailed. The school provides a nice chess set to keep, once you have signed up for its chess course.





#### **Beneficiary News**

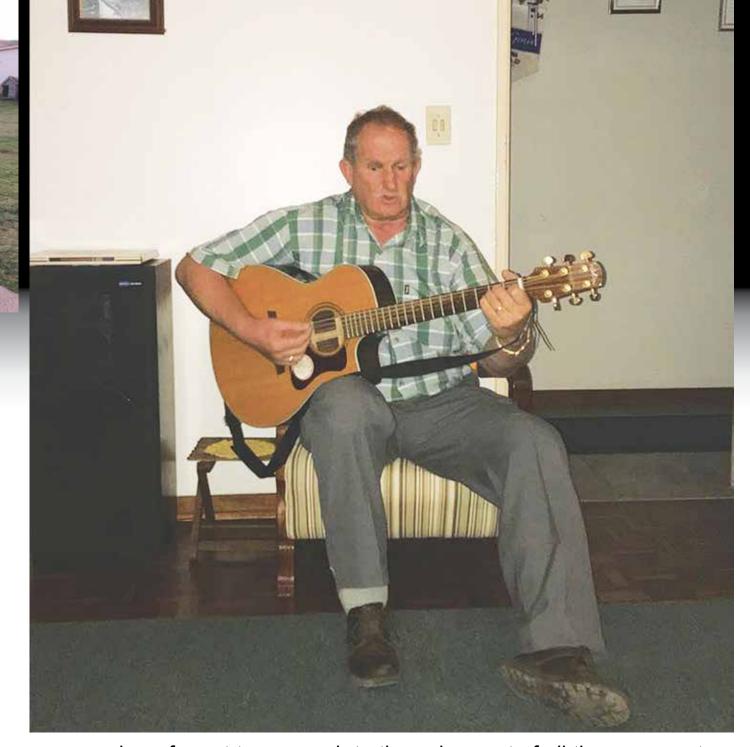
### **Riener Visit**

Living in Cape Town we become quite accustomed to the beauty and the sheer wondrous surrounds that the Cape has to offer and we become fooled into believing that the Cape is the best that South Africa has to offer. Fooled, I say as we forget how much the rest of South Africa has to offer and we forget that there are so many hidden gems. The latest gem I speak of is the small town of Bethlehem which is not only home to one of our beneficiaries but bodes one of the most amazing sunsets you could ever hope to experience.

We stood in the garden of Renier and Marie Heyns just as the sun began to set while setting up for Reiner's archery practice routine. Renier set about showing us how he not only sets up the "range" but demonstrated how he aimed and released the arrows.

It struck me how easy and quick the whole process was. The only concern raised was that now with the old neighbour moving out and a new neighbour moving in he would have to have the discussion about the direction of the practice range. I doubt there are many people who wouldn't be a little nervous having someone practicing archery so close to their back door. Renier was a little nervous to broach the subject with his new neighbour until they had settled in. We also met the 2 boxers that keep the Heyns family safe at night, 2 great boxers with an abundance of energy much to Andrea's (Social Inclusion Manager - St Dunstan's) comedic dismay.

After packing away the range and settling in on the couch in the lounge and relaxing, Renier brought out his guitar and entered into



a number of great tunes much to the enjoyment of all those present. I was amazed at how well Renier played and sang. In conversation about his journey with the guitar we were informed that when Renier was in Hospital the OT had taken the time and energy to help to begin learning the guitar and the rest is history (we look forward to some tunes from Renier at Project Gemini).

A big thank you must go to Renier and Marie for a great dinner at the Park Hotel. The dining room dates all the way back to the 1920's. I'm sure it's a dinner Andrea won't forget for a long time as I very much doubt there is another restaurant in South Africa that makes a beef schnitzel the size and quality on offer!

# **IFMB**

# **Sergil January**

Sergil started playing blind cricket 6 months after he became blind. He initially thought it was boring and didn't understand the game. He began as batsman no. 5 and as he scored more runs he got ahead in the game.



He is currently involved in co-ordinating Western Cape blind cricket and is endeavouring to establish a few more teams. He intends to grow blind cricket in the Western Cape and wishes that more people would get involved.

Sergil lost his sight in the line of fire when he was younger. Doctors were unable to remove the bullet and it remains in his head. At first, he was afraid of playing cricket due to his injury; afraid that the bullet might move. He has run into a few people on the field and he is still okay.

Sergil is a good all-rounder; he pretty much plays any position. He was playing cricket for just 6 months when he decided to enter the tournament for Western Province Cricket. He was competing against players who had much more experience than he did. To great surprise he was chosen to represent Western Province.

In 2012 he got word that a national team would be picked for the World Cup in India. He didn't think much of it as he was up against plyers that had over 10 years' experience playing the game and he only had a little over 6 month's experience.

He made the team and played in the 2012 World Cup. He never thought he would represent South Africa or even leave SA in his lifetime. He visited and played cricket in four different states in India 2017 as batsman no. 3.

Sergil feels that blind cricket is marginalised with respect to playing fields. He would like more practice grounds to be available and to play more games with other clubs in the Boland district. He is very appreciative of the regular support and assistance from WP Cricket.

#### The Ian Fraser Memorial Bursary

## **Anike Pretorius**

Anike became interested in sport at a very young age, particularly gymnastics. She and her friends would practice in a garage for their own "Olympic training camp". She would practise a lot more than the other kids her age because she was so fond of the sport.



In grade 7 she experienced a huge setback when she lost her eyesight due to Stargardt's disease. Adding to this, she also realised that she would no longer be able to do gymnastics. During that time, the most obvious thing to do was to attend Prinshof School. She however, was eager to attend a mainstream School and matriculated at Potchefstroom Gymnasium High School.

It was at this school that she found a new love for athletics among the other great opportunities the school offered her. She credits her coaches, Tom Ferreira and Werner Burger, for the exceptional role they played in developing her skills as an athlete. She participated in long jump and high jump at Schools SA, Paarl 2011 and achieved first and second place respectively. 2011 was also the year that she started with disabled athletics. She did exceptionally well and went on to qualify for the Paralympics in 2012.

In 2012, she moved to Stellenbosch to commence her studies in Sports Science. Her passion for sport is the reason for this study direction. She also started a Paralympic Training Group at Stellenbosch to further develop her athletics career. She had the opportunity to coach and interact with young students. The ability to pay it forward in sports teaching young athletes means the world to her.

In 2016 she unfortunately suffered an injury and was no longer able to compete. The years ahead were very tough on her as a result of to this injury. She is currently injury free and training for the 100m race at the 2020 Paralympic Games. She adds that she is indeed aiming for a medal, but that all her experiences, growth and friendships throughout her journey are worth so much more. A medal would only be an addition to all the experiences and all that she has learned.

# **IFMB**

#### Hendri Herbst

"The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do" – Walter Bagehot

Born with vitreous hyperplasia and secondary glaucoma, life has always been exciting... and sometimes a little different. As a child, I was never wrapped in cotton wool and even though I had limited vision, my parents allowed me to behave like any other child would. I was raised in exactly the same way as my brother – no concession or excuses were made for the fact that I couldn't see very well. I can still remember looking for my slippers and going to my parents to ask their help. My father's response, "Open your eyes and go and look". Needless to say, I eventually found my slippers.

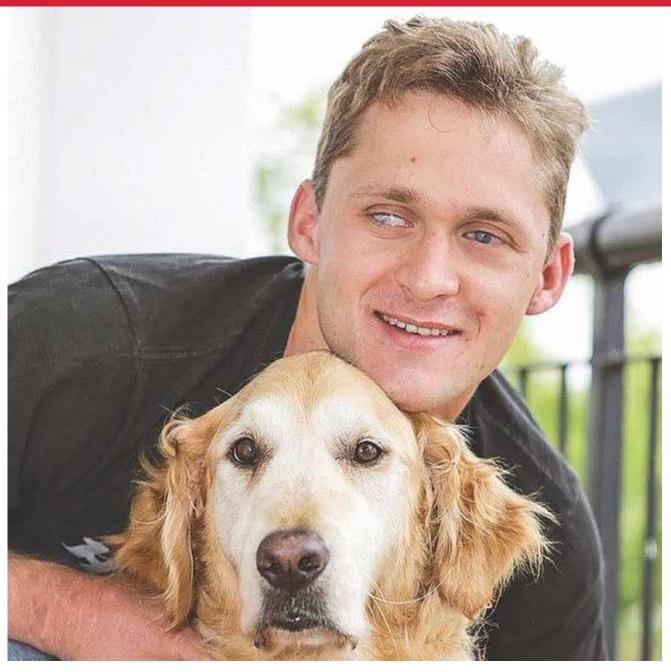
This was an important lesson that my father taught me – I was as capable as anyone else. Being born with a visual disability and losing what little vision I had as I got older meant that I had to work harder than everyone else to achieve my goals; most importantly, it meant that I could be as successful as anyone else. Being a teenager is not easy; losing your sight whilst a teenager and trying to find yourself is even more difficult.

In 2007 I decided to take up swimming as an outlet for many of my frustrations. In 2009 I competed on the international stage for the first time in my life and that privilege still continues to this day. In 2011 I walked onto the Stellenbosch University Campus to pursue a degree in Socio-Informatics, armed with my white cane and the lessons learned from my parents – that I was as capable of success as anyone else.

I continued swimming with Maties Swimming, not as a release for my frustrations, but rather because I had come to love the sport so much and it had become a way of life for me. Early mornings, late nights and class in between was challenging, but not impossible.

In 2012, my dream came true and I was selected to represent South

#### The Ian Fraser Memorial Bursary



Africa at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. In the first major final, the 100m freestyle, the event that had become my speciality, I finished in a time of 59.60. My personal best time and it was good enough to secure a bronze medal. I had become one of the best in the world; as capable as anyone else.

A year later I competed at the World Championships in Montreal, Canada and I won both a silver and bronze medal. In that same year, I completed my first degree and realised that I had a significant interest

#### The Ian Fraser Memorial Bursary

in law. So, in 2014, I started my second degree in the Faculty of Law at Stellenbosch University. Here I was able to develop my skill sets even further, with the support of the lecturers and staff in the faculty. They allowed me to be a normal student and realised that I was as capable as anyone else. I completed my degree in 2017, finishing in the top 20 for most of my subjects. During this time, I continued swimming competitively. I participated in World Championships, Para Pan Pacific Championships and in my second Paralympic Games in Rio 2016. In the 100m freestyle, I finished 4th; only 0.08 seconds separated the first 4 swimmers. I was still one of the best in the world and as capable as anyone else.

I am currently busy with my Master's degree in law. I married – and she's the stereotypical "normal". My wife holds a PhD in Human Genetics and yes, she can see. We have a relationship that is as normal as anyone else's. She understands that I "see" in a different way to the way that she does and most importantly, she understands that my eyes have a wet nose.

Over the course of my tertiary education, I traded my white cane in for a beautiful retriever. My first pair of eyes was named Stan and he is the reason that I met my wife and he became the glue the held us together in the beginning and he became the child of the family. Unfortunately, Stan is no longer with us and we have a new child, Julian.

Now, armed with my new eyes in the form of Julian, my constant companion, I am able to tackle my challenges every single day, just like everyone else. I would like to be an example and perhaps an inspiration to other individuals with a disability. They too are as capable as anyone else. I look forward to the challenges of the future and plan to tackle them head on – because I am as capable as everyone else.



**IEEMT** Graduation at COM



Written by Elizabeth Louw

Friday 6 April 2018 was a particularly special day at the College of Orientation and Mobility (COM). Six orientation and mobility practitioners graduated with a National Diploma in Orientation and Mobility Practice. The ceremony represented the culmination of two years of hard work which took them away from home, family and friends, in order to learn the skills required to make a difference in the lives of people who are visually impaired.

The ceremony was themed "The Power of Education" and focussed on the importance of education in changing people's lives. Guest speaker and Guide Dog owner, Melette Els, is a social worker who currently practices as a trauma counsellor. She focused her talk on the impact that orientation and mobility has had on her life and her



ability to live independently.

Gail Glover, the Executive Director of SA Guide-Dogs Association (GDA), thanked all who so generously support the College. St Dunstans John and Esther Ellerman Trust was recognised for their support in subsiding the salaries of 25 orientation and mobility practitioners, who work at a number of non-profit organisations throughout South Africa. We are grateful that all of our current graduates are fully employed and are actively making a difference. Three of the graduates' studies were sponsored by GDA. They have also been employed by GDA to provide much needed orientation and mobility services in the Gauteng area.

Nigel Unwin (chairman of GDA's board), congratulated the graduates on their achievements as he awarded their diplomas. Amongst the happy smiles of family members, the graduates waited in anticipation for the award of the 'Top Student' trophy. Florence Mampuru took the trophy in recognition of her hard work and consistent achievement throughout the course.

We are extremely proud of our graduates and our current students, who will have the opportunity to graduate in 2019. We are looking forward to welcoming a new group of students in January 2019.

For more information about the services offered by the College of Orientation and Mobility, please contact Elizabeth Louw ElizabethL@guidedog.org.za or 011 705 3512.

# Hope for Visually Impaired Rural People



Written by Ndivhuwo Mukwevho, Health24

Many disabled people are still overlooked when they apply for employment, but a new project may change the situation in South Africa.

Well-qualified blind people often struggle to find employment. ~

The South African Libraries for the Blind Project will afford visually impaired people an opportunity to be able to read books and access information online with ease through the installation of computers designed specifically for visually impaired people.

Despite this new facility offering hope to visually impaired people, many blind people in rural areas remain unemployed with limited opportunities.

#### High unemployment among disabled

Speaking during the project activation at the Thulamela Public Library, in Thohoyandou, the director of library services in the province, Collins Thovhakale, said disabled people are still overlooked when they apply for employment. The result is a high rate of unemployment among the disabled. He said the project should be used to empower disabled people by offering them jobs.

"Disabled people in the province are not being considered for proper employment despite having good qualifications. Most of our libraries lack librarians yet we have so many people who are qualified for the job," said Thovhakale.

"In most cases we only think of disabled people when we want to host events to celebrate their disabilities. But when it comes to serious issues like unemployment we do not consider them. People with disabilities must be employed in high numbers and they must be given first preference when they apply for jobs," he said.

The spokesperson for the disabled people in Vhembe, Ndishavhelafhi Mphaphuli said most educated disabled people have proper qualifications, but they continue to sit at home without jobs.

#### **Hope for Visually Impaired Rural People**

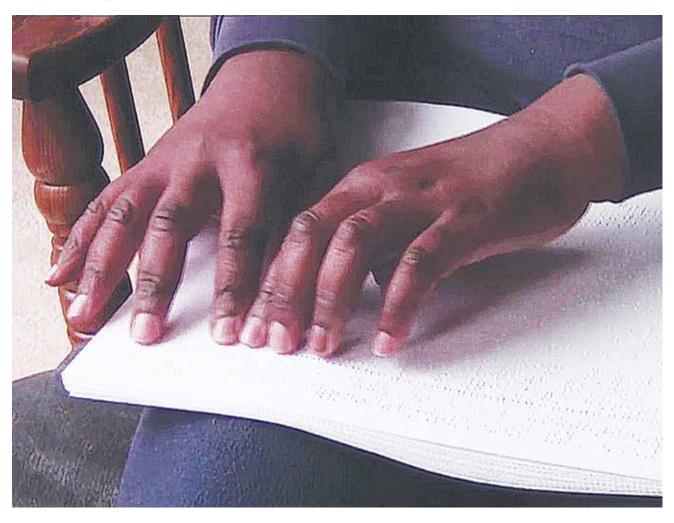
#### **Equal treatment essential**

"We also need proper jobs as we have our own needs. But it seems like people are not prepared to hire us as we are only offered short term contracts which are not enough to sustain us. We have been complaining about this issue for years," said Mphaphuli.

He added: "The only solution we can use to create jobs for ourselves is to start our own businesses as it seems like it's the only way out of this situation which we find ourselves in."

CEO of South African Library for the Blind, Francois Hendrikz, said that people with visual impairment should be treated the same as normal people.

"We all have the right to access information and this project gives that opportunity to blind people," he said. – Health-e News.



# Ford's New Smart Window Lets Blind People 'See'



Written by Kirsten Korosec, FORTUNE, May 1, 2018

Ford has developed a prototype smart car window that lets blind people "see" the passing landscape.

The "Feel the View" prototype, which was developed with

Italian startup xyz, uses vibrations to give blind and visually impaired passengers a sense of the scenery outside.

The smart window takes pictures using an external camera and turns them into high-contrast grayscale images. These images are reproduced on the glass using special LEDs. When a passenger touches the image, different shades of gray vibrate with a range of 255 intensities. The idea is that blind or visually impaired passengers can touch the scene and use the varying intensities of vibration to create in their mind what the landscape looks like.

Ford's team in Italy worked with agency GTB Roma and Aedo, a local start-up that specializes in devices for the visually impaired.

The smart window also has an Al voice assistant that taps into the car's audio system and put what the passengers are feeling into context. For instance, it might tell the passenger "snowy mountain," as depicted in the video, or "lake."

The prototype is part of Ford's advanced research, which means there are no plans (at least not publicly) to bring this to market.

This is the kind of technology that could show up in Ford's autonomous vehicle program. The company has been testing its technology and its future business model through pilot programs with Dominos and Postmates. The company has been using research vehicles to learn the logistical challenges of delivery by a driverless vehicle. One of those challenges is how an autonomous vehicle will interact with passengers and give them the information they need as they travel from Point A to Point B.

# 

#### **BACK TO THE FUTURE!**

Written by Garth Long, Cobh

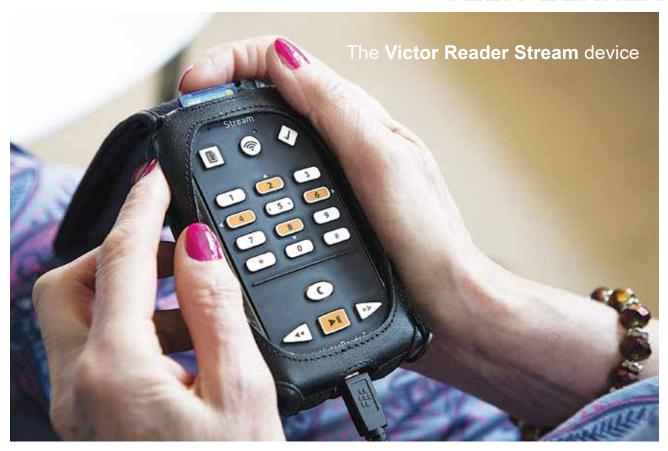
Another unwelcome month of May politely turned up and another anniversary date got me thinking; thinking about my journey as a blind person into the enigmatic world of tactile and auditory challenges. Which aids, apps or devices would I take with me for a similar journey? When I posed this question to a number of my Irish visually impaired students, one lady gave me a great sobering answer. She dismissed all the hi-tech developments and said the best invention she uses every day and it works every time is her kitchen paper towel.

In 1977 I was doing my rehab at Ian Fraser House at St Dunstans for the Blind in Brighton, Sussex, England. There were no PC's, no hint of anything binary, and the best device available was a talking book.

So I indulged myself for a good couple of hours and listened to "Whereas I am blind" written in 1929 by Sir Ian Fraser of Lonsdale himself. The device took up most of the space in my bedroom. Today I use a **Victor Reader Stream** and have over 500 books on a SSD card and over 1 000 internet radio stations at my disposal. In addition, I have a SSD holder with 30 similar discs. The device is about the size of a pack of 20 cigarettes. So reading and recording many MP3 files has become a listening pleasure.

Over the past 42 years I have owned 3 great guide dogs; one from the South African Guide Dog School and two from the Irish Guide Dog Society. Would I take my guide dog with me? Most definitely, as he poses a serious emotional foil which no device or hi-tech system could replace.

#### TECH CORNER



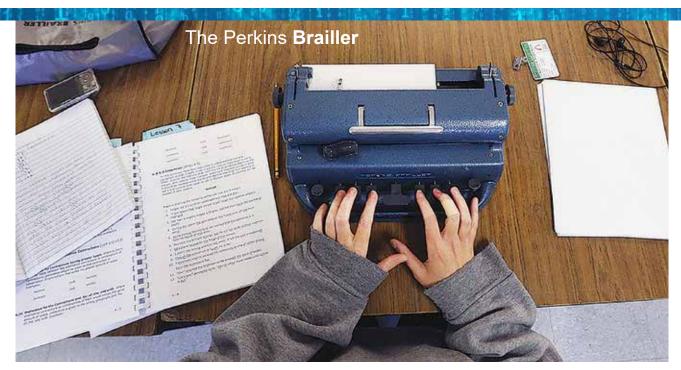
In Ireland during the second half of 2018, we will have the pilot system of **Aira** available for the southern part of the Emerald Isle. It is only found in San Diego, USA and we have scoped the next research phase.





With Aira a totally blind person can negotiate traffic as well as internal and external obstacles using his long cane. Do look up Aira on the Net. One day, it is anticipated that I could wear some head gear and even kayak around the harbour here in Cobh and find my way back to my starting point. So Aira is something to watch and perhaps even use. What about refreshable braille?

All those years ago I used the majestic Perkins Brailler. It was



designed to emboss the Louis Braille system onto durable paper and a blind person could use it for notes and reading. You had to learn to read and write using only 6 keys for the full 26 letter alphabet. Where is my Perkins now? I use it as a door stopper. I do read braille but so slowly it is of no beneficial use to me. Why? Well, I did myself the disservice of not sticking with braille and making it a natural part of my blind life. So when I attach refreshable electronic braille system to my PC and it generates tons of computer coded braille I do not know what I am reading. However, **the Super Pen**, a 12 cell braille writing device, is the current answer.



#### TECH CORNER

In 1980 when I worked for Eskom in their Researching Testing and Development Unit I was given the mighty **Optacon**. This clever device could read sans-serif and serif fonts via a neat little camera and a set of 144 pins which presented the image on your finger tip. Perhaps, its only downfall was that it sounded like 1 million crazed mosquitoes were after your bait. I so rated the Optacon which stood for OPtical to TActile CONverter. It was designed by Telesensory Systems Incorporated but due to its huge price tag the company did not last. I could read a book and its dust jacket. I could track my own signature and see how it was unravelling over the months that I was blind. I could check my typing on that gorgeous IBM golf ball machine.



I think the Optacon with some AI (Artificial Intelligence) would be a serious tool for the future. Why did it die? Imagine if it had the tech development of our modern mobile phones, it would have knocked spots off braille and it could be a very portable device. If I was again confined to working in an office then I would like some giant leap forward. Why would I bother with so many EAP's or enterprise application products? Imagine moving in and out or from a webinar system on Cisco and then going to a customer relation manager designed by Sage? You would need to know the amplets (menu) and perhaps even have your work station scoped. I had this once and it cost €800 per day for 2 long weeks. Then, I still had to learn to navigate my way around and I was not competitive for about 6 weeks.

The current way we search on the HTML or the World Wide Web is still very clumsy. Our sighted colleagues still have the jump on us. So I would desist from taking any of these old school solutions on my next journey.

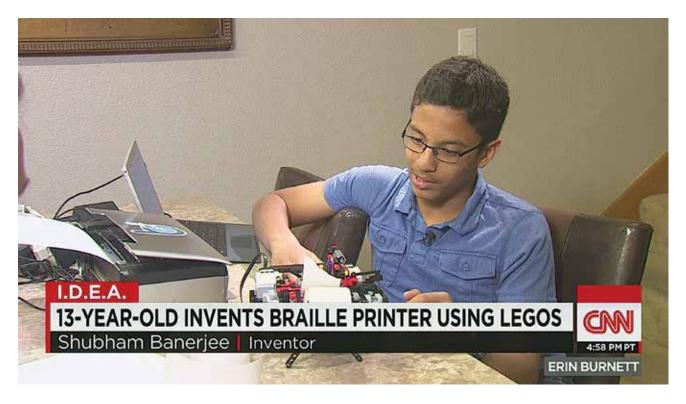
#### TECH CORNER

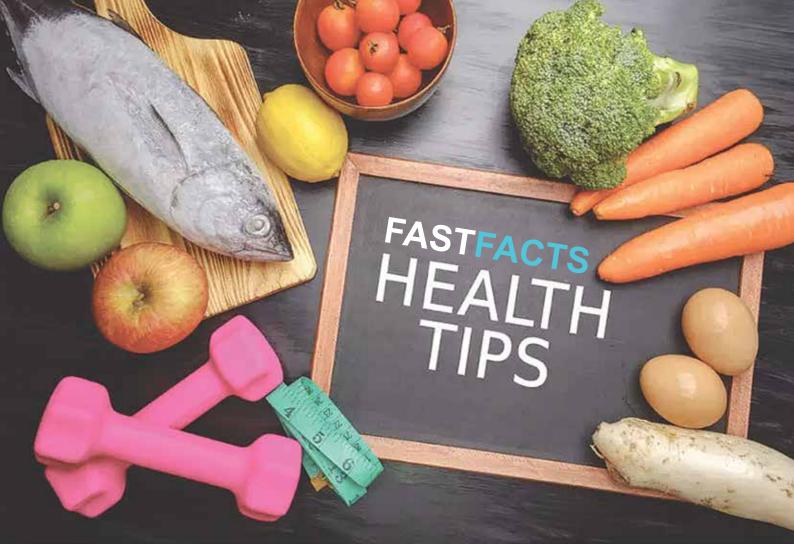
Now what would you use on the domestic front? I think the RNIB shop has this spot under wraps. First off, I would get the talking washing machine. How I so hate it when the dials are changed and I do not know about it. For many years I have had to make do with old tech and there comes a time in my life when I too would like some creature comforts. The talking microwave, the talking hob, the self-drive vacuum cleaner, and we could go on forever.

My home gym would also need some hi-tech modification. How often do I get on to my spinning bike and have to reset my calibrations and my time? How about some great weights systems using compressed air and some cross trainer device that tells you your heart rate and your distance? This is available and is not really used.

I would take my new smart speaker like Aamazon's Echo device with me. Why? Well, when it is properly primed it too offers a great deal of leeway and gives you so much data; bus time tables, your local weather forecast, your daily sports round-up. Plus it can even give you that important shopping list.

Why not let our editor know what your "Noah's Ark of hi-tech equipment" would be for your next journey into the world of blind challenges?





Source: News 24

The following health tips may seem strange, but can help you improve your health and in one instance even save your life:

#### 1. Build muscle to fit into a smaller size

As one would expect, a kilogram of muscle weighs the same as a kilogram of fat, but muscle is more compact and takes up less space than fat. This explains why a muscular person who weighs the same as a chubbier person will likely fit into a smaller pair of jeans.

#### 2. Eat more calories to lose weight

Carbohydrates on their own may do nothing but spike your blood sugar, leaving you even hungrier than before. Adding proteins and fats like peanut butter and cheese will increase the calorie count of your meal and will help you become full more quickly and stay satisfied for longer, which will lead to ingesting fewer calories in the long run.

# **HEALTHTIPS**



#### 3. Don't brush your teeth immediately after eating

It is better not to brush your teeth immediately after having food and drink, especially if high in acidity. Examples are citrus fruits, tomatoes and fizzy drinks. The abrasive action of brushing can cause the acid to attack the tooth enamel and the layer underneath. It is best to wait at least half an hour after a meal before brushing.

#### 4. Drink a hot beverage to help you cool off

In India it is the norm to drink hot tea in hot weather. It sounds crazy, but according to a study, a hot drink on a hot day will cool you off faster than a cold drink. When you drink a hot beverage, your body produces more sweat which, when it evaporates, cools you off.



#### 5. Exercise to increase your energy levels

After a long day at work, exercise is probably the last thing you want to do, but getting moving can actually energise you. Through exercise we recharge tired cells by giving them more oxygen. Physical activity that builds muscle strength also improves the efficiency of the mitochondria that produce the energy in the cells.



6. "Freeze" cardiac patients to save their lives

Cooling a cardiac arrest patient's core temperature to below 32.2 degrees Celsius – a process called "induced hypothermia", either by injecting them with a cold saline solution or placing ice packs on them increases their chances of complete recovery.

Hypothermia - when your core body temperature drops so low that normal metabolism and bodily functions cease - can lead to death, but can also radically slow down the dying process.

#### 7. Close the lid when you flush the toilet

You should always flush the toilet with the lid down. If you don't, water particles from the toilet will float around your bathroom and finally land on surfaces such as your toothbrush.

Experts say flushing creates an invisible cloud called "toilet plume" that's expelled into the air by the force of the flush. The toilet plume may contain faecal bacteria and other microorganisms such as viruses.



#### 8. Skip energy drinks when you're tired

Energy drinks contain up to five times more caffeine than coffee, but the boost they provide is fleeting and comes with unpleasant side effects such as nervousness, irritability, and

# **HEALTHTIPS**

rapid heartbeat. Plus, energy drinks often contain high levels of taurine, a central nervous system stimulant, and upwards of 50 grams of sugar per can (that's 13 teaspoons!). The sweet stuff spikes blood sugar temporarily, only to cause you to crash soon after leaving you sluggish and foggy headed - and reaching for another energy drink.

#### 9. Drink water when you're bloated

When you feel bloated, drinking water sounds as if it would only make matters worse, but it can often help. If you're on a high-fibre diet, for instance, then your body needs more water to work more efficiently. Water mixes with water soluble fibre and makes it into a gel-like substance. This affects the motility of the gut and reduces the symptoms of bloating. Drinking more water also relieves bloating caused by dehydration. When you're dehydrated, your body clings to the water in your body causing you to puff up.

#### 10. Ditch diet soda to lose weight

You should ditch all soda, including diet sodas. Diet soda drinkers display a 70% greater increase in waist circumference than non-soda drinkers over the course of approximately 10 years.



## **USEFULFACTS**

# Drinking coffee can prevent depression

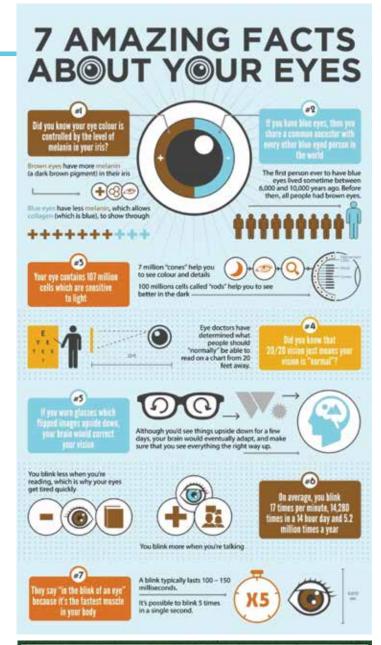
We hear a lot about the negative effects of caffeine on our health, but it turns out that caffeine has its good points too. Research from the Harvard School of Public Health found that women who drank a minimum of four cups of coffee per day could lower their risk of depression by 20 per cent. Earlier research also found that females who drank two or more cups per day were less likely to commit suicide.

#### Chewing gum makes you more alert

If your suffering from a mid-afternoon slump or can't seem to concentrate in the morning, then try chewing some gum to make you feel awake. Coventry University researchers found that chewing mint flavoured gum dramatically reduced feelings of tiredness. Another study on the subject found that chewing gum can improve overall test scores and memory by 35 per cent, relieve stress and reduce anxiety levels.

# Sitting at a desk can increase death risk by almost 50%

Office workers beware, as research from the University of Sydney found that office workers who sit for longer than 10 hours a day at their desk had a 48 per cent increase in risk of death, in comparison to people who sat for less than four hours a day. To counteract this health risk, try to introduce five minutes of activity every hour and make sure you take regular breaks away from your workstation. Simple changes like taking the stairs instead of the lift will also make a positive difference to your health.







**Congratulations** to Michael Roberts who made the KZN boys B team for squash. He played at the National Championship in George during the month of June.



I have not been playing squash for very long but I worked very hard and was fortunate to be chosen for the KwaZulu-Natal boys under 11B squash team. The reason they chose the squad was so that we could represent KwaZulu-Natal at a festival being held in George during the school holidays.

Mom, Grandad and I left on Friday the 22nd June 2018 to go to the festival that started on the 23rd June 2018. On Saturday the 23rd June the festival started off with an opening ceremony and pictures of each team were taken. After lunch we played our first match against South West Districts and won our matches quite easily. We then play Border with the same result. On Sunday we had a really tough test against Free State and, although we played well we lost by a very narrow margin. After lunch we played Boland and won this even though they were a good team.

On Monday we won against Western Cape and Eastern Province. Our toughest test was against Northerns and we lost quite badly because they are an extremely good team. Even though we lost some of the fixtures I managed to win all my games. At the end of the festival we were all given certificates. This was a really fun and exciting event for me as we also went to Spur, the caves, ten pin bowling and the beach. Thank you to our Manager and to my coach for all of their work.







Mrs. Simmers sadly passed away on 8 May 2018. Our sincerest condolences go to the family.



**Isaac Davids** passed away on 17 June 2018. Our thoughts are with the Davids family.

#### **Annual General Meeting**

Date: 14 Sept 2018 Venue: The River Club

#### **Project Gemini**

Date: 30 Sept 2018 to 7 Oct 2018 Venue: Lagoon Beach Hotel

#### **Long Cane Rally**

Date: 13 Oct 2018 Venue: Muizenberg

# **DUNSTAN'S**

Association for South African War-Blinded Veterans
Vereniging vir Suid- Afrikaanse Oorlogs-Verblinde Veterane
INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION NOT FOR GAIN
(Co. Reg. 1944/17587/08)

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#### Have you thought of leaving a lasting gift?

St Dunstan's, like many other associations, rely heavily on bequests/legacies to carry out its work. A simple gift can transform the lives of blind ex-servicemen and women. You could help St Dunstan's continue in its tradition of helping people come to terms with their blindness and achieve a level of independence in their daily lives. In this way you can literally leave the world a better place. Should you require confidential assistance in adding St Dunstan's to your Last Will and Testament, please feel free to contact our chief executive officer; Gareth Morgan, who will be glad to be of assistance to you.



**Caring for War-Blinded Veterans** 



Assisting Blind and V.I. Students



Providing Orientation & Mobility
Training