

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

New Talking Book Machines

TWO thousand new Talking Book machines will be manufactured next year and delivery of a small number should begin by the middle of February, if all goes well. I am glad to be able to report this news, with the qualification "if all goes well," for there is now a considerable number of St. Dunstaners on a waiting list. There have been very great delays, indeed, due to the difficulty of getting any manufacturer to undertake the order. During the war years they were undertaking Service contracts, and during the past year they have been turning over to peace-time production and are most anxious to get into the popular radio market with long mass production runs, and have not been anxious to take a small specialised order like ours.

Now, however, I am glad to say that our Technical Committee has approved a model made by the Decca Gramophone Co., Ltd., and this firm is going out of its way to help us. So are the Garrard Engineering and Manufacturing Co., Ltd., the motor makers. I express my thanks to both of them.

The new machine is very similar to the pre-war Talking Book machines, but embodies certain improvements. For example, there are two valves instead of one, giving better quality and greater amplification. Then we are using a very small and light pick-up, which weighs only a fraction of the standard instrument and not only improves quality, but prevents wear on the records. This pick-up is fitted with a permanent sapphire needle, which should last many months if properly cared for. In order to protect the needle and also to give further protection to the records, it is hoped that the machine may also have a pick-up lifting and lowering device, which will enable the operator to put the needle down, or pick up without any risk of scratching the records.

The machine will cost about £12, or possibly a little less, and from a special fund there will be a subsidy on each machine of £3, so that they may be available to St. Dunstan's and the National Institute for the Blind at approximately £9 each. Roughly speaking, sixty per cent. of the machines are for the use of the civilian blind through the National Institute for the Blind, and forty per cent. are for the use of St. Dunstan's.

St. Dunstan's Offer

The Joint Sound Recording Committee has decided that all existing Talking Book machines must be recalled over a period because the heavy pick-ups with which they are fitted are wearing out our records unduly and costing a very great deal of money for replacement. It is best for our readers that we should insist upon this change so that we may get better reproduction in the future and also have more books. We are hoping shortly to

open two Recording Studios in a new technical building in place of the one Recording Studio we have had in a shed in my back garden since our original buildings were blitzed.

The plan is to allocate the new machines approximately half for replacement of old machines, starting from those which do the most damage, and the other half to new readers, who are on the waiting lists. As machines become available, we will write to groups of St. Dunstaners asking them to return their old machines and we will present them with a new one free of charge. Owing to the danger of leaving the old machines in circulation, we are obliged to insist that the new machine will not be presented unless the old one is returned.

We shall write first to those who have acoustic machines, that is, the machines which wind up mechanically without electricity, because they are the ones that do the most harm to our records. Every man who has an acoustic machine, will receive a letter asking him if he has electricity in his house and if the answer is "yes" the exchange will be made. Those who live in out of the way places and have no electricity will have to keep their acoustic machines for some time, until we are able to devise something better for them.

The new machines will only play records at twenty-four revolutions per minute for British Talking Book records and at thirty-three r.p.m. for American records. They will not play ordinary gramophone records. The reason for this is that a much more substantial and better designed motor can be made for this limited function, than if it has to run at the relatively fast speed of seventy-eight revolutions as well as at the slow speed of twenty-four. We have found that to try and cover this wide range with one motor has led to a lot of trouble due to excessive braking and overheating.

There are many St. Dunstaners, who use the talking book machine for playing ordinary records and they may like the opportunity of having one of the old instruments for this purpose. To meet this need we will—so far as labour, spare parts and facilities allow—pick out a proportion of the old machines that are returned to us and will over a period have them put into good order and the motors altered so that they will only run at ordinary record speed and not at the slow talking book speed. As and when these become available, at the rate of a small number each week, we will sell them to St. Dunstaners at the price of £2 10s. for an acoustic machine and £5 for an electric machine.

The final effect of the subsidy from the special fund and of this most generous offer on the part of St. Dunstan's is that during a period of about a year, every St. Dunstaner, who at present has a talking book machine, will have it replaced for a new one of better design and performance, free of charge. Concurrently, men on the waiting list will be able to secure new talking book machines at the additionally subsidised price of £5 each.

I strongly recommend every St. Dunstaner, who has got a talking book machine, and who wants one, to write to Horace Kerr at once and place an order with him, or confirm an existing order. During the past two or three years we have been blitzed and have moved and have had many staff changes and our list may have mistakes in it. That is why I am asking those who believe they are already on the list to confirm the fact.

My Braille Speed

Last week I happened to be reading, in braille, a detective story called "The Crime Philosopher," and on two occasions I timed my reading over ten pages. On the first occasion I read ten pages in thirty-seven minutes, which equals three minutes forty-two seconds per page. On the second occasion I read ten pages in thirty-five minutes, which equals three minutes thirty seconds per page. I notice that, writing in the REVIEW in February, 1943, I said that I was reading braille then at the rate of a page in five minutes. I have consciously tried over the last two or three years to increase my speed by the simple process of pressing myself forward and trying to cover the words just a little more quickly than is natural. Evidently this process has had its effect. I still read very slowly by comparison with many blind people, but I would be interested to know how my speed compares with that of typical St. Dunstaners. One thing is clear, namely, that you are not too old to continue learning, even though you are nearly fifty.

IAN FRASER.

Ink-print and Braille

One or two readers may have noticed that the ink-print and the braille editions of the REVIEW are sometimes slightly different. Last month a note from the Chairman on braille reading appeared in the braille issue which had to be held over until this month in the printed REVIEW, and there were other omissions in the braille issue which we have corrected this month.

While it is an easy matter to lift and hold over printed matter, it is much more difficult and costly to alter matter which has already been set up in braille. When, therefore, last minute changes or additions have to be made, it is sometimes impossible to make the corresponding changes in the braille issue.

Normally, however, the ink-print copy and the braille issue of the REVIEW are identical and great trouble is taken to make them so.

Braille Reading

Following the Chairman's Note on Braille Reading, G. A. Prince, of Newcastle, writes as follows:

I read with interest your remarks in the REVIEW on braille reading and beg to point out that your statement tends to be very misleading in view of the fact that a page of braille does not always contain the same number of lines. Braille Reading Tests are governed by the number of lines read in a given time, and not by the number of pages. From experience I have found that fiction books issued by the N.I.B. have eighteen lines on each page, whereas the REVIEW and the *Braille Science Journal* have twenty-eight lines on each. I find that I can read comfortably five lines a minute.

I have also found that when reading an exciting story my finger fairly tears along the lines and I forget all about such things as quotes and commas, etc. I get so wrapped up in the story that I forget everything else.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE A. PRINCE.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

SIR IAN comments:

"G. A. Prince's criticism of my statement is quite correct. But I was not claiming

any speed record. I was only commenting on an observation I happened to have made in my own reading which I thought would interest others and perhaps stimulate St. Dunstaners to increase their own speed by the process of consciously hurrying a bit. I knew that reading a detective tale like the *Crime Philosopher* in a Panda edition was much easier than test braille and that is why I mentioned the particular book by name. As G. A. Prince says, when reading a novel, one skips brackets, italics, capitals and all the other hurdles, and I often find that I slip names. Sometimes I will read a whole chapter of a book and not be aware at the end of it what the real name of the hero is. If I am reading *King Solomon's Mines*, he is just UM and about two inches, and I recognise him as such. I do not bother to read the whole name, UMSLOPOGAS. This is not, of course, test reading, but pleasure reading."

Some Braille Comparisons

Readers may be interested in the following brief facts about familiar braille books and magazines:

- (1) ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW in braille—each page contains 28 lines with an average of 203 words.
- (2) *World Digest*, 29 lines, 255 words.
- (3) *American Reader's Digest*, 32 lines, 256 words.
- (4) A Panda detective story, 29 lines, 248 words.

Commander Smyth Writes

GOODBYE MY FRIENDS,

During the past year I have found that my complex administrative job was becoming a burden to me—a new and unpleasant experience. Very reluctantly, I came to the conclusion that a younger and more vigorous man was needed, so I am retiring.

My relief, Mr. Mackay, who has been working with me for the past couple of months, has, in good measure, the qualities which I know to be necessary and I am sure that you will like him and rely on him.

It hurts me to leave you, but I know that your interests will be in good hands.

My wife, who is known to many of you, joins me in wishing you all the best of luck.

Christmas, '46.

A. D. D. SMYTH.

Fifty-five Years with the Fresh Air Fund

Mr. Kessell Retires

Mr. Ernest Kessell, C.B.E., honorary secretary of Pearson's Fresh Air Fund since the Fund was founded by Sir Arthur Pearson fifty-five years ago, has retired. He is the last survivor of the three original organisers, the third being Sir John Kirk. Sir Arthur died in 1921 and Sir John the following year, but "E.K.," as everyone knows him, remained to work unceasingly for the charity which was so dear to Sir Arthur.

Sir Neville Pearson, President of the Fresh Air Fund, in a tribute to "E.K.," writes:

"The F.A.F. was originated by my father and all through his life, it was his pet charity. For him, the creation of St. Dunstan's was a lifework telescoped into the space of a few years. But the F.A.F. was a pet which had lived with him practically throughout his business career. In the creation of both these enterprises, Ernest Kessell was staunchly at his right hand. And there he stayed. With Sir John Kirk of the Ragged School Union—later changed to the Shaftesbury Society—Kessell travelled through the length and breadth of the land, until committees were formed in more than forty different centres and the seeds were sown which were to bring happiness into the lives of nearly seven million children. His has been a kindly and noble work. Long may he be spared to give us the benefit of his counsel and advice."

Mr. Kessell has received letters from Their Majesties the King and Queen, and Queen Mary, upon his retirement. He is now seventy-nine, but looks only sixty, and is still an active golfer and gardener. The greenhouse which St. Dunstaners presented to him when he retired from his office of Treasurer in 1932, is still one of his most treasured possessions.

To Campers

Lieut. L. Fawcett and Chief Petty Officer Moore send their warmest thanks to 1946 Campers for the gifts of cigarette boxes which they have received *via* Mrs. Spurway. They add that they were proud to have the honour of being their hosts and look forward to joining them at the 1947 Camp if they can "make it."

St. Dunstaners in Train Smashes

Two St. Dunstaners were involved in two serious train accidents shortly after Christmas, but although they were greatly shaken, both fortunately escaped without serious injury.

On December 27th, Wally Thomas, a St. Dunstaner of the recent war who is deaf also, was on his way to London Headquarters, from Bournemouth, when the train was derailed. Although the engine and all twelve coaches left the rails, there were only two casualties. Wally was naturally shaken, but he continued his journey by road and arrived at Park Crescent cheery and smiling.

Three days later, Jock Duncan, of Hull, with Mrs. Duncan, were in the Hull to King's Cross express when it was over-run by another train from Leeds, several coaches being derailed. A number of passengers were injured, and Jock and his wife were both bruised by falling luggage, but they went on to London and the next day Jock travelled to West House, where he is now recuperating.

Sir Clutha Mackenzie Honoured

The congratulations of all St. Dunstaners will be extended to Sir Clutha Mackenzie, who has been awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal for public services in India. Sir Clutha has represented St. Dunstan's in India throughout the war and received a special instruction from the Government of India to report on blindness generally in that country.

The Kaiser-i-Hind Medal is a high honour which is made as a reward for any person, of either sex, who has rendered useful service in or for India. There are two classes, First Class, Gold Medal; Second Class, Silver Medal.

Special Notice

The Welfare Committee has decided to make reasonable grants in approved cases to help with the initial installation of electricity in rural areas. The scheme is intended particularly to help those who may have to meet substantial charges because their homes are some distance away from the mains. St. Dunstaners may ascertain details of the scheme and whether it applies to their individual case by writing to Mr. Mackay, Superintendent, Welfare Department.

Points from Letters

The Blinded German

"Every reader of the REVIEW must have experienced a feeling of pride and pleasure when they read of men in two such widely separated places as China and Germany, wishing to re-establish themselves as useful and productive citizens, turning to our organisation for help and guidance. China has for many years had the benefit and assistance of our Mission workers and doctors, so it is perhaps not strange for them to turn to us in their need: but surely no greater compliment could be paid not only to St. D.'s, but to the British in general (of whom we are only a cross section), that a member of a very recent enemy country should turn to us for assistance and advice in the hour of his need; it is a tribute to that spirit of fair play and forgiveness which the British are always ready to extend to a beaten foe."

T. ROGERS.

"I feel very strongly that some help should be given to him if at all possible. I think this would be a means of furthering better and closer friendship and understanding between us and our late adversaries. It is and always has been my sincerest wish that St. Dunstan's should become the one organisation throughout the whole world for all blinded ex-service men and women and that every country should have a St. Dunstan's Headquarters, to be governed by our own Headquarters in London."

F. J. GUISELEY.

"It is just sheer hypocrisy to talk of loving the Nazis. The Bible or any biblical adherent, after all the atrocities which have been showered on the world and the people of the blitzed areas, cannot possibly mean that we should show love and charity to the Nazis until they have at least shown by their actions that they are done with militarism for all time."

D. J. McLOUGHLIN.

"I was surprised at the attitude of my colleagues in wanting to welcome the blind German into our circle; don't they realise that the Germans look upon kindness as a form of weakness? I wonder if the Canadians who were captured at Dieppe would think the same as Mick McFarlane, and I would like to hear the opinion of the

'14-'18 men who lost sons in the 1939 war. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' are very fine words, but there is no need to invite the neighbour into your house, especially if the neighbour is German."

Ilford. JOCK MACFARLANE.

"I am afraid I have not got quite so much sympathy for the Hun. We cannot pity those who strived to put us out of existence and have brought nothing but misery and sadness to the world. If the Huns are to have advice, then let it be in their own country and not over these shores. St. Dunstan's is for British soldiers, sailors and airmen, blinded in both wars, and not for enemies."

Dalston, N.1. H. TOMKINSON.

Sir Ian's Reply

St. Dunstaners who have followed the correspondence arising out of the letter sent by the blinded German to our Chairman will be interested in the following letter which Sir Ian has now sent to Herr Friedrich Walter.

December 30th, 1946.

DEAR HERR WALTER,

I have consulted some of my friends about your letter of October 10th, and am now able to reply to you. I have published your letter in our magazine and three or four British blinded ex-service men will be pleased to exchange correspondence with you and I have given them your address. They will, no doubt, write you letters in typewriting, because at present the use of Braille for communication between England and Germany is forbidden. I have written to the Minister in charge of the British Zone asking him to allow the use of Braille.

I am sorry we cannot supply you with a Talking Book machine, partly because we are extremely short of machines and have a long waiting list ourselves, but also because by itself it would be useless to you personally. You could not make use of it unless you had a regular supply of records and we could not send these to Germany for the use of yourself or a very limited number of German blinded ex-servicemen who can understand the English language. I have recently asked the Minister in charge of the British Zone, in Parliament, to encourage the setting up in Germany of organisation for the welfare of the blind. When these are organised

we will be glad to send to an approved organisation for the German blind, or for German blinded soldiers, a sample Talking Book machine and a few records in the German language, so as to demonstrate the system and enable your people to understand the technique and start setting up the Talking Book Library of their own. You may be interested to know that before the War, I supplied a machine and some sample records to the German Blinded Soldiers Organisation for this purpose, but no doubt they are lost or have been destroyed.

I am writing to Herr Voigt of Hamburg, who is an old pre-war friend of mine, about this matter and of the Talking Book, and I will send him a copy of this letter. You may like to know that very soon after the end of the war in Europe, I wrote to Lord Montgomery, the Field Marshal who was then in charge of British Troops in Germany, giving him Herr Voigt's name and telling him that if he needed advice in caring for German blinded soldiers he could go to Herr Voigt. I urged him even at that early date to do something to help them.

As regards your request to come to England, I think this will have to wait for a little time, partly because St. Dunstan's is now very full up and partly, also, because it might be difficult to get permission. There is also the point that the war is such a recent event, that it would, I think, be wise to leave an interchange of visit for a little while until they could be undertaken with unanimous approval.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

IAN FRASER.

Other Points from Letters

I am glad to see that Sir Ian is still "pegging" away at the Minister of Pensions and I hope he will soon start on the Minister of Transport. As transport is going to be nationalised, perhaps he will succeed in getting us free passes on London buses without an escort, the same as in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Bradford and other cities.

JOCK MACFARLANE.

BRILLE WRITING

I used to write letters to my husband with the ordinary braille-writing machine, although I had very little knowledge of Braille.

I learned the alphabet, but had no knowledge of contractions.

My husband could always understand what I had written. Perhaps this information may encourage other wives to "try their hand" at braille-writing.

With the season's greetings to St. Dunstan's and all St. Dunstaners.

Yours sincerely,

Aberdeen. (Mrs.) H. J. HUTCHEON.

THE TWO WARS

I do not agree with Braithwaite's idea, since "Major" is an army rank and can be misunderstood and I don't like the "Minor" for the new boys. If we are to have any distinction I would suggest, "Brown, Sen." and "Brown, Jun."

Yours sincerely,

Southwick. GEO. FALLOWFIELD.

A Dog's Bravery

From R. Noble, of Middlesborough, comes an amazing story of a dog's intelligence and bravery.

Mrs. Noble was attending to the fire, when her skirt caught alight; not wanting to alarm her husband, she went quickly into the yard without telling him what had happened. The open air naturally fanned the flames and her clothes were well alight when their little terrier rushed at her and with its teeth dragged her burning garments off.

In the meantime, Noble, aware of heat, called to his wife, who returned to find the coconut matting ablaze. She dragged one end, the little dog seized the other, and between them they pulled it into the yard where it burnt itself out.

Mrs. Noble was very considerably shocked and badly scratched by the dog in its efforts to tear off her clothes, but, fortunately, not seriously injured.

National Laying Test

Position	Name	Test Score
1	T. Gregory	218
2	G. Jackson	189
3	T. M. Fisher	159
4	P. Holmes	129
5	C. McIntosh	122
6	D. McLaren	106
7	A. Jarvis	95
8	A. Chaffin	67
9	W. Alan Smith	38
10	M. Watson-Brown	26

Average per bird: Month, 11.65; To Date, 19.93.

Thirty Guineas in Prizes

Sir Ian Fraser has received from Mr. Sidney Horniblow, who writes under the name of David Mills, as a donation to St. Dunstan's, the sum of thirty guineas, being the fee which he received from *Good Housekeeping*, for an article which he recently wrote about our Chairman and St. Dunstan's. As this donation comes from a writer, Sir Ian has given it to the Editor to use for prize money or for paying for articles written by St. Dunstaners which are accepted for publication in this magazine.

The Editor is anxious that the REVIEW should reflect every aspect of St. Dunstan's life and nothing is more likely to achieve this object than contributions from St. Dunstaners themselves.

As the REVIEW has to be read aloud or read in braille, brevity is of the utmost importance. We will not, therefore, pay for copy according to its length, but until the gift is exhausted, we will pay one guinea for every contribution, whether it is an article or part of an article, or a poem, letter to the Editor, or even a short paragraph or comment, which is published. Routine news of St. Dunstaners and their families will not be paid for.

Only a few items will be paid for each month, so that the prize money will not be used up too quickly, and there will be plenty of time for overseas readers to make their contribution. Except in cases of exceptional merit, or interest, no St. Dunstaner can receive more than one prize in this particular feature.

Please be brief. The Editor will be more pleased to pay a guinea for one really good line than for fifty moderate ones.

Placements

J. Dear, with Messrs. Williams and Williams, Rock Ferry, as an assembler; L. J. MacKinnon, with Crystal Gears, Ltd., Wandsworth, as a capstan operator; H. Hocking, as a telephone operator with the Bacup Shoe Co., Bacup; G. S. Brooks, as a telephone operator with the Ministry of Transport, Bedford; Ron Smith, as a capstan operator with Messrs. T. W. Barfoot, Seaford; W. Shotton, on assembly work, with Standard Telephones, Ltd.; D. Juner, as a telephone operator with the Leicester Permanent Building Society; and John Taylor, with Newman Industries, Ltd., Yate, Bristol, on assembly.

The Chairman's Silver Jubilee

On December 12th, 1946, Sir Ian Fraser completed his twenty-fifth year as Chairman of St. Dunstan's, an event which was remembered by friends of St. Dunstan's throughout the Empire. Below are just a few of the many messages of congratulation which he received:

Very many congratulations on the completion of your 25 years' strenuous work as Chairman. —MATRON PAIN.

All good wishes and congratulations on your 25th anniversary as Chairman.

—WEST HOUSE.

Men, Staff and Matron of Blackpool Home congratulate you most heartily on your 25 years' work as Chairman of St. Dunstan's. We send united greetings and thanks.

Heartiest congratulations and sincere good wishes from St. Dunstaners in New Zealand on your Silver Jubilee anniversary as Chairman of St. Dunstan's. Your leadership has been an inspiration to us all. May you long be spared to carry the Torch that has brightened the lives of so many. —DONALD MCPHEE.

Heartiest congratulations, on behalf of Scottish St. Dunstaners and myself on your Silver Jubilee as Chairman. Long may you live to continue as same.

—A. G. FISHER.

The Physiotherapists in my area send you hearty congratulations on attaining your Silver Jubilee as Chairman of St. Dunstan's. —G. A. JOLLY, Blackpool.

Thirty Years Ago

From the "St. Dunstan's Review," January, 1917:

It had been intended on December 7th to have a debate on "Should Conscription be enforced in Ireland?" but the dramatic change of Government that took place just then caused the subject to be altered to, "Is Mr. Lloyd George the most desirable Premier?" Considerable knowledge of the position was displayed by the speakers and Curtis-Willson's brilliant wind-up will not soon be forgotten.

When put to the vote, the resolution was carried by 51 to 0, and the Chairman was instructed to send "a vote of the utmost confidence in Mr. Lloyd George's capacity to deal with the war in the most efficacious way."

Other News

A handless St. Dunstaner, who was injured while a prisoner in Japanese hands, Bill Griffiths, of Blackburn, has been granted a road haulage licence, and on January 10th, at Preston, a new 12-ton motor lorry and trailer was formally handed over to him at a little ceremony at which the Mayors of Preston and Blackburn were present. Sir Ian Fraser, who was on his way to his constituency of Lonsdale, was also present with Lady Fraser.

Bill's brother will do the driving and he will be in charge of the business side, including telephone orders and typewriting.

G. Fallowfield, of Southwick, has been made a life member of Shoreham Rowing Club in recognition of his good work in connection with various sports. He has been a member of the Club since 1932 although he no longer races.

At the Norfolk Chrysanthemum Show, H. Lane, of Babingley, won three first prizes, one second and two third prizes for assorted vegetables in the Special Section for blind gardeners.

J. Wood, of Grange-over-Sands, was also a prize winner in the Grange Allotment Association's recent competitions, and was among the chief prize winners in the Grange British Legion Christmas Handicaps. His game was threes and fives.

Mr. H. W. E. Dredge, Secretary of the British Legion Club, Yeovil, has brought to our notice the good work done by F. Westaway, of Yeovil. He recently made a mat which he presented to the Legion and which realised the sum of £10 5s. "Westaway," writes Mr. Dredge, "is loved and respected by everyone."

An Exhibition—the first ever to be staged by the British Legion—begins at the Central Hall, Westminster, London, on January 22nd, and will go on until February 1st. Every aspect of the Legion's work will be shown. In conjunction with the Exhibition, there is to be a series of reunions at which five thousand, five hundred ex-service men and women are expected to take part. The reunions are being presented as a good will gesture by the British Legion to the Old Comrades Associations of the Services.

Ovingdean Notes

On Friday, December 13th, Ovingdean held its first End of Term Concert since the return from Church Stretton. An ominous date, but we had placated the fates by having a trial run the previous night. Even so, our spirits were quelled by the failure of the electricity supply at 5.30, but rose again with the welcome return of the lights and power half an hour later. In spite of this setback, all was ready for the raising of the curtain at eight o'clock.

At Church Stretton the "Fol-de-Rols." At Ovingdean, to the rousing strains of "White Horse Inn," the curtain went up for the first time on the "Brytonics."

Then—welcome back to three of St. Dunstan's best known and best loved "stars"—Beryl Sleight, Gwen Obern, and Tiny Hill Brown, all of whom had made special journeys to be with us again.

St. Dunstan's own Orchestra followed, with vocals by Joan Walch and Norman Nolde, and a trumpet solo by Allan Hold; and then there came three items which were billed on the programme as the Term's Novelties, and were in fact, remarkable performances. Bob Bickley, in his first public performance on the saxophone; Johnny Harris on his trumpet; and Norman Nolde, in a grand solo on his saxophone after only eight weeks' tuition.

During the interval, Sir Ian introduced an unexpected visitor, Major Tufton Beamish, M.P. for Lewes, and, as he said, their own Parliamentary representative since Ovingdean came into the Lewes constituency. Major Beamish said he had not enjoyed a concert so much since he went to the Prince of Wales Theatre in 1938.

Then the concert went on. One feature in particular brought down the house. "St. Dunstan's Guy-ed" (all characters fictitious with no resemblance to living persons). Roars greeted a buxom matron and a bearded commandant as they entered on a tandem; "Dr. Gruesome" giving expert advice to a doubtful patient; "Miss McTapestry" taking the English class; and a sporting I.T.O. who had a good opening for a bookmaker's clerk.

Our Polish girl trainee, Zofia Kiaszek, gave a wonderfully impressive delivery of Saint Joan's speech by Bernard Shaw. We

have since heard that Zofia has been accepted as a student by the Royal College of Dramatic Art.

So on to the Yuletide Melodies, beautifully sung by St. Dunstan's Choir, and then the Grand Finale.

The big Lounge was crowded to capacity with an audience which included Lady (Arthur) Pearson, D.B.E., Sir Ian and Lady Fraser, Sir John and Lady Ellerman, and Air Commodore and Mrs. G. Bentley Dacre.

Sir Ian spoke for everybody when he expressed warm thanks to the three producers, Bill Jennings, Phillip Woods and Hedley Morton, and to St. Dunstaners and members of the staff taking part. He congratulated men and staff on a successful year of work done (and not done!), and in settling down so well in their new quarters, and he wished good luck and prosperity to all those who were leaving.

Test Results

Advanced Braille Reading.—Arthur Finney.

Typewriting.—R. Ward.

Music

During your training days many of you derived great pleasure from learning to play a musical instrument, singing, or some form of musical activity. A questionnaire and letters on this subject have recently been sent to many of you, but our music records are, unfortunately, incomplete, and there may be a few of you, although keenly interested in music, who did not receive these communications. We are very anxious to help every St. Dunstaner, old war or new war, who wishes to continue, or revive, his music lessons at home. Briefly, the scheme is this:—

1. Find a suitable teacher in your own home town area.
2. Arrange for 12 lessons.
3. Ask the teacher to send his bill direct to H.Q., and we will meet the cost.
4. Further instruction can be arranged, if desired, on completion of the initial course of twelve lessons.

Much time is wasted by forwarding your musical instruments to Ovingdean for minor repairs. In future, have them attended to locally by a reputable music dealer and we will refund the cost.

If you want any further help or advice do not hesitate to write to Mr. Mackay, Welfare Superintendent, at Headquarters.

Birmingham St. Dunstan's Club

On December 15th, the Birmingham St. Dunstan's Club held its Christmas Meeting, when twenty St. Dunstaners, with wives or escorts, Red Cross helpers and V.A.D.'s of camp days, Miss Fairhead, Hon. Secretary, Miss Gough, and Mr. Cooling, Hon. Treasurer, were present. Before tea, there were competitions and singing of old time tunes. The B.R.C.S. Hospitality Committee personally attended and provided a special meat tea and many other good things. There was then an entertainment and dance and Auld Lang Syne at 7 p.m.

The next meeting is on Sunday, Feb. 9th, and there will be another on Sunday, Mar. 9th.

Just a word about the history and activities of the Club.

Founded in 1921, regular monthly meetings were held till 1939. In the summer, the Club had monthly Sports meetings and in the winter, socials. In 1924, the first holiday camp was arranged. This gave members a chance to have a week's rowing in preparation for the Regatta at Putney. Teams were sent to compete at this and at field sports in London and Manchester against other St. Dunstan's clubs. In the winter, the members kept fit by competing in road walks in London and Manchester, and Birmingham had its own annual 15 miles Road Walk attended by St. Dunstaners from all over England.

From the time of the first walk, Messrs. W. W. Alexander, senior and junior, of the Birchfield Harriers, did everything for the Club. It was they who found us our best friends, Mr. Cooling and Mr. Murphy, of the Farcroft Hotel. What wonderful times we had at the Farcroft after the Walks.

Well, that was the past. What of the future? It lies with you of the younger generation. The organisation is there—the people to help—the interest. Won't you all come along and use the Club and get some sports and other things going again?

Don't forget the Holiday Camp Week still goes on—a much grander camp these days, because the Navy runs it for us. We should like to see more "young 'uns" at that, too. We can promise a week's fun that it would be difficult to get anywhere else. AVIS SPURWAY, *President*.

The Vicarage, Titchfield, Hants.

West House Notes

Our Christmas was very much saddened by the death of Billy Spencer who had been living with us for a long while and also the tragically sudden deaths of Bob Larcombe and Albert Waite who were to have spent Christmas with us.

Sunday, December 21st, was the occasion of the special Christmas Service held in our little Chapel, when solos were sung by Mrs. Mercer and Miss Ramsden, and carol part singing by our St. Dunstaners Bulley, Stevens, Northcott and Clevitt. The whole Service had been arranged and was conducted by Canon James, M.C. The Chapel was looking most attractive, the altar beautiful with the new cloth made by Sister Theresa, of St. Martha's Convent, and Christmas roses.

We started our festivities with a party on the 22nd, which was a huge success, even though a few of us did misunderstand the title of "Mixed Grill" and had dreams of steak and chips!!

A word of thanks here to Miss Reynolds, Mrs. Charlesworth, "Prim" and Orderly Howe, who formed our "Decorations Committee" and did a really magnificent job. They transformed a corner of the Conservatory into a "Regent's Park Corner," complete with a "magic pool" and "thatched cottage" (Lounge Sister's Office).

On Christmas Eve, W. A. Muggeridge produced his skit, "Snow White and the Seven Sisters." Well done, Author, Producer, Cast and Musicians!!

We were now well and truly in the Christmas spirit and on returning from Christmas Service at St. Anne's Church on the 25th, we were met, at precisely 11 a.m., by Santa Claus in the shape of H. Day. He appeared dragging his sleigh which was laden high with Christmas presents and we were each presented with a "Snowball" and a parcel. There we sat, with a glass of port in one hand—thanks to our old friends of the Grocers' Association—and the most wonderful Christmas gifts all around us. Just before lunch time we were delighted that Lady (Arthur) Pearson, Sir Neville and his wife came along to wish us all a Happy Christmas.

And now came the Christmas Dinner. There were almost a hundred of us sitting down. The tables were laden with plenty of good things to eat and drink, and

beautifully decorated. It was the good old traditional dinner with Turkey and Chestnut Stuffing, followed by Christmas Pudding and Rum Butter and the "Fraser Cup." Just how this was concocted, we have not been allowed to discover and understand it must remain a "West House secret."

A dance was arranged for Boxing Day, at which Matron Ouseley, in her own inimitable style, was our Commere, thus adding considerably to the fun.

On Saturday afternoon we were pleased to have many old friends at the Whist Drive for the local St. Dunstaners, and here we have an apology to make. Owing to the very big numbers we had to cater for over the Christmas, we were not able to give you local lads the "special tea" we had planned. We have, therefore, arranged for another Whist Drive, to take place on the afternoon of February 14th, and you will be receiving your invitations shortly.

A Quiz was arranged by Miss Melbourne for the evening of the 30th, at which Mr. John Hay was the Question Master. St. Dunstan's team consisted of Bob Young (Glasgow), Norman Cook, Bill Burnett and W. Muggeridge. The opposing team was made up of members of the Young Conservatives Association—it is sad to relate that they were definitely the winners!!

Our twelve day marathon had nearly reached its end. New Year's Eve Fancy Dress Ball was certainly the last word in gaiety. Among the guests we were delighted to welcome Commander and Mrs. Paul, Air Commodore and Mrs. Dacre, and Matron Lang from Park Crescent.

The costumes were really wonderful, The Committee of Judges had a difficult task in trying to decide the prize winners, but the lucky ones were:—

1st prize, Wally Thomas—as a V.A.D.
2nd „ Jimmy Fay—as Father Christmas.
3rd „ W. Abbott—as Mrs. Mop.

Consolation Prizes

W. Sheridan, J. Boyd, G. Taylor, A. Rahim, J. Steeley. Mrs. Malone presented the prizes.

Later in the evening, we were entertained by an ingenious "Tight Rope Act" the "star" performers being Air Commodore Dacre and Commander Paul. At midnight, we joined hands to sing "Auld Lang Syne" and toasted the New Year with our rum punch. House Steward Mason was our able and energetic M.C.

Blackpool Notes

This is Blackpool calling St. Dunstaners everywhere. New Year Greetings to one and all!!

On December 9th, our Chaplain again visited us to take the Memorial Service for our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson. It was a simple service, but all remembered the great work and fine example of Sir Arthur and each one still regrets his passing and reveres his memory.

Our Christmas festivities began on December 23rd, when a large party went to the Palace. On Christmas Eve we went along to the Opera House to enjoy Little Red Riding Hood, followed by a dance at the Home in the evening.

Then came Christmas Day! This was a "Super" day!

Everyone had a present from Santa off the Christmas Tree. The staff got mysterious looking parcels, and so did the wives. Each man was presented with a stocking containing a 10s. note, shaving soap, razor blades, sweets, cigarettes, matches, a tie, and either a pipe or beautiful leather wallet. A grand dinner was served at one o'clock, greatly enjoyed by all except Johnny, who had been out for a "quick one" which turned out to be a "sick one." The thanks of everyone go to Matron and the V.A.D.'s for the care they bestowed on the tables to make them look so lovely.

In the evening we had the marvellous party! Our old friend, Bill Hawketts, M.C.-ed us in his own inimitable way and the fun waxed fast and furious. Spot prize winners caused peals of laughter as they had to sing to get their prizes!! When a lady was singing "Tipperary" and the man "Pack Up Your Troubles" at the same time—well!! As I have remarked, the fun was fast and furious, so much so that for one moment it laid our physio-therapist and dispensary sister completely out. However, they were up at the count of one and the dance went on.

Boxing Day saw us dancing again, and on Friday the whole party went to a matinee at the Grand Theatre and to the Tower Restaurant for another grand dinner as guests of the Blackpool Rotary Club.

To wind up the revelries, Matron gave us a lovely party on New Year's Eve.

Good friends came forward and entertained us—songs by Mrs. Jones, Miss Pearl Yarwood, Mr. J. Walsh and the "Twins," not forgetting Professor Jolly and his much appreciated monologue. The high spot of the evening was the buffet supper, provided by Mr. and Mrs. Vernon, of the Bourne Hotel, and served by their daughters and staff. Home-made refreshment specially made by the Hotel Staff!

After supper—on with the dance, until a few minutes before midnight, when we all trooped out of the back door and serenaded Matron at the front door with carols. On the last stroke of midnight, Matron opened the door and extended a hearty New Year greeting to one and all, and read a prayer of thanks and a blessing on the House.

Finally, regaled with choc-ices and drinks, we had a sing-song until the early hours of 1947 and so home to bed.

Goodnight, fellow St. Dunstaners!

This is Blackpool closing down for this month.

ANON.

St. Dunstan's Bridge Club

The last event for 1946 took place on Saturday, December 14th, when a Bridge Drive was organised. There was quite a good attendance and the prizes were numerous and useful, ranging from rabbits to face-cream. An excellent tea was provided and there was a touch of Christmas about the whole proceedings.

It was with deep regret that we heard of the death of Albert Waite who passed away just before Christmas. Albert had been a member of the Club since its inception and had been a regular member of the team which had played at Harrogate for many years. Most Saturday afternoons he found his way to Park Crescent, and we shall miss him very much in the future. He has been in failing health for a long time, but nevertheless, his death came as a great shock to all of us. We express our very deep sympathy to his daughter, Muriel, in her sad bereavement.

R. P. COLES.

WEST HOUSE

A gift to Commander Paul which St. Dunstaners and West House Staff had subscribed, was sent to him with best wishes for the future on New Year's Day. We have received a very nice letter of appreciation from him.

"In Memory"

Corporal John Daniel Lee, 2nd Durham Light Infantry

We record with deep regret the death of J. D. Lee, of Sacriston.

He served with his regiment from November, 1914, and was wounded in France in July, 1918, coming to St. Dunstan's the same year. He was trained as a boot repairer and mat-maker, although he completed his training at home, and he carried on with this work for some years, but eventually was only able to do a little light netting. He had been ill for some weeks prior to his death, but he actually died in his own home.

The funeral took place at Sacriston Jubilee Methodist Church; he was laid to rest with full military honours, the coffin being draped with the Union Jack, and the bearers were men from his old regiment.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his wife and family.

Sergeant Robert E. Larcombe, Northumberland Fusiliers

It is with deep regret that we record the death of our telephonist, R. E. Larcombe, of South Harrow, which occurred at West House, Brighton, on December 22nd.

When he came to St. Dunstan's in October, 1923, he was trained as a telephonist and his first and only job was with the Cornhill Insurance Company. His close association with that company and the affection in which he was held, can best be described in the following tribute to him from Mr. Claude Wilson, the General Manager:

"When he came to us the staff was small and the work was light. As the company grew and as the staff increased, more and more work fell upon Larcombe, which he discharged with the utmost efficiency and outstanding courtesy. On the outbreak of war we evacuated to Guildford. Larcombe took an active part in organising a Concert Party which did much to provide pleasure to the staff compulsorily evacuated from their homes. His ability was outstanding. He became part of the organisation and his circle of friends extended beyond the staff. At all times during the past twenty years whenever I have picked up my telephone, Larcombe has been at the other end. I miss him very badly and in his death I have lost a loyal friend and colleague."

Larcombe had not been very well for some time, but it was hoped that a holiday at Brighton would help him to get back to health. The funeral took place at Brighton Cemetery, many St. Dunstaners from West House and the Brighton District attending.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Larcombe and her son.

Private Albert Waite, 20th Cheshire Regiment

With deepest regret we record the death, also, of Albert Waite, of Chelsea.

Albert Waite came to us in March, 1920, and having been trained in basket-making, carried on with this occupation until 1929 when he began training in telephony.

He was a great personality, full of quips and light of heart, but the death of his wife in 1928 and the tragic loss of his boy in an air crash in January, 1945, contributed greatly to a gradual breakdown in health and early in 1946, he was forced to give up telephony altogether.

It was arranged for him to spend Christmas at West House and he travelled down on December 20th. He was taken ill shortly afterwards and he died there on Christmas Eve.

Many Brighton comrades attended the funeral at Brighton Cemetery where he was laid to rest beside his friend, Larcombe.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his daughter, now married.

Births

COPELAND.—On December 18th, to the wife of L. Copeland, of Winton, Bournemouth, a daughter, Valerie.

COUPLAND.—On January 9th, to the wife of R. Coupland, of Hull, a daughter—Susan.

THEOBALD.—On December 31st, to the wife of R. Theobald, of Redhill, a daughter, Elizabeth.

VENESS.—On December 25th, to the wife of W. V. Veness, of Brighton, a son—Christopher John.

Marriages

COPE—EVANS.—On Dec. 22nd, H. Cope, of Stoke-on-Trent, to Miss Irene Evans.

LITTLEJOHN—BACK.—On January 3rd, D. Littlejohn, of Seaford, to Miss Marjorie Back, late of the Chairman's Office. Mr. C. E. Beaufoy, of Dover ("Grandpa" Beaufoy), uncle of the bride, gave her away.

SHEA—PEPPER.—On December 28th, W. F. Shea, of Liverpool, to Miss Joan Pepper.

House of Commons Branch, British Legion

Sir Ian Fraser has been re-elected Chairman of the House of Commons Branch of the British Legion. Sir Ian, at the branch annual meeting, intimated his intention not to seek re-election and proposed that the office should be held by members of the different parties in turn. Speaking on behalf of the Labour members, Captain G. H. C. Bing said while they accepted that principle, he was going to move that Sir Ian was the first and obvious choice under the new system.

Silver Wedding

Congratulations to:

Mr. & Mrs. A. James, New Eltham, Jan. 7.