

ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

No. 315—VOLUME XXIX [NEW SERIES]

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[FREE TO ST. DUNSTAN'S MEN]

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I AM glad that the braille REVIEW has had such a good welcome. If any St. Dunstaner has not received it and would like to have a copy sent him, or, on the other hand, if any St. Dunstaner who is receiving it is quite sure that he does not want it, will he please write to the Editor.

I agree with those correspondents who stress the importance of keeping up our braille reading, so I hope that in judging whether to have the braille edition or not, my friends will err on the side of having it, even if they do not always read it all.

I have gone into the question of the cost of the printed edition, and it appears that the saving that would be made by knocking off a few hundreds from an edition of nearly three thousand is trifling. We shall, therefore, not make it a condition that the receipt of the braille edition will necessitate giving up the ink-print edition. I think many St. Dunstaners will be glad of this, because many wives enjoy reading the REVIEW as much as their husbands. Moreover, many will like to keep an ink-print record of family events.

I read Larcombe's letter championing the veterans with pleasure. There is much in his point that the new St. Dunstaners have the great advantage of the experience and help of the old. I am sure the younger generation would be the first to admit it and, contrary to what Larcombe has said, I have often expressed the same view myself.

Regarding the braille competition, a well-known London telephone operator, "Jock" MacFarlane, rang up to say: "Is the test the reading of two pages, for example, pages 31 and 32, or does it mean reading four pages, that is to say, 29, 30, 31 and 32." If it only means two pages, 31 and 32, Mac said: "You can send my £3 along at once!"

The answer is that it means literally two pages, say 31 and 32, and that twenty minutes is the time. But we won't send the £3 on to Mac until he's gone through the hoop.

I shall await with interest letters from St. Dunstaners commenting on the Braille Competition, and I would like to add, for the benefit of our Dominion readers, that we shall be pleased to extend the prize for the Advanced Test to men living in the Dominions, provided the St. Dunstan's branches or affiliations in those countries will organise the tests. When the scheme is finally approved, we will send details to overseas branches and to all individuals who write and tell us that they are interested.

Mr. Taylor Resigns

Mr. Taylor, our Shop Superintendent, has resigned. He has worked for St. Dunstan's for nearly thirty years, and has given splendid help to those of our men who have taken up

small shops and businesses. Mr. Taylor has been responsible for finding businesses, settling the men, and watching over their interests and advising them, and I am sure that all our business men will regret his leaving. He is going to work for H. J. Crane, a most successful St. Dunstan's shop-keeper, as his manager. Crane's gain is the loss of all other St. Dunstan's shop-keepers, and I am very sorry about it, but Mr. Taylor leaves with our goodwill and best wishes and thanks.

IAN FRASER.

St. Dunstaner Decorated

Many congratulations to Lance Corporal Harold Greatrex, Royal Engineers, who, at a recent Investiture, was decorated by the King with the Military Medal. Greatrex, who is at our Hospital Unit at Stoke Mandeville, was blinded in Italy when a truck he was driving was blown up in a minefield.

Before serving in Italy he was at El Alamein and he won his award for his gallantry and determination there.

In addition to being blinded, he also lost a foot and received injuries to his arms and at Buckingham Palace, he left his wheel chair and used crutches so that he could approach the King to receive his medal.

News from Australia

We were delighted to have news of Allen Williams, the Australian prisoner-of-war, who was repatriated in 1943 and came to us for a short while before he returned to New South Wales. He writes: "During the past few months I have discovered that I can still manage to carry out sufficient duties on the farm to make each day a busy one, and as time goes on the old life becomes more familiar. Quite a considerable amount of my time is being spent with very useful results in my home garden, the greatest success in this line so far being an abundant crop of large water melons. I wish to return all my very best wishes to all the people at St. Dunstan's."

A Canadian Magazine

We have received the first number of "All Clear," a magazine for the Canadian war-blinded at Baker Hall, Toronto. We welcome its publication. Through its pages we hope to meet new Canadian comrades, and renew acquaintance with those who have passed through our own St. Dunstan's and have since returned to their own country.

Engagement

The engagement is announced between William M. Robinson, late R.C.E., and Miss Monica H. S. Sey, of Hamilton, Ontario.

Lieut. Robinson was blinded in 1943 and is now Assistant Labour Manager at a factory in Cheshire. Miss Sey has been a V.A.D. at St. Dunstan's since 1943.

Miss Barbara Ball

On February 24th, at the King's Chapel of the Savoy, London, the marriage took place of Squadron Leader George Wardrop Scott, A.F.C., R.A.F.V.R., to Section Officer Alice Barbara Prestige Ball, W.A.A.F., only daughter of Lieutenant Col. and Mrs. Eric Ball.

Miss Ball will be remembered by many St. Dunstaners as a V.A.D. at Brighton and at Church Stretton.

A Wireless Suggestion

In the *Daily Mirror* Live Letters recently, A. J. Radford, of Castle Cary, wrote:

"The B.B.C. has introduced, on the Forces programme, short 'Sidelights on the News' item.

"Would it not be possible for us to have a definite 'Hour for the Blind' programme, when there is not such a call on the various wave-lengths. The cartoons might be reproduced by word picture.

New War Settlements

Ivan Darling, of Barnet, as a telephonist at Barnet Gas and Water Company.

H. Petty, of Leeds, as a telephonist with the Petroleum Board, Hunslet, Leeds.

Wilfred Evans, with his old firm, Messrs. Doulton & Co., near Tamworth. His job is making bottle stoppers.

On Active Service

We have heard with deep regret that Captain Clifford Leslie Curtis-Willson, R.A., son of S/Ldr. W. T. Curtis-Willson, M.B.E., of Brighton, has died of wounds received in action on the Western Front.

Government Gratuities for New War St. Dunstaners

A number of new war St. Dunstaners will already have heard over the wireless and elsewhere of the scheme announced by the Government early last month, for providing a cash gratuity to men released or honourably discharged from the Forces after at last six months' approved war service. It may be helpful, however, to those St. Dunstaners who are affected, if we explain just how they will benefit by the scheme.

The basic scale of gratuity for a private or the equivalent rank in the Navy and Air Force will be 10s. for each complete month of service, with an additional 2s. for each higher rank, so that a sergeant will receive 14s. for each complete month of service, and a warrant officer, first class, 20s.

Men who have held paid rank for a period or periods amounting to not less than six months above the rank they held on discharge will qualify for the higher rate of gratuity. Women members of the Forces will, in general, receive two-thirds of the rate for corresponding male ranks, and full-time Civil Defence personnel will receive 7s. 6d. for each complete month of service. The gratuity will be in the form of deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank, and will be exempt from tax.

The gratuity will be payable to men who have served for the requisite period during the present war, and therefore every St. Dunstaner who has already been discharged from the Forces or Civil Defence Service owing to his disability will be entitled to his full gratuity.

Written application for the gratuity has to be made on or after a date to be announced, so that the gratuity will not be forthcoming immediately. When the date is announced, however, we will obtain the necessary form and make sure that each St. Dunstaner receives the amount to which he is entitled.

If any new war St. Dunstaner feels any difficulty in understanding how the scheme will apply in his particular case, he should write, giving full details, to Mr. Askew, St. Dunstan's, 9-11 Park Crescent, W.1.

Wounded

Tommy Hotson (Brough) has been wounded for the second time; this time his eyes were hurt, but splendid skill and care in Holland has completely restored his sight.

Young St. Dunstaners

Marriages

On February 17th, Margaret Elsie Cooper (Hull), to Sub/Lieut. Laurance William Coverdale, R.N.V.R.

On January 8th, K. Bowering (Weymouth), R.N.A.S.

Promotions

Frank James (Hove) to the rank of Adjutant. He is in the East.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Guiseley (Otley) to Leading Radio Mechanic.

Honours

We have received a press cutting telling of the experiences of Lance Corporal Leslie Cousins (son of Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Cousins) in Burma. When his officer was wounded, Leslie organised a charge on a Japanese machine gun position and captured it, after clubbing a gunner to death. The battalion had been cut off for days, practically without food, and were under fire.

Now we hear that Leslie has been awarded the Military Medal for gallantry.

Sergt. S. A. Young, son of our late St. Dunstaner and Mrs. Young, of Feltham, has been mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Oak Leaf for his gallant and distinguished services in Italy.

Melplash News

On March 1st, twenty-two members of the Beaminster Lodge of Buffs came over to entertain us.

The first half of the programme, consisted of songs—how we enjoyed Mr. Gibbs, aged 81, singing "The Turn of the Wheel"! The "boys" heartily joined in all the choruses. During the interval, the artists handed round beer and cigarettes ad lib, which was greatly appreciated.

The second half consisted of a sketch, based on the Kentucky Minstrels, ending with the song "Good Night to you all," when the roof was really raised!

On behalf of St. Dunstan's boys, W. Spencer proposed a vote of thanks.

Silver Weddings

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Meaker, of Grahamstown, South Africa, whose anniversary was on March 16th; and to Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Barbour, of Brighton, who celebrate their anniversary on April 10th.

The Review in Braille

St. Dunstaners Give their Views

Below are just a few of the many letters we have received from St. Dunstaners expressing their views on the production, for the first time, of the ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW in braille.

"One of the finest books sent out from St. Dunstan's. I wish we had had it twenty years sooner."

R. BIGGADIKE, Boston.

"While appreciating the enterprise which has made this possible, I do not think that I will have a copy regularly. I prefer the old printed copy, as it seems more intimate somehow. My wife and I read it together and discuss its news."

W. LOWINGS, Chandlers Ford.

"The braille REVIEW is splendidly printed, the dots being very good and the paper very firm, but as I am a very slow reader (having mastered braille only two years ago, with great difficulty) I should be glad if you would send me the printed copy until my speed improves."

J. BLAKELY, Liverpool.

"The dots in the copy I received were very poor—in fact, many that should have been there simply did not exist, so that one had to guess them."

C. G. WILLIAMS, Hampstead.

"I would prefer to receive the type-printed copy, as the wife is just as interested in the doings of St. Dunstan's as myself. We wish, however, the best of luck to the new venture, and trust it will become as popular as the first."

J. W. CLARE, Brockenhurst.

"I have read the braille REVIEW, which I assure you was exceedingly well done. I should like same each month."

W. ROBINSON, Grantham.

"A fine idea for the fellows who cannot get the ordinary copy read for them."

A. TUCKER, Bristol.

"The ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW in braille is an excellent idea and fills a long-felt want. Those relatives and friends who have read aloud to us last-war St. Dunstaners for the last twenty-five or thirty years do not find it easy to read now. This is why I think most St. Dunstaners will welcome the REVIEW in braille."

J. E. DAVIES, Llandyssul.

"A word of appreciation for the braille REVIEW. Although I am a slow reader I am glad I learned braille. For many years I never touched a braille book, but it is an added pleasure as you get older. Many in my day gave braille a miss, but to newcomers I would say, by all means learn it."

E. JAMES, Darlington.

"I received with interest the braille REVIEW. My opinion is that it is not necessary, as surely most of the men can find someone who can spare the little time required to read to them the ink-print copy, and the braille paper (in view of the great shortage) would be better used for matters of permanent and more general interest."

A. T. BROOKS, Bournemouth.

"I certainly feel more in touch with St. Dunstan's affairs when I am able to read the REVIEW for myself."

PERCY WHITE, Leominster.

"The braille REVIEW is splendidly done by the good Edinburgh folk. I always look forward to the Chairman's Notes, and now I read with pleasure, though not a fast reader, all the varied doings of the present St. Dunstaners."

G. W. WRIGHT, Norwich.

"I fully appreciate the braille edition, which enables me to read at leisure the varied items; also I can turn back, as it were, to emphasise some particular passage. On the other side of the account, however, I feel very much that the printed version has a certain definite friendliness; also I am now speaking for my wife, for she feels equally that same great interest which that journal extends to us jointly. Whilst I appreciate very much the new braille edition, I feel I would not have it replace the ink-print copy."

A. ABRAM, Stockport.

"A great innovation—I heartily approve of it, and hope it will go on."

N. A. RAMSDEN, Oxford.

"To-day I have read, as for many years I have hoped I should some day read, the ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW in braille. I congratulate you—and all who assisted—on this welcome innovation."

C. MCINTOSH, Dumfries.

"It was a very pleasant surprise to receive a braille copy of the REVIEW on Wednesday; being able to read it myself was like reading a letter from a friend. I would recommend anybody to have patience to persevere learning braille. When I first started I was chasing dots all night long, and thought it impossible, but it comes to one gradually."

AGNES M. CLEWLOW, Winchester.

"I think the braille REVIEW a splendid number. I personally have always liked the Craigmillar braille; for men on manual work it is ideal, much to be preferred to the N.I.B. braille type, as used in 'Nuggets.' If the braille REVIEW is to become a permanent publication, then please omit my name from the mailing list for 'Nuggets.'"

W. E. BROOKS, Southampton.

From the above extracts it will be seen that the REVIEW has been well received, particularly by old St. Dunstaners. Among the new men at Church Stretton it has not proved so popular. As Miss Lloyd points out, most of the trainees have not yet arrived at the interpoint stage, and therefore have not attempted it. Miss Lloyd goes on: "As regards the braille dots, the Craigmillar dot is round and slightly larger than the standard and N.I.B. dot; opinions vary as to which is the easier to read. Some find the N.I.B. dot too pointed. Some of the material of the REVIEW is heavy going in braille, e.g., lists of names. Whereas a man can ask the reader to scan the letterpress for those articles and paragraphs which appeal to him, the brailist is wearied before he arrives at the 'In Memory' page."

Lastly, there is the verdict of the anonymous Church Stretton reader, who said: "THE REVIEW is dull enough when read form letter-print, but incomparably duller when in braille!"

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor, "St. Dunstan's Review"

DEAR SIR,

Sir Ian Fraser is frequently making comparisons between the old St. Dunstaner and the new on their ability and willingness to learn braille. I do not deny that the ratio of braille students amongst the present boys may be greater than in 1914-1918, but it must be remembered that the number of men trained during the years of the last war was very much greater than in the present conflict.

If the present improvement is maintained, then I contend that it's due, not to a higher standard of education or skill, but to the experience and traditions left behind by the early pioneers of St. Dunstan's. The early St. Dunstaner had no example to follow, and he may well have doubted his ability to overcome his handicap.

The present trainee, however, cannot question the wisdom of his teachers, for what they are striving to do has definitely been done before by blinded ex-Servicemen.

I remember that in my period of training, braille was always held to be the "ugly duckling" of one's existence. One spoke of it with baited breath, and a braille test assumed the proportions of an examination on Chinese. This was, of course, simply due to our lack of knowledge on the subject. I was trained by Miss Hamar Greenwood, and, being the understanding and capable teacher that she was, she soon put all my qualms to rest. I soon discovered that braille was not a subject introduced simply for the "highbrow" and "intelligentsia" of the trainees, but only another subject open to anyone with average common sense.

Sir Ian states that education has improved since our day, but my experience of mixing with the younger generation does not bear out this view. The recent debates in the House of Commons dealing with education have proved that, so far from improving, the standard of learning has fallen.

In any case, a higher education is not essential to the learning of braille. It is rather a matter of developing the hands, and unless one can do this all the education in the world will avail him nothing in this sphere.

On the braille teaching staff at present are at least four St. Dunstaners of the 1914-1918

vintage, and I suggest that they are responsible in no small measure for the improvement claimed by Sir Ian, although he hasn't so far admitted so.

I cannot close this letter without some reference to the Talking Book and its effect on braille reading.

In a letter published some time ago in the REVIEW, a correspondent informed Sir Ian "that the best way to improve one's braille is to get rid of your Talking Book." Now I don't happen to possess a Talking Book, but I'm sure that the writer of that letter was right. I read a lot of braille, and I'm sure that no Talking Book could fill the same place in my life. I know men who took the trouble to learn braille, then promptly forgot all about it when the Talking Book came along. But there is more to braille than simply reading books chosen by a Committee, who select what they consider to be the most suitable. There is the writing side of the matter to be considered. I therefore contend that the Talking Book is a form of entertainment only, but can never take the place of the "dots."

Considering the hundreds of men of the "old school" who have held down business and professional appointments for many years, using braille every day, I don't think the old St. Dunstaner has any cause for reproach.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully,
Guildford. R. E. LARCOMBE.

To the Editor, "St. Dunstan's Review"

DEAR SIR,

It was very nice to sit down and read our REVIEW in braille; let's hope it will continue.

All we need now is a political journal, in which the three big parties occupy an equal number of pages, and each tell us their policies, promises, views, etc. There are thousands of blind people who cannot get to political meetings or get papers read to them, and those who can often have to follow the views of an escort or friend. Apart from that, if the Sussex Association for the Deaf can put their small monthly magazine in braille for the benefit of a few deaf-blind in the county, surely the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Parties can publish a joint magazine.

What do other St. Dunstaners think?
Yours sincerely,
Southwick. G. FALLOWFIELD.

Church Stretton Notes

This month's Notes start with news of work—a change from all the usual accounts of play! Hearty congratulations to Duggie Parmenter on passing the first (and stiffest) part of his Matric. exam.: Logic and English—at Shrewsbury. To come home from a German prison camp, get engaged and married, and now this success, all in a few months—good going!

Our numbers have increased so much that, in order to fit in the extra lessons required, the mornings are now divided into four periods; the break is shortened, and work goes on till 12.15 p.m. The change-over meant headaches for organisers, but took place quite smoothly—no riots or breakdowns! Anyway, Dr. Newson is at hand now, established in his consulting room at Eaton House, just beyond the railway bridge, very handy for the Centre.

Don and Netta Baker are back in Shrewsbury. He helped Jock Steel last term with all the extra instruction, and will not be part-time in that Department and part-time helping Mr. Mahoney; for no one knows all the hours of devoted service *he* gives.

Special efforts have been made by the trainees themselves to raise a fund for Bill Rayton's young widow; proceeds from a dance, raffles, etc., amounted to £250—a practical token of everyone's sympathy.

Belmont has started weekly readings, which are popular; a homely fireside evening, with smokes and cups of tea, make a happy change from other attractions!

Anyone who listened to the football cup-tie, Wolverhampton *v.* Stoke, *may* have distinguished St. Dunstaners' cheers from our party of about twenty, to whom Mr. Carter gave a running commentary there. All felt the real thrill; it was followed by a sumptuous dinner (chicken, peche Melba and port wine), kindly provided by Mr. Gordon Pearce-Baker, truly a princely host. Lovely spring weather contributed to a first-class outing. Previously, seven trainees had been invited to the Scotland *v.* England International match at Villa Park, Birmingham.

The Musical Circle Committee is to be congratulated on completing another year's monthly meetings. The birthday was celebrated with a talk on "The Rise of the Orchestra," by Harold Gray.

Plays given in the Central Hall have included "Love in a Mist," by E.N.S.A., and "Poison Pen," by R.A.P.C.

On two occasions the Wolverhampton Forces Club invited twenty-six trainees to a show and dinner—"Quiet Week-end" at the Dudley Hippodrome, and "The Desert Song," at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. Kind hosts!

Another darts match has been played against the V.R.D. Unit at All Stretton, ten-a-side, playing in five pairs; they only won by three against two—good show!

Visiting Dance Bands have included the R.A.F., the R.A.O.C., and the K.S.L.I.

Among visiting entertainers, "Two-ton Tessie" surely bears the palm in "Little Red Riding-Hood," from the Theatre Royal, Birmingham; a posh pantomime in our own Central Hall; Teddy Foster's Band, from the Casino, Birmingham, and, another day, Renee Houston.

Dance invitations have been accepted to Welshpool Town Hall, to the British Legion at Dorrington, to the V.R.D. (A.T.S.) at Attingham, and to Shawbury.

Another St. Dunstan's informal Concert brought forward more new talent among trainees and staff; the guest was Dr. Trask, U.S.A., whom we already knew as a visiting "Brain."

Among trainees leaving are: Ivan Darling, as telephonist to the Barnet Gas and Water Co., Barnet; Tommy Bice for a week on Headquarter's switchboard prior to his employment at Tottenham Town Hall; Harry Petty to Shell-Mex, Hunslet, Leeds; Albert Vout to his old firm at Newcastle; and J. Cuadrado (Free French) for repatriation to his home in North Africa. Good luck to all!

Congratulations to the following, who have passed tests:

Typing.—P. Dent, M. Leigh, H. Greasley, M. Stanway, F. Bentley, H. Swain, A. Paulson, D. Gallagher, S. Fowler, J. E. F. Wright, P. Matthews.

Braille Reading (Interline).—J. White, F. Howes, C. Cooper, H. Norman.

Braille Reading (Moon Reading).—A. C. Walker.

Braille Reading (Interpoint).—R. Horsfield, J. Windsor.

Comforts Fund

The Comforts Fund has, since Christmas, sent gifts to 186 young St. Dunstaners on the Comforts Fund, but there are still many others for whom we are awaiting their present address.

Service Matters

On January 23rd, Mr. Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, was questioned about the steps to be taken to protect ex-Service men who contemplated acquiring small shops as a means of livelihood from unscrupulous sellers. He said that he had asked licensing committees not to grant licenses on a change of ownership, unless they were satisfied that there was a genuine goodwill attached to the business. This would, he hoped, go far to protect ex-Service men from being exploited.

Major Sir Brunel Cohen, National Treasurer of British Legion, at Birmingham on January 25th, the said that the Legion would not rest until a "stupid" pension regulation, a cause of hardship, was removed. He referred to a disabled airman who married. Because he was not married before he was wounded, his wife would get no allowances for any children that might be born. A man's pension, said Sir Brunel, was given him for his wounds; it was not supposed to be sufficient to keep a wife and bring up a family. If he was so badly handicapped that he was unable to earn a living, or if he could not work for a proper wage, the State must not deter him from having a wife and family.

Sir Ian Fraser, on January 27th, at the Annual General Meeting of the Warwickshire County British Legion, at Leamington Spa, said: "This is the last session of Parliament. Anything this Government is to do for ex-Service men must be done in the next nine months, or left undone so far as this Parliament is concerned. Ex-Servicemen have felt for five years in the Forces that they mattered, and that their job, however humble, mattered. They must not be allowed to lapse into cynical despair and feel that they are not wanted now. The Government has sound ideas on employment, but there must be some dislocation, and we want to know what is the intention of the Government in regard to a first preference for ex-Servicemen. Will they instruct local Labour Exchanges to keep ex-Servicemen's names on a separate register, so that their names are given to employers first? The Government have taken a step in the right direction by saying that there shall be priority for the disabled; but I ask for an extended preference for all men who have been out of civil life. With regard to the new Social Insurance scheme—I want to know whether all Service pensions, etc., will be disregarded when considering benefits? There will be one premium for all employed, who will receive full benefits. If disabled men pay full premiums, they must get full benefits."

On February 8th, Sir Ian Fraser asked the Minister of Pensions how much delay there is between the date when an ex-Service man or woman makes application for an appeal and the time when it is heard by the appeal tribunal.

The Minister of Pensions said it was not practicable in present circumstances to arrange for appeals to be dealt with as expeditiously as would be wished, but every endeavour was made to deal quickly with those cases in which an early decision was specially desirable.

Sir Ian Fraser: Is the Minister aware that the Chairman of the British Legion stated recently that the delay was sometimes between nine and eleven months?

Sir W. Womersley: I am aware that that statement has been made. I am not able to confirm it or deny it. All that I can say is that we give preference to those who are the most severely disabled, believing it is better for those who are really going to suffer most by reason of delay should have first turn.

The Minister of Labour gave details in the House of Commons, on February 15th, of a scheme for restarting men and women, now in the Forces, in business life. The scheme aims primarily at helping men and women who were in business or work on their own account before joining the Forces, Merchant Navy or Civil Defence services, and can show that they need help, beyond any war gratuities and post-war credit, in order to re-start their business, or resume their previous occupation on their own account. The scheme is also intended in suitable cases to help those disabled by war service to set up on their own for the first time.

Sir Ian Fraser, speaking at a meeting of the British Legion at Llandudno, on February 17th, said: "Blinded men, burned airmen, and other seriously disabled men are being discharged from the Armed Forces with unseemly haste. At present it is the practice to discharge men as soon as the Armed Forces have determined that he cannot return to duty. I raised this matter in Parliament with the three Service Ministers some time ago. I understand they are consulting about it, but it is time we had an answer. That answer ought clearly to be to give the men a full year, provided they are wholly or mainly in hospital."

In the House of Commons on February 27th, the Secretary of State for War announced:

I should perhaps make it clear that the Ministry of Pensions and not the Service Departments are generally responsible for the care of those who are disabled owing to war service and are unfit as a result for further service in the Forces. But I realise that the present rules governing discharge have given rise to complaint in the case of those who are discharged from the Service relatively soon. In some of these cases, hospital treatment may be needed almost indefinitely, and I am advised that it would often be impossible to define any stage of disability which could determine when the officer or man should be discharged from the Service. It has been decided, therefore, that the fairest way of dealing with these cases is to fix a minimum period. In future, no member of the Forces, whose in-patient treatment in a Service or E.M.S. hospital is not completed, will be discharged from the Service until at least eight calendar months, including 56 days' notice leave, have elapsed from the date of his first absence from duty on account of the disability.

Speaking at the Northern Area Conference of the British Legion, at York, on February 17th, Brig. General E. R. Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Legion, said he in no way shared the complacency of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said, regarding gratuities, that the aim of the Government had been to design a provision for resettlement, so as to cover all the needs of members of the Forces on their return to civil life. The Chancellor showed a lamentable want of appreciation of the needs of ex-Service people if he thought that these financial grants rounded off the Government's so-called comprehensive plan.

‘ In Memory ’

Private Bertie Toole, *Labour Corps*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Bertie Toole, of Notting Hill Gate. From February, 1916, until January, 1919, he served with the 720th Labour Corps, and he came to St. Dunstan's in March, 1925. For many years he did wool rug work, but was forced finally to give this up on account of his health, which, up to the time of his death at his home on February 3rd, was never good.

The funeral took place at Kensington Cemetery; among the flowers was a wreath from Sir Ian Fraser and his St. Dunstan's comrades.

Our very sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. Toole.

Private Frederick W. Thompson, *Labour Corps*

With very deep regret we record the death of F. W. Thompson, of Tavistock, one of our oldest St. Dunstaners. A regular soldier, he took part in the relief of General Gordon.

Re-enlisting in October, 1914, he was wounded in November, 1917, while serving with the Labour Corps in Mesopotamia. He came to St. Dunstan's in 1921, and was trained in netting, and he continued with this occupation for many years. For some time his health had not been good and he passed away at his home on February 7th. He would have been 81 had he lived two weeks longer.

The funeral took place at Tavistock Parish Church. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and members of Whitchurch British Legion acted as bearers. Among the many wreaths were those from Sir Ian Fraser and his comrades at St. Dunstan's, and from the British Legion. Mr. and Mrs. F. Mills represented St. Dunstan's, and General Lanpen and Captain England the Legion.

“Daddy” Thompson was twice married, and our very sincere sympathy goes out to his widow and to his daughter.

St. Dunstan's Bridge Club

The 8th Annual General Meeting of St. Dunstan's Bridge Club took place at Headquarters on Saturday, February 24th, when the President, Sir Ian Fraser, occupied the chair.

The Captain of the Club, H. Gover, reported that a satisfactory year's work had just been concluded. Eleven matches had been played, six of which had been won.

The Treasurer's report was equally satisfactory, the balance in hand being nearly doubled from last year; £10 13s. 8d. was the balance now in hand. A donation of three guineas was voted to the funds of St. Dunstan's Comforts Fund.

The new Officers were then appointed. After discussion, it was decided that the business of the Club should be in the hands of a Committee of three, and the following were duly elected: Secretary, N. Downs; Treasurer, P. Nuyens; Captain, R. P. Coles.

It was also decided that the League Tournament should be continued, that inter-club duplicate matches should take place, bridge drives, and also matches with outside clubs. Details of all events to be arranged by the Committee.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the new Captain expressed the appreciation of the Club for the splendid work done by the late Captain, who had been instrumental in starting the Club, and wished Mr. and Mrs. Gover all happiness in their new home by the sea.

Thanks were accorded to the Chairman for his presence.

Will all interested please note that all correspondence concerning the Bridge Club should be addressed to N. Downs, St. Dunstan's Headquarters, 9-11 Park Crescent, W.1, and we will be very glad to welcome any of our colleagues who are interested in the game.

R.P.C.

[As we go to press we hear that the Bridge Club, on Saturday, March 10th, played the first round of the Tournament Bridge Association Handicap, and won by 3,120. One hundred and eighteen teams are competing in this handicap, including some of the best players in the country. We wish our Club the best of luck.—ED.]

Births

DIMOND.—On February 17th, to the wife of W. J. Dimond, of East Grinstead, a daughter—Ethel Ann.

JUDD.—On March 10th, to the wife of W. Judd, of Hillingdon, a son.

FITZPATRICK.—On February 23rd, to the wife of B. Fitzpatrick, of Millom, a son—Michael John.

PECKETT.—To the wife of J. A. Peckett, of Manchester (new war St. Dunstaner), on March 8th, a son.

Marriages

GREGORY—RAYNER.—On March 7th, E. Gregory, of Aldham, near Colchester, to Miss Eunice Mary Rayner.

RICHARDS—SMITH.—On March 3rd, Elmer Richards, trainee, to Miss Edna Smith, of Bilston, Staffs.