

# ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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[FREE TO ST. DUNSTAN'S MEN]

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

### Some Records, Changes at Church Stretton, and Research

FROM my office in London I see St. Dunstan's as a whole, and its many developments all over the world are very interesting. The month of April, 1944, stands out as a rather unusual month, in which a number of rather exceptional matters have come to the point of decision, or have come to my notice. Some record of them will, I think, interest St. Dunstaners, so here they are.

Our financial year ends in March each year, and I have just seen the figures for St. Dunstan's world-wide collections, and they constitute a record. Never in the last war period, or in the years between, has the public supported us so generously, and I should like to place on record my thanks to Mr. Ernest Stanford, our Appeals Organiser, and Miss Marshall, Appeals Secretary, and their staff, which includes a number of St. Dunstaners, for this result. I try to maintain the appeal of St. Dunstan's on a high level of taste and dignity, worthy of our reputation and our purpose. St. Dunstaners in their homes and professions and factories and occupations are well-known figures amongst their neighbours, many help by a word of encouragement or support, all help by their example. I should like to thank them.

I sometimes read in certain papers an attack upon the voluntary system—all the services to the wounded and the sick and so on should be undertaken by the State, is the argument. My own view is that whatever any government of any party may do at any time there will always be the more advanced and generous members of the community who will want to do more, and want to do something special. I think this is one of the noblest aspects of the human mind and conscience. Apart from this, I am quite certain that the independence of St. Dunstan's from government control and government department administration is one of its sources of strength, and that the individuality and personal touch of our organisation is something to be greatly valued. If the nation is fully to pay its debt to those who have lost much in its service, it does not seem to me wrong that it should pay it through taxation and the State, as well as through voluntary contributions and voluntary service. One of the aspects of the voluntary system which counts for much to St. Dunstaners is the very great amount of voluntary service which we receive within our organisation and as individuals. We do not want pity or sentimentality or charity in the worst sense of that word, but to receive the help of our friends and neighbours in the spirit in which it is given, with good grace, is in itself a virtue, and to be able to give without counting the cost or the reward or seeking advertisement, and without patronising, is one of the highest expressions of the human mind.

What I have written about the voluntary system and St. Dunstan's in general reminds me of something that was said to me by a St. Dunstaner in Church Stretton the other day. He had not long been out of the Army, indeed he had only just returned to St. Dunstan's from twenty-eight days' discharge leave. He said: "It is surprising what fools some sighted people are, and how awkward they make you feel." I said: "I know exactly how you feel, but I think you're a bit hard on them. Remember they do not often meet a blind man, and although they want to do all they can to make you feel at ease and to help you, they do not know how to do it, and the result is a kind of awkwardness and shyness which expresses itself in a clumsy way. Now you, as a blind man, are always meeting sighted people, and you ought, therefore, to get very good at handling them, and one of the most important lessons you should learn at St. Dunstan's is to put the sighted people at ease. Bearing in mind that they want to help you in the most unobtrusive way possible, but don't know how to, it's really your job to guide them and help them to help you. If you can learn this lesson you will very soon find that human associations, which are one of the most important things in life, become much easier."

But to return to the month of April, and some of its significant decisions. The biggest single gift made by the British public, through St. Dunstan's, to blinded soldiers, sailors and airmen was made during that month. There were about three thousand men blinded in the last war, and of them some 220 did not receive government pensions, or received 70 per cent. or 60 per cent., or some other pension less than the 100 per cent. St. Dunstan's has always given them an allowance. In the case of those who receive no pension, St. Dunstan's gave half the government pension, and in some cases there were varying amounts, and in some there was nothing from St. Dunstan's. Nevertheless, all these men were blind, and all were St. Dunstaners, because St. Dunstan's, being a voluntary agency, could use its discretion in a way which the government could not do, and could give the benefit of the doubt to these men and take them into our organisation. But we could not do all that we would like to have done, because twenty years ago we had not the resources and the certainty in our minds that we could carry out our commitments, and it would have been a shocking thing to have started something which we could not guarantee and maintain. But now, owing to the strength of the position which we have built up, we are in a different position, and on April 17th we were able to write to each of the 220 men, and tell them that from that date, and for the rest of their lives, they would receive from St. Dunstan's an allowance which would bring their guaranteed income up to the level of the ordinary government pension. I am quite sure that nothing like this has ever been done by any organisation for disabled ex-Servicemen before, and you can imagine what a sense of satisfaction and security it has given to a substantial proportion of our men.

We may now proudly say that no St. Dunstaner has less income than the ordinary standard government pension for total disability. We have been able to afford this great sum of money without impairing our financial strength, and without reducing in any way our capacity to undertake any obligation into which we have entered, and we have in fact set the money aside in a reserve, so as to be a sure guarantee that the obligations will be met.

This policy arises directly out of parliamentary activity during the past year. It will be remembered that during the summer of last year, Parliament was induced to give further consideration to the position of severely disabled pensioners. Amongst the concessions that were then made were the following:—

1. The pensions for this war were brought up to the level of the pensioners of the last war.
2. A special supplementary pension and allowance for the wife and children, no matter when the marriage took place or when the children were born, was granted in respect of those men who were seriously disabled and were unable to undertake ordinary remunerative work.
3. In cases where the origin of the disability was not quite clear the benefit of the doubt was, for the first time, formally and legally given to the claimant.

These were great advances in pensions policy, and as a result of the supplementary pension many hundreds of our married St. Dunstaners have, as a matter of fact, received an extra pound a week during the past year and will receive it for the rest of their lives. This effectively raises the basic pension of £2 to £3, and represents a very big advance.

Mr. Askew, the Secretary of St. Dunstan's, who also acts as our pensions adviser, was responsible for a splendid bit of work in getting the administration of this concession carried through in record time, so that within a few weeks over 750 St. Dunstaners who were entitled to this increase were actually receiving it.

St. Dunstaners who are engaged in full time work as masseurs and telephone operators, as shopkeepers and poultry farmers, and who, in other ways, earn a normal living, may feel that their turn has not come, but it will be a satisfaction to them to know that, should their earning capacity drop below the level of £1 a week at any time, they too will be able to claim this supplementary pension from the Government.

Many of them, too, are now receiving war bonuses in their jobs, or are enjoying at least a small part of the general prosperity, so that it may well be said that St. Dunstaners as a whole are very largely, through parliamentary action and through administrative action taken by St. Dunstan's itself, enjoying an easement of their conditions which must make us all rejoice.

In the earlier years of the war I was able to persuade the British Legion that the wife's allowance and the children's allowance, no matter when the wife was married to the disabled soldier, or when the children were born, was one of the most important concessions required from the Government in our pensions system. The campaign of last year achieved a step forward in securing this for those who cannot work. One of the battles of the future is to secure the same wives' and childrens' concession for all. This has now become a foremost plank of Legion policy, and many friends of the Legion in the House of Commons are doing the best they can to get it implemented.

St. Dunstan's Pensions Department is always vigilant to secure improvements, however great, however small. The other day a new St. Dunstaner of this war pointed out to me that it was unfair that the Attendant Allowance should be taken away, not only when a man was in St. Dunstan's in training, but also when he was on holiday. I mentioned this matter to Mr. Askew and he negotiated with the Ministry of Pensions a settlement of this matter, so that in future it will be paid to trainees when they are on holiday in their homes and are not in one of St. Dunstan's homes.

There have been more than twenty full dress debates on ex-Service matters during the past year in the House of Commons. They include debates on Appeal Tribunals, the Disabled Persons Act, the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act, and pension conditions generally. Our method of watching and representing in the House of Commons matters of special concern to St. Dunstaners is most carefully worked out, and we are extremely vigilant. No opportunity is lost to present a good case at an appropriate time.

During April came the news to me that Sir Clutha Mackenzie, himself a St. Dunstaner, who is in charge of our affairs in India, has completed the first six months of St. Dunstan's training unit at Dehra Dun, in United Provinces. A note on another page of this issue will tell of something of his problems, and of the way he has overcome them. There are nearly fifty Indian St. Dunstaners. From Canada came the news that a Training Centre for blinded soldiers, sailors and airmen has been opened in Toronto. St. Dunstaners of the last war take a leading part in its initiation and management and teaching. From all the States of Australia and from New Zealand comes news of active work in the St. Dunstan's tradition, caring for newly-blinded men of this war, and here again St. Dunstaners of the old war are amongst those who are helping most. From South Africa the news comes to us more directly, for hardly a month passes without a contingent of new St. Dunstaners arriving from Tembani, who bring with them their own story of the conquest of blindness in its early stages amongst many men who have been sent there from the Middle East on their way home. St. Dunstan's in London and the St. Dunstan's spirit carried to the ends of the earth by its sons is the inspiration for all this work, and the governments and authorities of the Indian Empire and the Dominions are in constant touch with us for guidance and advice, and this is true too of allied governments, including particularly the American Government. The richness of the gift which we have been able to impart to so large a part of the blind world from the storehouse of experience, and from the success of St. Dunstaners themselves, is something of which we and Britain may well be proud.

At Church Stretton, too, there have been significant developments in April. The culmination of a year of growth and experiment has been the setting up of a new

organisation to carry the burden of the large casualties which I fear may be expected as a result of the opening of the second front. Negotiations with the War Office have released accommodation. Approaches to the Ministry of Labour have helped us to secure staff. We have had difficulties, and we have made mistakes, but never have we been unable to provide a bed for a blinded soldier, sailor or airman or other St. Dunstanian who has needed it, and never have we been without facilities to set his feet on the way. The doubling, or perhaps the trebling of our organisation to meet the demands of the next few months, however, have called for some changes, and Air Commodore G. B. Dacre, an experienced air officer, who has spent a good part of his active service in administration and in the charge of mixed technical training and educational and hospital establishments, has been appointed to be the new Commandant of St. Dunstan's at Church Stretton. A note of his career and qualifications, which will be found interesting, also appear on another page of this issue. Mr. I. M. Bankes-Williams, who for three years has borne the burden of the post of Director of Training at Church Stretton, and to whom the men there gave a spontaneous presentation out of their affection and regard for him, has become Director of Education to take charge of braille and typewriting, massage, geography, history, English, and special professional studies. This is the most important single department under the Commandant, and one which directly affects the welfare and subsequent life of all new St. Dunstanians. Miss Dorothy Pain, is released from the charge of the braille room in order that her special gifts may be concentrated upon the job of Matron, but instead of being matron of the Longmynd, which is the biggest of our houses at Church Stretton, she was recently appointed Matron of St. Dunstan's, to supervise the work of all the matrons and the welfare of all the trainees and their families. Although Miss Pain's present duty is at Church Stretton, the title, Matron of St. Dunstan's, has a much wider significance, and will, I know, be welcomed by all St. Dunstanians.

To come back to Headquarters, the month of April has also seen the initiation of a very important piece of research work in association with the Industrial Health Research Board of the Medical Research Council and the Ministry of Labour in the employment of blinded persons in commercial, industrial and professional jobs. We hope to find other interesting work, besides massage, telephone operating, shopkeeping and business life for those of our men who have the necessary aptitude to undertake it. This development follows upon the most successful research which we undertook early in the war in the matter of finding employment for blinded men in factories, in which very considerable progress has been made.

On August 4th of this year it will be thirty years since the Great War started, and it is, as I write, twenty-eight years since St. Dunstan's was founded, in the spring of 1915. Our organisation is old in experience, strong in tradition, but if the events of the month of April, 1944, are any guide, it is also capable of progress and change, of development, and has in it the vital spark of life.

IAN FRASER.

### Sir Beachcroft Towse

On Sunday, April 23rd, Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., K.C.V.O., C.B.E., celebrated his eightieth birthday. The following telegram was sent by the Chairman on this occasion:

For well over half a century, blinded ex-Servicemen and blind people generally, have regarded you with affection and have admired your notable career of public service for the blind. Lady Fraser and I, and all at St. Dunstan's, send you the best of good wishes, and many happy returns of your eightieth birthday.—IAN FRASER.

Sir Ian has received the following telegram in reply:

Please accept yourself and kindly convey to Lady Fraser, and all at St. Dunstan's, my warmest thanks and good wishes.—TOWSE.

### Reminder

The closing date of the Derby Sweepstake (open only to St. Dunstanians) is Friday, June 9th.

The draw will be made on Wednesday, June 14th, and those drawing a horse will be notified the following day.

Tickets are half-a-crown each. Applications should be sent to the Editor at 9-11 Park Crescent, London, W.1.

### Silver Weddings

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. H. Abbey, Lightwater, February; Mr. and Mrs. A. Taylor, Stourbridge, April 20th; Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Freeman, Brighton, June 5th.

### Church Stretton Notes

Everyone is back from the Easter break much refreshed—and thankful that the national emergency did not interfere with most of our plans. Longmynd remained open, with some staff, for those of the men who did not want to enter unsafe areas. These, and the "Tigers," were kept busy with walks, teas, dances, and a supper at "The Green Dragon," organised by the indefatigable Miss Morris. An Ensa party was specially welcome—Variety, including the comedienne's delightful impression of a Cockney woman watching her first football match! Every sympathy with Shean Macnamara, equipped for the telephone job that is awaiting him in Dublin, but no permit can be obtained yet. Hard lines!

Our big new Entertainments Hall opened at the Centre with a dance, supper and cabaret. The Band was Jack White's Collegians, and artistes included members of the R.A.F. Gang Show; a great evening, but, though capable of seating 300 people, the Hall is none too big!

Expansions have now required a Commandant here, and we welcome Air Commodore Dacre, who has been appointed. Memories of Regent's Park days recall the Adjutants who were part of our St. Dunstan's traditions in "civvy street."

**Dances.**—Another has been kindly given by the Sentinel Waggon Works Canteen in Shrewsbury—always a treat. On the 24th the Shropshire I.T.C. Band were again enjoyed at the Silvester Horne Institute, their "last performance" here. Condoover's first invitation was a great success—everyone was so hospitable. And Miss Weston, of Shrewsbury, added one more to her long series of most popular evenings—her last in single harness!

Brockhurst had another of its enjoyable play-readings—Emlyn William's "Night must Fall"; they are a great institution.

The Musical Circle organised another excellent programme, with Alfred Cave (violin), Margaret Ablethorpe (piano), and Kathleen Kay (vocalist); the Committee renders us yeoman service in arranging these monthly musical feasts.

An Ensa Variety Show at the Institute, "Passed to you," was one of the best we have had, and thoroughly enjoyed by a large audience.

£141 11s. 3d. has been collected to date by the St. Dunstan's branch of the Red Cross Penny-a-Week Fund, from very small beginnings two-and-a-half years ago; trainees, V.A.D.s, teachers, office and domestic staffs all join in this satisfactory result.

One of our boys on holiday in Elgin met a charming American officer and two still more charming ladies; captivated by the vivacity and Maryland accent of one of the latter, he sought and much enjoyed her company on several occasions. His brother took him to task, but only aroused indignation. "Why . . . ?" "But she's *black as night*." "Well . . . what about it?"

Congratulations to the following, who have passed tests:—

**Braille Reading (Interpoint).**—C. Beaumont-Edmonds, E. Dunlop.

**Braille Reading (Interline).**—J. Weekes, T. A. Vickers.

**Braille Writing.**—L. Cadman, J. Simmonds, E. Dunlop.

**Typing.**—W. Bowerman, A. Reagan, A. Simpson.

**Admitted to Hospital.**—Spr. F. Cinq-Mars, Canadian Engineers (22), Quebec; Pte. D. Savage, R.A.O.C. (29), Stranraer, Scotland; Pte. T. O. Smith, Lorne Scots of Canada (35), Manitoba; Lieut. E. S. C. Spence, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Yetminster, Dorset; A.C.1 T. A. Barton, R.A.F. (30), Scarborough; Pte. N. Dugdale, Cheshire Regt. (27), Manchester; L/Cpl. A. H. Vickery, Royal Fusiliers (27), Tolworth, Surrey; Pte. A. W. Chamberlain, Queen's Royal Regt. (29), Tewkesbury; Sgt. A. J. Edmunds, R.A.F. Regt. (28), Chichester; Cpl. R. Swannell, Northants Regt. (25), Wellingborough; Pte. V. C. Green, Royal Berks. Regt. (24), Rotherhithe, London; W/Sgt. E. Higgs, The Hampshire Regt. (29), Southfields, London; Pte. R. Pinson, Seaford Highlanders (27), Wolverhampton; Spr. J. L. Read, R.E. (29), Newbury; Sgt. F. Koenig, Canadian Engineers (22), Alberta; W/C.Q.M.S. J. J. Laffey, K.O.Y.L.I. (30), Pontefract; F/Sgt. B. J. McPhee, R.A.A.F. (23), Orange, Australia; Cpl. J. Humphrey, Royal Marine Commando (23), Belfast; Sgt. W. F. Shea, Royal Marine Commando (22), Liverpool; L.A.C.W. P. D. Bray, W.R.A.F. (19), Liskeard, Cornwall; Lieut. G. A. Preston, Burma

Regt., Lincoln; C.F. 4th Class G. L. Treglown, R.A.Ch.D., Redruth, Cornwall; Spr. J. Skilbeck, R.E. (23), Leeds; W/Sgt. W. C. Such, Wilts Regt. (30), Walthamstow, London; Sister E. A. Quinn, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R., Kilkeel, N. Ireland; L/Cpl. R. H. Brett, Pioneer Corps (27), Deptford, London; Gnr. E. G. Higgs, R.A. (20), Warfield, Berks; Fus. R. Jones, Royal Fusiliers (31), Swansea; Pte. A. V. Kennard, Royal Sussex Regt. (20), Battle, Sussex.

#### From Tembani

Rfmm. A. H. Franklin, Rifle Brigade (22), Edmonton, London; L/Sgt. L. D. Northwood, R.A. (26), Launceston, Cornwall; Pte. J. Weeks, Royal Sussex Regt. (23), East Grinstead; L/Cpl. G. B. Wood, Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry (34), Nuneaton; Pte. M. F. Burns, R.A.S.C. (24), Edinburgh; Cpl. J. E. Ellis, Royal Hussars (30), Shadwell, London; Pte. A. Lang, Corps of Military Police (27), Carstairs Junction; Gnr. T. A. Vickers, R.A. (25), Bamber Bridge, Lancs.

**Discharged from Hospital and admitted to Training.**—Pte. T. Bice, Sgt. Shea, Cpl. Humphrey, Pte. Weeks, Rfmm. Franklin, Pte. Burns, Cpl. Ellis, Gnr. Vickers, Pte. Pratt, Capt. Spence.

**Discharged from Hospital later to return to Training.**—Cpl. Caswell, Pte. Jensen, Sgmn. Stevens, Bdr. Northwood.

**Discharged from Hospital awaiting Repatriation.**—Pte. A. Williams (Australia), Pte. H. Bishop (U.S.A.)

**Discharged from Hospital, later to Newington House.**—Spr. McMillan, Pte. Savage, Pte. Lang.

**Discharged from Hospital, hoping to take up Civilian Employment.**—Cpl. Huntley, L/Cpl. Wood, L/Cpl. Vickery.

**Discharged from Hospital, Returned to Unit.**—L.A.C.W. Bray.

**Hospital Transfers.**—Pte. J. Beauge, W/O. H. Macrea, Pte. S. Southall, Ft/Sgt. B. McPhee, Pte. F. Swilper, Cpl. R. Swannell, Cpl. J. Doucet.

#### Comforts Fund

Congratulations and thanks to C.P.O. Robbins, Royal Navy, who has sent us a cheque for £17 12s. 10d. as the result of a raffle for a basket, and church collection made on board his ship.

Very many thanks for all those who have kept us up to date with new addresses of their Serving Sons. We hope it will continue!

### St. Dunstan's, India

*A report by Lieut.-Col. Sir Clutha Mackenzie on the first six months' work at St. Dunstan's Hostel for Indian war-blinded, Dehra Dun, United Provinces:*

"At the close of the first six months of active training work here, I think a considered view of work for the war-blinded men in India would be appropriate. The total number so far reliably reported is fifty-three, of whom twenty-four have entered here and four left.

Western civilisation has made considerable changes in the life and thought of the people in the commercial cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Karachi, Poona and New Delhi, and some of the larger Indian State and district capitals; but 90 per cent. of India's four hundred millions are still dwellers in their seven hundred thousand villages. Almost without exception our men belong to the small cultivator class of Indian villager. The bulk of the villages lie far from rail and road, accessible only by devious tracks, useable only by bullock carts or horses. The monsoon isolates many of the villages for several months; and for a further three or four months the heat is discouraging to the traveller by day, while dacoity (gang robbery) and evil spirits oppress the wayfarer by night. Here, then are various aspects of the little nuts we have to crack.

**Angle towards blindness.**—The fundamental notion in the villages is quite simple; a blind man can't do anything. Everyone in the village knows it, and everyone before them has known it for many generations, so he is only a foolish person who believes otherwise.

**Attitude towards the blind.**—This is a mixture of kindness, callousness, and exploitation. There is no unanimous attitude as in England that it is the duty of a blind man's family and his community to protect and help him.

**Caste difficulties.**—The caste system, with the collateral custom that the son follows the father's trade, doing that and only that, makes them inelastic and unadaptable to some extent. Leather work of any kind belongs to the lowest caste, practically outcast. Basketry is also very low caste, and weaving not much higher. Tradition has saddled the Indian with these man-made handicaps. There are a dozen simple jobs about him which he could do

in a twinkling of an eye; but they are not jobs for him. It is the sweeper, the dhobi, the water carrier or the coolie whose tasks these are. The soldiers, by reason of their experience and training in the Army, are more ready to turn their hand to things.

**Illiteracy.**—Illiteracy is, of course, another factor limiting the scope of our men. Almost all have two languages, their mother tongues, of Tamil, Mahratti, Punjabi, Hindi, Gurkhali, etc., plus Urdu, which they learnt in the Army. Some, before they were blinded, could write in the script of their mother tongue, and about a third of them have learnt in Army classes to write elementary Urdu in Roman script. About three of the men can now type letters in Roman Urdu, and one, the Burman Karen, in English. This may give them a little occupation in their villages as letter writers, in addition to adding to their status as possessors of typewriters. It is difficult to find people who can write letters to their homes in a script anyone in the village can read, and hard, too, to find terms and descriptions they will comprehend.

#### Prospects and Policy

In the face of this somewhat gloomy picture, it may well be asked as to how successful St. Dunstan's principles can be in their application to the Indian war-blinded. Six months of experience have not altered the five-point policy with which I began:

1. Giving the men back their confidence, manliness, and personal independence. In this we are being definitely successful.

2. Training the men in simple village trades they can follow when they return home. This is going moderately well, but we want more trades, suitable to the different castes and to the supplies of material and markets available. The raw materials must in general be a product of the men's immediate neighbourhood, and their finished articles the simple village needs.

3. Training in music and recreations. This is also going not at all badly.

4. Grants for setting up the home industries the men have learnt, for housing, marriage, and other needs.

5. To look out for men of above average character and ability, with a view to training them for civilian blind welfare work, or some outstanding occupation.

It is clear that no after-care system such as we have in England is at all feasible. With the present attitude of the Indian

people towards the blind, it would be very difficult, too, for men to make their way in independent occupations in cities. Our men, however, are almost entirely attached to the land. The fundamental wish of them all is, I think, to return to their homes as soon as their training is complete.

**Conclusion.**—We are not discouraged by all the hurdles and handicaps set out in the foregoing. I knew of them before we began. The work has, in fact, gone better than I had hoped. My purpose has been to give a closer view of our task and its background. Of this I am certain—that we have done the right thing in starting our Indian Centre.

#### New Commandant at Stretton

Air Commodore G. B. Dacre, the new Commandant at Church Stretton, has a distinguished record of service. He qualified as an engineer, and was employed in experimental work by the Bristol Aircraft Company. Although he is only now fifty-three years of age, he was one of the first 200 to obtain a Pilot's Certificate, and is Senior Pilot on the Active List in the Royal Air Force. He is still serving in the R.A.F., but has been lent to St. Dunstan's pending his formal release. He was the first passenger ever to fly in a seaplane in British waters, and the first in the world to torpedo and sink an enemy vessel from an aeroplane.

He served in the Army, R.N.A.S. and R.F.C., and saw active service in two wars, winning the D.S.O. as a pilot in 1915 and the C.B.E. as a staff officer in France in 1940. He was a prisoner of war in Turkey during the first war, in the same camp and house as "Sailor" Doyle, who came to St. Dunstan's in May, 1919.

Air Commodore Dacre spent some years in diplomatic appointments, and was for one year before this war, and two years during this war, in command at Halton, the R.A.F. Central Technical Training School. Here he had wide experience of administration of schools and hospitals, of teachers and students.

His wife, who is Sir Ian Fraser's sister, was one of the founders of the A.T.S. and the W.A.A.F. (in which she is still serving), and their only son, Flying Officer Kenneth Dacre, D.F.C., who has been missing for over six months and is now presumed lost, was described as one of the most brilliant of the young intruder pilots.

## "In Memory"

### Corporal Annie Ibbetson, *Women's Auxiliary Air Force*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Annie Ibbetson, of Leeds, at the early age of twenty-nine.

Enlisting in the W.A.A.F. in 1941, she was invalided out two years later, since when she has been practically bed-ridden, in addition to her blindness. She came under St. Dunstan's care only in January, 1944, but, although she had been a St. Dunstaner such a short time, we had learned to admire her patience and fortitude in the face of much suffering.

At the funeral, the Girl Guides' Association, of which Annie was a prominent member, was represented by the District Commissioner and a detachment of local Rangers. A wreath from Sir Ian Fraser was among the many flowers.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to her mother in her loss.

### Private Robert McCluskey, *Royal Army Veterinary Corps*

With deep regret we record the death of R. McCluskey, of Crewe.

He served with the R.A.V.C. from November, 1915, until January, 1917, but although his sight was affected as a result of his service, he did not come to St. Dunstan's until 1929. He was trained as a basket-maker and carried on this occupation until the end of 1941. Recently he had taken a part-time post at Toc H, a source of great interest to him.

His death occurred very suddenly. He had called upon his doctor as he was not feeling well, and he passed away in the doctor's surgery.

A wreath from Sir Ian Fraser and his St. Dunstan's comrades was among the flowers at the funeral at which his son, serving in the Army, was given leave to attend.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to his widow and her son.

### Private George B. Bond, *5th Australian Pioneers*

We have heard with deep regret of the death of G. B. Bond, of Midland Junction, Western Australia. Blinded near St. Quentin, in September, 1918, he came to us on January 1st, 1919, and left nine months later to return to his own country, after being trained as a boot repairer and netter. He was not, however, able to do very much in this direction, as he suffered from head trouble. He had for several years been Vice-President of the Western Australia Blinded Soldiers' Association.

His death took place on June 19th last, at the age of 55.

Our very sincere sympathy is extended to his widow and to her three sons, all of whom are serving in the Forces, as volunteers.

### Births

PETERS.—To the wife of W. Peters, of Huyton, Liverpool, on April 27th, a son—Robert.

STANLEY.—To the wife of G. Stanley, of Market Harborough (new war St. Dunstaner), a son—Godfrey Glynne.

MCCLARNAN.—To Mrs. E. McClarnan, of Poulton-le-Fylde (new war St. Dunstaner), a son.

### Blind Persons' Pensions

St. Dunstaners are reminded that if they are drawing the Blind Persons Pension and their income has increased since the pension was awarded, they should immediately notify the local Pensions Officer of the Customs and Excise, whose address can be obtained from the Post Office. In the event of the pension being decreased or stopped, St. Dunstan's should be advised.

### Missing—now in England

Mr. and Mrs. J. O'Brien, of Skelmersdale, whose youngest son has been reported missing, have now heard that he is in hospital in England.

### Wanted to Purchase

CHILD'S DOLL'S PRAM.—Details please to C. Brampton, 4 Hornsey Lane Gardens, Highgate, N.6.

### Blinded Prisoners of War

Blinded prisoners of war in Germany are now housed at the small spa of Soden, in a former sanatorium.

On March 31st, the British patients numbered fifteen, of which three are totally blind. The senior British Medical Officer is Major Charters, who was with the other group of blinded prisoners of war at Kloster Haina, and who have since been repatriated.

The impression gained by a visiting representative of the Protecting Power on January 20th was a good one. The camp is a great improvement on Kloster Haina, the general atmosphere being of an ordinary hospital, not of one connected with prisoners of war. Four to six men share a room, all of which have running water laid on. The patients have single spring beds, good food, and are well cared for by Roman Catholic Sisters, who are also accommodated in part of the building.

Major Charters says that the German doctor in command gives every possible assistance in the circumstances.

It is hoped the Braille School will be re-established shortly.