

# ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

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For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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## QUEEN MARY

IN the month that has passed, St. Dunstaners have mourned with countless others the death of a very great and gracious lady, Her Majesty Queen Mary. On March 25th the following message was sent to Her Majesty the Queen by Sir Neville Pearson, President of St. Dunstan's:

"Please convey to Her Majesty the Queen the deep sympathy of the blinded men and women of St. Dunstan's on the death of Her Majesty Queen Mary."

NEVILLE PEARSON.

The following reply was received by Sir Neville Pearson at our Headquarters:

"The Queen desires me to express her sincere thanks to you and all who joined with you in your kind message of sympathy."

PRIVATE SECRETARY.

A wreath of poppies, in the form of St. Dunstan's badge, was the tribute of St. Dunstan's men and women at the funeral of Her Late Majesty. It bore the words:

"From St. Dunstan's in affectionate memory from the war-blinded men and women of the Empire."

Much has been written about Queen Mary's great kindness, her thoughtful sympathy, and her noble character. Many will have their own personal recollections or special memories. We at St. Dunstan's particularly recall her surprise visit to our Headquarters in Regent's Park in June, 1938. We had been told at very short notice of Her Majesty's intention to pay us a visit. There was no time to make any elaborate arrangements, but this was just what Queen Mary wanted—to see our work in its ordinary day-to-day setting. She showed keen interest in everything she saw and asked many questions. Later Her Majesty sent a cheque for the purchase of a Talking Book for a St. Dunstaner.

When Queen Mary visited Brighton in 1946 for the Regency Exhibition, she had a special word for those St. Dunstaners present.

We mourn her passing but we will have proud and affectionate memories of her long and valuable life.

Sir Ian Fraser, accompanied by Lady Fraser, was present in Westminster Hall on March 29th when Members of both Houses of Parliament attended at the ceremony to receive the Royal coffin for the Lying in State.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

### War Pensions

In concert with the British Legion and other societies, we have continued to work for improved pensions. On another page is a summary of the case we have put forward on many platforms, in the Press, and by deputation. We regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not seen fit to meet our claims in his Budget, but we recall that adjustments of war pensions do not necessarily have to be made in the Budget or the Finance Bill but can be made by Royal Warrant at any time. We will continue to press the Government to deal with this matter in an adequate and generous manner.

### Reading for the Talking Book

On a Sunday morning, unless I am out in the sunshine, I like to listen to a programme on the Home Service called "The Critics." It keeps you in touch with present-day thought about books, plays, radio, and other forms of art.

A few Sundays ago the Critics had been listening to the reading of books in the "Book at Bedtime" feature, at 11.5 p.m. on the Light Programme, and I thought their discussion most relevant to our needs as blind listeners to the Talking Book.

One of them said that a particular book had been beautifully read by a certain artist, but another said that the artist had dramatised the book to too great an extent. The reader should not impress his or her personality too strongly upon the listener, because what was wanted was the author's work and the personality of the character rather than the individuality of the reader. One speaker said, "The reader must not come between us and the book."

I thought this informed criticism put into words exactly the point I have always felt should guide readers of Talking Books. I do not go as far as to say that they must read monotonously, but I agree that they should not dramatise or act parts except to the very slightest extent to indicate a change of speaker.

### Hansard in Braille

Some time ago a Member asked a Parliamentary Question as to whether a synopsis of Hansard could be put into Braille. The Minister, replying, said there would not be sufficient demand.

As a matter of interest, I have taken out the following two figures. The fullest synopsis or summary of the speeches made in Parliament appears in *The Times* newspaper, and in an average week it occupies between 15,000 and 20,000 words. One Braille volume of a magazine or Panda type book contains between 25,000 and 30,000 words.

I doubt if more than a handful of blind persons would want to read so much, and that is, no doubt, the conclusion—I think the correct conclusion—to which the Minister came.

Nevertheless the only political or sociological comment which we have in Braille is Commander Stephen King-Hall's *National News-Letter*, and I wonder if, without introducing a new magazine, a few pages of some of the existing magazines might not be used to reproduce an occasional extract from a notable political speech, an outstanding leading article, or an informed comment from one of the well-known Lobby Correspondents or sketch writers.

### Early St. Dunstaners and Staff

My note in last month's REVIEW mentioning early St. Dunstaners and staff has given much pleasure to many who remember those early days. I am glad to be corrected by correspondents who give us further information this month.

IAN FRASER.

### London Club Notes

*Indoor Section.*—On Monday, March 9th, our Darts Team paid a visit to Addiscombe and Shirley British Legion Club. The result of three keenly contested games was a victory for our hosts, this being our first defeat of the year. Our Dominoes players, however, retained their unbeaten record.

On Monday, March 23rd, members from the Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind Club paid us a visit. On this occasion we won two out of three games of darts, the dominoes players again won, and a jolly evening was had by all. A Darts team of twelve were the guests of Shell Mex-B.P. Sports Club at the Strand on Wednesday, March 25th. This popular annual event, under the capable leadership of Bill Phillips as captain, was won by our team in two straight games. Several of our players later won at Crib.

It is proposed to run a coach to the Derby on Saturday, June 6th. The cost is expected to be approximately £1 per person. Will members wishing to go please give their names to Mr. Willis not later than May 15th. In the event of there being more people wishing to go than there are seats available, a ballot will be held.

W. BISHOP.

*Bridge.*—February 28th saw the Club in action against a combined team provided by our old friend, Jack Armstrong, and our much older friend, Bill Henry—teams of eight. Result, a win for the Jack-Jock combination by a very small margin. Congratulations.

March 7th saw us doing battle against a very strong four from the High Command for India office (Hicomind). We received a thorough beating.

On March 14th we were very pleased to welcome our old friends from Lyons' Bridge Club, 12 a side. It was a very pleasant afternoon in every sense of the word. Here again we were unsuccessful. Congratulations, J.L.B.C. Come again soon.

March 21st saw eight representatives residing North of the river competing against eight from the sunny South. Bridge seems as unpredictable as soccer for the Northerners have a credit balance of some 1,600 odd points. We meet again for the second leg in the autumn.

On March 28th we again had the pleasure of a visit from our friends of the Civil Service, skippered by our old friend, Jack

Callow. I regret to say that we were well and truly beaten. Congratulations, Jack.

Brush up your Bridge, blokes, it is badly in need of a spring clean.

The London Business Houses League matches have now all been played. Paul Nuyens' team finished second in their section, playing ten matches, winning six, drawing one and losing three. The winning team, Civil Service, were only beaten once—and that was by our team.

"Tiny" Fleming's team, in their section, played ten matches, won two, drew one and lost seven. A good many of these matches were only lost by the narrowest of margins. Better luck next time! S.H.W.

*Outdoor Section.*—Twelve miles, March 7th, 1953. We were pleased to have Mr. Lale to start the race and present the prizes at the 12 mile race on March 7th. It was a cold but dry day, and we must congratulate Archie Brown on his splendid performance in winning the race (see what persistent, regular training can do). Billy Miller took a hiding and finished fourth—only the second time he has been beaten this season, which proved anyone can be knocked off his pedestal.

The two rivals were at it again, Tommy Gaygan and Charles Williamson finishing 2nd and 3rd. Now for the steady plodders: Stan Tutton is still improving and moving up the field. Alf Bradley wanted to die at 9½ miles, but a little bird told him to keep going and he finished. Charles Stafford is still hard at it heading for the Brighton road, and Dennis Fleisig, whose first season this is, was game to the end—watch out for him next season. Les Dennis, from Brighton, was with us again.

The first three men home caused our handicapper, Bill Harris, some embarrassment by taking the handicap prizes in that order—almost unheard of in road walking; restless nights to come for Bill.

Charles Stafford won the prize for the best improved time since last year's race, being five minutes faster.

We are still waiting for new faces and stout hearts on Tuesday evenings at 6.30 p.m., Holme House, Regent's Park. What about it, boys? W. M. and C. W.

### To All Sportsmen

St. Dunstaners may now obtain a hand-embroidered blazer or sweater badge at a cost of five shillings from Men's Supplies Department at Headquarters.

### 1953 Derby Sweepstake

The Derby will be run on Saturday, June 6th, and we invite applications from St. Dunstaners and St. Dunstan's trainees for tickets in our own Sweepstake. No other person can enter.

Tickets are 2s. 6d. each and application for them should be made as soon as possible and will be received up to the first post on **Thursday, May 21st.** Every application must bear the name and address of the sender, together with the number of tickets required, and must be sent to the Editor, ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW, 1 South Audley Street, London, W.1. Postal orders should be made payable to St. Dunstan's and crossed. St. Dunstaners are advised to send postal orders or cheques and not loose money unless it is registered. Tickets will be issued consecutively.

The total money subscribed, less the cost of printing and postage, will be distributed as follows:—

50% to the holder of the ticket drawing the winning horse;

20% to the holder of the ticket drawing the second horse;

10% to the holder of the ticket drawing the third horse;

20% to be divided equally among those drawing a horse which actually starts in the race.

### Miss Beryl Sleigh

Many of her St. Dunstan's friends were at the Salle Erard in London on Monday, March 16th, when Beryl Sleigh, C.I.A., gave a recital of songs at a concert presented by the Circle of International Art. With Miss Sleigh was Thora Hornsby, who gave a pianoforte recital.

Beryl's songs included the delightful airs by Haydn, "She never told her love" and "My mother bids me bind my hair"; well-loved songs by Schubert and Brahms; and, finally, a group of songs by Ivor Gurney, Frank Bridge and Roger Quilter. When, as one of her many encores, Beryl sang "Drink to me only with thine eyes," her audience was delighted.

### Lee-on-Solent Camp

An invitation has come from the Navy asking us for a week's Camp from August 7th—15th.

Please send your entries along as soon as possible to Mrs. Spurway, The Vicarage, Holmwood, Dorking. Closing date for entries, May 6th.

### The First St. Dunstaners

H. E. Hill, of Devizes, in a letter to Sir Ian, tells how he too was among the earliest arrivals at St. Dunstan's. He writes:

"On the 12th February, 1915, I met a lady (Miss Hesketh by name), who asked me if I would like to go to London to learn Braille and make string bags. She said it will open on Monday, the 15th February. I told her I would go on Friday, the 19th. The following men were there when I arrived: Cole, Jimmy Batchelor, Milligan, Selby, Harry Day, now at West House, Bill Kerr, Foxon, Billy Hallam, Kirby, and Jock Waddell were also at Bayswater. Sewell came on the 20th. Sewell and myself were the first to ever go to St. Dunstan's (the house itself). Wilfred Robins took us one day to see if the place was ready for us."

### Early Staff

Sergeant Alan Nichols writes: "I was appointed Lecturer and Manager of the Lantern Slide and Film Department in February, 1918."

(We understand that this was a department of the N.I.B. in association with the Carol League. Miss Marshall was in charge of the Carol League.—Ed.)

### Reading and Maidstone Reunions

It fell to Reading, on March 25th, to be the first of the 1953 meetings, and Mr. Wills' first Reunion as Welfare Superintendent. Sir Neville Pearson, Bt., President of St. Dunstan's, and Lady Fraser were the guests of honour at this very happy gathering of some sixty St. Dunstaners, who welcomed another popular guest—Miss Pain. As a tribute to Queen Mary, a minute's silence was observed.

On April 1st, Sir Neville Pearson was again present at the Royal Star Hotel, Maidstone, to welcome St. Dunstaners and to introduce to them another special guest, Alderman Dorothy M. Relf, Mayor of Maidstone, who was present with her husband. Alderman Relf is the first woman Mayor of Maidstone for four hundred years and she was a most popular visitor. She greeted every man personally, took the keenest interest in everything concerning them, and was delighted to let them examine and admire her magnificent Chain of Office.

At both meetings, a message of good wishes was read from Sir Ian Fraser.

### Letters to the Editor

DEAR EDITOR,

My memory is something I have been training for a number of years because I have to depend upon it so much. Therefore when I said that I had seen the Kaiser at the Coronation of King George V, and this was disputed, I had to discover who was making the mistake. The answer is very simple and has been confirmed by Marlborough House, the Lord Chamberlain's office, and a neutral, highly reputable newspaper.

The Kaiser was in London at the end of the Court Mourning for His Majesty King Edward VII in May, 1911. There was a ceremonial procession in his honour and he was in the parade. I was on duty during that parade, and while standing at the "Present" saw the Kaiser ride past. Subsequently, a few days later, when on duty opposite Sandow's Physical Training School, I had those Germans in view during the whole of the Coronation procession.

In December last, when I thought of writing to the REVIEW, I did not realise that the lapse of forty-two years had caused me to put the Kaiser in the picture of the actual Coronation Procession. Probably Bill Lowings fell into the same trap.

That is the explanation and I am glad to clear the matter up.

Yours sincerely,

A. M. NICHOLS.

Portslade.

DEAR EDITOR,

My wife gave me a deerstalker hat for a Christmas present. I thought some St. Dunstaners might be interested to know what a protection I have found it to be. The peak sticks out further than the average cap and is more rigid, and has saved me many a time from getting a blow on the face from half-opened doors, etc. The back peak shelters your neck from the sun and also stops the rain running down your neck! I live in the country and do a fair amount of walking about by myself, and will never be without a deerstalker in the future.

Yours truly,

D. J. M. STEPHENS.

Ferryside, Carmarthenshire.

DEAR EDITOR,

Why do so many St. Dunstaners, particularly men of the 1914-18 war, address V.A.D.s and, indeed, any female member

of Ovingdean staff as Sister? I am not trying to make a major issue of this, but often during the few years I have been a St. Dunstaner I have wondered about this practice. Like all the members of St. Dunstan's, I have spent a lot of my time in hospitals, and my experience has filled me with a deep and abiding respect and admiration for the nursing profession. I have learned to associate the title of Sister with a certain amount of authority and a great deal of nursing skill, acquired only after several years of hard work. There is no doubt at all that the word Sister is a rank and not just a means of indicating a profession. I have an equal admiration and respect for our V.A.D.s, but at the same time I cannot help feeling that we should remember the significance of the title and cause less embarrassment to the V.A.D.s by addressing them as Miss or Mrs., as the case may be.

I suspect that these observations will make little impression, but I would like to know if any other St. Dunstaners have held the same opinion.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE ELLIS.

Ovingdean.

### Nostalgia

*A summer day, a pal or two,  
Time to accomplish all we mean to do.  
Bill and Johnny—those two clowns—  
Go for a walk across the Downs.*

*The mail is read, the papers scanned,  
An afternoon trip in a coach is planned.  
A cup of char, the morning break,  
That reading test I've got to take!  
A clanging bell, a rush of feet—  
I couldn't give a name to that there meat.*

*Comes afternoon, and after that  
Let's find Bert and have a chat.  
A hurried shave, a stick, and now  
If anyone wants me I'm at The Plough!*

Hatch End.

S. JONES.

### Wanted

Would any St. Dunstaner offer to send his braille copy of the "Review" or "Nuggets" to a blind American living in Fittsville, Mass.? The Editor has had many requests from him and would like to help him.

★ ★ ★

There are a number of items in the printed REVIEW which it has not been possible to include in the braille issue. These will appear next month.

### From All Quarters

From South Perth, West Australia, comes a cheerful letter from J. Lloyd. He writes: "In looking back over the years there is one thing that has given me a lot of satisfaction and that is the fact that I learnt Braille. . . . To Miss Pain and her Braille teachers goes my everlasting thanks. Although we are a long way off from you, the Christmas greetings from Sir Ian and the Christmas gift serve to remind us that we are still part of the band of St. Dunstaners who have received so much help and guidance. My best wishes to all St. Dunstaners."

★ ★ ★

From Australia, too, there is news of Norman Nolde, who sailed from England in April, 1952. Norman, who had a successful shop in Leytonstone, is now doing very well in a business in Richmond, Victoria.

★ ★ ★

We have recently welcomed to our "family" a new St. Dunstaner, H. Morgan, of Welshpool, Montgomery. One of his sons was killed in Malaya and was posthumously awarded the George Medal. It was a proud moment for Mr. and Mrs. Morgan when they went to Buckingham Palace to receive their boy's decoration from the late King George VI.

★ ★ ★

Another newcomer, J. S. Taylor, of Doncaster, tells us that he has reluctantly had to resign his Red Cross work as Quartermaster after nearly nine years' service.

★ ★ ★

Joseph ("Smokey") Britton, of Kingsley, near Pontefract, becomes a Knight of the R.A.O.B. on April 24th. Smokey is one of our handless lads and runs a successful fried fish and chip business.

★ ★ ★

Mrs. Margaret Stanway, who runs a boarding house at Morecambe, had a wonderful write-up in the *Sunday Chronicle* recently. Across its headlines it said "The landlady who never makes a mistake," and the article which followed praised Margaret's skill at cooking and coping with the food requirements of her seven-year-old daughter, her mother and the visitors. In a recent competition she won first prize against 150 experienced cooks.

Harry Costigan also "hit the headlines" in the Brighton Press recently. Recalling the fact that Harry was the first to broadcast for the old British Broadcasting Company at Marconi House on its first day of operations, it went on to tell of his varied career, including his tours with ENSA, and of his achievement a few weeks ago when he took part in "Tuesday at the Dome." He sang four songs and won immediate applause from the great audience. The headlines were: "Made First Song Broadcast—Harry Costigan Stages a Come-back"—a come-back, they added, to the concert platform that has been too long without him.

★ ★ ★

George Shed, of Hurstpierpoint, is in the semi-final of the Cuckfield Darts Competition. He is the only blind competitor.

★ ★ ★

Bernard Glover, of Southsea, has invented a new musical instrument which he calls the "accorganola"—a new version of the piano accordion which he claims increases and enhances the tone by electronic means. The prototype took three months to make with the assistance of a sighted friend. He hopes that a musical firm will take up his invention.

★ ★ ★

Bill Young received many congratulatory letters following his broadcast in the Wilfred Pickles programme from Brighton. Not only did complete strangers write in to say how much they enjoyed his singing, but for old friends of the regiment it was an opportunity to get in touch with him again. His fine voice obviously gave tremendous pleasure to listeners everywhere. Thank you, Bill, and lots of luck.

★ ★ ★

Anthony F. Naumann, of Palmers Cross, near Bramley, Surrey, and Mrs. Naumann (who will be remembered by many as Matron of Brockhurst, Church Stretton) are breeding whippets and actively showing them. Their stud dog—Sapperly Merry Monarch (affectionately known as Muffin Man)—is father of the new European Champion Whippet.

### Placement

W. Hodder, of Hull, as a telephonist at the Ministry of Labour, Market Place, Hull.

### Keeping Hens for Eggs

St. Dunstan thought I was a clever chap and that I knew a lot about hens, so they started me right off. Now I find out I know nothing about those fowl birds. I was sent one of the finest poultry houses ever made—it is the pride of the village. I started off with twenty and had everything ready for them, even to a nice new basket to collect the eggs. The birds came and they were quite proud of their new home and soon settled down. Next morning I was up very early, with my new basket with plenty of hay in the bottom as the weight of eggs might crush the ones on the bottom and I was taking no risks. Into the hen house I went. I felt a little guilty as the only eggs I had collected before belonged to someone else. A word of warning! Never put eggs in your pocket. I once fell over a fence with 18 in my pockets. The results were too sticky, so we will leave it. I started to look for the eggs and drew all blanks until I came to the last nest; one of the girls was sitting quite content. She got up and walked out, stopped and looked over her shoulder and saw what I saw. Then she gave me a look as much as to say, "Take it or leave it; what can you expect, I am only a learner?" It was the prettiest little egg I had seen—it reminded me of my bird-nesting days, so I put it in the new basket and went into the house. My wife was frying bacon. She said "The bacon is ready, give me the eggs." When she saw it she said "Have I to fry it all?" The hens, however, soon made up for lost time and my basket was very handy. One day I went to see how many eggs I was going to get and one old girl was sitting and would not move. I was going to help her off when she hit me on the hand with her beak, so I let her stop for two days and slipped four pot eggs under her. She settled down fine. I went to see how she was keeping. She was standing looking at the eggs and then settled down again, as much as to say, "I will do it if I sit here for ever." Later I moved her into a little prefab I had made for her and put four duck eggs under her and left her. Another chap had the Prince of the Rhode Island Reds. It was always

on the fence yelling "I've got my eye on you." One day he saw the girl of the prefab come out and was on the point of rushing to meet her when he saw what was behind her—four ducklings. He stopped dead in his rush and gave her a nasty look as much as to say "I always had my doubts about you." But looking after those birds keeps me out of mischief and I feel very proud when people tell me they are a grand lot.

Newcastle.

BILLY BELL.

### I Remember

Before common sense and experience taught me to accept the occupational training of St. Dunstan's, I remember trying my hand at helping a team of farm labourers to clean up and prepare for dispatch potatoes which had been sealed in a "pit, cave, or clamp," call it what you will, during the winter time.

After my first morning, having got in everyone's way, I enquired where we were to eat our sandwich lunch. I was advised to follow one of the party who was also just leaving. I hurried after his misty figure until it disappeared round the corner of a house. Turning the same corner a few seconds later, I hesitated at an open back door, and someone just inside, getting cleaned up at the sink. . . . I waited, and as he completed his toilet, I stepped inside to commence mine. I believe my hands were soaking nicely, when yet another member of our party arrived, and, looking in at me enquired what on earth I was doing there! I hurriedly picked up my lunch bag, hands still wet, while he explained that I must have lost contact with the chappie I was following, as at that precise moment I seemed to be inviting myself to lunch in the farmer's house!

Eventually I discovered that we ate under a "lean-to" with some Italian P.O.W.s and farm hands.

I've often wondered what the farmer told his wife, as he definitely saw me begin my ablutions. Isn't it amazing what one can get away with?

ALFRED G. BRADLEY.

West Harrow.

## War Pensions Again Debated

In the House of Commons on April 2nd, Sir Ian Fraser said:

"Her Majesty's Government have decided to ask Parliament later in the year to consider the merging of the Ministry of Pensions into a new Ministry, to be called the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance. . . . This Motion will come before the House and I do not propose to deal with it for more than a minute now, but I think it right at this early stage to place on record the fact that, within my knowledge, the British Legion, Blesma, St. Dunstan's and, I fancy, most other organisations concerned with the welfare of ex-Service men are most anxious about this merger. They feel that they will be losing a friend in the Ministry of Pensions; a friend with whom we have argued many times but who, nevertheless, has over the years come to know our needs.

"However well the new machinery may work, we doubt whether the well-being of ex-Servicemen will, when they are only part of a big Ministry, be so well cared for as it has been during the past years, when they have had what they regard as their own Ministry. However, final judgment on whether the merger is a good thing or not will, in my view, depend much more upon what Governments do for disabled ex-Servicemen by way of improving their war pensions.

"The British Legion asks that the basic rate of war pensions should be increased to 90s. a week. This does not mean that hundreds of thousands of men are to have 90s. a week. . . . Last year Her Majesty's Government gave a rise of 10s. a week on the 100 per cent. basic rate. That was the highest rise we had had and involved more money than all the benefits that had been provided for war pensioners in the past six or eight years. Nevertheless, it did not give everybody 10s. a week. It gave to war pensioners an average of 4s. 0½d. a week. At the same time, in the same Budget, about that amount was taken away.

"We claim that the basic rate of war pensions is, as a whole, 38 per cent. below

what it ought to be if it were put in its proper place in the cost of living scale. Our argument is not so much that we want a rise, or even a preference, but that we have been left behind, and that our disabled men ought to be put in their right place in the cost of living scale.

"What we ask is that the Government shall accept the principle that compensation for loss of limb, health or sight should at least be on the basis that it buys now as much as it did in earlier years. I say without contradiction that the basic rate of war pensions buys less to-day than it has done at any time in the last 30 years. That surely is a prima facie case for action or for inquiry.

"The Budget is due on Tuesday week. We earnestly hope that it may contain provisions which will recognise the duty which this great nation owes to its disabled ex-Service men and women."

In a brief debate, Sir Ian was supported by Members of both sides of the House.

Mr. Heathcoat Amory, Minister of Pensions, replying, doubted whether any Government could vary pensions automatically with rises in the cost of living, unless it agreed to do something downward if and when the cost of living fell. The best service any Government could render was to try to kill inflation.

Fortunately a majority of war pensioners were able to be employed and so were benefiting from wage increases.

## The Liverpool Club

The sympathy of the Club goes out to Mrs. Alex Wright in the grief caused by the untimely death of her husband. We all feel this as a personal loss and our Club meetings will seem sadly different for a long time to come. Alex served us well as Hon. Treasurer and his help will be missed. He was one of the founder members of the Club and this fact in itself only serves to accentuate his absence, for he was known above all things for his constant cheerfulness and eagerness to be friendly.

G. W. ELLIS.

## Because of the Rum

A grim silent figure stood in the black shadow of a barn, from which came discordant voices, cursing those who had failed to issue the rum due after a wearisome trudge back from the trenches. Old Pat Casey, whose ribbons denoted service in South Africa, was too astute a soldier to incite disorder, or indulge in empty, mutinous abuse, instead he decided upon, and posted himself for effective action.

Presently a form emerged from the darkness, a bulky object in his arms, and after disappearing into the sergeant's billet, soon came out empty-handed, to rejoin his fellow N.C.O.s taking coffee in the farmhouse. Casey slipped stealthily into the said billet, a lighted match revealing a suspiciously neat pile of straw, from which his nimble fingers extracted the missing section rum. "Come along, me little darling," he murmured triumphantly, "the boys be waiting for ye." But outside, the keen night air prompted him to first fortify himself. Hastening to the improvised cookhouse, a corrugated iron lean-to, he kicked the dying fire into flames, and lay snugly down, his mess tin liberally supplied with rum. He soon felt at peace with the world, sergeants included. He replenished his tin, and presently the strong spirit and fire's glow induced drowsiness, and he fell asleep.

His slumbers, however, were rudely disturbed. In wild alarm he sprang to his feet, the seat of his tunic and pants ablaze. "Mither of Aul Oirelneecy on me," he yelled wildly. "The divil has me at last, for all afoire I be."

Now Pat feared no man nor tangible danger, but this sudden envelopment in fire and smoke was too much for his muddled senses and national dread of the supernatural, and he fled wildly for the safety of his billet. This frenzied onrush fanned the incendiary still more.

The willing hands of his grinning comrades promptly relieved his perilous plight by the simple expedient of rolling him along the puddly mire.

"Oh boyes, 'tis from hell ye've grabbed me, or mebbe from those thaiving sergeants, but in yon tin hut ye'll foind your rum, but 'tis to be water for this pair Oirishman till me dying day," he gasped, as he stood there, charred and smoke-begrimed.

"Good old Casey," grinned the section.

W. GIRLING.

## The Last Thing I Saw

This article was found among her husband's papers by Mrs. Appleby, who sent it to Sir Ian. It carries with it a message of such sincerity that we think St. Dunstaners will like to read it.—ED.

★ ★ ★

"To meet the worst that fate can send and to wring courage from it instead of despair—that is success."

Booth Tarkington, who will be known to readers as the author of that famous book, "Monsieur Beaucaire," wrote those lines to me many years ago after a happy meeting in America.

I had travelled much on the Continent of Europe, and even further afield to Egypt and India before the war, and had always been struck by the misery and dejection, often accompanied by disease, of the foreign blind beggar. He had always made me feel that he was the poorest of all human species.

On the evening of July 6th, 1915, I was taking my Company up to the front line to occupy our position on Pilken Ridge, and I passed a blind beggar clad in rags sitting by the roadside, and filthy beyond description.

I think in those days one's soul was more easily touched, and I felt that I must give him all I could; my all being only a few franks, but as I dropped them into his can I registered the prayer almost audibly, "May God grant that I never be like you."

Within twelve hours I was physically blind for life.

A strange answer to my prayer you will say, but I do not think so.

Wars are made by man, and the loss of my sight, I felt even from the first, was due in no way to divine direction, but to the foolishness of man.

How then was my prayer answered?

From that very moment life became richer to me in all those things we believe are controlled and directed by God, if we will give him the opportunity.

I have been given a vast number of friends all over the world. Ex-Service men have given me equality with sighted men in the mutual building up of our organisation.

I am rich by the affection of most, and have no enemies.

The last thing I saw taught me how not to live when blind, but rather how, by work and play, the mind and body could be brought into tune, giving me courage to face the future, and with this faith has come the richest of all earthly blessings, "The true comradeship of man."

### Ovingdean Notes

Before telling you about some of the things which have taken place at Ovingdean during the last few weeks, there are two items of interest to local St. Dunstaners. So make a note of these two dates! Firstly, the Farmer Cup Walking Race at Brighton will be held this year on Saturday, May 30th, starting at 3 p.m. from the Sun Terrace, Madeira Drive. Please will as many of you as possible come along to cheer the competitors on their way? Secondly, the date of Ovingdean Sports Day has been fixed for Saturday, July 11th, and again we are hoping for a record number of entries and a big crowd of spectators.

The end of term seemed to arrive quickly once March was reached, and at the end of that month away went the trainees for their Easter holiday, whilst Ovingdean prepared to receive other St. Dunstaners, and by Good Friday the house was pretty well full. On both Saturday and Easter Monday two coaches of men went off to Plumpton Races, and on Saturday evening one of the regular Whist and Domino Tournaments for local St. Dunstaners was held in the Winter Garden.

The weather, of course, was not too bright, and rather blustery, and therefore the coach drives were particularly popular. Several of these were arranged for the holiday week, and Arundel and Drusillas, at Alfriston, were amongst the places visited.

Easter Services in the Ovingdean Chapel were conducted by the Reverend W. J. Taylor, and were well attended.

On Easter Saturday we were very pleased to receive a visit from Sir Ian and Lady Fraser.

A thoroughly varied week of entertainments, in which we hope that everyone here on holiday found pleasure in one form or another, was rounded off last Sunday evening with a Concert in the Lounge before a most appreciative audience. Bill Young, who not so long ago broadcast in the Wilfred Pickles programme, entertained us with songs and his harmonica, and Gwennie Obern, holidaying at Port Hall, sang beautifully, as did Joe Doubler, who lives locally and came up to Ovingdean specially for the Concert. Our thanks, too, to Miss Chidleigh for her contribution to a most enjoyable evening.

### Retirement

Many St. Dunstaners who were trained at Church Stretton and Ovingdean will learn with regret of Mr. K. Norman's retirement because of ill-health. He will be remembered by many for his work in the Machine Shop during the past nine years. We now at Ovingdean know that many ex-trainees will join with us in hoping that in his retirement his health will improve and that he will from time to time visit us here.

### Test Results

**Typing Test.**—R. Armstrong, J. Padley, A. Barnes (Officer), J. Shirlaw, R. Swannell, J. Walker.

**Preliminary Test.**—A. Barnes (Officer), T. Giles, J. Donbavand, R. Armstrong.

**Writing Test.**—T. Giles.

**Advanced.**—P. Walker, J. Oriel (Officer), A. Barnes (Officer), J. Padley.

### National Laying Test

Report for 12th month ended  
February 15th

	Score	Value to date
1. W. Alan Smith ...	...	531
2. Philip Bagwell ...	...	460
3. W. Webb ...	...	418
4. Percy Holmes ...	...	397
5. T. D. Gregory ...	...	244
6. G. C. Jackson ...	...	223

Average per bird to date, 67.51.

### Freedom

I have felt the chill whip of the dawn in  
my face,  
I have laughed in the wind at its worst;  
And I've joyed with the sun in his swift  
morning chase

Of the shadows the hedgerows have nursed.  
I have walked on the hills at the green  
valley's brim;

I have printed the sheen-silvered dew;  
And I've joyed with the birds in their great  
pealing hymn

As it broke from the woodland anew.  
I have lain 'neath the trees with their deep  
arching boughs,

I have watched with my candles the stars;  
And I joy in the freedom reflection endows,  
And I grope not around for the bars.

ANTHONY LAW.

### Young St. Dunstaners

Peter, the twin son of J. S. Whitelam, of Westcliff-on-Sea, passed the Institute of Bankers' examination last summer and came first in all England, winning the Beckett Memorial Prize.

Jack Loram (Brixham) is now a full Lieutenant in the Navy and is stationed at Torpoint, on H.M.S. *Raleigh*. He is an instructor.

Stanislaus Sephton, with his bride, has sailed to Burma to take up an appointment.

Ian Marsden has won a medal for the best aggregate in Alderholt Rifle Club for 1952.

### Marriages

On April 6th, Marjorie Shaw, Ashton-in-Makerfield, to Peter Cox.

On March 21st, Douglas Kerr, Widnes, to Miss Lucy Hazelhurst.

The son of G. Jackson, of Ashford, was married on April 4th.

Maureen Robinson, of Scarborough, on March 28th.

On December 20th, 1952, at St. Mark's Church, Cheltenham, Harold Dembenski to Eileen May Taylor.

On Easter Monday, the son of A. T. Brooks, of Bournemouth.

In March, Mary Ashe, Lancing.

### Out of the Past

During the war, a Comforts Fund for sons of St. Dunstaners was organised by Matron Boyd Rochfort and subsequently carried on by Matron Pain and her helpers. Later, Matron Vaughan-Davies continued from Blackpool, and when the war ended she still held several small gifts and a sum of money. Since the closing of the Blackpool Home, Miss Davies of the Linen Room has prepared a list of some two thousand names of sons and daughters of St. Dunstaners, a draw took place on February 15th, and nine lucky ones came out—Gwendoline Anderson (now Gwenny Bracey), Eleanor Meckin, A. Simmons, G. E. Thornton, Kathleen Hills (now Kathleen Howlett), D. J. Chambers, Winifred Abbey, Enid Kenward and M. Hall. The gifts have been dispatched, and Miss Vaughan-Davies breathes again!

### Grandfathers

W. Muir, Whitley Bay; G. Jackson, Ashford; R. Popple, Llandebie; A. S. Henderson, Dagenham (twins for the second time, making eleven grandchildren); W. Smith, Parbold, Wigan; T. Jarman, Bournemouth (another grandson); H. Marsden, Alderholt. J. G. Rose, East Lothian, a grand-daughter.

### Births

BROUGHAM.—To the wife of T. Brougham, of Speke, a daughter—Jean.

COPE.—On April 5th, to the wife of H. R. Cope, of Stoke-on-Trent, a daughter.

GODING.—On March 13th, to the wife of R. J. Goding, of Reading, a daughter—Janet.

SPRING.—On March 7th, to the wife of P. Spring, of Chessington North, Surrey, a son—Anthony Joseph.

STUART.—On March 22nd, to the wife of J. Stuart, of High Wycombe, a daughter—Suzanne Eileen.

TURNER.—On March 2nd, to the wife of I. R. Turner, of Skipton, a son—Peter John. (Amended notice.)

WHITE.—On February 15th, to the wife of L. A. White, of Mount Albert, Auckland, New Zealand, a daughter—Melanie May.

### Marriages

GARTHWAITE—SHEPARD.—In Rotherham, on February 9th, 1952, E. Garthwaite, lately of Rotherham, now of Plumstead, to Mrs. Lucy Shephard.

PADLEY—HIRON.—Jim Padley (training at Ovingdean) married Patricia Hiron on April 2nd, 1953, at Brighton.

RAYNER—MASKELL.—On April 4th, Albert Rayner, of Gateshead, to Alice Edith Maskell.

### Deaths

Our deep sympathy goes out to the following:—

BALLARD.—To A. W. Ballard, of Nottingham, whose wife died in hospital on November 4th, after great suffering. (We must apologise for the lateness of this notice.)

BRYDSON.—To S. Brydson, of Gasstown, Dumfries, whose wife has died. Our St. Dunstaner is himself a sick man and he will be coming to West House.

HAMILTON.—To J. Hamilton, of Nottingham, who has lost his father.

HARDING.—To R. Harding, of Southbourne, whose mother died recently.

SEYMOUR.—To W. Seymour, of Regent's Park, whose sister died in January.

WINDLEY.—To Harry Windley, of Hull, whose mother died on March 8th.

★ ★ ★

We have heard with deep regret that Mrs. Jack Vincent's mother died recently as the result of an accident near her daughter's home at Maidenhead.

## “ In Memory ”

### Private Sidney Batten, *17th Essex Regiment*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of S. Batten, of Bridgewater, Somerset. He came to St. Dunstan's in 1919, and it was from the Bungalow in that year that he and Mrs. Batten were married. He worked at mat-making for many years, but later transferred to netting. His health, however, had not been good in recent months and he died suddenly on March 13th.

The funeral took place at Quantock Road Cemetery. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack. A St. Dunstaner comrade, Mr. Bob Sheehan, was present, with Mrs. Sheehan. Sir Ian Fraser's wreath of poppies was among the flowers.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. Batten and her sons.

### Gunner Henry Buchanan, *Royal Field Artillery*

With deep regret we record the death of H. Buchanan, of Folkestone, which occurred on April 5th, at the age of sixty-four.

When he came to us in October, 1925, he trained in telephony, but he retired from this work in 1947 and settled in Folkestone.

A wreath of poppies from Sir Ian was among the flowers at the funeral.

He leaves a widow and grown-up family to whom our deep sympathy is extended.

### Private Alfred Walter Bundy, *1/5th Batt. Gloucestershire Regiment*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Alf Bundy, of Gloucester. He was fifty-six.

Wounded on the Somme, he entered St. Dunstan's in December, 1916. For a time he did boot-repairing, then he took a shop. Later he gave this up and trained in telephony and as a telephonist he worked with Shell Mex and B.P., Ltd., until his death. Early in March he was admitted to hospital and he died there on the 13th.

At his express wish, his friends sent donations to St. Dunstan's, instead of flowers, and it is clear from the messages which came with them that he was deeply loved and respected. "My friend, telephone operator and gallant gentleman . . ." wrote an executive of his firm. "An English gentleman, friend and telephone operator whose face at the window beside his board will be greatly missed by us all . . ." The Supervisors and Staff, Gloucester Telephone Exchange, wrote: "One of our most cheerful subscribers." The Post Office Engineering Staff referred to him as "the perfect operator."

Nearly five hundred people attended his funeral, including representatives of Shell Mex and B.P., Ltd., the British Legion, the 1/5th Battalion Gloucester Regiment O.C. Association, and Toc H, Gloucester Branch, of which he was a founder member. St. Dunstan's wreath of poppies was placed on the coffin with the family cross.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his wife, daughter and son.

### Private George Robert Coxon, *K.O.Y.L.I.*

It is with deep regret that we record the death of G. R. Coxon, of Blyth, who died very suddenly on March 19th, following a heart attack.

Although suffering from the effects of mustard gas in the first World War, he did not come to us until 1944, and then only light work was possible.

The Chairman's wreath of poppies was sent for the funeral.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Coxon in her further bereavement; only last April she lost her only son at the age of nineteen.

### Private Dennis Driscoll, *Royal Munster Fusiliers*

With deep regret we record the death of D. Driscoll, of Cork, who came to us in 1929 having lost his sight as a result of being buried in a shell explosion. He trained as a boot-repairer and mat-maker but carried on only the latter craft, but for a number of years now he has not been a fit man.

He had a great personality and was a good comrade, always anxious to help fellow St. Dunstaners. He and Mrs. Driscoll, in difficult times when visits were impossible, often helped in this way.

He had been severely ill for two or three weeks, and he died at his home on March 14th. The funeral took place from Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bollinlough, on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. The attendance at the funeral and the many floral wreaths were proof of the high esteem in which he was held. Among the wreaths was one from Sir Ian Fraser and his St. Dunstan's comrades, which bore red, white and blue ribbons, and another from the British Legion.

Three St. Dunstaners—Messrs. Andrew Keegan, Denis Morrison and Pat Long—were present, and also the widows of three St. Dunstaners—Mrs. Hayes, Mrs. Kenny and Mrs. Condon. Mrs. Toomey, wife of our St. Dunstaner was also present.

He is survived by his widow and four daughters, to whom our deep sympathy is extended.

### Private William Duxbury, *1st Manchester Regiment*

With deep regret we record the death of W. Duxbury, of Cheadle Hulme, Stockport.

Wounded at La Bassée in October, 1914, he came to St. Dunstan's in April of the following year, so that he was one of our first St. Dunstaners.

He had a small business for some time, but of recent years he had been able only to do light work, and, in fact, had been in bad health for some time. He was very ill at Ovingdean last year, but recovered sufficiently to go home and carry on quietly. He passed away on March 1st.

A wreath from Sir Ian and his St. Dunstan's comrades was sent for the funeral.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his wife and family.