

ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Patron—Her Majesty the Queen

“**H**ER Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to grant her Patronage to St. Dunstan's.”

Sir Neville Pearson, Bt., our President, replying to the letter which conveyed this news, expressed the deep appreciation of the Council and all the war-blinded, and said: “Ever since its foundation, all members of Your Majesty's family have from time to time shown their deep interest in St. Dunstan's. We are therefore all the more grateful for this signal mark of your continued interest in those who, each in his own fashion, has had to rebuild a broken life.”

The letter, which is similar to that received by the British Legion, of which Her Majesty has also become Patron, says: “It will be in order for the words ‘Patron—Her Majesty the Queen’ to appear in future under the name of your Institution on all correspondence.”

Some who have written to me or mentioned the matter to me, asked if Her Majesty would become Patroness of St. Dunstan's, and accordingly the instruction from Buckingham Palace that the style “Patron” is to be used is interesting and clears up any doubt there might have been on the matter. There are other examples in our public affairs where the use of the male noun is appropriate for a lady, as for instance in the case indicated by Lord Derby, the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, who shortly after the accession of Queen Elizabeth II, informed Lancastrians that when the Royal Toast is given at a dinner, the proper formula is “Ladies and Gentlemen, the Queen, the Duke of Lancaster.”

Yet another example is that, when the head of a Department of State is a lady, she is still called “Minister,” as in the case of Miss Horsbrugh, the Minister of Education.

George Bernard Shaw, the playwright, foreshadowed that women would one day hold high office, and long ago described one of his characters as the Ministrix of Power, but this word has never in fact been used.

Our Own Braille Contractions

I note that, for the National News Letter, which is published in Braille, they print a series of initials representing well-known names with the Braille characters next to each other, without a capital sign and without full stops. For example, usa for United States of America, uk for United Kingdom, pmg for Postmaster General. I suggest to the Editor

of the REVIEW that it would be a good thing to consider adopting this practice in our Braille edition, as it saves a little space, but, more important, is much easier to read.

We might also develop further our own system of shorthand. We already have a contraction for St. Dunstan's. Why not let us have a contraction for Brighton—say, BN; Blackpool—BP, etc. Perhaps a study should be made of the REVIEW to see what words there are which are repeated so often as to be worth while contracting. What do our Braille readers think?

Visitors to Britain

I welcome to Britain two St. Dunstaners and their wives, namely, Donald McPhee, O.B.E., physiotherapist and St. Dunstan's representative in New Zealand; and W. H. Foster, of Vancouver, Canada.

IAN FRASER.

Braille Centenary Celebrations

A programme of events has been planned to celebrate the Louis Braille Centenary in France, culminating with a Ceremony on Sunday, June 22nd, at which the Ashes of Louis Braille will be transferred to the Pantheon in Paris. Mr. Askew is going to France to represent St. Dunstan's.

The National Institute for the Blind is holding a Braille Centenary Exhibition, which was opened on June 11th by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Lady Fraser represented St. Dunstan's at the dinner to inaugurate the Celebrations.

Captain Alan Milne, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Econ.)

Many congratulations to Alan Milne, late of the Commandos, who has obtained his Ph.D.

In 1949 he obtained a First in the B.Sc. (Econ.) examination of London University, and has since been at the London School of Economics as a Research Student. He has already been awarded a Commonwealth Fund Scholarship for a year to an American University, and takes up this Scholarship early in the autumn.

No Reply?

The Editor received an envelope on May 10th with the Brighton and Hove postmark; it had only a blank sheet of paper inside. The only clue was the watermark on the paper, which is Abermill Bond.

Grandfathers

F. Bush, Elland; W. H. Rutland, Princes Risborough (seventh grand-daughter); J. Butler, Waterford; F. Matthewman, Northampton.

Reunions

More than sixty St. Dunstaners were present, with their escorts, at the Oxford Halls, Reading, on May 14th, when Mr. J. E. Woodward, Chairman of Berkshire County British Legion, was the guest of honour. Miss Pain and Mr. Lale, Mr. Ottaway and Mr. George White—all now retired members of the staff—were greeted with immense pleasure.

Miss Pain was present also at Plymouth and Bristol—on May 22nd and 24th respectively. At Plymouth, the Rev. F. Darrell Bunt, O.B.E., R.N., a member of St. Dunstan's Executive Council, was the special guest. At Bristol, Mr. D. G. Hopewell, another member of St. Dunstan's Council, welcomed the visitors. (Miss Lloyd and Mr. Ottaway were among them.) At Salisbury, the special guest was again Mr. Hopewell, and here Miss Pain was present, with Mr. Lale, Mr. Ottaway and Mr. White.

Festival Gardens, Battersea Park

The Directors of the Festival Pleasure Gardens at Battersea Park are inviting any St. Dunstaners who care to come to visit the Pleasure Gardens free of charge during the period, Monday, July 28th, to Saturday, August 2nd, inclusive; members of the British Legion and the Women's Section are also invited. Admission is from 11.30 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. Each St. Dunstaner may bring his wife or one escort free, but additional friends or members of the family would have to pay the ordinary entrance fee. No tickets are required, but St. Dunstaners must wear their badges.

Sir Ian and Lady Fraser will attend a ceremony to inaugurate this Ex-Servicemen's Week, at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, July 28th.

London Club Notes

The London Club were privileged to take part in a most enjoyable trip up the river on Sunday, May 18th, when three coaches left the club and proceeded to Windsor, and thence by steamer to Marlow, cruising along what is perhaps the most beautiful part of the Thames. At Marlow we had refreshments, and returned by the same route. We all had a wonderful time, with a full dance band in the bow, and an accordionist in the stern, with liberal refreshments constantly passing round. It was a day we shall long remember, and for all this we were indebted to our very good friend, Mr. G. D. Cheeseman, who never forgets us when organising his annual outings.

Bridge

On May 24th we had a match against Mr. Alf. Field's team—twelve-a-side—which we lost, but we won our match against Sperry's, on June 7th.

Harrogate is now fixed for seven days, commencing Saturday, September 6th, and we are staying at the Dirlton Hotel, Ripon Road. (Seven guineas each).

The St. Dunstan's Bridge Congress will be held at Brighton again, and the date has been fixed for the week-end of November 15th. Mr. A. E. Field will again be our Tournament Director. Please send in your name in good time if you are interested.

The Bridge Club has again been invited to the headquarters of the London County Contract Bridge Association. The date is Saturday, June 21st, and we are sending five teams of four. We shall have the pleasure of playing against some of the best players in England. H. GOVER.

Indoor Section

On May 5th we paid a visit to the Tottenham Constitutional Club; this was a grand evening's entertainment, during which we played against them at darts, dominoes, cribbage, bridge, and a four at solo whist was arranged.

We again won at darts, we also won at dominoes and cribbage, but were unlucky at bridge, as our men met a very hot pair.

This was a very successful evening in every way. It was the strongest turn-out in numbers yet.

On May 12th we paid a return visit to the O.C.C. & A.C., at Gipsy Hill, and amid good fellowship our Darts Team retaliated by beating them 2—1, after a stiff battle.

On Derby Day a merry party left St. Dunstan's by coach for the annual trip to the Derby. The weather was good, as also were the arrangements for the party. For this we have to thank the able management of Bob Willis, who looked after everyone's needs very capably.

The Sir Arthur Pearson Competitions are proceeding satisfactorily.

CHARLES J. WALKER.

Outdoor Section

There will be an invitation 2 mile walk at the police sports to be held on July 12th, at Ipswich; entries to Mr. Dawkins at the Club. The Brighton Sports day will be July 9th, and entries should be sent to Mr. Dawkins as soon as possible.

The annual walk for the Farmer Cup was held at Brighton on May 17th, when two teams, London versus The Rest, competed over a seven mile course. Mr. Don. Cockell started the race, and a sharp pace was maintained from the "off." Gaygan, Brown, Miller and Williamson raced round the first lap, and then Williamson moved into second place and Miller into third, this order being kept to the finish. T. Denmead retired owing to a belated dinner, but L. Dennis, who was walking for the first time, put up a really excellent show, and we shall look forward to seeing him in future events. The Mayor of Brighton presented the Cup to T. Gaygan, on behalf of the winning team. Mr. Shuter again presented the fastest loser prize, which was won by W. Miller. So ended a very good walking season.

St. Dunstan's Seven Mile Walk

Order of Finish	Time	Hcp. All.	Hcp. Time	H'cap. Pos.
T. Gaygan	60:06	Scr.	60:06	1
C. Williamson	62:40	2:00	50:40	3
W. Miller	63:37	40	62:57	6
(fastest loser)				
A. Brown	64:44	3:20	61:24	4
S. Tutton	68:26	7:50	60:36	2
C. Stafford	69:27	7:20	62:07	5
P. Cryan	70:44	7:00	63:44	7
A. Bradley	70:51	6:00	64:51	8
L. Dennis	79:01	7:00	72:01	9
Team—Rest of England			17	
London			19	

Handicapper and Timekeeper—W. J. Harris.

Prizewinners:

1st Handicap Race	T. Gaygan.
2nd	S. V. Tutton.
3rd	C. Williamson.
Fastest loser	W. Miller.

Winning Team:—The Rest

T. Gaygan, W. Miller, C. Stafford, P. Cryan.

Derby Sweepstake, 1952

The draw for the Derby Sweepstake was included in last month's REVIEW, and St. Dunstaners will therefore know the lucky prizewinners. 2,824 tickets were sold, against 2,747 last year. After printing and postage expenses (26 15s. 0d.) had been deducted, a sum of £326 5s. 0d. was left for distribution in accordance with the published rules.

The draw was made at Headquarters on May 23rd, by Messrs. Jock Henry and Bruce Ingrey, with Mr. Willis supervising; a number of Club members and their wives, Miss Ibbettson, and other friends and helpers were also present.

The result was as follows:—

1st Tulyar	... R. V. Ham, Glamorgan	£163/2/6
2nd Gay Time	F. Stew, Tewkesbury	£65/5/0
3rd Faubourg II	W. B. Moon Harrogate	£32/12/6

£65 5s. 0d. was distributed between thirty other starters, and the holders of these tickets received £2 3s. 6d. each. They were:—

Ararat II	... A. BENNING, Tiptree	1078
Argur	... E. SWAYNE, London, S.E.25	1961
Bob Major	... W. G. MORRIS, Southbourne	44
Bold Buccaneer	E. W. READ, Poitchester	608
Caerlaverock	C. A. LUKER, London, S.W.18	836
Chavey Down	R. CHANDLER, Richmond, Yorks	1549
Fiery Torch	E. L. WOODS, Malmesbury	2369
Hasty Prince	W. H. HILL, Blackpool	1918
H.V.C.	S. BULL, Hemel Hempstead	1825
Indian Hemp	PADDY COOKE, Kingston	1366
Kara Tepe	W. TROTT, Birmingham	1989
Khor-Mousa	E. BOWCOTT, Mitcham	994
La Varende	H. DAY, Brighton	1045
Marsyad	F. L. HUNT, London, N.W.3	896
Merry Minstrel	J. H. BURT, Southampton	1676
Monarch More	H. G. GRANSBY, Perivale	2219
Neath	W. J. WOODCOCK, Saffron Walden	132
Nick La Rocca	G. A. ("Archie") BROWN, London, N.W.2	152
Postman's Path	W. HARDING, London, N.4	487
Rego	J. CLYDE, London, N.W.10	458
Serpenyoe	Capt. W. APPLEBY, Reigate	203
Shahcrenda	A. J. RADFORD, Castle Cary	302
Silnet	J. LYNCH, Hornchurch	224
Silver Wraith	W. SHAYLER, Liverpool	2488
Speechmaker	P. ASHTON, Perivale	2398
Summer Rain	E. BREWER, West House	506
Thunderhead II	J. DELANEY, Taunton	2608
Trim Curry	W. HEUSHAW, Potters Bar	1871
Torcross	W. FLOWERS, Birmingham	2598
Worden II	A. PAULSON, Brighton	1668
The Field	was drawn by E. CARPENTER, King's Langley	137

The remainder of the horses listed last month did not start.

The Liverpool Club

The thirty people who disembarked from a certain coach in Liverpool city centre at approximately 10.35 p.m. on the evening of Saturday, May 17th, did so with a general feeling of a day well spent. These St. Dunstaners and their wives had travelled from Liverpool in the early afternoon to the Railway Hotel, near Blackburn, at the express invitation of Mr. Bob Britten, a fellow St. Dunstaner. Along with Mr. and Mrs. Hindle, and many other good friends, Bob had prepared a right royal welcome. It was a gorgeous afternoon, and apart from enjoying the sun for its warmth, the party was also able to take advantage by having photographs taken. It was gratifying to see that from the start the Liverpoolians were in good hands as far as hospitality was concerned, for the buffet would have done justice to a Sultan's feast. Of course, our Club members rallied round to give this buffet the only treatment it deserved, and that was the old St. Dunstan's treatment. Ham sandwiches, pies and cakes were consumed fast and furious, and the slickness with which the food disappeared was something akin to the magic of the celebrated Indian Rope Trick. Eventually hosts and guests got down to a team match of darts, which ended happily enough in a draw. At the same time the Club was getting to grips with Britten and Co. in the game of dominoes. Without a doubt the outing was an unqualified success, and the party left with a deep feeling of gratitude towards Bob Britten and his chief friends and co-operators, Mr. and Mrs. Hindle. Before departing, our Chairman, Mr. J. C. Owen, made a final flourish by proposing a vote of thanks to all concerned; Vice-Chairman, Mr. A. Lincoln, was emphatic in seconding this motion, then the Secretary added a few informal remarks and summed up the Club's appreciation. As a final note, may I put it on record that on the journey home-wards the company, on finding that the residue of the memorable buffet had been put aboard, all rallied once more, and in a further demonstration of appreciation "scoffed the lot." "FRISBY."

C. Smith, of Walsall, is a keen fisherman, and has invented a float which is suitable for blind fishermen. He wonders if other St. Dunstaners would be interested.

Letters to the Editor

DEAR EDITOR,

I am wondering if there is any other St. Dunstaner, like myself, who met when he came to St. Dunstan's an old pal from his old battalion—and company. George Orrow was our regimental barber when I was in the Herts Territorials during the early part of the 1914—18 war. When we met, we found much to talk about, and I am now wondering if there are any more Herts Territorials in St. Dunstan's of those early days.

Yours sincerely,
G. FALLOWFIELD.

Southwick.

DEAR EDITOR,

It is indeed gratifying to find that my letter in the April issue of the REVIEW has brought forth criticism. I am happy to enlarge upon my previous comment, and maybe solve, explain and clarify.

Firstly, I have not been appointed to speak on behalf of Headquarters, I have merely availed myself of the opportunity to give an opinion and air my views, open to all St. Dunstaners, and which views and opinions I still adhere to. Despite my natural aptitude for imagination, a gift free to all, the "dos" alleged to be imaginary are indeed very tangible. I would refer Jock M. to the notice board in the hall at H.Q. when he next visits the London Club. Jock is maybe losing opportunities.

I must now query the allegation that I told the world I admired a certain person, via the B.B.C. I said, "I would like to entertain Gilbert Harding for three days." I would, but I do not necessarily admire a person because I would like to entertain him.

Good luck, Bill Edwards, I am glad that I can say you appear to do that which I ask the younger men to do, i.e., attend functions; you appear to have attended all types. I seem to have given others the impression that the younger men should not attend the parties, etc., but that is entirely wrong; attend all you can, and the best of luck, but what I do ask is that they should also attend some of the serious affairs. Regarding the number of St. Dunstaners in the Greater London area, it is, I understand, somewhere over three hundred, with the younger men in the minority of just under two to one.

I am sure that the numbers attending serious functions can be increased, and

I look forward to them doing so. To quote Jock M., "They lost their sight for freedom." I agree, all are free to attend or stay away, and I also am free to give my opinions, whilst he is free to agree or disagree with them.

Just to end upon a personal finding through attending the London Club, and functions of all kinds, I have made many friends amongst St. Dunstaners of all ages. I appreciate this friendship, and from all I learn something, and I shall still continue to do so and still remain an individual.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN A. MUDGE.

Tottenham.

DEAR EDITOR,

In reply to Mr. G. T. Shaw in the REVIEW of May.

I have my mother living with me who is 97 years old this month (June)—the mother of thirteen children.

Yours sincerely,
H. I. MORRIS JONES.

Birkenhead.

Middleton Towers Holiday Camp

DEAR EDITOR,

May I, through the columns of the REVIEW, say thank you to the Directors, Management and Staff of Middleton Towers Holiday Camp for the grand week's holiday they gave us.

Among the many entertainments held during the week was a boxing match, film show, and first class shows and orchestral concerts. It was also an occasion for meeting many old friends and making new ones.

On the Friday, we had the boys over from Blackpool to join us for the day, and here again came many old faces and much talk about old times whilst in training, etc.

I would like to say "good luck" to Roy Glover, who won the talent contest and goes into the final—it was a really grand show.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE EUSTACE.

Tolworth, Surrey.

Braille Reading Tests

Senior Reading Tests: W. Collins, Redhill (in December); A. Pecket, Manchester.

Elementary Reading Test: K. W. Hedges, Bexley.

British Legion Annual Conference

By AN OBSERVER

Delegates from all parts of the British Isles assembled at Guernsey over Whitsun for the British Legion Annual Conference, which proved to be one of the most controversial and high spirited meetings for many years.

There were 102 resolutions down on the agenda paper for discussion including 37 on pensions, but important though many of these items were, the censure motion calling on Sir Ian to resign the presidency overshadowed all other business. This motion claimed that Sir Ian had "forfeited the confidence of the Legion," and criticised his attitude in the House when he thanked the Chancellor for the grant of 10s. weekly to war-disabled pensioners. It also referred to Sir Ian's statement that the basic war disability pension should be £3 2s. 6d. "during the time that the Legion was looking to him for support in its struggle for a basic rate of 90s. a week." The mover and seconder were frequently interrupted, and when the proposer, Mr. H. W. Long, of Barking, said "It is unfortunate that Sir Ian represents a political party," there were shouts of "No" and "Withdraw." Mr. Long could only just be heard to add "The time has arrived to carry out the Legion's policy, the President must be free from any party obligations," and renewed cheers and booing drowned the rest of his remarks. Captain James Prince, of Cardiff, speaking against the motion, got a very different reception when he voiced the opinion of most delegates by describing the resolution as "repugnant," adding "The Legion has no place for the washing of dirty linen." Sir Ian, who was greeted with prolonged cheering when he rose to reply, said that he did not share the criticism that some had felt inclined to level against the mover or the seconder. They were entitled to their point of view and he thanked them for giving the conference an opportunity of discussing a matter which was one of principle. Sir Ian added: "I am charged with thanking Governments. Well, I have sat in Parliament for 28 years on and off—mainly on (laughter)—and I have been on one side or the other while there have been eight Governments. I have thanked them all, and I intend, so long as I am in

Parliament, and whether I speak officially for you or unofficially for ex-Service men generally, to continue to thank any Government and any Members who help us from time to time" (applause). It was absolutely untrue that he was more ready to attack a Labour Government, but was now holding back because he was a Conservative. Sir Ian added that while policy was made by the conference, the strategy and the tactics of a campaign must be left to some degree to the discretion of the leaders on the spot. He reminded the conference that at the very opening of the Legion campaign he not only counselled that they should ask for 90s., but he was the first to find statistical figures and justification for that amount. But he emphasised also that the matter must be discussed in the context of the national finances. If political pressure were put on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the point at which each section of the community demanded all it thought it was entitled to at any particular moment, no Chancellor would be able to balance his budget (applause). They must not expect to win the 90s. pension in one gigantic and glorious breakthrough, but rather by a series of hard-fought battles. Sir Ian ended: "I ask therefore for unity behind a policy which requires that our pensions be made up to 90s. by such stages as we can impress upon public opinion and upon the House as reasonable, and I ask you to vote on the issue of a strong and powerful Legion as a moderate, responsible body, fighting and fighting hard and courteously for the men whom it represents, but never neglecting the nation's interests" (applause).

When the motion was put to the conference, only five delegates voted for it and 650 were against. Sir Ian, who could have been re-elected earlier on the agenda, but preferred to answer the censure resolution first, was then unanimously re-elected, and the whole conference rose and cheered and sang "For he's a jolly good fellow." It was a most moving scene, and the enthusiasm and warmth of the delegates revealed even more than the voting that had just gone before, just how much the Legion was behind their leader.

The censure motion was taken on the first day of the conference and followed the speeches of welcome by the Governor of Guernsey (Lieut. General Sir Philip Neame) and the Bailiff (Sir Ambrose

Sherwin). In his Presidential Address, Sir Ian revealed that the membership of the Legion stood at over 1,250,000, compared with 1,400,000 in the peak year of 1946—a remarkable figure considering it was estimated that 150,000 had died, emigrated or rejoined the Forces. The Legion's housing loan scheme, under which interest free loans were granted, has so far helped over 9,000 families to live in a home of their own. Referring to re-armament, Sir Ian said "The British Legion, representing more than one million members, stands by the Government on all steps that are necessary to make this country safe and strong so that we may help to preserve world peace."

On the first day of the conference the National Chairman (Major General Sir Richard Howard Vyse)—who was also re-elected—presented the report of the National Executive Council, which revealed that Poppy Day receipts had been £27,000 up on the previous year's total. Colonel the Rt. Hon. the Lord Cromwell, the National Hon. Treasurer, was also re-elected.

On the second day the remaining resolutions were dealt with, and one of the most interesting—a move to ban Communists from the membership of the Legion—was defeated in a ballot by 430 votes to 126. "If it was necessary to exclude conscientious objectors after the First World War, surely it is necessary to exclude Communists now," said the mover. Urging the rejection of this amendment to the rules, Sir Ian observed "The way to deal with political thought with which you are in disagreement is, in my judgment, by argument and reason, not by banning." The majority of the conference were behind Sir Ian in his advice "to maintain the right of every man to hold the political or religious view which his conscience dictates."

The conference carried a resolution which expressed concern at the increased number of evictions of families of young ex-Service men, deploring the inadequacy of emergency housing accommodation, and calling for a review. Two delegates clashed over "bowlers or berets" for Legion standard-bearers, which provided a light relief to the more serious business of the day. Speaking against the proposal that the conference should recommend black berets with Legion badges as the official headdress, one delegate said "They can be as smart in

mufti as in semi-uniform. The black beret is very near to the black shirt, which could follow it." Amid shouts of protest another delegate cried "If a black beret leads to a black shirt they must have a Fascist organisation in the British Army already." (laughter). Berets for Standard Bearers won the day by a large majority. Another delegate criticised the Legion's annual Festival of Remembrance in London for a tendency to become "an advertising agency for the Forces." He moved a resolution, which was adopted, asking that the Festival should be a more fitting tribute to the fallen and a reunion of those who served "rather than an opportunity for a display of physical prowess by present serving members of the Forces."

The conference also carried a resolution renewing the Legion's demand for a basic 100% disability pension of 90s., compared with the present 55s. The delegates rejected an executive resolution asking for a Select Committee on war pensions, but carried the motion calling for an "Annual day of demand in connection with the pensions campaign," and also a resolution deploring "the complacent attitude of Members of Parliament" towards pensions. Other important items included the decision to support any legislation designed to provide cornea for grafting purposes to relieve blindness, and to press the claims of ex-Service men and women in this matter, while the most sympathetic reception was given for the resolution calling attention to the plight of war widows and ex-P.O.W.s.

St. Dunstan's was well represented at the conference for, apart from Sir Ian and Lady Fraser, the delegates included Captain William Appleby, O.B.E., a member of the St. Dunstan's Executive Council and a member until this year (he resigned on account of ill-health) of the British Legion Executive Council, and Mr. E. Russell, of Leeds, who was there with his wife. The National Council presented Captain Appleby with an illuminated address, signed by all its members, recalling the fact that he was a founder of the Legion and had been a member of the N.E.C. continuously since its inception, and expressing their regard and affection for him.

Eavesdropping

The term eavesdropping, in its most dramatic sense, conjures up a Cloak and Dagger picture. I always think of some sinister-looking character lurking behind a heavy velvet curtain, or else a Master Spy with one eager ear glued to a keyhole. I know this is carrying things a bit into the realms of fantasy, but whichever way I look at the word I visualise an Eavesdropper as a pretty nasty specimen. Yet I myself am not enveloped in a cloak, nor do I sport a dagger; no, not even a pen-knife. In all modesty I don't think I am a Nasty Character either, so how can I explain the naked fact that I am an Eavesdropper? What is more, I am going to try and justify it with the following lines.

Let me paint a picture, the Ovingdean lounge at teatime, crowds of St. Dunstan's bods perching all over the place stuffing themselves glassy-eyed with cakes and tea. I am sitting, or rather balancing, on the edge of a settee which also accommodates four other hungry St. Dunstaners, whose chatter makes my attempt at soliloquising rather difficult. I meditate profoundly on the chances of convincing the cake V.A.D. that I have not yet eaten or supped. A cup pushed hastily under the settee and some very crumbly floor space in front of me is my downfall. I am just about to slink craftily to another position when suddenly a few words from someone nearby float to my ears and make me sit up and take notice. I strain eagerly to catch again the voice which uttered the all important sentence. All I can hear is a continual hubbub and jabber of many voices, none of which I recognise. This kind of thing has happened to me frequently since I lost my sight. Normally I am not the least interested in other people's conversations, but on occasions such as I have described I unashamedly throw good manners to the wind, and cock my ears. That is why I brand myself as an Eavesdropper, not in a very big way, maybe, but an Eavesdropper nevertheless. Moreover, I contend that everyone, given the right provocation, will indulge in this indiscretion. Perhaps it is time I divulged what it was I heard in the lounge on this occasion. Quite simple, really, only a few words. Someone was remarking, in an apparently sane voice, that Matron Davis, of Blackpool, "keeps hundreds of elephants in her

room." Now if this had been heard as a direct statement for my special benefit I would have laughed, loud and long. Or else advised my informant to go to bed for a while and take things easy. Unfortunately, I overheard the wretched thing, and that very fact has added all the plausibility in the world to it. How on earth does Matron feed the brutes?

I do hope my point is becoming clearer now. It is my belief that Man's curiosity will lead him, or should it be drive him, to the ends of the earth, thus, when highly developed, a man's curiosity will make him a common or garden Nosey Parker.

I recall the time when, sitting alone at the top of the lounge, I became aware that a certain "Georgie" was being addressed in the most affectionate manner by an obviously lovesick female. I was fascinated, maybe because my name also happens to be George, and in a day-dreaming moment of whimsy I just sat and took it all in a near-swoon. However, my better judgment and honour prevailed, and I dragged myself away to a spot where I hoped I would overhear nothing so disturbing. It must have been my destiny on that day to hear things I shouldn't. From immediately behind me a very ancient St. Dunstaner was wheezing away to his neighbour in sympathetic tones about the Com's nasty fall down three flights of stairs. The reply was "Shut up, you fool, it doesn't come off till to-morrow." I did not move away that time, I couldn't. Then there was the afternoon when I cursed my luck as an eavesdropper. An individual, actually sitting next to me, asked his companion on the other side, what he thought of the band at the St. Dunstan's dance on the previous evening. "What a lousy drummer," was the unhesitating answer. They say that listeners never hear any good of themselves. How true. I was the drummer.

My final example of earflapping concerns two holidaymakers at the Blackpool Home last summer. A few of us were in the lounge, but the only two voices really audible were Mr. Baritone and Mr. Adenoids. They were directly across the room from me, and in spite of my own thoughts I was soon jogging along with them as a silent member of the company.

I gathered with casual interest that they had just met again for the first time in over thirty years. In those fabulous days at the

College they had apparently been bosom pals, or so I learned later on. I soon began to lose my powers of discretion once again. Adenoids and Baritone had certainly sown many a wild oat and burned the midnight oil in those far off days. Of the two, Adenoids was the more eloquent and descriptive, his friend seemed a little reluctant to dwell upon some of the escapades. Maybe Adenoids' half-hour in "The Star" had loosened his tongue, the expected arrival of Mrs. Baritone was probably making Baritone nervous. After many rather barrackroom reminiscences which I thoroughly enjoyed, Adenoids suddenly enquired if Baritone had enjoyed a happy married life. Without waiting for an answer he went on, "Always knew you'd marry Phoebe; strewth, how you two carried on." Someone entered the lounge and sat near the reunited cronies. Adenoids was undeterred, he warmed to his subject in his nasal tones "Remember how you said you'd cut your throat if Phoebe spoke to another St. Dunstaner, and how you wrote all that soppy poetry?" I began to feel uneasy, this was a bit personal. Then, just as Adenoids was narrating with obvious enjoyment the time when Baritone had not turned up at St. Dunstan's till after 4 a.m., there was the sound of someone jumping up in great haste, then a sharp feminine voice, "I'm not going to stop here to be insulted, with everybody listening." With that she stamped out of the room glaring at me. I knew she was glaring, for I felt it. I tried to look as though I was not listening as Baritone groaned "That was my wife, Mabel."

G. W. ELLIS.

Liverpool.

Rain

"Oh! Confound the rain!" How often, all over the well-watered areas of the world, do we hear this mild imprecation of the weather. But there is one place you won't hear it, and that is in the great Outback of Australia. The rough and ready pioneers, the stockmen, the drovers, the station owners, who are willing and very able to curse anyone and everything under the canopy of heaven, will never curse the rain. To them, rain is life itself. Rain is the difference between poverty and plenty.

From east to west, just above the centre line, and extending up north to the tropics,

lies a belt of country which is a cattleman's paradise—when it rains! Then, over thousands of square miles, the ground is covered with rich green grass—sometimes four to six feet high—lagoons and lakes are brimful of clean water. The cattle multiply, and the cattlemen prosper.

But the tall grass matures and seeds, and then, cured by sun and wind, becomes dry hay, losing none of its natural feed value. The months roll by, and the dry grass has been laid flat by the hot winds of the interior, and trampled into the dry red dust. The lakes and lagoons have shrunk in area, and are fringed with green ooze, constantly churned and stirred by the feet of thirsty animals. As time goes by the huge gaunt steers stagger weakly through the mud; they drink, but now have not the strength to drag themselves from the cloying mud, and there they die, sadly and stoically, after the manner of their kind. The stockmen spend long harrowing days dragging the unfortunate beasts clear of the precious water.

Each morning the station owner and his wife search the brazen blue skies for a hint of relief, hoping and praying for a hint that all might not yet be lost—just one little cloud to give hope. Evening comes, the hot red sun has dropped below the shimmering horizon, but no cool breeze comes to ease the suffering of the tortured land. The thermometer still reads over the century.

But the drought will break: that brazen sky will be covered with thick, dark, tumultuous clouds: the thunder will roar through the ageless ironstone hills, and the rain will fall! Great warm drops which, caressing the stricken earth, bring forth a scent so unutterably sweet that it can never be forgotten. The vivid green grass will once again carpet the dusty red plains. The herds will multiply again, and move slowly down the stock routes over miles of pink and white everlasting daisies, or the rich red desert pea. No, north of the 29th parallel, they don't curse the rain. They call it God's own Holy Water!

West Australia.

E. C. BULLEN.

Placement

J. Taylor, of Woodhouse, Sheffield, as a packer with Rempoy, Ltd.

Ovingdean Notes

Once again this year St. Dunstan's men resident in Brighton, including a party from West House and Ovingdean, have been entertained by the Sussex Freemasons. On May 6th a dinner and dance was held for them at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, which was much enjoyed by the large party who attended.

Another tireless friend of St. Dunstan's, Mr. Cheeseman, well known to many of our readers for the dances he organises at "The Arlington," Brighton, this month arranged a river trip for disabled ex-Servicemen. Coaches from the Brighton Homes joined up with men from Roehampton and the London Club, and then proceeded from Marlow to Windsor by river steamer. It was a great success in every way. Our thanks again to Mr. Cheeseman and his friends.

A first visit was paid to Ovingdean this month by the Langley Theatre Group, when they came to present their production of Tennessee Williams' play "The Glass Menagerie." The Music Hut was crowded and we were pleased that a good number of local St. Dunstaners were amongst the audience.

The Derby was once again well attended. Three coaches from Ovingdean and Brighton met up with the London Club coach. Once again, as the race was on a week-day, it was not possible for the trainees to be included in the party, but the best possible use was made of the radio at the time of the race!

Coach drives this month have been to Ockenden Manor and Drusilla's, both now confirmed favourites with St. Dunstan's men, and with the reopening of the Palace Pier Theatre we have once again been given free tickets to our men staying at Ovingdean on holiday, so that one more entertainment has been added to the many already available.

At Whitsun week-end the Centre was very full, and in the programme arranged were coaches to Fontwell Races, a drive to Wannock Tea Gardens, a Whist and Domino Drive (to which the local St. Dunstaners were invited), an extremely good Concert Party and a Gala Dance on Bank Holiday evening.

Finally now, a reminder that Sports Day is July 19th, and we hope to see as

many as possible of the Sussex St. Dunstaners and any from other parts who may be down our way at that time. Remember to apply for your tea tickets (which will be limited to one guest for each St. Dunstaner) as early as possible.

From the Chairman's Postbag

"Will the increase of 10s. a week on the basic rate of total disability pensions apply to alternative pensioners?"

H. NELSON, Bakewell.

Sir Ian replies:—

"The rise in the basic rate of 10s. a week does not apply to an alternative pension. All the Governments since the war have refused to apply rises to alternative pensions, though the British Legion has pressed the matter upon them. The reason the Ministry gives is that an alternative pension was a special feature of the First World War arrangements, and is not repeated for Second World War men.

We do not think this is satisfactory, but I am afraid there is nothing we can do about it, at least, not at present.

You are at liberty to exchange from an alternative pension to a basic pension if you wish to do so. There are some cases, particularly where family and other special allowances are available, where it pays a man to do this, and if you will write to Mr. L. Banks, M.B.E., at St. Dunstan's Training Centre, Ovingdean, giving particulars of your war pension, number of your pension book, etc., he will, I know, be glad to investigate your case individually and advise you whether you are getting all the pension to which you are entitled."

National Library for the Blind

Reading Competition

The E. W. Austin Memorial Reading Competition was held on May 17th, and we congratulate the following St. Dunstaners, who were successful in their different sections:—

Section I (Readers who lost their sight before 1938):

- 1st, T. Kent, Chelmsford.
- 2nd, S. Webster, Forest Hill.
- 3rd, F. A. Rhodes, Ovingdean.

Section II (Readers who have lost their sight since 1938):

- 1st, Miss Simpson (civilian).
- 2nd, F. Ripley.
- 3rd, R. Major.

From All Quarters

Lord Ismay, on becoming Secretary General of N.A.T.O. and residing in Paris, has resigned his membership of the Council of St. Dunstan's; Mr. Godfrey Robinson, who has become Chairman of the N.I.B. in his stead, has been invited to join St. Dunstan's Council and has accepted.

Captain C. C. Boyd Rochfort, trainer to Her Majesty the Queen, and well known to many St. Dunstaners, became a Companion of the Royal Victorian Order (C.V.O.) in the Birthday Honours.

F. W. Boorman, of Peterborough, took a big part in the production of "Show Boat," given by his firm's Dramatic Society. His daughter had taken one of the leading parts. There were masses of flowers for her, and a splendid basket of fruit for our St. Dunstaner after the show.

A. E. Hill, of Alresford, has been elected by members of Clacton Blind Club to be host for the Louis Braille Centenary Celebrations there in October. He received 2,333 votes, each vote representing a penny collected during the day.

Many local St. Dunstaners were present at the big production by the British Legion Players (Leeds) of "Good Night, Vienna, the proceeds of which were given to St. Dunstan's. Our St. Dunstaner, Mr. Ernest Russell, took a prominent part in the organisation of the event. He is a Member of the Northern Area Council and of the West Riding County Committee of the Legion.

Alan Hold, of Yeovil, toured with the Yeovil Temple Salvation Army Band during Whitsun, and on June 7th played with them as a solo band at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Welcome to England to Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Foster, of Vancouver, Canada, who are here for a good holiday. Our St. Dunstaner (one of our First War men) has now retired.

A St. Dunstaner who is also a paraplegic—S. A. Belsham, of Broadway, Worcestershire—has made a wonderful doll's house on quite a large scale. Every detail is perfect, and the house is lit by electricity.

Tom Taylor, of Farrington, near Preston, was chosen by the members of Bolton Road

Methodist Church to open their new Memorial Hall. A large crowd listened to him and watched as he performed the ceremony.

On May 10th, J. W. Cookson, of Kendal, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his service with the Provincial Insurance Company. Mr. F. Scott, the Company's Chairman, in a personal message of congratulation and good wishes, wrote: "It is becoming quite difficult to think of the 'Provincial' telephone service without associating it with your name. May I just say what I am sure would be a universal expression—that we all appreciate your willing and cheerful service and the sound of your cheery voice."

Irish St. Dunstaners McCrea, Berry and Rutledge, and Miss E. Wilson, were present at the Victory Anniversary Reunion of the "Not Forgotten Association" in the Ulster Hall on May 8th.

Councillor H. W. Greatrex, M.M., of Peacehaven, has been re-elected to his Parish Council and will shortly attend a Conference of Parish Councillors to be held in the North.

"Lease of Life"

This is the title of a book which has just been published. Its author is Andrew Milbourne, a paratrooper who was captured by the Germans at Arnhem, where he lost both forearms and the sight of one eye.

It is a deeply moving story of his service in North Africa and Italy, of his testing time at Arnhem, and his experiences, with his grave disabilities, as a prisoner of war. He writes simply of his early difficulties, and of how he overcame many of them; of his attempt to get back into civilian life. (He first found himself a job in a coal-mine as a haulage engine man.)

To-day he is happily married, successfully filling a post in the Civil Service. He has gained for himself a new "lease of life."

Young St. Dunstaners

Marriages

On May 24th, Peter Nichols (Hendon) to Miss Joan Wiltshire (London).

"In Memory"

Private Alfred Frederick Williamson, *Labour Corps (King's Liverpool Regt.)*

With deep regret we record the death of A. F. Williamson, of Chorlton-cum-Hardy. He came to us in 1918 after serving from May, 1917, until December of that year. He trained as a boot repairer and mat-maker, but for many years his health had been so poor that work was almost out of the question. He died in hospital on May 1st.

A wreath of poppies from Sir Ian Fraser and his St. Dunstan's friends was sent for the funeral. He leaves a wife and grown-up children, to whom our deep sympathy is extended.

Sergeant Thomas Moore Fisher, *28th Australian Imperial Force*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of T. M. Fisher, who served with the Australian Imperial Force and was wounded at Villers-Bretonneux in July, 1918. He came to us in September of that year to train as a poultry-farmer, but returned to Australia in 1919. In 1922 he was back again and he then settled in Scotland. He was intensely interested in his farm and carried this on until a few months before his death, which occurred at his home on April 25th.

Sir Ian's wreath was among the many flowers at the funeral. Our deep sympathy goes out to Mrs. Fisher and her daughter.

Private Smith Thompson, *King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry*

We record with deep regret the death of S. Thompson, of Wakefield, which took place at West House on March 6th. He was 80.

Although he served with his regiment from September, 1914, until April, 1916, he did not come to St. Dunstan's until 1929, but he was not able to take up any serious work.

He was buried at his home town, and St. Dunstan's wreath from Sir Ian was among the flowers. He leaves a wife and family, to whom our sincere sympathy is offered.

Sergeant David Nicol, *5th Canadian Western Cavalry*

With the death of David Nicol, we have lost another of our West House men.

David served with the 5th Canadian Western Cavalry, but it was not until 1937 that he returned to England and came under our care. He was then an elderly man and did not take any serious training. His health was not good and, after the death of his wife, he became one of our permanent residents at West House, where he died on May 23rd.

Wreaths from Sir Ian and from his comrades at Brighton were among the flowers at the funeral.

Private Cecil Challoner, *R.A.S.C. and Labour Corps*

We record, with regret, the sudden death on June 6th, of Cecil Challoner, of Beaumont, Jersey. He came to St. Dunstan's only in 1949, although his discharge from the Army was in June, 1918. He trained in netting.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his widow and grown-up daughter.

Births

BOND.—In April, to the wife of W. G.

Bond, of Ontario, Canada, a daughter.

ELLIS.—On April 17th, to the wife of

Jimmie Ellis, of Rondebosch, Cape Province, South Africa, a daughter—Beverly Anne.

HARALAMBOUS.—On June 3rd, to the wife

of A. H. Haralambous, of Lower Edmonton, a daughter—Helen.

MANNERS.—On June 11th, to the wife of

Melville Manners, of Bridgend, a daughter.

PRESTON.—On May 18th, to Isobel, the

wife of Geoff., a son—Thomas.

Marriages

BURNS—WOOD.—On June 7th, M.

("Micky") Burns, of Leatherhead, to Miss Wood, late V.A.D. at Brighton.

CARMAN—SHELDRAKE.—On June 7th, P.

Carman, of Saxmundham, to Mrs. Sheldrake.

FOULKES—COX.—On May 24th, W.

Foulkes, of Bowbrick Hill, to Mrs. A. L. Cox.

Deaths

Our sincere sympathy goes out to the following:

DENNIS.—To J. L. Dennis, at present in training at Brighton, who lost his wife on June 6th.

HAYLOCK.—To J. Haylock, of Ickleton, who has suffered the loss of his sister.

HORAN.—To E. P. Horan, of Dublin, whose sister died on May 29th.

KILLINGBECK.—To G. Killingbeck, of Peacehaven, whose wife passed away on June 18th.

LIPSCOMBE.—To F. Lipscombe, of Exeter, whose father died at the end of May.

POLLITT.—To Arthur Pollitt, of Patricroft, near Manchester, in the sudden loss of his mother.

STRAND.—To A. E. Strand, of Ringwood, whose step-father has recently died.