

ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

A FEW St. Dunstaners attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall on the evening of Saturday, November 5th, when the Queen, the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee and many other distinguished people were present. A contingent assembled on the morning of Remembrance Sunday to march to the Service at the Cenotaph, and I learned that individual St. Dunstaners attended Armistice Services in towns and villages all over the land; no doubt, all over the world too. Many laid wreaths. So we all played our various parts thinking, no doubt, of experiences of long ago and above all remembering comrades in arms who are not with us now.

How Do You Listen?

Since my blind friends get so much pleasure from listening to wireless and the Talking Book, I make no excuse for again referring to what I consider to be the best way to listen. Speech is made up of many sound waves; some of them are big and strong and produce the vowel sounds; others are small and weak and produce the consonant sounds. It is the consonants that make for intelligibility. It happens that these tenuous waves travel mainly in a straight line from the loudspeaker and do not go round corners and fill up the room like the stronger ones do. Therefore, it is less tiring to listen from a point directly in front of the loudspeaker than from an angle. It is also less tiring to give the weaker waves a chance by turning the tone control to "high" or "treble" to the largest possible extent that is comfortable.

In my experience, many people listen round the corner, so to speak, or with the tone control as deep as possible so that there is a booming sound. This may give pleasure to some when the programme is dance music, but it does not make speech easier to hear.

My advice, therefore, is to put the tone control as high as possible, have the volume reasonably low and sit straight in front of the loudspeaker facing it. I am sure this technique is right if you get used to it, but I admit that it is a matter of opinion and taste and I would be interested to know what others think.

Some T.V. Impressions

The other evening I did my first considerable television broadcast. In the studio were 40 members of the Asian Club, men and women from India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, China and other places in the Far East who happen to be students, doctors, teachers, etc., in London. Among them was Mr. Suresh Ahuja, a young Indian in his twenties who had been blind for seven years and who has obtained the M.A. degree of London University, and Mr. David Po Cho, who is headmaster of the biggest school for the blind in Burma.

I sat in their midst and they asked me questions, and I was told that from five to eight million viewers were watching and listening to us. I have been asked by a good many people what it feels like.

It feels very hot for most powerful lights are shining down upon you. Just before the programme starts a young woman appears with a bowl of brown powder and a powder puff which she rubs over your face and forehead to prevent you looking so pale under the intense light and also to reduce sweating.

Before the show starts, we have a rehearsal in which questions are asked and answers given, but they are not the real questions, just dummy ones to enable us to get used to our own voices and give the technicians a chance of focusing their cameras and adjusting their microphones.

I think the fact that I did not see the cameras training themselves upon me like machine guns probably prevented me from being conscious of the outside audience to the extent to which I might otherwise have been, for I was able without much difficulty to fix my attention on the people in the studio without being anxious about the greater audience outside.

I was, of course, being questioned on a subject which is very familiar to me, namely aspects of blindness, and questioning itself did not greatly surprise or disconcert me because my political training has accustomed me to it. Nevertheless, the experience was a considerable nervous strain.

I was astonished at the universality of a popular television programme such as this, for during the next few days I could hardly move in any circle of men and women, the office, the train, the House of Commons, the local newspaper shop, or even the local casual passer-by in Regent's Park without being greeted with "I saw you on the television."

IAN FRASER.

Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Service

On the morning of Friday, December 9th, the thirty-fourth anniversary of the death of our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson, a party of St. Dunstaners will go from Headquarters to Hampstead Cemetery, where a wreath will be placed upon Sir Arthur's grave.

Subscriptions of not more than one shilling towards the wreath should be sent to Mr. Lloyds, at 191 Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1.

A Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, December 11th, at the Ovingdean Chapel, at 11.15 a.m. It will be a combined Service for St. Dunstaners at Ovingdean and West House, and for St. Dunstaners living in the Brighton area. Sir Neville Pearson, Bt., will read the lesson at the Service, which will be conducted by Canon W. G. Speight (St. Dunstaner) and the Rev. W. J. Taylor.

Eisteddfod Success

M. Manners of Bridgend, was awarded first prize as a bass-baritone at the Glamorgan County Blind Eisteddfod held at Briton Ferry.

David Bell, M.A., B.Com.

David Bell, who graduated Master of Arts at Edinburgh University in July, 1952, was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Commerce at the University on October 15th. David had a first class distinction in Banking, and a second class distinction in Industrial Commerce.

Telephonist Wins Handicraft Competition

Jack Embleton, of Trimdon Grange, who is a telephonist, won the Men's Class at the Handicrafts Exhibition of Durham County Women's Institutes, held at Gateshead on October 22nd. He exhibited a woven travelling rug, woven cushion covers, and a tray.

★ ★ ★

Kenneth Revis, law student at Oxford University, took part in the B.B.C.'s "Top Town" feature on November 15th. The contest was between Oxford and Cambridge. Captain Revis sang a song dedicated to his guide dog, "Sandra," who also appeared with him. Oxford won.

London Club Notes

Bridge

As we go to press, our members are converging on Ovingdean for their annual Bridge Congress. Full details will be given next month.

In the London Business Houses League our team's winning run has been halted. Of five matches they have now won four and lost one. Their match with Civil Service on November 18th resulted in a win for the visitors by 4 points.

Walking Section

On October 29th, St. Dunstan's held a six-a-side match with the Metropolitan Police in Regent's Park.

In ideal weather for walking, Archie Brown set a good pace at the start with Miller tucked in behind him, and Charles Williamson close behind in third place. After half a mile, Billy went into the lead and immediately came under pressure from Charles, when Billy got a stitch after only 2½ miles. Charles quickly took advantage of this and went into the lead and, keeping up the pace, soon had a lead of about 50 yards. Two policemen remained close to Charles and gained a short lead on him. Billy eventually recovered and began to make up leeway, and finally passed Charles with a mile to go, but the two policemen proved to be the stronger, and although he caught one, he could not pass him; thus they returned the same time, with the policeman taking second place only inches in front of Billy. Charles Williamson maintained a good pace and easily won the handicap, with Billy Miller second and Charles Stafford third.

The Metropolitan Police won the match with 37 points to St. Dunstan's 41.

W. M.

St. Dunstan's Six Mile Handicap Walk and Match with Metropolitan Police Regent's Park, Saturday, October 29th, 1955

Order of Finish		Actual Time		H'cp.	Pos'n.
		All.	Time in H'p.		
1.	R. Readman	M.P.	53-25		
2.	S. Milsum	M.P.	53-32		
3.	W. Miller	St. D.	53-32	sc.	53-32 2
4.	C. Williamson	St. D.	53-53	1-30	53-23 1
5.	A. Brown	St. D.	55-34	1-00	54-34 4
6.	C. Spencer	M.P.	57-12		
7.	W. Read	M.P.	57-43		
8.	T. Gaygan	St. D.	58-49	3-00	55-59 6
9.	R. Youldon	M.P.	59-45		
10.	C. Stafford	St. D.	59-47	5-20	54-27 3
11.	S. Tutton	St. D.	59-49	5-00	54-49 5
12.	R. Parsons	M.P.	60-18		

Handicap: 1st, C. Williamson.
2nd, W. Miller.
3rd, C. Stafford.

Match: 1st, Metropolitan Police, 37 points.
2nd, St. Dunstan's, 41 points.

National Federation Chairman

Congratulations to Alex. Scott, of Belfast, upon his election as chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch of the National Federation of the Blind for the coming year.

National Laying Test Dinner

Sir Ian Fraser, accompanied by Lady Fraser, was the guest of honour at the Dinner and Prize Presentation organised by the National Egg Laying Test. It was held at the Hotel Russell on October 26th, 1955, and during the evening Sir Ian presented the prizes to the successful competitors.

Among these were the winners in the St. Dunstan's Section. This section has been a feature of the Test for the last 30 years. In that section, the winner of the first position was W. Wells, of Gt. Houghton, Northants. His pen of Rhodes gained the St. Dunstan's Cup, silver gilt medal, and cash prize of £4. It also gained the winter certificate and the cash prize of £3 from the Poultry Association of Great Britain. His six birds laid 1,268 scoring eggs.

G. Cooke, of Stoke-on-Trent, gained second place and was awarded a silver medal, and a cheque for £3, and also the second P.A.G.B. prize of £2. His birds laid 1,132 scoring eggs.

P. Holmes, of Woburn, gained third place and was awarded a bronze medal and cheque for £2. He also holds the Jacob and Spearman cup for a year, as his pen contained the bird with the highest individual production, 1,035 scoring eggs.

Sir Ian was received by the Chairman of the Directors of the Test, Sir Guy Hambling, and by the Deputy Chairman, Miss Eunice Kidd. In his speech, he thanked the Test Management and everyone concerned for their interest in the St. Dunstan's section, sketched briefly the part played by St. Dunstan's poultry farmers in the industry, and then had his audience deeply interested by a word picture of the scene at the House of Commons, from which he had just come, on the occasion of the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Letters to the Editor

DEAR EDITOR,

I was very interested in Mr. Chambers' letter regarding the strange way in which world-famous authors depict the character and behaviour of blind people.

I quite agree with all that has been said about them. Why, oh why, don't they take the trouble to meet and mix with a few blind people before they start painting them in a book?

A short time ago I listened to one of W. Somerset Maugham's plays, "For Services Rendered." The main character, a war-blinded army man, was made to tap his way round his own home with his stick presumably on floors with no carpets. His long-suffering sister was made to play endless games of cards with him to keep the poor chap amused. He was a burden to himself and everybody else.

Because Somerset Maugham is Somerset Maugham, he gets away with it! There are many other similar instances of well-known writers getting away with it.

I am trying to write a book myself about a war-blinded ex-R.A.F. pilot. It deals with his rehabilitation and return to civilian life. I don't suppose the book will ever be published, but I am not making our blind hero a superman or a stupid clot. He is, I hope, a perfectly normal human being and enjoying life like the rest of us.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN MARTIN.

W.11.

DEAR EDITOR,

Mr. Chambers' article, "To See Ourselves," induces me to submit a letter from the *Bristol Evening World* to which I contribute. To see ourselves as others see us is not often given to us, and very often we would not wish to know what others think of us or see in us. I have read the book to which Mr. Chambers refers, and endorse his opinion of that fictional blind officer whose chief function was that of a self-sacrificing moralist to whom I think most normal persons would take an intense dislike.

Normality is the Utopia to which blinded people should aspire, and neither the sighted or similarly handicapped blind persons admire the individuals who seek to pose as wonder-men to whom the blessed eyesight was superfluous. I wonder how many St. Dunstaners listened to "The Hole in the

Wall" on T.V. some weeks ago, in which a particularly nauseating character called "Blind George" was featured. I think it is a tragedy that fiction writers always depict blindness as a sort of unalterable characteristic that turns people into sub-human devils or superhuman if priggish angels.

Well, there it is. We are what we are and what we have allowed St. Dunstan's to make of us, and what use we have made of our training. I am now well past the Old Age conception, but, thanks to my work, my dog, my interests and, of course, my wife, who looks after the creature comforts, I take a priggish pride in thinking that I am very near normal.

Yours sincerely,

A. J. RADFORD.
Castle Cary.

The letter to the *Bristol Evening World*, to which Mr. Radford referred, read:

"No contributor to your 'Opinion' has ever given me more pleasure than A. J. Radford, and whenever I read or hear over 'Air Space' the name of Castle Cary, I think back a few years when I walked from Bruton to see this man who had an 'Opinion.' Whatever Castle Cary may think of him, particularly on his recent contribution, 'Conscience,' he may be sure that at least one other 'crank' fully supports him.

"Unfortunately, A.J., in these days the individual has to be stifled, and there are so many careerists in the political and trade union spheres that there 'ain't any room for conscience.' Or is there?"

"Happy hunting, A.J., and thanks, *Evening World*, for the opportunity of reading him."

E. G. SAGE, *Bristol.*

DEAR EDITOR,

I know of one author who took the trouble to find out about blind people, although I do not think his book has been published yet. His name is Norman Swallow, who is well known both on the radio and television.

In 1949 an article appeared in one of the London evening papers concerning some of the St. Dunstan's girls, myself included. Later I received a letter from Mr. Swallow saying he was writing a book, and the main character was a blind girl. Could I help him by answering some questions. Does a blind person prefer to link his guide, if so, why; does a totally blind person see only blackness, or colour? And, as his book was to be mainly about a girl, would she still be interested in make-up, dress, dancing, and so on.

I answered these questions as fully as I could, and asked the advice of other St.

St. Dunstan's Dance

Remember the date: *Friday, December 9th, 7.30 to 11 p.m.*

Remember the place: *Trevelyan Hall, St. Anne's Place, Great Peter Street, off Great Smith Street, Westminster.*

Tickets: 3s. single; 5s. double. Obtainable from Miss Hoare, 3-9 The Paragon, Blackheath, S.E.3 (Tel. Reliance 1084 during office hours). No tickets sold at the door, so please apply beforehand. Please give us a few days' notice because of catering.

There will be a bar. Transport will be arranged to stations.

This Dance is for St. Dunstaners and their wives, St. Dunstan's staff and V.A.D.s; St. Dunstaners' widows will be most welcome. *Come along and meet old friends.*

Deaf-Blind Watch Fund

This Fund—as my St. Dunstaner friends will know—was started early in 1945 by our old friend, Mr. Ottaway, and since that date some £825 has been subscribed, almost entirely by St. Dunstaners.

The object of the Fund is to supply braille watches to the civilian deaf-blind, and I understand from the National Deaf-Blind Helpers' League that they still have on their lists some 100 deaf-blind persons who have no watch. The present cost of a braille watch is £4 2s. 6d.

Many St. Dunstaners have taken an interest in this little Fund through the years, and the Bridge Club in London have very kindly donated a braille watch each year. It has been a personal pleasure to me to have been able to act as Hon. Treasurer of the Fund since its inception, and Mr. A. D. Lloyds, who has now succeeded me as Secretary of St. Dunstan's, has kindly consented to act as Hon. Treasurer in the future.

The watches, which the Fund supplies, give such real pleasure to our deaf-blind friends, and I feel sure that there are many St. Dunstaners who would like to send a small donation to Mr. Lloyds at 191 Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1.

Thank you all so much for the generous help you have given to the Fund, and to me, as its Hon. Treasurer, in the past.

W. ASKEW.

Dunstaners, so that Mr. Swallow would have as true a picture as possible.

If other authors would go to so much trouble to get their facts straight, it would make more convincing reading, and a far more interesting book.

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET STANWAY.
Morecambe and Heysham.

DEAR EDITOR,

Living in a constantly changing world, filled with exciting new discoveries, blind people have to rely to a great extent for their information on the powers of description of their friends and relations. Unfortunately, very few people possess the ability to describe in a few words objects and situations in much the same way as a cartoonist expresses his ideas by a few strokes of his pen. The day-to-day parlance of ordinary people often contains words and expressions of loose and broad meaning, and on many occasions in general conversation this habit is unimportant. I have often accepted a statement from an informant in its true, literal meaning, and later found it was totally inaccurate. My informant, when challenged, would be horrified that I had taken his words so literally. It is surprising how many people will describe something as being to the left when it is on the right. The number of people who call oblongs squares! And how often does the expression "one or two" turn out to mean six or more!

These, of course, are only simple examples of the careless use of words; even so, when used descriptively, they can completely mislead a blind person.

Blind people owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the B.B.C. for employing so many masters of the art of making word pictures. I wonder if the commentators on sport and pageantry realise what joy and pleasure they are giving to those who cannot see and therefore have to rely so much on the spoken word for their entertainment and knowledge.

Yours sincerely,

EDGAR R. ETTRIDGE.
Addiscombe.

★ ★ ★

R. Edwards' grandson, Roy (Denbigh, North Wales) was picked to play in the Youths' Football International on October 29th.

In the House of Commons

Extract from Hansard, November 2nd

SIR IAN FRASER :

National Service is an interruption of young life. It takes men away from their families, their education and their jobs, and checks their prospects and their careers. It should not be tolerated or prolonged for a moment longer than is absolutely necessary.

In my opinion, two years' service for the time being is inevitable. The Minister has made out a case and I have not the slightest hesitation in supporting him on it. It would clearly be exceedingly wasteful to continue with the present system, but to let the present men go out at eighteen months, that would be wasting the most valuable six months of their time and, with our burdens all over the world, it seems to me that that cannot be afforded.

When we consider that practically half of the militia man's service is spent in learning the elements of his job—and then he does not know it so well as a professional—it must be clearly wasteful to have men in for two years; they ought to be in for seven and twelve years. I should like to know what it would cost to make the Service so attractive that they would come in for a longer period.

There are in this country ten million old soldiers, sailors and airmen. The great majority look back on their service with pleasure, a little wistfully, especially the older ones. They have a patriotic outlook and tend to encourage the good name of the Armed Forces and be proud of their regiment, the ship, or the unit in which they served. Many of them are very sensible chaps and, if they knew more about the facts they might be more convinced in supporting the policy of the moment and in helping to determine the public opinion that will make the policy of the future. I do not demand an inquiry of the formal kind, but I ask the Government to consider whether a great many more facts could be given—not facts which expose our weakness to the enemy or anything of that kind, but economic facts as to the burdens the country bears now and would bear were we to make the remuneration in the Armed Forces really comparable with what it is in industry.

Talking Book Library

On October

The half dozen books installed this month could hardly be more varied and, at the same time, so readable. Here is the opportunity to choose the most entertaining for yourself:

"The Houses in Between," by Howard Spring, reader Marjorie Anderson, is an interesting diary of a lady, born 1848, died 1948. In fact, the name of the author comes as a surprise so convincing is his writing. It makes Mrs. Dale even tamer than one thinks it already! *Cat. No. 942.*

"Gilbert and Sullivan," by Hesketh Pearson, reader Eric Gillett, is neatly summed up in its title. It shows the working and personal relationship of the pair as almost perfect material for numberless comic operas in itself. Highly entertaining. *Cat. No. 943.*

"Random Harvest," by James Hilton, reader Robert Dougall, has all the best ingredients of a good book. Shell-shock, temporary loss of memory, then colossal business success with always a haunting blank of some eighteen months when anything might have happened. The theme is handled in masterly fashion and the result is a really excellent book. *Cat. No. 448.*

"Fathers and Sons," by Turgenev, reader Jack de Manio, is an everyday sort of yarn of family life in the vacuum that was Russia a century ago. The fathers—old stick-in-the-muds; the sons—keen Nihilists; helluva lot of chatter, no action. *Cat. No. 450.*

"Flying Saucers Have Landed," by Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, reader Robert Gladwell, as many a married man knows to his cost, is only too true. Maybe this book is pseudo-scientific, but it is both entertaining and highly plausible. Are we to say this or that is or is not true? Fact, fiction, or somewhere in between, this is gripping and absorbing. *Cat. No. 4.*

"A Tale of Two Cities," by Charles Dickens, reader Andrew Timothy. This is an excellent recording and anything I say about the multiplicity of threads of many lives crossing and re-crossing between London and Paris in those fateful days before and during the French Revolution is probably superfluous. A treat for those who don't know the story, and a revelation to those with but a rusty memory of it. *Cat. No. 22.* My money's on "Random Harvest!" "NELSON."

Hitch-Hiking to Naples

Tastes differ as much in the matter of holidays as in anything else, but just in case someone should feel that he has run the gamut of novelty, I should like to describe the trip abroad that I made this year.

I like to leave England every year, and in the last six years I have made visits to France, Italy, Holland and Eire; this year I decided to go both to France and Italy, trying a new method which I hoped, with reason, would bring me into contact with many different people. I refer to the art of hitch-hiking, called on the Continent "auto-stop."

Briefly, I determined to hitch-hike to Naples; how far I succeeded the reader must judge.

I need not describe the journey from London to Boulogne, for I do not regard it as part of my hitch, so I will start from the moment when I descended the gangway and found myself in a noisy, bustling quay-cum-railway station.

As I had eaten no food since one o'clock the previous night, I turned right-handed along the main Paris road, which ran, a porter informed me, past several cheap eating houses.

The first shop that emitted an appetising odour turned out to be "Le Café de l'Abattoir," the Slaughter-House Café. Undeterred by this somewhat gruesome name, I entered and was shortly served with a splendid ham omelette, rolls, butter, and a carafe of good red wine, costing less than an equal amount of beer in England. Replete, I once more followed the traffic noises in the direction of Paris. Tapping along for twenty minutes or so took me beyond the limits of Boulogne and I decided to make my first hitching experiment, thus: Walk twenty yards, stop, advance white stick so as to be visible to oncoming traffic, make sweeping gesticulations towards Paris with thumb upraised like a Roman Emperor indicating his decision to a gladiatorial circus. Nothing stopped, nothing even slowed down, I felt foolish. Twenty minutes later I was still walking and pausing, walking and pausing, walking and pausing, when a small van, smelling strongly of fish, stopped, and a hearty French voice asked me where I was going. "Towards Paris," I said, "anywhere along this road."

The fishmonger seemed interested when I told him of my plans, and twenty kilo-

metres later dropped me at a garage, saying that I stood a better chance of getting a lift from a customer there than by thumbing on the main road.

A youngish man in a minute 4 h.p. car, on his way to collect his children from some party, was my next benefactor. Half an hour later I quitted his tiny car at Abbeville, where my enquiries not only discovered the whereabouts of the youth hotel, but the Pere Aubergiste, as the wardens are called.

I was not the first arrival at the Abbeville hostel, for there I met the kind providers of my next lift. Staying at the hostel were three English people driving to the South of France. What luck! for on hearing of my destination they insisted on taking me with them for their next day's journey and, the following morning at about six, the four of us set off on the road for Paris. We arrived in the early evening at Auxerre, where my companions had hotel accommodation. Thanking these generous lift-givers, I once more took the road.

At the southern end of Auxerre I stopped at a café for refreshment, and was at once drawn into conversation by Monsieur André Fourrier, a very large and kind-hearted elderly gentleman, who at once set himself to work on the problem of getting me some distance on my way. The result of André's labours was a van, into which he handed me with his best good wishes. There was much noise made by the engine, and the banging of its cargo, which seemed to be empty petrol cans and garden implements. Conversation was impossible, but André Fourrier kept up a continuous commentary on the ideas that occurred to him. "Yes, yes, routiers were the places to go; cars, lorries, stopped there, they were open all night, it was the law." Half an hour later we had arrived at one. I said goodbye to André and the driver of the rattling van, accepted André's card, and settled down to wait for the next lift.

I waited a long time, but nothing came. At about midnight the routier proprietor suggested that I would do better to go on to yet another routier, only a short distance away but more patronised by long distance travellers, and so, on this second day of travel, I arrived at a modern café, with a semi-circular drive, parking space, and all the latest gadgets in the food production line.

There were no beds, all were taken hours ago, but I could, if I wished, sit up in the restaurant; it was open all night. I sat, I drank coffee, I talked with the counter-man, I drank more coffee, I sat up all night, and so at about seven in the morning, I set off to walk a bit, and, I hoped, to pick up a lift on the way. Thus commenced my acquaintance with a stretch of road that I heard later had long ago been christened "the hitch-hikers' graveyard."

At this early hour there was only a little traffic on the road, and I was not unduly discouraged when, half an hour later, I was still walking with occasional pauses to signal an overtaking vehicle. I walked on and on, until suddenly the road vanished from under me, the chief discovery of Sir Isaac Newton took hold of me, and I fell with a crash on to a surface of dry mud and stones. I was not hurt, but somewhat taken aback, since normal roads do not, in my experience, lead off into space. I investigated the bank down which I had fallen and, aided by the noise of traffic, deduced that the edge of the road, where normally there would be a curb or at least a grass verge, fell sheer from the traffic lane, and foot passengers were just not catered for. I remounted the road and walked on. By this time traffic was once again coming thick and fast, but no signal of mine served to arrest the progress of any of them. Cars almost brushed me as they rushed past with a blare of klaxon. I realised the full difficulty of my position, the road was in the process of being made up, there was barely room for two-way traffic, nothing dare stop, for now cars were passing almost nose to tail at high speed; I must carry on till the road widened. I carried on. Again and again, as I shied away from some vehicle that seemed to pass more than usually close, I fell headlong over the edge into the field below, or tripped over the heaps of road ballast that were set at intervals for use when the road gangs got to work.

Two or three hours later I was still walking and falling, with occasional halts to ease my knapsack, which could not settle itself into any comfortable position between my frequent falls over the edge.

At last the road widened slightly, and although no cars stopped to my signals I was in luck, for a small boy, riding a large bicycle, came out of a side turning and dismounted at my side. In answer to his

enquiries I explained my situation. He was equal to the crisis, for he said the road was now slightly wider, and if I gripped the seat of his bicycle he would guide me to the next village where, he said, there was a routiers café.

We must have looked odd as we wended our way along this busy road, for I now realised that the boy's bicycle was far too big for him, and he could not reach the saddle and I had to do a sort of dot-and-carry-one shuffle to avoid hitting my leg against the bicycle. Twenty minutes or so brought us to the village, however, and, having indicated the routiers outside which several cars and lorries were parked, the boy pedalled off for his lunch while I entered and ordered a glass of wine.

The counterman was most upset when he heard of my unfortunate morning, and very soon found among his customers a lorry driver who said that if I cared to travel in the back of his lorry he would take me to Lyons. I thanked the counterman and the driver and, having stood them both a drink, climbed into the back of the empty lorry for the five or six hour journey to Lyons.

There I had no difficulty in finding the youth hostel, and had the good fortune to secure the last bed. It was here that I first heard that I had passed through "the hitch-hikers' graveyard."

On Tuesday morning I left the Lyons hostel in the company of a German of about twenty-three or four, who was going to Avignon, some 200 miles away.

A kilometre or so outside Lyons we got a lift in a van which we discovered was the property of the local gas company. We left the gas man some twenty or thirty kilometres later, but after only ten minutes or so of walking and signalling, a car drew up and the young man who was driving offered to take us as far as Avignon. The young man just mentioned was not alone in the car, for his mother and his sister already occupied the back seat, but after our bags had been stowed in the boot there was plenty of room for all and we set off at a cracking pace in the direction of Avignon.

Quite suddenly the car screeched to a standstill with a crash that announced that we had hit something fairly hard. Excited exclamations from the other occupants assured me that in our car we were all unhurt so I got out with the others to participate in the volatile exchange which

followed. We had, it appeared, ran into the back of another car which had stopped for no apparent reason very suddenly, and although the rear of the leading car was undamaged, the radiator of my lift-giver's car was buckled and water was pouring on to the road.

In a very few minutes all was arranged, addresses exchanged, and the undamaged car went off to find a 'phone to summon a breakdown van.

Mademoiselle told me with pride that the main roads of France have a special breakdown service, and that a van would assuredly arrive in short order, but the car would, without doubt, be delayed for some time. Regretfully Hans and I bade farewell to our companions, and once more trudged on towards distant Avignon.

After one or two unsuccessful signals, a vast machine halted and a gloomy-voiced driver told us to get into the cab with him as he was going to Avignon. The cab of this vehicle stood about six feet above the ground, and it was quite a climb to get in but, once settled, we ground along at a fair speed.

"Life is hard," said the driver in a despondent tone of voice, and, not wishing to argue with a benefactor, I agreed tentatively. "Why should we not all be equal?" went on the driver. "Why not indeed," I said. "Do you then disagree with the Government?" I asked. "I disagree with all Governments, they are all bad. Why should we not be able to do as we like?" With infrequent pauses for a few words of encouragement from me, the driver grumbled on "Down with controls, down with work!" The man was an anarchist. A kilometre or so later I learned the reason. Our driver was very fond of wine, this lorry was a wine tanker. Behind us thousands of litres of wine lay in locked and sealed compartments. Tantalus himself was not more tantalised!

At Avignon the German and I descended and, crossing the new bridge, not the one they dance on, soon found the youth hostel, which resembled a big army camp.

In the evening I went to the town alone. Then fortune smiled, for I was hailed, and found myself talking to Madame, her son and daughter, the occupants of the car that had crashed. "To-morrow," they said, "we go to Cannes. If you meet us

outside the Town Hall at eight sharp we will take you there with us."

At about twelve noon, and on Wednesday, the 3rd, I left my lift in the centre of Cannes and set about finding the hostels.

I stayed a week in Cannes, swimming and lazing on the beach all day and touring the town at night. I soon made several friends and we clubbed together to provide our own mess, buying food at the markets and cooking it at the well-equipped camp kitchen. The evenings were full of parties, community singing and other activities, and my slight ability with the guitar made me many friends.

But for my determination to reach Naples I would not have left, but I felt I had to go on, so, after my farewells, I stationed myself on the road near the camp to try once more for a lift. Luck was again with me, for after a very short wait a young Frenchman in a fast car drew up and offered to take me to Nice.

On arriving at Nice I said goodbye to my driver, but he was in too great a hurry to pay much attention, and roared off while still protesting that it had been a pleasure.

I had heard that private persons were very chary of taking strangers in their cars across the frontier, since they might be delayed if the Customs discovered any irregularity in a passenger, so I took a 'bus for the fifteen odd kilometres to Bordighera, the Italian frontier town. I was not delayed by the Customs, and indeed they seemed only interested to know if I had sufficient currency to support myself, and not become an immediate liability to the Italian State.

I stood on the roadside about a hundred yards from the control post, and almost immediately my signals arrested another young man driving solo, who offered to take me as far as Genoa where, he explained, he had a date for dinner.

When I left this last lift, I took a 'bus to the outskirts of the town, on the Rome road, for, as the young man informed me, Genoa was a very long town with many miles of docks.

At a garage near the point where I had left the 'bus, I found a large empty lorry filling up with petrol, and I promptly begged a lift in very halting Italian. The driver seemed to understand me, and assisted me into the rear, which smelled strongly of chemicals and contained only a few heavy

wooden crates lying apparently haphazardly. "It is a long way," said the driver, "sleep well."

I awoke chilly and stiff to find the lorry dashing along at high speed. I could not get at the driver to find out either the time or our whereabouts, so I smoked and sat guessing until the driver, stopping the lorry, came round to the back to tell me that he could not take me further on my way, but that we had reached Albamo. This information gave me a surprise, for Albamo is south of Rome. "How far have we come, what time is it?" I asked. "Eight," said the driver. He would accept nothing save a few cigarettes left in my packet, and then directed me to a garage a short distance down the road, where I might get another lift. I was very stiff after this long ride on the hard floor of a fast lorry, and I was practically hobbling as I walked towards the garage.

The garage proprietor, who was standing at the entrance, said he would try and get me a lift, and while we waited for a suitable traveller to arrive I told him something of my journey. "Per Bacho," he said, when I had finished in my very halting Italian, "How far from Genoa are we?" I asked, to find out just how far I had come during the night. "About four hundred and fifty kilometres," he said. It was my turn to say "Per Bacho!" for this is more than two hundred and fifty miles.

Shortly after this and other exchanges, lasting about ten minutes or so, the garage proprietor introduced me to a young man who, he said, was going to Naples. Once again I found myself in a Fiat Millecento, but with a rather more talkative driver than the last driver of this type of car. We drove fast, apparently oblivious of all other traffic.

I arrived at Naples about ten or eleven in the morning and, after purchasing a stamp in a tobacconist's (stamps are not sold in the post offices, I was told) I sent off a postcard to inform my parents of my arrival and made enquiries for the youth hostel.

At the hostel I found that I could not book a bed until six in the evening, so I left my rucksack in the care of a counterman in a restaurant that was in the same block of buildings. After a good lunch in the town and some tentative exploration, I returned at six to the hostel to book my bed, which I did without difficulty. When I went to

find my rucksack, however, I found that the restaurant where I had left it had closed, and although the building superintendent assured me that my bag was safe, I could not reclaim it until the following morning. This was a blow for I had to spend another night without being able to have a bath or a shave, and would have to sleep in my clothes since my sleeping bag was also in my knapsack.

Next morning I retrieved my rucksack with considerable relief and, after a shave and a wash, I made my way to the railway station, for I had decided that I would visit my friends in Rome.

Thus ended my hitch-hiking, for after a most enjoyable stay at the home of my friends, the Prince and Princess Barberini, I returned by air to London.

ROBERT PRINGLE.

In Brief

A tribute to Bill Bignell's generosity to their Children's Fund is paid in the R.A.O.B. Quarterly "Review." A copy of the magazine was sent to us by another Brother of the Order.

★ ★ ★

J. R. Burton, of Portchester, who, with Mrs. Burton, is a member of the Peter Pan Club, has been in great demand as a soloist at Club concerts.

★ ★ ★

Surprise for Teddy Mills, of Bloxwich. A lily plant, given to him early in the year, has borne blooms as big as dinner plates.

★ ★ ★

G. Waterworth, of Coventry, was paid a wonderful tribute in the "Dowty Group Journal." An illustrated half-page article called "Spotlight on Granville Waterworth," described him as "one of the most popular men at Coventry."

★ ★ ★

E. Brockie, of Torphins, Aberdeen, attended a Sale of Work for the Scottish War-Blinded to hand a small gift to Mrs. Humphrey, who opened the Sale. To his surprise he discovered that Mrs. Humphrey's mother was the late Lady Barclay Harvey, a regular visitor to St. Dunstan's in the early days, who had taken our St. Dunstaner for walks in the Park. Her husband was C.O. of the 7th Gordons, his old regiment.

Manchester Club Notes

Referring to our September Club Notes and the competition games, it can now be reported that Sam Russell took the second prize in Darts (S.S.), after a keen game with Walter Bramley.

It is pleasing to note that whilst the Club still follows the rule that each competitor shall play every other entrant in the Competition, a much quicker rate of progress has been maintained and it is expected that all games will be completed before the end of the year.

We have to record our sincere thanks to our good friends at the Railway Hotel, Pleasington, for the very fine way they entertained us on October 8th. In the early evening, our party was welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Hindle and members of their Darts team. Bob Britten was also there and he shared with us the enjoyment of the whole proceedings, which commenced with a tea consisting of an excellent variety of "home prepared" food, all suitably arranged and served by the good ladies, under the direction of Mrs. Hindle.

The evening games of darts and dominoes for once went in our favour by a slight margin. What is so pleasing, however, on these occasions, is the enthusiasm of the contestants.

We are deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Hindle, to the Captain and members of the Darts Club, to Bob Britton, and to all who helped to add yet another pleasant occasion to those already enjoyed.

On October 19th, members and their wives honoured an invitation from Mrs. Jackson, of Longsight, at a party which is held annually in memory of her son, who was killed whilst serving with the Royal Air Force. Here we joined with members of BLESMA and the civilian blind. About sixty sat down for tea, and we were specially pleased to have with us Miss Vaughan-Davies and Miss Doel, our Welfare Visitor.

With balloons, paper hats and novelties a very gay atmosphere developed, and in the intervals between items rendered by visiting artists, many popular choruses were attempted in rather doubtful harmony.

Each St. Dunstaner received a special gift and there followed a long procession of prize winners on tickets drawn from a hat.

Our grateful thanks are extended to Mrs. Jackson and to all who assisted her.

"MANCUNIAN."

Washing an Elephant!

St. Dunstaner Ted Blackmore, of South Brisbane, who is a well-known Queensland business man, is a chief distributor of "Wettex" Sponge Cloth, a sort of synthetic chamois, and he recently secured sensational publicity for the product by offering a prize of £5 to anyone who could wash Lena, a three and a half ton elephant, in an hour. The winner did it in forty-five minutes. Even the Australian Broadcasting Commission mentioned the stunt.

Young St. Dunstaners

Alan Leigh, Orford, Warrington, who is a keen geologist, has won two more prizes for geology and geography.

★ ★ ★

The Vowles family, of Northend, Portsmouth, is a prize-winning one. Leslie has won two more medals for dancing (ballet and stage), Barry has won a certificate for back stroke swimming, and even Julie was awarded two first prizes at recent Baby Shows.

★ ★ ★

Keith Brown, Nuneaton, is a part-time professional footballer and plays for Rugby Town as a full-back. At six feet he dwarfs his father by five inches.

Marriages

On October 15th, the daughter of H. Tweed, of Newmarket.

On November 9th, Christabel Robinson, Cookstown, to Roy Clive Gale.

Jean Tebbutt, Nottingham, on August 13th, to B. Lamb.

On October 20th, Colin Acton, Moor-down, Bournemouth, to Miss Catherine Webb, of Long Beach, California. Colin is Staff Purser on the *Queen Elizabeth*.

Grandfathers

R. Giffin, Crewe; A. Anderson, Letham, Scotland, who became a grandfather on October 1st and again on October 18th; P. Lynch, Co. Durham (for the twentieth time).

Personal

Mr. and Mrs. F. Rodwell, of Tring, have retired from their guest house, and would like their St. Dunstan's friends to know that they will be living at 7 Station Road, Tring, Herts.

"In Memory"

Private Roderick Anderson, Royal Army Service Corps

We record with deep regret the death of Roderick Anderson, of Middlesbrough. He saw service from 1915 until 1918, but did not come under St. Dunstan's care until 1952, when he was already a very sick man. Coming to Brighton for a holiday recently, he was admitted to hospital but was transferred later to West House, where a short time afterwards he died. In 1952 he married Mrs. Green, to whom our very sincere sympathy is extended; our sympathy also goes out to the other members of his family.

Private Percy Bolton, 1-6th Manchester Regiment

It is with deep regret that we record the death of P. Bolton, a permanent resident of West House. He was sixty-four.

After service in the Dardanelles and Egypt, he was wounded in France. Coming to St. Dunstan's in November, 1918, he trained as a basket-maker and he continued with this craft until 1937, when he transferred to netting.

He became a permanent resident at West House in 1947. His health had been failing for some time, and he passed away on October 21st.

He leaves a married brother and married sister, to whom our very sincere sympathy is extended.

M. Connolly, W. Guppy, G. Ryde, Australian Forces

With deep regret we have heard of the deaths of three Australians, M. Connolly, of Victoria, W. Guppy, also of Victoria, and G. Ryde, of Western Australia. They did not come to St. Dunstan's in this country, although they had been in touch with us.

Our deep sympathy goes out to Mrs. Connolly and her family, to Mrs. Ryde and her children, and to the family of Mr. Guppy.

Births

BATES.—To Brenda Bates (*nee* Henderson), on October 26th, a daughter—Denise Paulette. Brenda's father-in-law has also now become a St. Dunstaner.

LYDON.—On November 1st, to the wife of T. Lydon, of New Malden, a daughter—Theresa Anne.

MCDERMOTT.—On November 6th, to the wife of J. McDermott, of Davyhulme, Manchester, a son—Paul Anthony.

Marriages

CALLOW—ANDREWS.—On July 25th, Ernest Callow, of Brentwood, to Mabel Gladys Andrews.

DENNISON — JENNINGS. — On November 16th, C. Dennison, to Mrs. Hilda Jennings.

NEWMAN—WHITING.—On November 1st, G. Newman, of Folkestone, to Mrs. Whiting.

WILSHAW—FREEMAN.—On October 31st, C. Wilshaw, of Worthing, to Mrs. Freeman.

Deaths

Our deep sympathy goes out to the following:—

BOWEN.—To H. Bowen, of Haverfordwest, and Mrs. Bowen, in the loss of their little grandson, David, on October 29th.

JAMES.—To A. James, of Margate, whose niece, who was only married in June, has died.

SHONFIELD.—To J. Shonfield, of Reading, whose father has died after a long illness.

STEVENSON.—To S. Stevenson, of Walthamstow, whose sister, Mrs. Fowler, in whose house he has lived for many years, has died.

WALKER.—To E. Walker, of Bamford, Derbyshire, whose mother died in July at a great age.

WARREN.—To J. W. Warren whose wife died on October 27th.

* * *

SIMPSON.—We have heard with deep regret that Mrs. Simpson, widow of our St. Dunstaner, J. W. Simpson, who died last year, died on November 6th.

Miss Dorothy Lloyd

H. Randall, of Hove, writes:—

"I feel I must pay my tribute to Miss Lloyd's devoted and most unselfish work for St. Dunstaners, so hidden beneath her quiet and unassuming manner. A message to tell of difficulty with a recent braille lesson, and without delay she would be on the spot to thrash it out. There will be many St. Dunstaners who feel, as I do, that we have lost a very real friend."