

ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Her Majesty The Queen Visits St. Dunstan's

THE visit of Her Majesty the Queen to our Training Establishment at Ovingdean, on February 26th, was an event of the greatest significance for St. Dunstan's and St. Dunstaners all over the world. I am sure that I express for all the members of our world-wide family the honour done to our organisation on this occasion. As readers will learn from other pages, the Queen made the visit an informal and friendly affair, and I am sure that the recollection that will be uppermost in the mind of anyone who was there will be Her Majesty's charming voice and manner, which made even the most nervous feel at ease in talking with her.

Many members of St. Dunstan's Council were present to greet the Queen, and at a meeting held shortly after the visit, a resolution was passed expressing appreciation of the arrangements made by the Commandant and his staff, and the thanks of the Council to all trainees for their share in the success of the Royal Visit was placed on record.

St. Dunstaners in the Union

I went to South Africa on private family business, but while I was there attended six ex-Servicemen's meetings, including three St. Dunstan's Reunions. Lady Fraser and I met a number of South African St. Dunstaners who live in or near the big centres, such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban, and also some relatives of South Africans who are at present in training in Britain. I gave the best wishes of St. Dunstaners in England to St. Dunstaners in South Africa, and they asked me to bring their greetings back. I also attended a meeting of St. Dunstan's, South Africa, Committee, at which Mr. Alers Hankey presided, and where we discussed many business matters of mutual interest.

Many old friends of Mrs. Chadwick Bates will be glad to know that, although she had a touch of 'flu while we were in South Africa, she is on the whole very well and, I thought, as I have always thought, that she was doing a wonderful job of work for South Africa and for us.

The Four Rights

The right stuff, the right place, the right time, and the right price. This was the formula given to me by Bill Shakspeare for successful shopkeeping when I visited him at his business and home in Sheldon, near Birmingham, earlier this month.

"I have heard some disabled ex-Servicemen," he told me, "say that the public ought to buy from them because they have been blinded or crippled. It isn't any good," he said emphatically, "you have got to give value, whoever you are."

Bill is a St. Dunstaner of the first war who owns two successful retail shops, where he sells newspapers, tobacco, stationery and groceries, and he has built them up and paid for them himself, with the assistance in later years of his son and daughter, who are now partners.

Bill practises what he preaches, for his shop certainly impressed Lady Fraser and me as being one of the best of its kind; quietly busy, well set out and efficient. The shop is open at 6.30 a.m., when two thousand newspapers have to be sorted, ready for thirteen boys to deliver, and some hundreds of customers have to be attended to before 8 a.m. One of the partners, and often two, are on duty during the twelve hours of every day the shop is open. Even on Sundays the newspaper customers must be served.

Voluntary Work

Voluntary work for ex-Servicemen and women is the interest of a number of St. Dunstaners. Bill Shakspeare is typical of these. He devotes much of his thought and all his spare time acting as honorary representative of St. Dunstan's in his district, or as British Legion Club and Branch official.

The Sheldon No. 1 Branch and Club of the British Legion owes its splendid premises primarily to his financial ability and faith. In addition to owning their own branch headquarters, they have a flourishing club, a hall that will seat 250 people, and a sports hall which I opened for them on the occasion of my visit. Bill borrowed the money, formed a Friendly Society, sold the shares and guided the finance. The venture is a great success, well patronised, and more than paying its way. Last year they made £500 profit. "Very hard work, common sense, and ability to see a bit of luck when it crosses your way and take advantage of it," that is how Bill himself describes the secret of his success in life.

I told the audience who came to the opening ceremony that both St. Dunstan's and the Legion were very proud of Bill Shakspeare.

Other St. Dunstaners Help

There are quite a large number of St. Dunstaners who act as honorary officials of St. Dunstan's Committees or honorary representatives in different parts of the country. I cannot mention them all by name, though much honour and our best thanks are due to them all. One, however, is in the news this month, namely, F. G. Braithwaite, of Guildford, who has just been elected Worshipful Master of the Onslow Lodge (Freemasons). Congratulations to Bro. Braithwaite, in which Masons generally, and St. Dunstan's Masons in particular, will join. Not so long ago, Frank Braithwaite came to my office with a big cheque, which he had raised by a house-to-house collection in that town. The Countess of Onslow came with him, for she is President of his Committee. There will be many of the younger generation who will remember Lady Onslow when she used to pay regular visits to our wards at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Her name was then Lady Cranley.

IAN FRASER.

To Gunners, R.A.

The Royal Artillery Association is holding a Rally at the Albert Hall on Saturday, May 1st, at 7.30 p.m.

The Committee are most anxious that any St. Dunstaners who were Gunners should attend, if they would like to do so.

Will those Gunners who are interested send in their names to Mr. Mackay, at Headquarters immediately.

Seafield House

St. Dunstaners who were at camp in 1945 and 1946 will hear with regret that Seafield House has been destroyed by fire. It was a fine Georgian mansion, and had been used as a signal school. Our campers were under canvas in its grounds in 1945 and in the house itself in 1946.

Holiday Camp

Commodore Neame, of Royal Naval Barracks, Lee-on-Solent, invites St. Dunstaners to a Holiday Camp from Friday, August 6th—13th. Please send in names to Mrs. Spurway, Holmwood Vicarage, Dorking.

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Campers are invited to a meeting on April 6th, at 2.30 p.m., at the V.A.D. Club, 28 Cavendish Square (at the back of John Lewis, Oxford Street, corner of Hollis Street). I should like to know how many to expect, so please write to me if you are coming.

AVIS SPURWAY.

The Queen at St. Dunstan's

On February 26th the Queen paid her first visit to St. Dunstan's. Her Majesty arrived at the Training Centre, Ovingdean, soon after 3 o'clock, where she was greeted by Sir Neville Pearson, President of St. Dunstan's. Sir Neville then presented to Her Majesty, Lady (Arthur) Pearson, ex-President, and widow of our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson, Sir Ian Fraser, Chairman, Mr. A. W. Tuke, Honorary Treasurer, Mr. W. G. Askew, Secretary, Air Commodore G. B. Dacre, Commandant of Ovingdean, Miss D. A. Pain, Matron, and Lady Fraser, Commandant, V.A.D.

Conducted by Air Commodore Dacre, the Queen went up to the Lounge, where Sir Ian presented Mr. L. Fawcett, Commandant at West House, and Mrs. M. Ouseley, Matron at West House.

In a brief speech, Sir Ian Fraser said he and his wife had just arrived back from South Africa in time for this great occasion. The visit of the Royal Family to South Africa was still being talked about, and its effect upon all in the Union had been very deep and significant, binding them to each other and to the Mother Country.

The visit of the Queen to St. Dunstan's, Sir Ian said, honoured not only those who were present, but more than five thousand members of St. Dunstan's family throughout the Empire. (Applause.)

Sir Ian then presented to Her Majesty, Sapper T. C. McKay, a young blinded and crippled Royal Engineer, who had been chosen to typify all St. Dunstaners who were not present at the ceremony.

A large contingent from West House were present, and the Queen passed among them all, shaking hands and chatting with many. A particularly proud St. Dunstaner was Petty Officer Gopala K. Unny, of the Royal Indian Marines, to whom the Queen spoke for some minutes.

Air Commodore Dacre then conducted the Queen round the Training Centre. Her Majesty stayed for nearly two hours, visiting every department in turn, and watching and greeting many of the trainees at their work. She had a special word for Ted Miller, a handless St. Dunstaner, weaving at his loom, and John Proctor, another handless man, at his typewriter. Eileen Gould, who lost her sight while serving with the A.T.S., presented a bouquet to Her Majesty, and the Queen

also accepted a sea grass stool, a leather handbag, a royal blue rug, a blue woollen scarf, a plastic bowl, and a table lamp from the handicraft trainees.

These gifts were sent on, and the Air Commodore has received a letter from the Queen's Private Secretary saying with what pleasure Her Majesty had received them. They would be delightful reminders to the Queen of her visit.

Passing on to the upholstery, carpentry and engineering departments, Her Majesty was greatly impressed with the skilled work our men are doing in preparing for their part in the production drive.

In the Braille Library the Queen had tea. Her long visit had come to an end. But before she left the Training Centre she signed her name in the Visitors' Book, and then, passing through cheering rows of trainees and members of the staff, she said goodbye with her own charming smile and that gracious wave of the hand which we have come to know so well.

The royal car drove slowly away down the hill to the coast road, and the last to wave goodbye to Her Majesty was a group of nurses and staff from West House, who had taken up their positions on an "island" in the road outside.

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Amongst those present at the ceremony were the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Leconfield, His Worship the Mayor of Brighton, Councillor P. F. Friend-James, and the Chief Constable of Brighton, Captain W. J. Hutchinson.

Amongst those presented to Her Majesty were St. Dunstan's Council Members, Captain William Appleby, Lieut. Col. Eric Ball, Major General John Hay Beith, Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Carpendale, Major Sir Brunel Cohen, Miss M. Hamar Greenwood, and Lord Normanby, and staff including Mr. I. F. Anderson, Director of Education; Miss Mortimer, Mrs. Comer, Mr. Hawketts, Dr. Mulcahy, Miss M. D. Adams, Miss L. Carlton, Lounge Sister, Mrs. L. Harvey, Miss D. Noon, Miss F. Ramshaw, Miss G. Scadden, Mrs. R. C. Webster, and Messrs. R. Burman, K. Bundy, E. G. Cheesman, E. Killingbeck, S. Kitson, K. Norman, F. Ralph, T. Rogers, and J. Steel.

A number of St. Dunstaners, with whom the Queen had a word of conversation, were also informally presented.

Sir Neville Pearson, in his capacity as President of St. Dunstan's, sent a letter of thanks to Her Majesty the Queen for her visit and has received the following letter from the Queen's Private Secretary:

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The QUEEN at St. DUNSTAN'S

HER MAJESTY greets Sapper T. C. McKay (top left) before visiting the engineering, boot-repairing and weaving shops, and the Braille Room. (Below left) Sir Ian Fraser introduces Ted Miller, at his handless loom, to the Queen. (Centre) Her Majesty receives a bouquet from Eileen Gould. (Top right) The Queen stops for a word with J. H. Palmer, working on assembly. Sir Neville Pearson accompanies Her Majesty to the Rug Room, where she is talking to Eric Jones. The Queen watches John Proctor, handless St. Dunstanian, at his typewriter, and the trainees at work in the upholstery section. The Queen, with Air Commodore Dacre, looks at the view from the Sun Bay of the building.



Buckingham Palace.

27th February, 1948.

MY DEAR SIR NEVILLE,

By command of Her Majesty the Queen, I am writing to say how pleased Her Majesty has been to be able to visit the St. Dunstan's Training Centre.

The Queen was deeply impressed by the wonderful training which the Centre is giving to men and women who have lost their sight. The wide variety of activities which they are taught, and the skill which they attain, has given Her Majesty very great pleasure and has aroused her warm admiration.

The Queen feels sure that the spirit of goodwill which so clearly permeates those at the Centre must be a source of constant strength and gratification to all those who, like yourself, have devoted their lives to those who have lost their sight in the service of their country.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) T. C. HARVEY,

Private Secretary to the Queen.

The Chairman has received the following letter:—

Buckingham Palace.

DEAR SIR IAN FRASER, 1st March, 1948.

Her Majesty the Queen was very pleased to receive your letter, and to know that her visit to St. Dunstan's was so much appreciated.

I can assure you that the Queen, for her part, was very moved by what she saw and by the wonderful atmosphere which prevails.

I am so glad that you and Lady Fraser were able to get back in time, for a visit to St. Dunstan's would have seemed incomplete without you.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) T. C. HARVEY,

Private Secretary to the Queen.

The Children's Home

It has been decided for the present to reduce the age of entry for children to the Children's Home, Northgate House, from three years to one year. This means that, until further notice, boys can be admitted between the ages of one and twelve, and girls between the ages of one and fourteen.

Test Results

Braille, Advanced: J. Rawlinson, G. K. Unny, R. J. Vine.

Braille, Writing: G. Holland, G. K. Unny.

Typing: J. Clyde, E. Penny, H. Dickenson, J. Wilson, J. Stuart, J. Conroy, A. Downman.

Ovingdean Notes

This month a very kind invitation came from the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, of which the 1914-1918 trainees gladly availed themselves. A happy coachload set off on Saturday morning, February 28th. After lunch at the Museum, they were taken to a private hall where small tables held sample exhibits which they were allowed to handle. Friendly curators gladly answered every question, and records of animal noises were played for us. After tea at Lyons' Corner House, there was a visit to the play "The Relapse," at The Phoenix Theatre, and so home, after a perfect day.

St. Dunstaners in Brighton were very privileged to hear a private land-line broadcast at Ovingdean of a commentary on the Mills-Bueno and Thompson-Proietti fights, from the Harringay Arena, on February 17th. Tommy Trinder gave the commentary, and Sid Field summed up. The concert hut was crowded, but unfortunately the "big fight" took place earlier than expected and, incidentally, only lasted for four and a half minutes. However, many St. Dunstaners who were listening were shown on news reels at cinemas all over the country, and now think that they will terminate their training at Ovingdean in order to sign film contracts in Hollywood.

It was an exciting evening for those who went to the Plummer Roddis dance on Feb. 19th. The quiz—with forfeits—during the interval, was very amusing, and a certain bachelor, who shall remain anonymous, had to propose to his partner and, to the great delight of the audience, was accepted.

The Town Clerk of Brighton, Mr. Drew, gave an extremely interesting lecture on February 23rd. His subject was "Matters of Local Interest" and Mr. Perry's talk, a résumé of the Disabled Persons' Act, was very enlightening.

Our first shooting match against the Sussex Rifle Club, next month, is a much looked-forward-to event. Recently, in a practice match, three totally blinded men fired ten shots each, with the most astounding results. Twenty-nine out of thirty were all within a six-inch circle. The result of this match was as follows:—

Dickie Richardson,	94	out of a possible	100
Stan Fletcher	89	" "	100
Kel Gattrell	77	" "	100

West House Notes

Naturally enough, the Royal Visit overshadowed all else during February, but that is not to say that there were not plenty of other things for our enjoyment.

We have always been exceptionally fortunate in having the friendship of the residents in this district, and another indication of this was shown on February 12th, when a Darts Team from West House was invited to a match at the Park View Hotel. On that occasion a barrel of beer was given by the proprietor, Mr. Jarvis. Whether or not this spurred us on we would not like to say, but the fact remains that our team won the match!

St. Valentine's Eve Dance got off to a flying start, with a surprise visit from Max Miller and Alfred Thripp, the blind pianist, who was appearing with Max at the Brighton Hippodrome that week. We had our usual appropriately festive decorations, made by the Lounge Staff, and the whole evening was a great success.

It has been a long time since we had a "Brains Trust" at West House, and this provided us with an interesting and enjoyable evening on Sunday, February 15th. The Question Master was Mr. W. Weeks, and the team consisted of Squadron Leader W. T. Curtis-Willson, Councillor T. Pugh, Councillor Miss I. Mitchell, Mr. Aubrey East, and Mrs. Scaping.

Many of you will be pleased to hear that Mrs. Malone expects to be in Brighton for Easter, and she will be paying another visit to West House then.

Sister Evans, who had been West House Dispensary Sister since we reopened after the war in 1945, left us at the end of February. We are sure those St. Dunstaners who remember her will wish to join with us in wishing her the very best of luck in the future and, since she is still living in the district, we hope to be seeing her again from time to time.

Masonic

Bro. Frank Braithwaite, of Guildford, was installed Worshipful Master of the Onslow Lodge, No. 2234 (Freemasons) on Thursday, February 12th. W. Bro. Braithwaite is a St. Dunstaner of the first World War, and for many years has run a most successful wholesale leather business.

Gwen Obern and Bro. H. Costigan contributed to the musical entertainment during the evening.

St. Dunstan's Bridge Club

On February 28th the Club held its 10th Annual General Meeting at Park Crescent, under the most congenial and able direction of its Chairman, Mr. A. Mackay. There was a record gathering of twenty-three members, including three members of the recent war. It is hoped that many more younger St. Dunstaners will come along and infuse new vigour and blood in the Club. Reports of the Captain and Secretary reflected the Club's extensive activities, and the Treasurer's statement showed the Club to be in a very healthy state so far as finances were concerned. There was one very dark spot, viz., the retirement of our most able captain, Reg. Coles. He has held this office for three years, and it is very largely due to his loyalty to the Club and devotion to his duties that the past three years have been so outstanding.

The new officers appointed were Frank A. Rhodes, Captain and Secretary; H. Gover, Treasurer, with the valued assistance of Drummer on the Committee.

All those interested in Bridge are cordially invited to join us on Saturday afternoons; especially we should like to have good support from St. Dunstaners of the last war.

FRANK A. RHODES,

"E. K."

Mr. Ernest Kessell, C.B.E., who was associated with Sir Arthur Pearson in the foundation of St. Dunstan's, and who served as its honorary treasurer for seventeen years, celebrated his eightieth birthday on February 22nd.

Among the many congratulatory messages which Mr. Kessell received was a letter from Queen Mary. Other letters from Lord Mayors of London, Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool, Nottingham and Sheffield, and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

Law Success

Our warmest congratulations to A. Howard Simcocks who, since being blinded in Italy, has studied law, and has now passed the finals of his examinations. His success is the more outstanding since it has been achieved well under the normal period of studentship. He has passed his finals in two and a half years, but cannot be "called" until the normal three years' studentship is completed. He will practise in the Isle of Man.

"In Memory"

Private Frederick Ashworth, *Labour Corps*

We record with deep regret the death of F. Ashworth, of Gorleston-on-Sea. His sight failing as a result of his war service, he came to St. Dunstan's in 1918, where he trained in basket-making and netting.

He had for some time been ill in hospital, and he passed away there on February 15th. He leaves a widow and adopted child, to whom we offer our sincere sympathy.

Private Thomas Powell, *Labour Corps*

With deep regret we record the death of T. Powell, of Brighton. His sight failed after his service with the Labour Corps, and he was admitted to St. Dunstan's in 1921, where he trained in telephony.

His death was unexpected; he passed away in his sleep on February 11th.

Tommy Powell was a single man, and our sympathy is extended to his brother.

Lance Corporal William James Hallam, *2nd Sherwood Foresters*

It is with deep regret that we record the death, on March 7th, of W. J. Hallam, a permanent resident at West House.

Wounded at Namur in 1914, he came to St. Dunstan's in 1915, left us and was re-admitted in 1927, when he trained as a telephonist. The funeral took place at Uxbridge and the wreaths included one from the Directors of his old firm, the Dairy Supply Co. It was inscribed, "To the best telephone operator ever, with grateful thanks for extremely efficient, courteous and devoted service." St. Dunstaners Harry Day and Mark Sheridan were present from West House.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his daughter, Dorothy, who is married to Leslie Webber, a St. Dunstaner of the 1939-45 war.

Sergeant Walter H. Thorpe, *1st Suffolk Regiment*

With deep regret we record the death of W. H. Thorpe, of Chelmsford.

He received wounds which led to his blindness at Ypres in 1915, and he came to St. Dunstan's three years later. He trained as a joiner, but later took up a post as a porter in an infirmary.

He passed away on March 5th, after a short illness.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to his widow and family.

Private John Benson, *Royal Army Service Corps*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of J. Benson, of Boroughbridge.

As a result of service in Palestine and Egypt, his sight failed and his hearing was also greatly affected. He was discharged from the Army in 1919 and came to us the following year. He trained as a poultry farmer and took a keen interest in his work right up to the time of his death, in spite of very indifferent health for some time.

Our deep sympathy does out to his widow and children.

John William Burge, *Merchant Navy*

We record with deep regret the death of another of our permanent residents of West House, J. W. ("Dicky") Burge.

Discharged from the Merchant Navy in 1915, he came to us the following year. He was eventually trained as a boot repairer and mat-maker, but for some years was not able to work, and after the death of his second wife had been one of our permanent residents. He suffered considerably, but his death on February 19th occurred only a few days after he had been confined to his bed.

"Dicky" and his dominoes had become quite a part of the life of West House and he will be missed.

Trooper Robert Peat, *Royal Tank Regiment*

With deep regret we record the death of R. Peat, of Carlisle, a St. Dunstaner of the 1939-45 war.

Enlisting in July, 1940, he was discharged in March, 1946. His sight had failed and he was in a very low physical condition. He was admitted to St. Dunstan's benefits in December, 1947, but training of any sort was impossible. He died following an operation at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on February 14th. He was taken home to Carlisle to be buried, and Mr. and Mrs. Wooldridge were among the mourners.

Our sympathy goes out to his family, and particularly to his sister, who nursed him.

Births

BOSELEY.—On February 11th, to the wife of A. H. Boseley, of Liscard, Wallasey, a son—Albert Harry Alexander Brian.

FAULKNER.—On February 11th, to the wife of W. D. Faulkner, of Smethwick, a daughter—Peggy Ann.

SERDET.—On August 22nd, to the wife of A. M. Serdet, of Edgham, a daughter—Rosemary Elaine.

Marriages

HEWETT—WINCHCOMBE.—On February 7th, G. Hewett, of Liverpool, to Mrs. Winchcombe.

CRADDOCK.—On February 7th, R. Craddock, of Great Sankey, Warrington.

DURANT.—On February 21st, G. Durant of Worthing.

Death

POOLE.—Our deep sympathy goes out to I. H. Poole, of Redditch, whose wife passed away on February 28th.