

# ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

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For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

“LET us now praise famous men.” So says an ancient writer in the Apocrypha. All down the ages we have praised famous men, in national affairs, in the arts, in science, and in the leadership of commerce and labour. In our own organisation of St. Dunstan's we praise the outstanding ones who do unusually well or undertake new, interesting and adventurous things. And it is well that we should, for they blaze new trails for all of us.

But let us not forget to praise also the ordinary fellow who is just as blind, just as courageous, just as hard working. It is equally worthy of praise, and perhaps worthier still, to learn to read with your fingers if your fingers are stiff and insensitive, and if you never were much good at reading anyway. The work of the world is not all dramatic and interesting, and it is not everybody who can be a professional or a business man, or secure a higher appointment. The majority follow a less exacting but from some points of view no less skilled occupation. Skill is of many kinds, and what matters is not so much the nature of it as that it is developed to the highest pitch.

As the summer term draws to an end and larger numbers than usual are leaving the Training Centre, I think of those who have done well in every study, and congratulate them and wish them good luck in their future lives; their future is assured, but I think also of those who have found it particularly hard to adjust themselves to blindness, who are going out into the world not quite so sure of themselves, to face its many difficulties, and I congratulate them too on the tremendous progress they have made in solving their personal problems. I think of the saints and also of the sinners; St. Dunstan's includes all and all have enriched St. Dunstan's by their life and experience. The corporate life of St. Dunstan's and the Spirit of St. Dunstan's are the pride of the activities of all. Each one of us is his brother's keeper and we are a true brotherhood.

Often I think of the older St. Dunstaners, whose names and homes and occupations, whose wives and families, whose virtues and failings are so well known to me, as mine are to them. I think of the many things we have done together over thirty years, and I look forward to the future, when the passage of time has afforded me the opportunity of a similar intermittent knowledge of, and friendship with, increasing numbers of the men and women of the second war. This feeling will, I think, be shared by all the members of our world-wide St. Dunstan's family.

Lady Fraser and I are going this summer for a brief visit to the United States, where I have been asked to address the National Convention of the American Legion, and to Canada, where I shall meet the Dominion Council of the Canadian Legion, and also many

blinded sailors, soldiers and airmen of both wars. In addition to discussing views and experiences on matters relating to the welfare of blinded men and women in our two countries, I shall of course exchange many messages of goodwill between members of our organisation in the Old Country and our friends in Canada.

IAN FRASER.

### Burglary at Park Crescent

As many St. Dunstaners will have read in the Press, thieves broke into our Headquarters in Park Crescent during the night of July 8th, opened a safe, and stole £500.

The following letter appeared in the *Daily Mirror* on July 10th:—

#### Open Letter to Thief who Robbed the Blind

DEAR SIR,

When you decided to break into No. 10 Park Crescent, Regent's Park, you must have known it was the headquarters of that wonderful war charity for blinded Servicemen. The name is over the door, with its symbol, a burning torch.

You took £500 in notes and postal orders from the safe in the office. This money—it was for administrative purposes—was subscribed by people anxious to help the blind.

As it happens, St. Dunstan's—knowing human nature—insured against theft, so they will not lose a lot.

But you could not have known this. At the hostels where blind people stay near the scene of your theft they were talking about you last night. "A very shabby trick" was their verdict.

Yours,  
*Daily Mirror* Crime Reporter.

### Mrs. Bates in England

Mrs. E. Chadwick Bates has arrived in this country on a visit from South Africa. She will be here for some weeks, probably until the beginning of October, and looks forward to meeting in brief many old friends.

### Holiday Exchange

Would any St. Dunstaner living in the south like to exchange houses for a fortnight in August with F. Crabtree, 15 Hillcrest Avenue, Burniston Road, Scarborough?

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W. Trott, of Birmingham, has just had a small piece of shrapnel taken from the ring finger of his right hand.

### Canada's Grand Reunion

The first post-war Grand Reunion of Canadian blinded soldiers of both wars was held in Toronto from June 23rd to 28th. On the opening day Sir Ian Fraser sent a cable of good wishes from all St. Dunstaners at home.

### Reunions

The month's Reunions began with Maidstone, on June 16th, where the Mayor, Councillor S. J. Lyle, welcomed the guests to the town, and Lieut.-Col. C. Gordon Larking, National Chairman of the British Legion, was also present. At Oxford, on the 19th, the Mayor, Councillor E. A. Smewin, brought the City's greetings to St. Dunstaners, and Mr. W. H. T. Mardon, Vice-Chairman of the Oxfordshire Branch, represented the British Legion.

The Leicester meeting was on June 21st, Brighton on the 26th, and Guildford on the 28th. The Mayor of Brighton had intended to welcome St. Dunstaners there but was unable to do so owing to the illness of the Mayoress. The British Legion was represented by Wing Commander T. C. Burchell, Chairman of the Sussex Council. July began with the Colchester meeting on the 1st, where the Chairman of the Essex County Committee of the British Legion, Brigadier H. G. Seth-Smith, welcomed the guests. The Norwich meeting was on the following day, and here Capt. S. J. Pusinelli, Chairman of the Norfolk County Branch, gave a welcome on behalf of the Legion.

### Placements

T. J. Horne, of Kenley, takes over a tobacco, news and stationery business; G. Shed, of Hurstpierpoint, a tobacco, confectionery and stationery business; and W. Holmes, of Stonehouse, a tobacco and confectionery business. Ron Parsons, as a capstan operator, with Messrs. S. and J. R. Everett & Co., Ltd., Thornton Heath; E. Howarth, on leather work, with Messrs. J. & A. Hillman, Ltd., of Dudley.

### Camp, 1947

The Camp at Lee-on-Solent proved itself to be, as usual, a great success. We spent a week as guests of the Navy, who did everything in their power to give us seven days of complete entertainment.

Friday and Saturday were spent in settling down and finding our way around, though many of us did our settling down in the Wet Canteen. Sunday morning was taken up by a service at Titchfield, this being given by the Rev. Spurway, and was followed by beer on the Vicarage Lawn. In the evening we were successfully entertained by the Chief Petty Officers. A grand time was had by all on Monday evening, when a Garden Party was given by the Wrens at Heathfield House. On Tuesday and Wednesday there were parties given by the P.O.s in 32 and 23 Mess respectively. A party was given by the Women's Section, British Legion, on Thursday, and on Friday a farewell party was given by the ratings. Various entertainments during the earlier part of the days throughout the week included a tour of H.M.S. *Illustrious*; here we were first given tea by the Officers in the Ward Room, and then taken through the hangars and around the flight deck. Afternoon tea parties were also given by the Wrens, who produced their home-made cakes, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all. The Wrens at Edinburgh House also gave an afternoon party on Friday. Mrs. Spurway arranged morning sports and our grateful thanks go to her and her assistants who worked very hard to make the whole week a grand success.

Our greatest disappointment lay in the fact that only six of this war's boys attended the Camp, and being a young St. Dunstaner myself, I should like to express my heartfelt hope that next year's Camp will be supported by more of my younger colleagues.

It certainly is a grand life. B. BRIGHT.

### Successes

At the recent Musical Festival at Hove, N. McLeod Steel, of Hove, was awarded three first prizes, three seconds and a third for his compositions; Beryl Sleigh came first in two mezzo-soprano classes, and Joe Walch won first place in the diction test for singing, any age or voice.

### Grandfather

Sergt. Alan Nichols, of Hove.

### Musical Instruments for the One-Handed

The Rev. G. L. Treglown has been searching for an instrument, apart from a mouth organ, which could be played by a one-handed person, and he was put in touch with the famous Dolmetsch family, which has done splendid work in constructing old-time musical instruments. This firm advised him to try a sixteenth century wood-wind instrument known as a whittle, or three-hole pipe, which is played with one hand—either hand. The instrument, he says, is quite a pleasant one, not unlike a recorder, and one which he has found fairly simple to play.

Sir Ian Fraser passed on the suggestion to our Music Department at Ovingdean, but its director has reported that with our trainees at least, orchestral instruments for the modern type of music are far more popular; in fact, our men are not interested in the old-fashioned instruments.

The melo-phone has been found a great success with handless men, and has even ousted the trombone. The melo-phone is similar to a French horn, and can be held with the body; it is light in weight, and only requires one hand to play, and fingers can even be missing on this hand. The instrument has a rich deep tone, similar to the French horn, and can be played either in a dance band or a straight orchestra.

For those St. Dunstaners who may be interested in the sixteenth century instrument, the address of the makers is Arnold Dolmetsch, Ltd., Jesses, Haslemere, Surrey; it costs three guineas.

### Thirty Years Ago

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

"We have been very nearly in the wars ourselves at St. Dunstan's, what with day air raids, night alarms, and thunderstorms. We prefer the raids to the thunderstorms, because the former do us no harm, but we treat them with all good humour. All possible precautions have been taken by Captain Roberts against the raids, and everybody has his post and duty assigned; but we are all helpless against the deluges. Hill 60 was practically demolished by the storm on June 16th, and the floods in the cellars drove everybody upstairs. We got plenty of exercise running upstairs to escape the water and running downstairs to avoid the bombs."

### Australian Dinner

Australian St. Dunstaners, resident in England, had a Reunion Dinner at the Cafe Royal on June 23rd, on the occasion of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Lynch from Australia, who were the guests of honour. Joe Lynch came to England at the invitation of Sir Ian Fraser to study St. Dunstan's from all angles, and to make a full report of its many activities to the Commonwealth Government.

This has been accomplished and, on June 23rd, Sir Ian and Lady Fraser entertained the High Commissioner for Australia, the Hon. J. A. Beasley, and Mrs. Beasley, the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Norman R. Mighell, C.M.G., and Mrs. Mighell, Sir Neville and Lady Pearson, Air Commodore and Mrs. Dacre, and a goodly company of Australian St. Dunstaners and their wives, to bid farewell to the visitors on the eve of their departure.

In an interesting speech introducing the High Commissioner, Sir Neville Pearson spoke of Australia as he had recently seen it, and instilled his hearers with a real desire to pack up their troubles in old England and set out with Mr. and Mrs. Lynch for that great country. Mr. Beasley, in thanking Sir Neville, spoke with deep feeling of Sir Arthur Pearson's magnificent work, and referred with enthusiasm to his recent visit to the Training Centre at Ovingdean. His audience was warmed to hear of the deep gratitude and admiration felt by Australian people for Britain when she stood alone, and that this sentiment was as lively to-day, with Australia ready and willing to give to the Mother Country succour and co-operation of every kind.

In the short interval which followed Mr. Beasley's speech, the company had the pleasure of listening to songs sung by Beryl Sleight, St. Dunstan's first woman soldier.

The second half of the evening was memorable for Sir Ian's personal reminiscences of how authority at St. Dunstan's endeavoured to contend with the high-spirited and often astounding escapades of the Australian contingent who came to St. Dunstan's as a result of the first World War.

In introducing the guest of honour, Mr. Mighell, Deputy High Commissioner, and until recently Chairman of the Repatriation Committee in Australia, left no doubt in the minds of his hearers of the esteem

felt for Joe Lynch among all ex-service organisations in Australia, or of the thoroughness with which he tackled every problem concerning the welfare of the ex-servicemen in the Commonwealth. Joe Lynch replied in an entertaining and deeply moving speech in which he reflected the affection of Australian St. Dunstaners of the old war for St. Dunstan. Mr. Mighell said he favoured Australian blinded men coming to St. Dunstan's, and the High Commissioner, proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Ian Fraser at the end of the evening, confirmed that he would report in this sense to his Government.

Australian wine flowed in the drinking of the very good health of Mr. and Mrs. Lynch, and in the final toast, proposed by Mr. Beasley, to Sir Ian.

Others present at the party included Mr. Ewart Norris and Mrs. Norris, Commodore Harrison, Mr. A. Mackay, and St. Dunstaners G. Matrenin, L. Hoult, A. Cima, J. Jerome, A. J. Somervell, R. E. Jetson, J. S. Harrison, G. Merriman, W. J. Voss, and T. M. Fisher.

### Birmingham St. Dunstan's Club

The Club is going strong, and very happy monthly meetings are held at British Red Cross Headquarters in Harborne. Miss Fairhead is a most able and energetic hon. secretary, and organised a wonderful outing to Worcester on Sunday, June 14th. Club members and their wives and Red Cross helpers met at one o'clock for tea and sandwiches. The Red Cross Voluntary Car Service turned up in full force, collecting men from outlying districts en route, and the party, numbering 104, started off. Miss Gough joined the party at Worcester, with Messrs. Dennick and Sheridan. Then up the river by steamer and back to high tea in Worcester. After tea the party walked down to the old familiar meeting ground, the Worcester R.C., to be met by Mr. Tysoe. Some went sculling, some took part in sports, Mr. Cooling taking charge. A leisurely return to Birmingham, picnicking on the way, ended a most successful day—and a start, I feel sure, to much bigger attendances at such meetings.

A. SPURWAY,  
*President, Birmingham St. Dunstan's  
Sports and Social Club.*

### Letters to the Editor

*To the Editor.*

DEAR SIR,

I read with interest, but not enthusiasm, Sir Ian's remarks in the House, as reported in the REVIEW, concerning the old tag, pensions.

I say without enthusiasm because the pension bogey is like the Loch Ness Monster, it appears at odd intervals, attracts interest and then fades away.

What are the facts? The basic pension was £2 weekly in the '20's—it is now £2 5s. in the '40's—this increase taking place during the "reign" of a Labour Government.

At this rate of acceleration we may confidently expect another 5s. in the '60's—or maybe, by that time, the cost of living may not be quite so important to the boys of the Regent's Park days.

Yours without enthusiasm,  
Upper Walthamstow. H. M. STEEL.

*To the Editor,*

DEAR SIR,

May I be allowed to reply to E. Russell regarding the suggestion for the formation of a Branch of the British Legion within St. Dunstan's.

The Royal Charter makes necessary provisions for the establishment of a Branch, but also requires the necessary Officers and Committee. In view of the continuous movements, to and from West House, of very many St. Dunstaners, how would the stability of a Committee be achieved?

Secondly, should such a Committee be formed, it would be interesting to know the extent of their activities. As those members of the Legion who have served upon Committees know, the main work constitutes pension matters, employment and benevolence, all of which are administered by the various Departments of St. Dunstan's.

With regard to the social side, St. Dunstaners at West House are given every opportunity for entertainment, and, personally, I do not think the formation of any Branch within St. Dunstan's would serve any useful purpose.

I am not deprecating the British Legion, on the contrary I have always advocated that every St. Dunstaner should join the nearest Branch to his home.

Yours sincerely,  
Great Bookham. W. A. MUGGERIDGE.

*To the Editor,*

DEAR SIR,

A few months ago, after I had cooked my week-end meat, I put it back in the still warm gas oven, the meat on the top shelf, and a tin filled with gravy on the bottom shelf, with the door slightly open.

I called my young puppy to give him some scraps and when I could not find him, I began to search. On going to have a look under the bath I saw his head sticking out of the gas oven. He was lying in the now empty gravy tin, having had a lovely warm meal, nice and comfortable in the warm oven, but, no doubt, bemoaning the fact that he just could not get at that juicy piece of meat above him.

Yours sincerely,  
MARGARET POTTS.  
Macclesfield.

### Great Grandfathers Forward!

E. Greenwood, of Enfield, became a great-grandfather this year and wonders how many other St. Dunstaners of his generation are keeping pace with him, or have outstripped him in this respect.

### Young St. Dunstaners

Raymond Jenkins, Porth, Glamorgan, has passed his B.Sc. examination with First Class Honours in Chemistry.

Andrew Young has passed his Anatomy Examination for the degrees of M.B. and Ch.B. at Glasgow University.

Martin Jordan, Bellerby, who is only 13, has been chosen for the village cricket team—composed of all men.

Paddy Coleman had two pictures hung in the recent exhibition at Northampton Art Gallery.

### Braille

What would you like to do, my son,  
What would you like to do?  
I'd like to stand where the distant land  
Is a smudge 'twixt the sea and the sky;  
Where hills and caves in the great green  
waves  
White flecked with foam ride by.  
And what are you going to do, my son,  
What are you going to do?  
I'm going to feel the tug of the wheel  
And the shudder of plunging ships,  
The morning star, and the harbour bar  
In the touch of my finger tips.

G.M.

### Blindness in Malaya

On the invitation of the Governments of the Malayan Union and Singapore, I have spent a short time here discussing with the newly-created Social Welfare Departments and with the Malayan Union Social Welfare Council, the question of setting up a blind welfare service, and the Government has now announced its intention to do so. It has decided to appoint Major D. R. Bridges as Adviser on Blind Welfare. He spent part of his boyhood in Malaya where his father was in the Medical Service. Major Bridges is a soldier by profession and was an officer of the 7th Gurkha Rifles. He was blinded in action in Burma early in 1945 and, after taking training in St. Dunstan's in England, has been on the staff of St. Dunstan's Training Centre in India.

Following the general rule throughout Asia, it is apparent that in the humid, green and beautiful land of Malaya, the incidence of blindness is far lower than in these countries where long periods of dry, intensely hot weather are experienced and where the heat, glare, dust and flies impose a heavy strain on the eye and its mechanism. Judging from such slender figures as are available and from the incidence to be looked for, under the conditions existing in Malaya, it is estimated that the blind population numbers between 7,000 and 8,000, *i.e.*, about 1.25 per 1,000 of the population. The impression is gained, too, that the ratio is highest in the Chinese community, due possibly to the great prevalence of trachoma and smallpox in China, whence many of them are recent immigrants. Probably blindness is next highest among the Indians, and at its lowest in the indigenous Malays.

Excellent work has been done for a number of years in the education of a small group of children in the St. Nicholas Church of England School for the blind in Penang. Though as yet it has been scarcely developed into a substantial unit. Two groups of blind men in Decrepits Homes in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, under the urge of mind and body for something with which to fill the long dark hours, have themselves built up small basket-making enterprises with distinct commercial success. Such are the beginnings of blind welfare in Malaya; and it is hoped that the Government's decision

will soon open up a wide field of usefulness and happiness for the blind of this pleasant tropic land. There was one young Chinese seen during my brief stay, to whom we hope this may specially apply. The Japanese had inflicted water torture upon him and had beaten him about the head until he had become totally blind.

CLUTHA MACKENZIE.

### Plastic Thrills

May I be permitted to parody an old, old maxim? "One blob of plastic makes a Sunny Jim." If you are thinking of indulging in one of the plastic glamour eyes, don't pay heed to tales told in lounges at our Holiday Homes; or at No. 8 or 10 P.C. If you have two sockets, and have never worn glass eyes since your own left you, it is not true that the plastic-eyes surgeon inserts a blob of dynamite under your eyelid and then taps it with a hammer to get it open. If you have one eyeball and one socket you DO NOT have to leave your eyeball with the surgeon overnight that he might make another similar. It is not true. And neither is it true that he scrubs, scrapes and peels your eyeball before he puts it back so that it shall look as pretty as the new one. It is true that you sit in a chair with a three inch nail protruding from your socket. But the surgeon knocks the nail into some wood before he puts it into your socket; you don't feel him banging it with a hammer at all. Don't give room in your mind to the tale that Orderly Guy takes you to Shortlands trailing behind him like a string of kids. He doesn't. You travel by taxi and train both ways. The third day you get your new eye. It is a perfect facsimile, really symmetrical, and truly centred, and you don't look so boss-eyed as hitherto. You simply cannot wear two plastic left eyes at the same time—as many poor fellows have done with glass ones—because plastic eyes are a perfect fit and just will not work on the double-shuffle principle. Also they last a lifetime—always shiny. The only flaw is that you cannot hear any better with them than you could before you had them. But what compensation! When folk see you walking around they declare at once that the world is looking nicer with the addition of your plastic glamour eye.

Southampton.

W. E. BROOKES.

### An Australian looks at St. Dunstan's

P. J. Lynch, C.B.E., President of the Australian Blinded Soldiers' Association, has been visiting this country to discuss with St. Dunstan's the offer which has been made to the Australian Government to welcome as our guests any blinded members of the Australian Forces who wish to come to St. Dunstan's for a period of training.

Joe Lynch, as we all know him, was at St. Dunstan's in the first World War, and one of the most interesting aspects of his visit here now has been the comparison of the training methods which he knew in 1915 with those which are carried on now—training which has been extended and improved upon in the light of many years' experience and constant research.

We asked our St. Dunstaner for some impressions and he said:

"After many discussions with Sir Ian Fraser and every head of department, and after visiting the Training Centre at Ovingdean and attending meetings of the Welfare Committee—in fact, after studying every phase of St. Dunstan's work—I must say that I am profoundly impressed with St. Dunstan's organisation. The past few weeks have been a real education to me. I thought I knew everything that was necessary of training, settlement and welfare, but I acknowledge that I was greatly mistaken. My only regret is that I did not come here and see for myself much earlier.

The thing which has impressed me most, I suppose, is the astounding variety of occupations which St. Dunstaners are following now, and which have been made possible by the men's own initiative and desire to work, coupled with the training and practical follow-up by St. Dunstan's, which helps in every direction to keep him happy and contented.

Training technique has undergone a considerable change from that of my day, and the years have produced a fund of knowledge which is being applied to the war-blinded of to-day.

There is still poultry farming for the man who likes an open air life, and I see that, added to the normal training now, is instruction in pig-keeping and other small livestock, as well as the growing of vegetables and fruit.

In Australia I have often heard it said

that the blind cannot successfully handle physiotherapeutic electrical apparatus, but my opinion, after contact with trained blinded masseurs whom I have met during my visit is that it is entirely the contrary. The training for physiotherapy is long and arduous, but when St. Dunstan's trainees finally qualify, it seems that many of them outshine their sighted colleagues.

The training in telephony is as efficient as it always was, and I am not surprised that the demand for your telephonists is far greater than the supply.

The new methods in shop-keeping have interested me. The system by which St. Dunstan's remains the owner of the shop, with the net profit earned going to the shop-keeper himself, is an excellent incentive, particularly as the St. Dunstaner has the opportunity of becoming sole owner later on, when the shop has paid its way.

Boot-repairing training has changed since I was at St. Dunstan's. Then the trained man returned to his own home and carried on alone; now he is employed at one of St. Dunstan's boot repair depots, where he has the advantage of the company of other men and a sighted manager.

One result of the recent war has been the training of St. Dunstaners for industry. Like boot-repairing, factory work brings to the blinded man the pleasure of working in congenial surroundings and company. The care which goes to the choice of a particular job for an individual man, and the fact that when the job has been found, he is able to carry on that work in St. Dunstan's workshops before he goes to his new employer greatly impressed me.

So far I have only mentioned some of the trades and occupations which St. Dunstan's teaches, but I have been amazed at the number of men who have been able to return to their pre-war occupations, or who have shown a particular leaning towards a special profession. Here again St. Dunstan's has given them every possible training and assistance.

Handicrafts are pretty much the same as they were in my day, except that their purpose now is to accustom a man to the use of his hands, rather than for him to take them up as an occupation. Weaving and leather-work has been added to basket-making, netting, wool-rug making, etc., and make profitable sidelines.

When I was at St. Dunstan's we were tremendously keen on all sports—dancing, swimming, walking, and particularly rowing. We were lucky in having Regent's Park lake near at hand. All the sports and indoor pastimes which we enjoyed are there for the younger generation, but now they have added horse-riding, fencing and darts to the long list.

The greatest thing arising out of war is the spirit of comradeship, and this was never more evident than in that great comradeship which I have found at St. Dunstan's.

I have told Sir Ian Fraser of what we are doing for our men in Australia, the form training is taking and what has been done in placing them in employment; there are a number of difficulties, but Sir Ian is anxious to place the whole of St. Dunstan's facilities at the Australian Government's disposal, so that the Australian war-blinded can have the same chance in life as their brothers in other parts of the Empire.

I look forward to seeing that hope fulfilled."

In a farewell personal message to Sir Ian, Joe said:—

"From the point of view of an old St. Dunstaner with thirty years of continuous association with welfare work for and on behalf of the war-blinded, I can truthfully say that I cannot find any fault with any part of your organisation, and in view of the trying conditions with which your organisation has to contend, I feel you are all doing a noble work of which you should be quite justly proud. Therefore, on the eve of my departure home, the thought which is greatest in my mind is that of special gratitude to you and to all with whom I have had the honour of contacting—each and every one seems to be thoroughly imbued with desire to help, to give all the information and assistance that I require.

To write and thank each one personally would be a task occupying more time than I have now at my disposal, so I feel that in expressing my very best thanks and sincere appreciation to you, as Chairman of St. Dunstan's, I know everyone will feel that I am truly grateful to them for all they have done for me.

I tender you and Lady Fraser, your splendid staff, and all St. Dunstaners my warmest wishes for greater success, and the blessings of Almighty God upon you and St. Dunstan's." P. J. LYNCH.

## Ovingdean Notes

Among numerous visitors during June we have been honoured to receive the High Commissioner of Australia and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Beasley, and the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. and Mrs. Mighell; the President of the Syrian Red Cross, Madam el Abed Pasha; the Chairman of the British Legion, Lt.-Col. C. Gordon Larking, with thirteen members of the National Executive Council, which party also included Brigadier Strutt and Mr. Eric Millhouse, K.C. (Australian delegates).

Leslie Laurence Productions have spent several days shooting scenes to incorporate some of St. Dunstan's activities, called "And So To Work," which will be publicly shown in due course.

The Inter-Dormitory "Quiz" Final had an exciting finish—Dormitory 2 winning from Dormitory 1 by one point. Scores: Dormitory 2, 30 points; Dormitory 1, 29 points.

The "14—18" Club is still going strong, with a membership of twenty-three. Activities during the month included an invitation to a Stag Party at the Petty Officers' Mess, R.N.B., Portsmouth, accompanied by ex-naval trainees in residence at Ovingdean.

On June 4th the Veterans' Club paid a visit to Arundel Castle. The weather was just right and members of the party were in the right mood for exploring, even to making the hazardous climb up the very narrow and winding stair to the Keep.

Saturday, June 7th, dawned cloudy, with pouring rain, when a party of fifty men set out for the Derby in the coach; however, the weather was kind eventually and everybody had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Another Dinner and Dance was given by Mr. Cheeseman at the Savoy Cafe, on June 12th. During the evening Mr. Charles Germaine and Miss Winifred Harris entertained.

The next day a party of trainees and escorts went for an evening outing to Alfriston. A halt was made at the "Smugglers' Arms," where local people made them very welcome. After a few games of darts and a stroll round the village the party arrived back at Ovingdean at 10.30 p.m.

The mid-term Dance on Monday, June 16th, was a very happy event; dancing

continued until 11 p.m. Mr. Bert Martin's Young Ladies gave a floor show during the interval. Delicious "eats" were provided, with an unlimited supply of ice cream.

Our Play-Reading still goes on each month with great success, the June addition being "Fresh Fields," by Ivor Novello. We have come a long way since the Play-Reading at Longmynd, but it is none the less popular.

Congratulations to Beryl Sleight, Joe Walch and J. McLeod Steel upon their successes in Brighton's Musical Festival.

*Footnote—*

Visitor, having been shown round St. Dunstan's, and duly impressed by the skill of the trainees, talks to a trainee in the lounge and says how wonderful she thinks they all are. *Trainee*: "Oh, it's easy when you know how—I even ride a bicycle." "Ride a bicycle. Goodness me! How do you manage in traffic?" "Oh," replies the trainee, "I use braille handle-bars!"

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We are happy to announce that Miss Sheila Clowsley, who is well-known to the many visitors to Ovingdean, is engaged to Mr. Anthony Roberts, and we all wish her the very best of happiness.

★ ★ ★

## Test Results

Avenue Road

Braille Writing.—George Reed.

## Holiday in Switzerland

The name "Golden Arrow" given to the famous Continental Boat Train, is well chosen. It suggests a wonderful holiday on the Continent. To be actually sitting in the "Golden Arrow" in company with fourteen comrades and feel the train glide smoothly out of Victoria Station gave me—and I have no doubt the others of our party—a terrific thrill. We had started on our holiday in Switzerland.

From the "Golden Arrow" to the cross-Channel steamer, from the cross-Channel steamer to the special Red Cross Coach attached to the Paris train, we were soon in Paris. The short time spent in France's capital was typically continental. It was May Day and, as is the custom on the Fete Day, we were showered with lilies of the valley. The following day we arrived in Switzerland, the whole journey having been

made smooth for us by the unobtrusive care of the British, French and Swiss Red Cross. We were met at Lausanne by the Chairman of the Swiss Red Cross and taken to the Villa on the edge of Lake Geneva at Lausanne, where we were to stay.

Our first day was spent in a delightful coach trip around Lake Geneva and a visit to the Chateau de Chillon. Sunday we spent quietly, and I was happy to "stay put" in the comfort of our villa. In the evening came an invitation from the Mayor of Preverenges for myself and another fellow to visit him, and we were received with the inimitable hospitality of the Swiss.

Money is necessary—oh! so necessary—and the following day saw me cashing a cheque in Lausanne and then enjoying the hospitality of a friend of Cyril (my escort), who gave us dinner at her flat. It would be unfair to detail the dinner—I had forgotten that such a meal could still be served!

The next day we had a most enjoyable steamer trip across the lake to the French border town of St. Gidoph, where we were permitted to cross the border into France for a few moments, receiving a "smashing" salute from the Guards. The evening brought us a new experience, delightful in its simplicity and charming in its courtesy; when having a drink in one of the inns, some of the Swiss men greeted us by kissing us on both cheeks!

On the Wednesday I lazed in the sun while the other chaps went on a trip to the mountains; the wild flowers are beautiful at this time of year. In the afternoon there was a small reception in the Rose Garden, and among the guests was Sir Archibald Macindoe, who was delighted to see the tan we had acquired in a few days.

The living industry in Switzerland is watch and clock-making, so that it was with the greatest interest that two days later we were taken over a big watch factory, where every stage of the manufacture was excellently explained and demonstrated to us.

On the following Sunday I rested, our previous night's frivolity at a Students' Ball at the Lausanne Palace having terminated at 5.30 a.m., with us catching the milk train home.

So the days passed. A visit to Gruyere, home of the famous cheese; to the Nestlé factory, with samples of every type of chocolate made there; Saturday, May 17th:

Object Lausanne. Target, a pleasant inn. Objective reached. Target attacked successfully. Return journey, no cloud.

The lovely, lazy days went by—but not all of them lazy, if you include mountain climbing with the aid of a cable car; a two-day Gymkhana, and another visit to another cheese factory, and by coach to the famous St. Bernard Pass, with snow 12 feet deep in parts.

Thursday, June 5th, and our last day—a lazy day in preparation for the night's farewell party, which lasted into the small hours.

My diary ends here. It is a little scrappy, but one cannot enjoy such hospitality as was shown to us and keep a full diary.

DICKY RICHARDSON.

### West House Notes

June opened with a swing when, on the 4th, men from West House and those living in Brighton and district were once again the guests of the Brighton, Hove and District Grocers' Association. That invitation alone was an assurance of a grand time and this, the Annual Outing, was no exception to that golden rule. Everyone arrived back at West House at about ten o'clock, just a little weary but all having enjoyed the day immensely.

The next week was just one long rush. On the 7th a record number set off by coach for the Derby at 9.30 a.m., each armed with a packed lunch-box and enough cash to see us through the day's racing. On our return, the lunch boxes were empty and so, we regret, were most of our pockets! Even so, it was a wonderful day.

It has indeed been a month for the racing enthusiasts at Brighton. Following close upon the Derby came two days' racing at Lewes and two days at Brighton. The weather, fortunately, was in our favour, and we all had a good time—whichever way the luck ran!

The picnics, started earlier this year, have become quite a popular feature, and we have been bowling away over the Downs at least twice a week. In the evenings we have been as keen as ever to visit the Brighton theatres, and there have been the usual whist drives, darts and domino matches, and dances in the House.

The Brighton, Hove and District and the Southdown Omnibus Companies took a large part on their Annual Outing on June 25th. It was a perfect day and went

with all the gusto we have come to associate with those Annual Outings. We cannot thank our friends enough for all these years of tip-top outings.

We are hoping to arrange a "Sports Week" in August for men staying at West House and those living in and around Brighton. Unfortunately, plans are not sufficiently advanced to let you have details at present, but we will be circularising local St. Dunstaners in due course and hope many of them will take part in the events planned.

Back again next month!

### The Grocers' Outing

The day that we, the men of West House and the locals, or Hungry Hundreds, had been looking forward to arrived with a very wet morning, but despondency departed with the joint arrival of a brilliant sun and the coaches for the Annual Summer Outing which the Grocers' Federation have given us for more years than most of us like to remember. About two hundred and fifty men and escorts left Portland Place on June 4th, and travelled through the beauty spots of West Sussex.

En route we passed the Devil's Dyke; fortunately he was not at home so we lost none of our party. Down the hill through Steyning and Hassocks, on we went. Amberley, the pride of Sussex, then Arundel slipped past, and we arrived at our destination, Littlehampton, and tea. After our enjoyable ride, the tea was indeed welcome, and many declined active pastimes during the two hours at our disposal before the beer was due to be shifted. One of the chief attractions which Littlehampton has to offer is Butlin's Amusement Park; strolling through I noticed two tiny men replaying a game they played half a century ago. They were endeavouring to catch bubbles, and their success was rewarded with a prize instead of the scolding of their mothers. Another candidate must have had one of the cheapest drunks in his life, for his reeling and spinning head after a trip on the roundabout cost very little. We left the Amusement Park, with the ladies carrying their prizes, and partook of refreshments while Tiny supplied the entertainment with his knick knacks. The beer was very good, but judge my horror when I was told that Miss Morley would have to return some of the beer to the

brewery since it was not required! Surely such a thing had never occurred at a St. Dunstan's Outing!

TOM DICKINSON.

### My Work in India

(Canon W. G. Speight is a St. Dunstaner who for twenty-eight years has been the head of the School for the Blind at Palamcottah, India. Now he has returned to England to take up a living in Worcestershire, and at our request he has written the following most interesting article on his work in India.—Ed.)

Twenty-eight years is a long time, and to cover so much ground in the space of a single short article is a feat quite beyond my powers. I hope therefore that the Editor will be charitable and not wield the blue pencil too ruthlessly.

The reader with an enquiring mind will probably want to know how I came to find myself in India at all, especially when it is known that I first settled down to work as a poultry farmer.

Well, to be quite frank, that work did not satisfy me at all. I don't mean that I despise that very laudable occupation. I rather suspect that the fowls despised me. At any rate they did not seem to put their backs into the job for which they were intended, and my best efforts to induce them to do so met with only mediocre results.

For my own part, having become definitely interested in religion, my inclination turned more and more towards the church, not as a profession but as a definite vocation. I therefore approached the authorities with a view to being trained for the Ministry, but the path was strewn with obstacles and it was many years before that part of my ambition was fulfilled. At the same time I felt the urge to do whatever I could to help others who laboured under the handicap of blindness. So that, when I heard that the Church Missionary Society wanted someone to take charge of their School for the Blind at Palamcottah, South India, I felt that here was an opportunity of realising, at least in part, the first of my ambitions, and completely fulfilling the second. I applied for the post at once and was accepted. That was about the middle of 1918, but I did not leave for India until March of the following year. India gave me something more than

a warm welcome for, as many of you know from experience, Bombay in April can be unspeakably hot. However, I went to the lovely hill station of Ootacamund for the first few weeks and reached Palamcottah in June.

There I received a warm welcome of a very different nature. This time it was from the boys and girls in the school. I was immensely impressed, and also a little scared by the size of the task I had undertaken. I found a going concern with about one hundred pupils of both sexes, and ranging in age from three to forty or more years. A word about the history of the school. It really began with one blind boy about the year 1888, but the first class was officially opened in 1890, which makes it the second oldest in India, and incidentally it is still the largest. The first class was part of a school for girls but in 1908 it began life as a separate entity on a new site and now it has five elementary classes for boys and the same for girls and an industrial training section for both sexes. The educational section is just what you would expect to find in any such school and in the training section the crafts taught are those most suited to the country, with weaving taking first place, but cane-work, netting, gardening, house-work, knitting and Indian music are also taught. The emphasis, however, is not on the teaching of a particular craft, but rather to train every boy and girl to become adaptable and make themselves as useful as possible. This is necessary because there is no workshop where pupils can be permanently employed after training, and circumstances in India are not at present favourable to home employment, as it would be extremely difficult to organise a satisfactory system of after-care.

Now let us turn back to the time of my arrival. You probably noticed the tremendous range of years between the youngest and oldest pupil. This was because it had been the custom to admit all and sundry, a policy which may be followed quite successfully if you have the accommodation in which to keep the major age groups in separate sections, and where you have the staff needed to handle each section but it is an unwise policy, to say the least, when accommodation is limited and you have only the two main sections. Also, when your institution is doing pioneer work, I hold the view that one must

concentrate on one type of education and training, and it is therefore better to concentrate on admitting children who can take full advantage of whatever education and training you can offer. Other groups can be added later as funds and accommodation become available.

So my first task was to restrict admission to young children, and I think that results have fully justified this action. It was also necessary to emphasise the fact that while providing a happy home for our children, we were essentially a school, and the emphasis was on work.

But the main background, or it would be better to say the driving force, was the Christian Faith. But here let me make it quite clear that this Faith is not being thrust upon anyone. The school is open to Hindu, Moslem, Parsee, Buddhist or Christian alike, and although conversion is the aim, it is conversion through conviction and not through coercion. Even when a pupil asks for baptism it is only granted when we are quite sure that there is real conviction behind the request, and even then no child is baptised without the full consent of parents or guardian.

It is no part of my purpose to make this article a missionary talk, but I would like to draw attention to two points. First, it was Christian missionaries, moved by Christian love, who first started the work for the blind in India, and secondly, we seek only to bring our blind children to the knowledge of Him who taught us by His example to have true compassion for all who suffer, or are handicapped in the race of life.

Although the strength of the school has not been greatly increased during my term of service, it is well that I should mention that the School for the Blind at Poonamallee, near Madras, may justly be claimed as a direct descendant. When Bishop Waller went to Madras from our diocese of Tinnevely, he asked me to draw up a scheme for the opening of a school. This I did and the Poonamallee school was the outcome and, I may add, the majority of its earliest pupils were sent from Palamcottah because their homes were near to that city.

And what of the future? He would be rash indeed who attempted any kind of forecast about India. Sir Clutha Mackenzie was specially commissioned by the Govern-

ment of India to study the problem of blindness in India and to make recommendations for future development. His report is very full and comprehensive, and it has been approved in principle by the authorities, but how the scheme will fare in the new India it is quite impossible to say. All that can be said at the moment is that a start of hope and of great promise has appeared above the horizon, and I am sure that every St. Dunstaner will share my hope that the star will rise steadily and increase in magnitude until it becomes a sun which will lighten the road to every blind man, woman and child in India.

W. G. SPEIGHT.

### Prizewinners

Margaret Potts, of Macclesfield, G. Merriman, A enue Road, W. E. Brookes, of Southampton, and Dicky Richardson, Ovingdean, receive a guinea for their contributions this month.

### Births

BAKER.—On June 8th, to the wife of Paul Baker, of Aston Clinton, a daughter—Penelope Ann.

DICKERSON.—On May 28th, to the wife of F. Dickerson, of Thornton Heath, a daughter—Honor Mary.

HUMPHREY.—On July 4th, to the wife of J. Humphrey, of Londonderry, a daughter.

MILNE.—On June 21st, to the wife of Alan Milne, of Beaconsfield, twin daughters.

NAUMANN.—On April 23rd, to the wife of Anthony Naumann, of Bucks Mills, near Bideford, a daughter—Carola Gwyn.

### Marriages

BEATTIE—HEATH.—On June 21st, J. Beattie, of Wallasey, to Miss Nora Kathleen Heath, of Shrewsbury.

CONSTABLE—BENALLACK.—On June 26th, L. P. H. J. Constable, D.C.M., of Sidcup, to Miss Betty Benallack.

DEVENPORT—TURNER.—On July 12th, Harry Devenport, to Miss Beryl Turner.

KENT—BANHAM.—On June 21st, Tom Kent, of Chelmsford, to Mrs. Maud Banham.

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As in previous years, no REVIEW will be published for the month of August.