

ST. DUNSTAN'S *Review*

— December 2017 —



Caring for War-Blinded Veterans



Message from the Chairman



It is hard to believe that we are at the end of another year and soon we will be preparing for Christmas. This year has been full of shocks and surprises both within St Dunstan's and in the country. I am hopeful that the year will not end with more shocks from the ruling party's elective conference in December.

In the past twelve months sadly three of our 2nd World War widows passed away and we continue to keep the families of Nora Neal, Sue Sadler and Elaine Lawrence in our prayers. We have held three very successful events recently. The reunion, the AGM and the Long Cane Rally were each a success and enjoyed by all. For this, I would like to thank the staff, under Gareth's leadership, for a job well done.

Our events held during the course of the year taught us how necessary it is to listen to each other and to respect others' opinions. This is most appropriate as we celebrate the centenary of the life of OR Tambo. All the commentators at the OR Tambo celebrations spoke endlessly about his capacity to listen and to respect the views of others. I believe that this is the message we should take from the life of OR Tambo and use to make our organisation more respectful of others by listening more attentively to the views of others. This presents a challenge for all of us in the boardroom, in our meetings, in our homes and at all our events. We need to set the example of tolerance and mutual respect. Let us build a new culture with the people around us in the office and in our homes.

I hope that all the family members who were engaged in examinations during these last few months will enjoy the fruits of their hard work.

To the board members my sincere gratitude for the service you render to St Dunstan's so willingly and generously.

I wish you all a peaceful and safe Christmas season filled with lots of joy and happiness.

God Bless

Brian Figaji



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Beneficiary News

Nora Elizabeth Neal

Nora Elizabeth Neal (née Petersen) was the widow of Leslie Mervyn Neal born 2 September 1921 in Cape Town. He had three sisters and a brother. Leslie's parents and siblings eventually emigrated, three to England and his sister Margaret to Southern Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe. He was trained as a shoe machinist at Oaksole Shoe Co. and worked there until he joined the Armed Forces on 7 August 1940 and served as a bombardier in Egypt. There he sustained severe burns during an explosion.

He was discharged from active service on 14 May 1946 and was employed as a Market Constable by the City of Cape Town on 2 July 1946. He moved to the Epping Market when this establishment was relocated there from their old premises in Cape Town. He was promoted to Assistant Market Supervisor on 1 November 1950 and was boarded, due to failing eyesight, as a Market Inspector on 29 February 1976. He died on 17 April 1992 and was buried from St Margaret's Anglican Church, Parow.



Nora was born in Cape Town on 15 March 1922. She moved to Parow with her parents Manuel and Edith and had two brothers; Robert and Peter. Nora trained as a milliner and joined the SAWAAF on 28

September 1941 and was stationed in Pretoria. She was discharged from duty on 30 April 1946. Living in Parow, one road away each other, it was inevitable that Leslie and Nora would meet. They married at the Parow Catholic Church on 20 December 1947. They continued to live in Parow and had seven children. Their eldest son Michael did not survive infancy.

Leslie and Nora were active members of the local Kelly's Eye MOTH organisation where Nora served as the treasurer of the Women's Auxiliary for many years. They were both long-standing blood donors and in later years once Nora had returned to work at OK Bazaars in Parow, she was often collected by the WP Blood Transfusion Service when her rare blood group was needed for a new-born urgently requiring a blood transfusion at birth. When Leslie was no longer able to drive due to complete loss of sight, Nora, then in her fifties, started driving lessons. She made numerous attempts at getting her driver's licence and it was only granted to her after she promised to never attempt parallel parking on a busy street. Leslie traded his much loved Chevy II for a little blue VW Beetle for Nora, which she drove for a good few years before selling it to one of her grandsons.

Nora was an avid knitter in her younger years and turned out many jerseys, cardigans and socks for her growing family. She also continued to dabble in the art of millinery and always had a good hat to wear to church in the days it was still fashionable to do so. She made delicious brawn and was famous for her Christmas cakes which often travelled overseas, tucked away in the suitcase of a family member visiting friends and relatives in England.

When her youngest son Paul was stationed at Grahamstown to complete his basic army training; his Staff Sgt always checked for any parcels from home containing a fruit cake! For a number of years Nora enjoyed being involved in many of the organisations and societies that were active at the Catholic Church in Parow.

She eventually sold the family home to Paul and moved to the NOAH home in Parow. After having a serious colon operation in 1994 she spent some years living with each of her children. After spending a little while at the Jubilee Home in Goodwood she decided in 2002 to join her sister-in-law Margaret at the Ladies Christian Home in Cape Town. When she became too frail to care for herself she was moved

from her room to the frail care facility. There she continued to enjoy popular TV soapies. Nora loved reading and continued to do so into her 90's.

She became well known for her sarcastic wit which resulted in the nursing staff teasing her just to see her reaction. Her first enquiry to anyone who came to visit was, "Haven't you got a sweetie?" Her mental and physical capabilities deteriorated after a number of small strokes and falls.

She received regular visits from the St Dunstan's Association who also continued to support her financially as the widow of a war veteran who had sustained injuries to his eyes during active duty. Whilst she was still strong enough she would enjoy spending weekends with her children or being taken for a drive to enjoy coffee and cake but as the years passed this became increasingly difficult and Christmas and birthdays had to be celebrated with her at her nursing home.

She died peacefully on 31 July 2017 at the age of 95 surrounded by her family. One of the last songs she could remember and sing was the old tune, "Show me the way to go home". Her Creator truly came to show her the way to the home He had prepared for her after a long life of faithful service. MHDSRIP

Elaine Margaret Lawrence

Elaine Margaret Lawrence (née Hildick) was born on 16 January 1917 in Bloemfontein where her father, a professional photographer owned a studio. Elaine was the eldest of five siblings.

The family moved to Pretoria where Elaine spent most of her childhood and attended primary and high school. Elaine was a shy child but showed considerable artistic and musical talent - she was given a boudoir grand piano for her 21st birthday. Elaine's mother died when Elaine was 18, a deeply sad and difficult time, leaving her to run the family home and become mother to her youngest sister who was only 5 at the time of their mother's passing.



The family moved to Johannesburg where Elaine worked in an office, played social tennis and attended dances robed in slinky evening dresses, all the while taking care of the family. In 1941 her eldest brother returned home on leave from the air force with a friend who was to become the love of her life - Guy. Due to the uncertainties of the war they didn't marry until June 1943. Guy, then an instructor, was stationed at Port Alfred airbase and city-girl Elaine happily moved to a small cottage very close to the beach and coped with living in a tiny village without the mod cons of the city to which she was accustomed. A year later Guy was posted to Italy and Elaine, expecting their first child, went to live with her mother-in-law. Lynsey was born in 1945 while Guy was away. The reunion once the war was over was wonderful.

The young family moved to Springs where the second child, Janice, was born and soon thereafter they moved again. This time to a 5-acre small holding outside Kempton Park where they spent 6 wonderful years despite having neither electricity nor telephone and relied on a

borehole for water and a paraffin stove on which Elaine cooked many wonderful, inventive meals using produce from the garden mixed with her creativity and flair. It was during this seemingly idyllic time that the shadow of Guy's blindness began to fall upon the family and eventually they were obliged to move to Germiston where Elaine supported Guy with all the love, strength and determination that characterised her personality. Elaine became Guy's "eyes" and for the rest of their lives they were seldom apart.

When their eldest daughter immigrated to Australia with her family Elaine was devastated. She bravely packed up their home to move once again, this time to join their younger daughter in Cape Town. It was a huge wrench to move to a new city but once again Elaine took on the burdens that Guy could not and created a home for them in Pinelands. The next move was to a cottage; no. 41 Pinewood Village. Guy's death in 1998 left Elaine deeply bereft. She gathered her strength once more and moved into cottage no. 51, and finally to Advanced Care, where she passed away in April 2017.

Elaine's creativity was channelled into the preparation of beautiful food, knitting and sewing for her two little girls and creating beautiful homes and gardens wherever she lived. She had a love for beautiful things and always tried to create a pleasing environment around her and her loved ones. She created tapestries and hand-made carpets and knitted for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She never shirked in her dedication to supporting her husband in all his endeavours.

Elaine had six grandchildren three of which are in Australia and three great-grandchildren in Cape Town. Her younger sister lives in England.

Elaine's dedication to Guy and their life together has been an inspiration to everyone who knew them. She was unfailingly kind, dignified and caring towards others. She smiled in the face of the many difficulties that beset the very old. Her warm, loving spirit was still evident and the twinkle in her eye when offered chocolate never diminished!

Sue Sadler

Diana Wilhelmina Sadler, or Sue as she was known, passed away on 21 July 2017 at the age of 91 at Hermanus Private Hospital. After fracturing her hip and then a couple of years later her knee she became bedridden. Sue suffered a heart attack in July and passed away one week later. Sue was married to St Dunstaner Fred Sadler who passed away in August 2003. They had been married for over 50 years and featured on the cover page of St Dunstan's newsletter in 2001 in celebration of their golden wedding anniversary. They had 5 children; four boys and a daughter, 14 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

Childhood sweethearts, Fred and Sue, settled in Benoni where they spent many years before moving to Pilgrim's Rest and later Barberton where they lived for over 20 years. After their youngest daughter had left home, they moved to Uitenhage and later Hermanus in the early nineteen-nineties where they joined their daughter and grandchildren.



After their daughter immigrated to New Zealand in 1998, their son Bruce moved to Hermanus to take care of and look after his aging parents.

Remembered by her children as a loving, caring and deeply religious person who would always help those less fortunate. She will be sadly missed by her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and friends.

From her children, *"Mum had such an impact on our lives; we will miss her humour and tenacious spirit. A void that can never be filled."*

2017 Reunion, Pumula Beach Hotel

KZN South Coast

Get Together

We could not have asked for a better setting for our annual get together for the St Dunstan's reunion. The Pumula Beach Hotel on the KZN South Coast once again pulled out all the stops to accommodate the team that is St Dunstan's. The sun shone, the waves crashed against the rocks and the feeling of relaxation and rest seemed to dominate the mood at the 2017 reunion.

The families, staff, directors and of course "skilpad" came together on the Thursday after traveling from their respective homes eager to engage and see one another again especially the children who don't seem to notice the year-long gap between their meetings, which speaks to the great friendships and experiences enjoyed by these youngsters on their reunion adventures.



Photo Left

Shakila Maharaj
(Disability Management
Services) addressing the
beneficiaries with regards
to the Smart Cane

Photo Right

Katy Roberts, Aplonia
Ruiendo and Katerina
Kawewe jumping on the
trampoline



PLEASE DO NOT
USE THE
TRAMPOLINE IF
YOU ARE
UNDER 10 YEARS
OLD OR IF YOU
ARE NOT
ACCOMPANIED
BY AN ADULT.
PROPERTY
OF THE
CITY OF
DALLAS

THE SHOOT



SHOOTING RANGE



After fearing the service provider for our shooting activity had pulled a fast one on us we finally met up and wandered through the sugar cane fields of the KZN South Coast ending at a shooting range that had all the looks of a cane field and no longer produced anything except old rubber tyres.

Following an initial safety briefing and mandatory issuing of safety gear our instructor, Wian, began to point out in which direction everything was to happen only to be reminded that the majority of the audience was blind and that his hand gestures were falling on deaf ears!

Once the briefing was completed the team was introduced to the firearms to be used and orientated as to the direction of the targets. The shooting began with the team taking shots with the 9mm Glock with a 25 round magazine that saw a number of the team striking the metal targets much to the encouragement of the team members awaiting their turns. On the range running parallel to the 9mm shooting was the shotgun shooting which saw "Instructor Gareth" guiding the team through the motions of firing a shotgun at balloons positioned about 10 paces away. After the entire team including two young and very excitable children (Mateo and Luko) had fired their fair share of the 9mm and shotgun Wian brought out the R5 machine gun that seemed to really strike a cord with a number of the team who decided it was best to keep the trigger down and let fly with all the rounds than go the slow and steady route of one by one, this not only woke the neighbours but seemed to energise the team further.

As the shooting came to an end the team hustled together for a final shot shared in front of the camera and said goodbye to a great day out on the range.



Photo Up

Zuko Mtwana and Gareth Morgan at the shooting range

Out and About



The Waffle House is an all-time favourite of the locals in KZN. It offers a variety of waffles for both a sweet tooth and savoury preference. Our drive was an adventure as our driver decided to take the scenic route!

For those who favoured a less adventurous day, our group of young and old enjoyed death by chocolate waffles, smoothies, chocolate shakes and a nice pot of tea while taking in the relaxed atmosphere and company. Our table was outside overlooking the beautiful greenery and a little stream. The service was friendly and we all enjoyed our waffles. The most popular waffle at the table was the double chocolate brownie waffle with chocolate sauce and ice cream.

After our sweet feast we all took a walk across the wooden bridge through a little forest to the beach where there was a colourful market full of interesting things. It was truly a lovely and relaxing day.

Photo Right

Kalolina and Katarina
Kawewe at The Waffle
House (KZN)





FISHING

Early on the Saturday morning the fishing group left the hotel while the others were still sleeping. We met up with the fishermen at the harbour and boarded the Sea Hunter. Excitement levels were high and everyone was hoping to catch a fish or two. Tommy and his crew helped everyone onto the boat and soon after the tractor pulled the boat into the sea.

We left at full speed and luckily the life jackets also served as windbreakers. We anchored at over 10km from the harbour. On-board equipment guided us to the school of fish and we were constantly on the move. We were very lucky as most of us managed to catch a fish. Some of us got sea sick, but we will not elaborate on that.

We got back to the hotel earlier than anticipated and the staff were kind enough to prepare some of our catch.

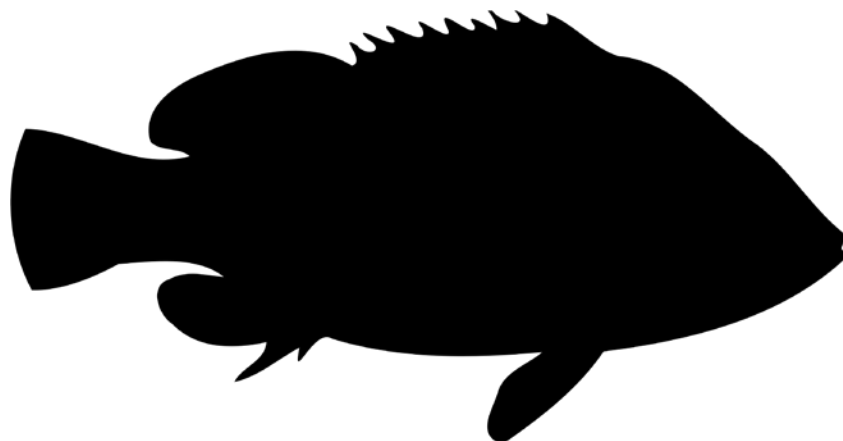


Photo Left

Don Wessels
showing 2 of the fish
he caught

Quiz Night



Photo Up

Neville Clarence, Alice
and their dog Opera

"Winner winner chicken dinner", were the words our quiz night host uttered after round one of what was to be a thoroughly enjoyable pub style quiz. The evening saw the group split into separate tables with what we hoped was even numbers and minds.

Following the first few questions table 1 seemed to streak ahead only to not generate another single point. Tables 4 and 5 appeared to have crib sheets lying around and moved swiftly into the winning positions, much to the dismay of the other competitors who swore blindly that their buzzers were broken.

Our host guided us through several rounds, only to stumble on a few and be forced to bring in the big guns - Google - to confirm correct answers to a few fairly ambiguous questions. Nevertheless great team spirit and fun was had by all and at the end of the evening, winner or loser, all the players walked away with some new insight into which is the longest river in Africa!

Spa Treatments

Spa treatment took place in the Pumula Health Centre above the children's playroom. Ensuring that everybody was on time for their appointments was nothing short of a miracle but all fell into place and no appointment times were missed. We followed up with a few of the group who had been lucky enough to experience the spa.

Sarah Roberts, *"It was what I needed and I am very grateful to St Dunstan's for the treat."*



Photo Up

JP aka Skilpad and
Braam "Die Mol" Naude

Angelina and Otile felt like queens and could not stop smiling. They were incredibly grateful. Landi was very happy and said that she would love another massage. She too was very grateful. Neville could not wait and wanted his 1 hour full body massage done before the ladies; well needless to say he lost that battle to the ladies and had to wait for his turn at 2pm. The wait was well worth it he said. The kids enjoyed their manicures and pedicures, an experience which will be remembered for years to come.

Gala Dinner

After a relaxed day in the sun, the 2017 reunion concluded with the gala dinner. Hair brushed, ties made, clothes ironed and shoes polished the group gathered in the foyer ready to escape into what would be the culmination of 3 days of fun and relaxation in the dinner venue.

Photo Right

A night of dancing and much fun at the gala dinner



After a short speech by our Chairman Prof. Figaji the group settled into dinner conversation and a spread that included everything from seafood, steak and chicken to the lighter more leafy options. Dessert was not forgotten and offered a selection from ice cream to lemon meringue pie, which seemed to be the group favourite.

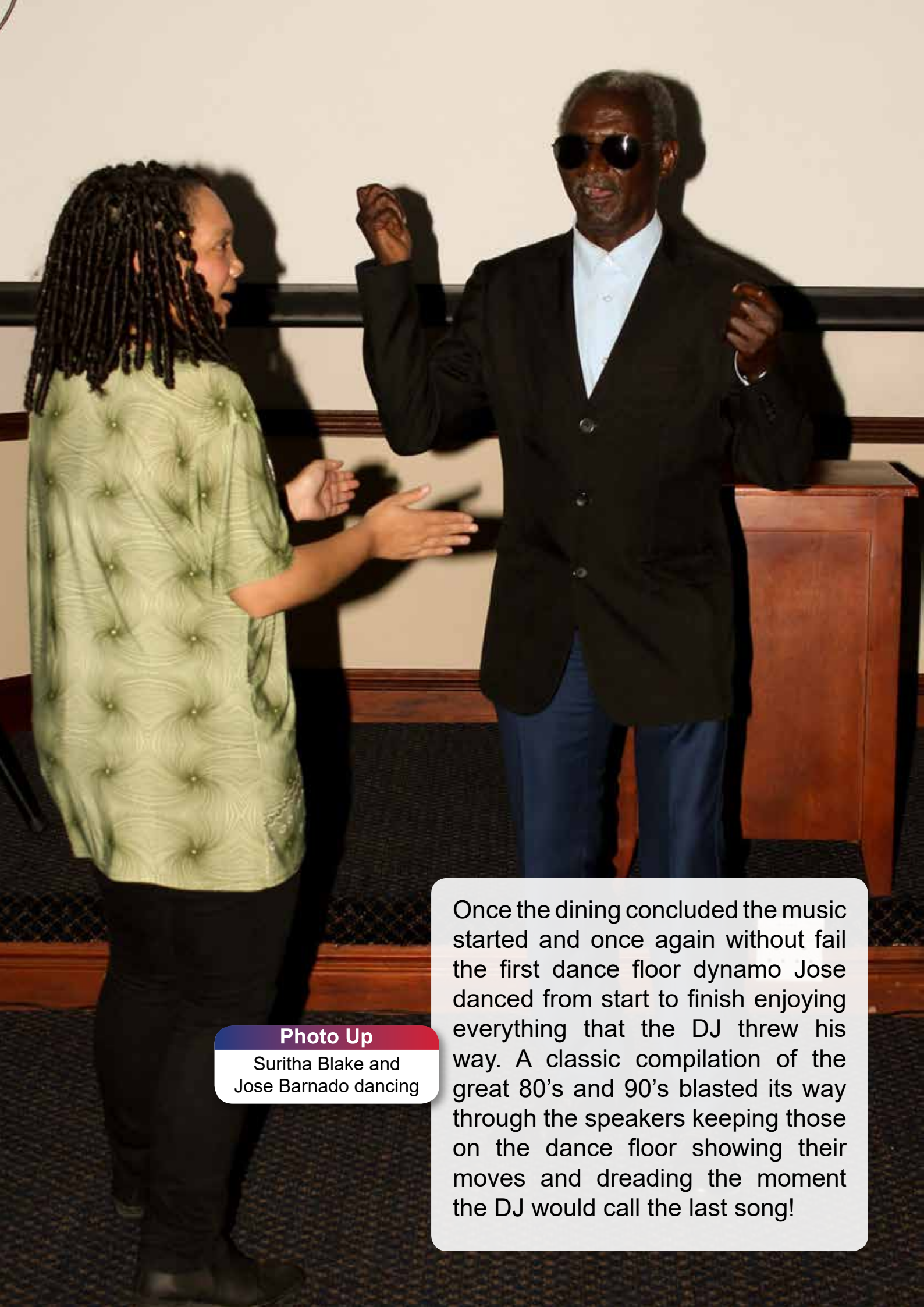


Photo Up

Suritha Blake and
Jose Barnado dancing

Once the dining concluded the music started and once again without fail the first dance floor dynamo Jose danced from start to finish enjoying everything that the DJ threw his way. A classic compilation of the great 80's and 90's blasted its way through the speakers keeping those on the dance floor showing their moves and dreading the moment the DJ would call the last song!

Long Cane Rally

The Annual John and Esther Ellerman Long Cane Rally took place on 28 October 2017. Entrants were made up of guys and girls, men and women from Kaleidoscope, Pioneer School, Beacon Club, Guide Dogs, CTSB, Athlone School for the Blind, Madrassa, SABWIA and SANCB. There were over 250 entrants ranging from as young as 12 years to entrants accompanied by guide dogs. This year's rally saw entrants from all over the Western Cape navigating the roads and paths around Green Point Park.

The annual rally began at 10:00am on a hot sunny day and followed a route from the Salesian Football Club around the park and returning to the football field. This year's rally placed emphasis on participation and the use of the long cane and guide dogs rather than the competitive edge of the past. Each entrant received a St Dunstan's coffee mug on completion of the course to remind them of their great achievement in completing the 4km route.



Photo Up

Participants making their way along the route

In addition, this year's entrants received white shirts to add to their collections of coloured shirts of previous rallies. The different organisations set up their tents on the grass in front of the football club where entrants gathered to share their stories of the walk with one another whilst enjoying some hard-earned boerie roles supplied by Build It Worcester.



Photo Up

The Kaleidoscope Group at the Long Cane Rally

A volunteer's perspective

On 28 October, a beautifully warm and windless morning saw the JEEMT Long Cane Rally take place at the Salesian Football Club in Green Point.

As a first time volunteer, here is what she said about the event:

“The organisation was very good, and the sponsors most generous. What impressed me most was the spirit and enthusiasm of the participants. They were delighted to be there



Photo Up

A Participant at the finish Line receiving his JEEMT coffee mug

and to mix and meet each other. Chatting to one of the teachers, she told me that the children's excitement had been difficult to contain as this was an event that they really looked forward to and enjoyed. This was a day that all the participants seemed to enjoy, so may it continue for many many years"

John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust representative perspective

"It's absolutely fantastic to see all the entrants so excited and so eager to start the rally. What stood out for me was how well oriented and mobile the entrants were and how confident they were on setting out to conquer the course. I loved being a part of such a great event."



Photo Up

Participant and their guide dogs showing off the gifts they received

A few words of thanks, a lucky draw prize giving which awarded prizes ranging from Pick n Pay food vouchers and Greenleaf Olive Oil to 2 Vodacom smartphones. Dog food supplied by Denise at Leliebloem Kennels was handed out to the guide dog entrants. Some goody bags supplied by Build It Worcester and Vodacom were also given to entrants.

The organisers of the event would like to thank the staff at St Dunstan's, the committee members and marshals for their help as well as Build It Worcester, Vodacom, PenBev, Edit Micro, Hentie Rossouw, Bokkie Galaway, Neil Burger, Telkom, Salesian Football Club and Bagazio.

Another great event and more shared memories



Photo Up

Karin Smith and Johan Grove
handing over the cell phone to
the winner

2017 AGM Guest Speaker and Ian Fraser Bursary recipient

Bonita Blankenberg

Bonita Blankenberg is an energetic, passionate and captivating motivator. Her ability to connect authentically with people is one of her greatest strengths. She loves being in the company of others and has always been curious about the world. Bonita is the eldest of four children. She was born in 1982 and three months after birth it became apparent that she was to live with blindness. However, her visual disability was never a deterrent, as it propelled her towards achieving countless goals. She has an innate news-nose and her writer's instinct was apparent throughout school days.

This natural curiosity was the driving force behind her career in journalism coupled with her love for

Photo Right

Our Guest Speaker,
Bonita Blankenberg



words and inability to stop talking. Bonita matriculated from the Athlone School for the Blind in 1999, after which she studied Journalism at CPUT. She acquired both her National Diploma and B-tech Degree at this institution.



Photo Up

FLTR: Bev Richardson (Hellen Keller); Barbara Davis (Athlone School for the Blind); Vincent Daniels (CTSB); Rueben Matthews (Beacon Club for the Blind)

After completing her studies, Bonita was employed in various roles at a variety of radio stations. This includes working as a weekend news reporter at KFM 94.5, doing a mid-morning magazine show on Bush Radio 89.5 and presenting a disability-focused programme on the Johannesburg-based station Radio Today. Bonita is currently employed as the weekend breakfast presenter at Bok Radio 98.9FM.

However, Bonita also honed her skills in employee communication in the corporate world where she learned the art of PR and stakeholder relations. She joined Eskom and Nestlé as PR specialist in their Corporate and Public Affairs divisions respectively.

Bonita breathes enthusiasm into every aspect of her life and this is evident in her choice of hobbies. Motor rally navigating is not for the faint-hearted, but even more of a challenge when one is blind. She has won numerous accolades, awards and trophies for her contribution to

this sport. She is a keen outdoor sports aficionado and became an award-winning motorsport participant in 2012. Bonita was awarded the coveted Gauteng Sportswoman of the Year with a disability accolade for winning five tournaments in succession. She also took part in a variety of motorcycle Econoruns in which she participated in the pillion class. This led to a variety of her articles being published in Bike SA and other outdoor magazines.



Photo Up

Capt. M Matwa (Institute of Maritime Medicine);
Dollence Makhubele (Athlone School for the Blind)

This 35-year-old Capetonian finds inspiration in her friends, family and God. She is proudly South African and is obsessed with the Springboks, Stormers and Proteas. Bonita has been blessed with an angelic voice and impressive memory retention for songs. She can often be found singing her heart out at karaoke competitions.

Recently she became a well-known face on local television when she took part in the family game shows Noot vir Noot and



Photo Up

FLTR: Linda Loggenberg,
Marilyn Bailey, Rose Nunneley



Photo Up

Les Masterson; Prof Brain del Figaji; Gareth Morgan; Clive Payne(Light House Association); Dave Mitchell

Musiek Roulette. It was a splendid example of her passionate drive to always compete on an equal level with her sighted counterparts! She had viewers across the country glued to their seats in the nail-biting Noot vir Noot semi-final that had social media buzzing for days after the show was aired.

Having overcome her own challenges and barriers, Bonita would like



Photo Left

Prf Brian del Figaji; Bonita Blankenberg; Gareth Morgan; Dave Mitchell

to help others to do the same. Her warmth, intellect, wicked sense of humour and infectious laugh are all part of the inspirational package.

She speaks with honesty and always encourages her audience to live bravely, freely and outside of their comfort zone.



Photo Up

Back Row FLTR: Adm (JG) D.M Mkhonto; PRO Pierre Fourie (Signals Association); Mr P Jordaan (Vice Chairman Signals Association); Capt W Kassaka (SA Navy); Lt Col Tienie Lott (Cape Town Highlanders); WO1 F. Bennett (SANDF); WO2 W.A. Luitjies (SA Navy);

Front Row FLTR: Mr R Fife (Naval Officers Association); Ms S Pieters (SA Navy); Capt. M Matwa (Institute of Maritime Medicine); CPO IJ. Du Plessis (SA Navy); Mr J.W Darries (SA Navy)

Tech Corner

Below are four devices that may interest other beneficiaries and visually impaired people - compiled by George De Nobrega.

1. Talking WalkFit Pedometer

The Talking WalkFit Pedometer is fashionable. It is designed for all day and everyday use and everyone can use it. This device monitors number of steps, distance covered, number of calories burned and time duration of one's walk or jog.

This device is small and can be carried in a pocket, purse and backpack or even around one's neck or clipped on a belt. It has a seven-day memory record and is easy to operate; pressing a single button the device provides all information. Battery operated. Available at the SANCB resource centre for R200.00

2. Audio Bible

This gadget is similar in size to a cell phone and is fitted with a speaker instead of a screen. It features eleven buttons.

The buttons enable one to navigate the Bible from book to book, chapter to chapter in forward or reverse mode as well as scrolling in ten second increments in either forward or reverse mode when in a chapter. It can be re-charged either by a charger for three hours or in the sun for eight hours. It can be used with headphones. It is available in the King James Version and the NIV (New International

Version) and in multiple languages.

3. Sensory PBR (Portable Book Reader).

The Sensory PBR is a compact lightweight handheld electronic device packed with features among which allows the playback of audio files in various formats including MP3, WAV, WMA as well as video formats like MP4 and WMV to name a few. The built-in high-quality IVONA text-to-speech engine not only provides guidance as one navigates through the different menus and applications on the device; it also provides clear articulated speech when reading various eBooks.

EBook formats include Microsoft Word DOC and DOCX files, text files, html files as well as ePub and PDF files. It also supports the playback of DAISY 2.0 and 3.0 formats. Other features of the device include a talking compass, FM radio and calculator as well as the ability to create digital recordings either through the use of the built-in microphone or through the attachment of an external microphone (sold separately). The device also boasts 8GB built-in storage capacity and features a microSD card slot that will recognise cards from 1GB to 32GB turning this nifty little device into a mobile library. Operating systems supported: Windows 7, 8.1 and 10. Other features include the time, date, alarm and battery indicator.

4. Talking digital jump rope - provided by SANCB

Do you enjoy skipping? Then this is for you. It monitors the number of revolutions, number of calories burned and time duration. Battery operated. Available at the SANCB resource centre for R200.00

Pieter's Gate Modification

Pieter recently shared some tips on how to modify a gate in order to indicate whether the gate is open or closed.

Requirements for the alarm:

- A 12 volt alarm battery
- A buzzer limit switch wire

Instructions:

1. Attach limit switch to the gate motor box in the position so the indicator touches the gate. If the gate opens the indicator will push back and if it closed the indicator will be in the middle.
2. Connect one wire to the positive end and the other to the switch.
3. Connect the 2 wires to the buzzer, lead to the battery.
4. Connect one wire to negative and the other to the switch on box.
5. If the gate opens you should hear the buzzer and if the gate closes the buzzer does not sound.

Tips:

- You can use your gate motor's battery.
- A separate battery will require a charger.
- You can use the reverse buzzer of a truck.

Photo Right

Pieter Engelbrecht





The Smart Cane and what our users had to say

At the 2017 Reunion, St Dunstan's Association for war blinded veterans decided to provide all its beneficiaries with the new Indian Smart Cane which was met with great excitement.

Archie Roberts

"I firstly would like to thank Saint Dunstan's for my new toy." Saint Dunstan's gave all Saint Dunstener's a SMART cane as a gift at the 2017 reunion. Shekila Maharaj and Jeremy Opperman gave us an orientation to the SMART cane at the reunion and this orientation was very useful. Initially I found the different grip and sensor on the front of the cane to be quite bulky and awkward but I did get used to it after a while. I did think that the cane itself was a bit flimsy however with the feedback you get from the cane you do not need to use it to bash walls and objects to see where the objects are you can simply avoid walking into them. Knowing the technical side of using the cane, although fundamental to being able to use the device I found that when I started practicing with it I realised that I did not have to rely on my hearing to know where objects were in my environment anymore. Having said that I have worked out that using a blend of my hearing in concert with the vibrations from the cane makes my cane travel experience less stressful. In my opinion though one has to learn the old fashioned basics of cane use before progressing to the use of the SMART cane. One reason for this is that if one is taking a route and the battery suddenly goes flat you're a bit stuck if you were only relying on the cane to give you feedback about obstacles in your path and you'd be in big trouble. The most useful feature for me though is the alarm that tells you when something is



coming at great speed towards you and this is something my hearing does not always pick up.

“Once again I would like to thank the Board and staff for my wonderful gift.”

Jeremy Opperman

Aiming for the gaps

Ask anyone used to using a white cane or someone nearby when a cane is being used, and tap, tap, tap is the sound one associated with cane navigation.

Not so with the new Smart Cane developed by the Indian Institute of Technology.

Where typical cane navigation included the obligatory connection of the end of the cane on potential obstacles ranging from doorways to poles and even people, the Smart Cane, using a version of sonar, can be operated without much connection between the end of the cane and the obstacle, making for a smoother navigation style. Sound waves are projected out of a neat box like unit near the top of the cane and bounce off obstacles and are interpreted by the user as vibrations. Varying frequency of vibration inform the user about closeness of obstacles in the path. Slower or no vibrations at all tell the user that items such as trees, poles, walls, cars etc are further away or not in the direct path, allowing the user to literally aim for the gaps.

Although not a new concept, this new smart cane has refined many of the less attractive elements one associated with older versions such as the Ultra cane, not least the whopping price tag that went with



older smart canes that could cost as much as 1000 Pounds! Other innovations include a far less clunky and heavy design and far simpler battery charging ability.

This new Smart cane, brought into the country by well-known blind entrepreneur Shakila Maharaj has been trailed by several blind users around the country since the beginning of the year, and has met with very positive feedback including myself who typically use a cane when I am not using my guide dog.

At the 2017 Reunion, St Dunstan's Association for War blinded veterans decided to supply all their beneficiaries with the new Indian Smart Cane which was met with great excitement.



Photo Up

Carlos De Nobrega translating
to Jose Barnado

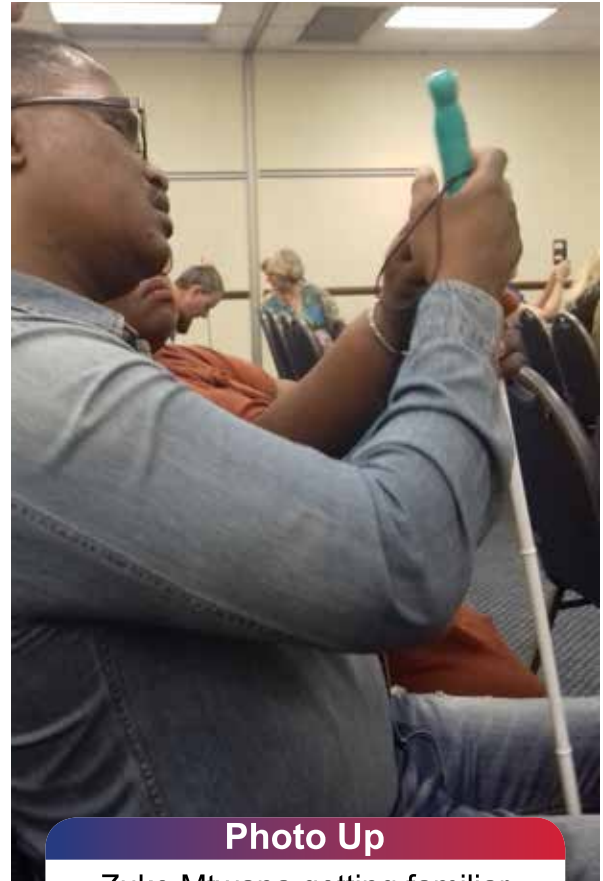


Photo Up

Zuko Mtwana getting familiar
with the smart cane

Renier Heyns

“Morning Morning, well what can I say. Never in 1981 when I first hold a long cane in my hand would I have thought I'll have the opportunity of having such technology in my hands. If they give it to me at that time I would be frightened by touching the smart cane.

Still in the learning and inspecting curve but already in the beginning I can't see why we should not became good friends. I took the smart cane with me to my working place and it help a lot in walking straight down a passage finding doors and detecting people standing in my way.

Many thanks again to St Dunstan's for all the care and support”

Warm Regards.

Renier



Project

In 2010 Blind Veterans UK's President Colin Williamson set up Project Gemini in his spare time. He worked on it in the evenings, the early hours of the morning and at weekends and sometimes through the night.

Together with Louise Timms, the Sports & Recreation Manager at the Brighton centre, and Dr Tom Zampieri, his counterpart in America, he developed an engaging itinerary for the week-long peer-to-peer support programme. Those who most needed to hear its message of support were invited to take part.

In May 2011 the first exchange took place when 10 war blinded veterans from the Blinded Veterans Association (USA) came to England to visit the Brighton centre. Over the week war stories and tales of rehabilitation were exchanged, as they bonded during meetings at the House of Lords and the American Embassy. There were fun evenings full of laughter during which the newly blinded found that spark that had been dimmed for a while.

Project Gemini has grown and in 2014 St Dunstaners from St Dunstan's in South Africa joined. At the heart of Project Gemini is a message of support. Participants witness the transformative change in young soldiers from the UK and America who have been blinded in Afghanistan as well as in established veterans from South Africa who experience the life-changing work of Project Gemini and Blind

Gemini

wins the Soldering on International Award

Veterans UK.

It was a proud moment, when on Friday 24 March, Colin Williamson, blind veteran Chris Nowell, Louise Timms and Mark Hollis (Activity Team Leader - Llandudno, UK), accepted the Soldiering On International Award from Angela Rippon. The award was for outstanding achievements, acts of personal sacrifice or comradeship demonstrated internationally, by individuals, groups or associations which have supported the British Armed Forces community.

Accepting the award Colin said, "I feel very pleased, honoured and humbled to win this magnificent award. Project Gemini is all about teamwork, with everyone pulling together to achieve the programme's aims and objectives and I'm proud to say that we've been very successful over the years in accomplishing our goals. I'd like to place on record my thanks to Louise Timms and Dr Tom Zampieri for their outstanding contribution and commitment to the project; without their help and support Project Gemini wouldn't be where we are today."

Colin Williamson, our President has just completed 10 years working for Blind Veterans UK and continues to build on the great work of Project Gemini in fostering ideas and ways of helping blind veterans across the Atlantic and with our sister organisation in South Africa.

Source: Blind Veterans UK

FAST FACT



Did you know that the talking book was first dreamt up by blind veteran Captain Ian Fraser while listening to a gramophone at one of the Blind Veterans UK centres?

You can listen to an audio recording of Lord Fraser talking about his work at:

<https://audioboom.com/posts/4601137-ian-fraser-whereas-i-was-blind-1942-part-1>

Happy Birthday

Congratulations to **Palesa** who celebrated her 60th birthday at the end of October.



Office Closure – 22 December 2017 to 8 January 2018

As one year draws to a close and another year peaks over the horizon waiting to invite us in, we draw on the memories of the year that will stay with us forever; and look to the future for all the great possibilities and excitement that we are yet to experience.

From all of us at St Dunstan's we wish you and your family a relaxed, restful and safe holiday season.



Photo Up

St. Dunstans Staff

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence." Helen Keller

Competition Time

Prize A: To donate to the organisation of your choice

- 2 x roller ball tips with hook
- 2 x slip on roller marshmallow tip
- 1 x roller marshmallow with hook
- 1 x packet of bumps
- 1 x JEEMT Long Cane Rally 2017 mug
- 1 x St Dunstan's branded tie



Prize B: Individual prize

- 1 x intelligent key finder
- 1 x packet of bumps
- 1 x JEEMT Long Cane Rally 2017 mug
- 1 x St Dunstan's branded neck scarf

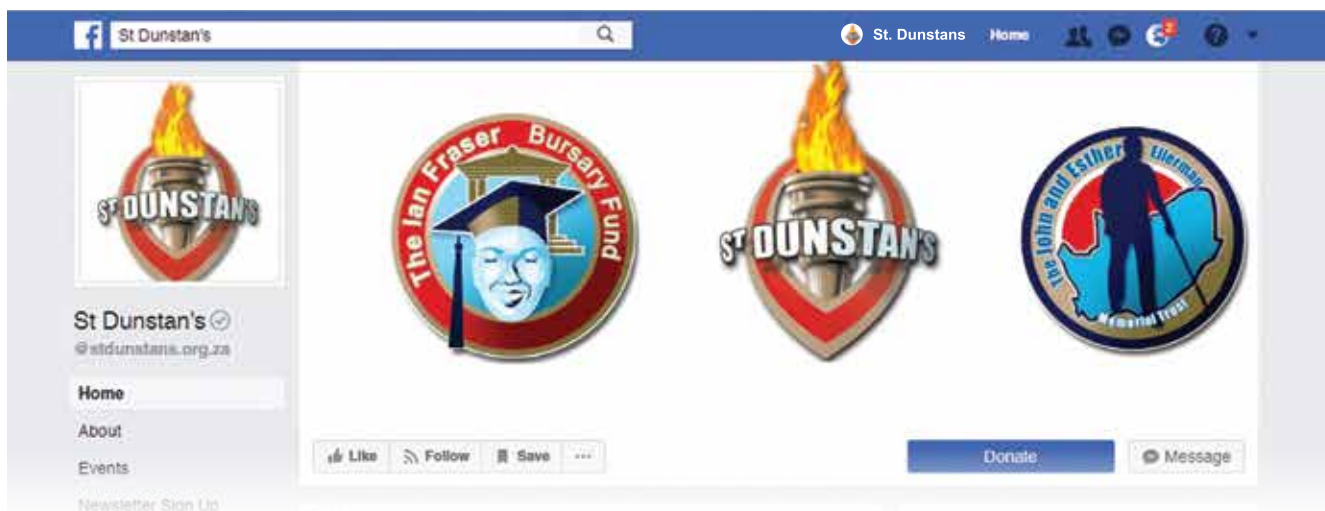
Prize C: Individual Prize

- 1 x talking alarm clock
- 1 x packet of bumps
- 1 x JEEMT Long Cane Rally 2017 mug
- 1 x signature guide



Terms and Conditions

1. Like our Facebook Page.
2. Share our page.
3. Like and share the post relating to the competition.
4. Sign up for our newsletter via Facebook or St Dunstan's website.
5. Competition ends 31 December 2017.
6. Prizes may not be exchanged for cash.
7. Judges decision is final.
8. Winners will be announced in our next newsletter and on Facebook.
9. Winners will be contacted via email or Facebook.



Events in 2018 (Dates to be confirmed)

- Reunion replaced with Project Gemini in October 2018
- John and Esther Ellerman Long Cane Rally
- AGM



ST 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 charities, relies heavily on bequests/legacies to carry out its work, and a simple gift can transform the lives of blind ex-servicemen and women. You could help St Dunstan's continue its tradition of helping people come to terms with their blindness, achieve and maintain 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, Mr G Morgan, who will gladly assist you.



Caring for War-Blinded Veterans



Assisting Blind and V.I. Students



**Providing Orientation & Mobility
Training**

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