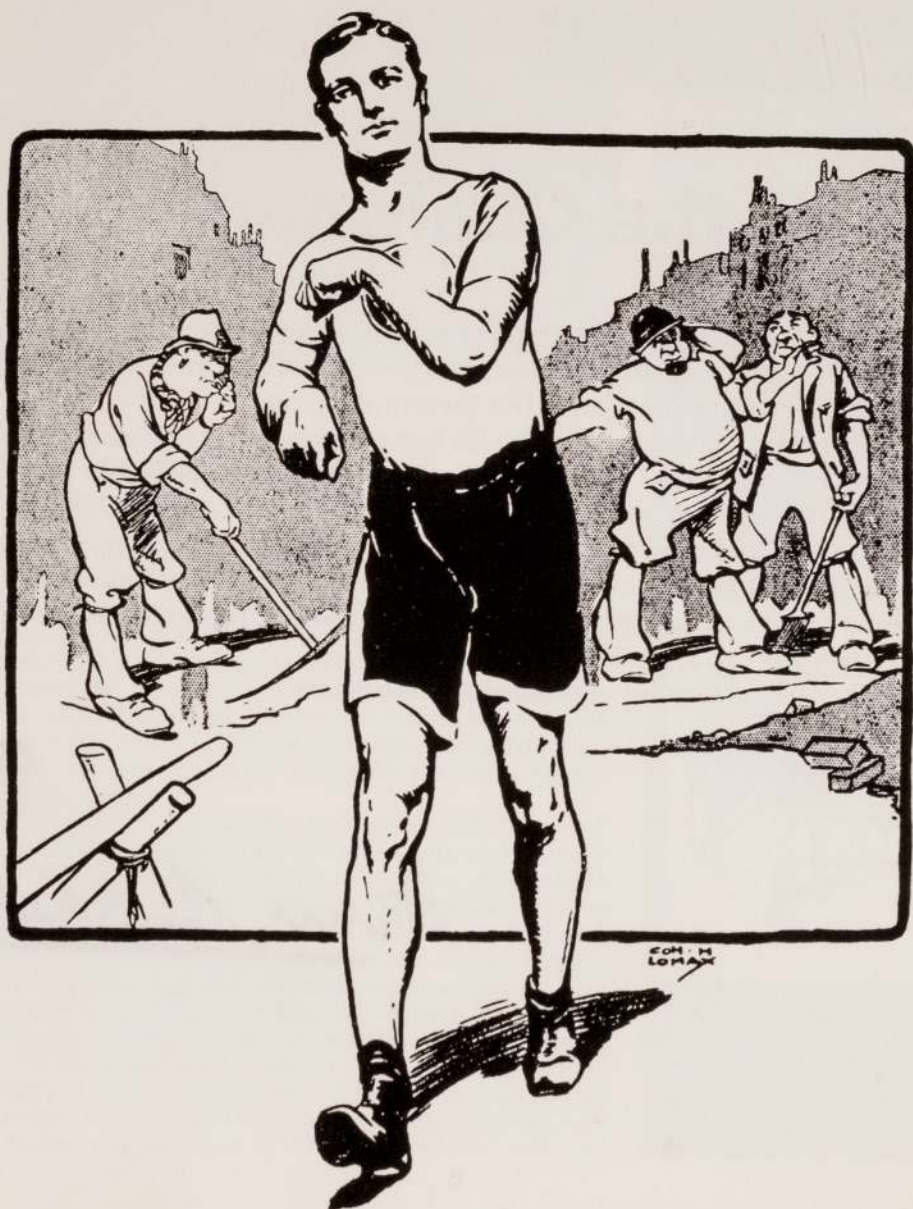


# St Dunstans Review July 1986



"What's 'e doing it for Bill?"



## From the Chairman

Douglas Wills has gone. One moment he was among us cheerfully and effectively organising the Reunions; the next — but a month or two later — he had died. It was shockingly but mercifully quick.

Most of you will have known him far better than me. He had been with St. Dunstan's for nearly 40 years, described in more detail elsewhere in these pages. But in the few years that I knew him I quickly came to regard him with respect and affection. With his quiet firmness, deep wisdom and gentle humour he was everybody's friend. He will be greatly missed.

Some thanks are due to all who help St. Dunstan's. But to few more than Douglas Wills can it be said:

'Well done thou good and faithful servant.'

*Henry Leach*



**Charles Douglas Wills, O.B.E.**  
December, 1913 — May, 1986

Douglas Wills was born in the year before the Great War started and attended school in Huntingdon and Chesterfield. After leaving school he took up the study of accountancy and worked for various firms of chartered accountants in Chesterfield and London until 1940 when he joined the Army. He served with a number of units at home and abroad and, by the end of the War, he had attained the rank of Staff Captain with the 152nd Highland Brigade in Germany and had gained his first experience in the welfare field.

In May, 1948, he joined St. Dunstan's as Chief Accountant, continuing the work he was familiar with in civilian life but, over the next few years, he became increasingly interested in the welfare service that St. Dunstan's offered to its war-blinded men and women and their families and, in January 1953, his career had a dramatic change of direction when he was appointed Welfare Superintendent. Thus began his long connection with the Welfare Department which was to bring him into personal contact with almost every St. Dunstaner in the country during a period of some 33 years. In 1971 he was appointed Assistant Secretary and he succeeded Mr. A.D. Lloyds as Secretary of the Council on the latter's retirement in 1973, but he carried with him

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'What's it doing it for Bill?'

Cover: A cartoon drawing from the cover of the race programme for the London to Brighton and Back Walking Race, 1955. Fred Duff's account of the event is part of our centre feature.

### Tribute to Douglas Wills *continued*

into this new post his abiding interest in the welfare of St. Dunstaners — using the phrase in its broadest sense. He continued to attend and manage the regional and special reunions, including those for the Handless group and the Lady St. Dunstaners even after his formal retirement in December, 1979, and, in all, he was present at some 500 of these important occasions. He took justifiable pride in the fact that, in all this period, he only missed two reunions and it is hard to imagine one of these events without his smiling and reassuring presence.

He was at work in his Headquarters office as recently as the beginning of April of this year when he was putting the finishing touches to the arrangements for the Brighton Reunion but, sadly, he was not well enough to be present at that reunion, within a few days, he was in a nursing home in Guildford, where he died peacefully on 8th May. All those who were privileged to visit him during this period were impressed and moved by the courage and good humour with which he faced his illness. Until the end he continued to take an interest in the reunions that he had helped to organise and he sent his best wishes to those who attended them.

His interests at home and at work were wide and varied and he was very much concerned to encourage St. Dunstaners to take up new activities and hobbies on their retirement. He took particular pleasure in having helped to set up what has become the thriving St. Dunstan's Gardening Club. He represented St. Dunstan's on various official bodies and helped to organise a number of international congresses. His devoted work for war-blinded men and women and their families was recognised in the 1979 New Year's Honours List when he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

Douglas Wills is survived by a wife and daughter who gave him great support and comfort during his last illness and to whom we offer our warm sympathy and condolences.

*William C. Weisblatt*

### MR. E.A. BAKER

Ernest Baker came to St. Dunstan's late in his professional life having worked with contractors prior to the war, and during the war was engaged on military construction work, including a number of airfields. After the war he had his own private practice until the mid 60's when he joined another established firm of Quantity Surveyors, coming to St. Dunstan's towards the end of his working life in late 1977.

From November 1977 until his illness in February this year he was No.2 in the Estate Department at Headquarters taking on many additional burdens as well as the major task of general supervision of all building works. He was also a leading light in the Staff Association. Ernest died on May 5th, only some 5½ weeks after his 70th birthday. He leaves his widow, Joan, his son, Paul, and two grandchildren.

### MR. F.R. BRIDGER

Fred Bridger retired in November 1978 after some 31½ years of service with the Estate Department. Mr. Bridger was engaged primarily to help with the acqui-

sition of shops for those St. Dunstaners who had taken up this form of settlement. Over the years he was particularly successful in this field, and by 1953 there were about 120 tobacco and confectionery businesses operating under the umbrella of St. Dunstan's controlled shops scheme. His next major contribution to the services provided by the Estate Department for St. Dunstaners was the successful introduction of a number of St. Dunstaners into the launderette field.

By the early 60's the pressure for shops had eased considerably and Mr. Bridger then spent more time on the care and maintenance of St. Dunstan's properties in Surrey and Ireland. After retiring he remained a part-time member of staff operating from his home in Worthing. Sadly, Mr. Bridger died on April 22nd and we send condolences to his family.

### JOYCE MEYER

Our deep sympathy to Miss Muriel Meyer, whose sister, Joyce Meyer, died on May 15th. Joyce was known to many St. Dunstaners and will be sadly missed.

### MISS RAY SKINNER, M.B.E., RETIRES

*Syd Scroggie has sent in this tribute to Miss Ray Skinner, M.B.E., who has been St. Dunstan's Welfare Visitor for Scotland from the spring of 1974 until her retirement on April 30th this year.*

First of all in an Audi, latterly in a Datsun, Miss Ray Skinner would draw up outside Roseangle from time to time in her capacity as St. Dunstan's Visitor. She was always beautifully dressed, Margaret tells me, has a nice Inverness accent, and would toy with a drop of sherry in the bottom of a glass in turning over such matters as might be thought to be of interest to Margaret and myself.

Technically there wasn't much Ray could do for me, since blindness is somebody else's problem where I'm concerned, but there would be items of St. Dunstan's news aired, of interest to people like us on the extreme periphery of the organisation. Besides, Ray's work with the Soroptomists took her all over the world, so without any expense to ourselves we got the benefit of her adventures in places as far apart as Honolulu and Istanbul. Ray, for her part, marvelled at the capacity of Margaret and myself to be content with what Scotland has to offer, our horizons being limited on the one hand by the Angus glens, on the other by such infinitely remote localities as Kintyre, Arran and the Isle of Skye.

Did we need anything, Ray would ask; and the answer, 'Nothing', indicates that here at Roseangle is embodied Sir Arthur Pearson's ideal for the blind, a self-reliance based on the supposition that sight is a mere aberration from the norm. In the country of the blind, as H.G. Wells' story proves, the one-eyed man is not after all king. Now retired, Ray and her Datsun will no longer draw up outside Roseangle; it will, however, be her partner still in various other benevolent enterprises, and we wish our old friend well in a life now severed, yet not entirely severed, from its heretofore St. Dunstan's connections. In her successor, Miss May Anderson, we see already what we always saw in Ray: a friend rather than a frigid overseer and inquisitor.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### From Paul Francia, Portsmouth

Your article in the current issue of the *Review* on the career and accomplishments of our new President, prompts me to suggest that the compilation and circulation of a St. Dunstan's membership list would be of interest to us all.

The series of articles entitled 'Ways of Life' occasionally published in your magazine, was a step in this direction, but a membership list including details of career and social achievements would provide a more coherent picture of the life of the war-blinded.

Too often we have had to wait to read of our friends' achievements from the *In Memory* column at the back of the *Review*, and by then it is far too late!

### FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S POSTBAG

On April 25th, Sir Henry received this letter from **R. J. Sadler**, Honorary Representative of St. Dunstaners in New Zealand:

At our Annual General Meeting held last weekend I was asked to write and convey to you, your Council and all St. Dunstaners fraternal greetings and best wishes from New Zealand.

### SWEEPSTAKE WINNERS

This year 3,258 Derby Sweepstake tickets were sold and the total prize money, less the cost of printing the tickets, amounted to £573.52.

There were 17 runners this year and the payout was as follows:

1st Prize £287.00 — **L. Kibbler** — Shahrastani, Ticket No. 25.

2nd Prize £115.00 — **H. Greasley** — Dancing Brave, Ticket No. 1554.

3rd Prize £57.00 — **T.C. McKay** — Mashkour, Ticket No. 766.

The rest of the prize money was divided equally between all those who held tickets for the remaining 14 runners.

# EX-POW REUNION, April 1986

By Alf Lockhart

Friday, April 25th saw the start of the St. Dunstan's ex-Prisoners of War weekend, and what a marvellous weekend it was. Joining our company during the weekend were a number of famous and very distinguished guests; people who are not only well known in this country, but have achieved world-wide fame and renown. In order of my memory, and not of their seniority, they were:

Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch, K.C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., and Lady McGeoch.

Mrs. Odette Hallowes, G.C., M.B.E., and Mr. Hallowes.

The Rt. Rev. Harold Darby, Bishop of Sherwood.

Lord Newborough, D.S.C., and lady Newborough.

Lieut. Comdr. John Hoggard and Mrs Hoggard.

Mr. Ion Garnett-Orme, C.B.E., and Mrs. Garnett-Orme.

As each of these famous people have had their names and exploits carved in the annals of history, I shall not dwell on them in this article. There were several among our number, whom I have not mentioned, who have very distinguished records, and have been our guests on previous occasions. I think the best way to start this article, is to take you through day by day.

Friday evening we had a dance/buffet in the annexe, where we danced the evening away to the lively music, which was, as on previous occasions, provided by Ernie Took and his band. One of the announcements made by Bill Griffiths in his welcoming address, was to inform us that Bob Young, that famous St. Dunstaner, had joined us. Bob had been a prisoner of the Kaiser. Kaiser? That's going back a few years, isn't it? I understand that Bob is the only First World War ex-Prisoner of War we have. Another first was that Norman Nolde, an Australian St. Dunstaner, who is

over here on holiday with his wife, had joined our group. This is more significant than it would seem at first sight, as his joining with the ex-Prisoners of War, has now made us an international section of St. Dunstan's. During the dancing, Tom Hart called for silence in order to make an announcement. Having eventually received it, he told us that our President, Elizabeth Dacre, who is also our dear and valued friend, was to receive the plaque of St. Dunstan's Prisoners of War, suitably inscribed to show our deep appreciation of her splendid efforts on our behalf. It was a most happy time to make the award, as many of her friends from the Rottingdean and Brighton area were also present, and were able to see the high esteem in which Mrs. Dacre is held by St. Dunstaners. The singing and dancing carried on till midnight. We then joined hands to sing Auld Lang Syne, and went our various ways.

The A.G.M. on Saturday morning opened on rather a sad note. We were told that during the last year, two of our number had died. Our President gave the exhortation and we also remembered the wife of Arthur Morris, who had died since our last meeting. There were 48 ex-POW's at the meeting, and we speedily went through the morning's business with the very able assistance of Mrs. Pat Stone. All the club's officers were re-elected unopposed. It was noted that some of us were billeted in outside accommodation. This was due to the large attendance at this reunion. At Ian Fraser House there are only a finite number of places available. This fact is both stark and obvious. So hear the gipsy's warning — BOOK EARLY — through the usual channels, i.e. Mrs. Coyne, at HQ. The Rt. Rev. Harold Darby became an honorary member, and after some general discussion, the meeting closed.



Mrs. Odette Hallowes speaks at the reunion.

On Saturday evening, amid mounting excitement, a group of us assembled in the entrance hall to greet our famous guests. The party included Commander and Mrs. Conway, Tom and Mabs Hart, Bill and Alice Griffiths and Alf Lockhart, who was accompanied by Pat Doolan. All were watched over by Mrs. Dacre. When the guests arrived, they proved to be every bit as charismatic as we had hoped. Although they protested that they were just ordinary people, it was obvious to anyone in their company that they were not. They had the charm and distinction of the truly great. During the pre-dinner sherry, they mixed in with the company and had a chat with as many people as they could. Dinner proved to be a most sumptuous affair. Paul James and his staff really excelled on this occasion. The high quality of the food, coupled with the excellent service given by the serving staff, transformed this reunion dinner into a veritable banquet. Thank you caterers for your superb service, and please give our compliments to the chef.

After dinner, our President, Elizabeth Dacre, M.B.E., T.D., J.P., called on Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch. He gave an interesting

speech, the keynote being Vigilance and Enterprise. Bill Griffiths, M.B.E., replied on behalf of the ex-POW's and said we St. Dunstaners were both proud and privileged to have such famous guests. Mrs. Dacre then called on Odette, whom she described as Halley's comet in a galaxy of stars. Odette replied on behalf of the guests and said that they were enjoying themselves immensely, and considered it an honour to have been invited. We then presented to each of our guests one of our plaques. Each of these plaques had been inscribed with the name of the guest and an appropriate epigraph. A few more pleasant exchanges, and then we all adjourned to the annexe to socialise and have a congenial drink.

Sunday morning we went to a special service for the Prisoners of War who had died in captivity. This was conducted by the Rt. Rev. Harold Darby, the Bishop of Sherwood, who had been a Jap prisoner in Hong Kong. The Bishop was dressed in full regalia, and was indeed a splendid sight. During the service, Bill Griffiths sang the 'Captives' Hymn', which had been composed by Margaret Dryburgh, a missionary who sadly died whilst still a



Tom Hart receives Odette's enthusiastic thanks for her presentation plaque.

prisoner in Sumatra. Tom Hart read the lesson, and did a remarkably fine job of it. After St. Paul's Epistle, the Bishop gave his sermon, which was an apt one.

Sunday evening we were entertained by the Brighton Musical Comedy Company and, my word, they were good. They quickly established a rapport with the audience, and gave us one and a half hours of really first class entertainment. They even gave a couple of First World War songs in honour of Bob Young, with Harry Wheeler joining in one of them. Harry is apparently an old friend of these singers. When they left (and we were sorry to see them go) that marked the end of St. Dunstan's ex-POW's weekend.

In closing, I must give praise to Commander Conway and the entire staff at Ian Fraser House, for the magnificent way in which they looked after us over the weekend. They always make us so very welcome when we arrive, and make us as comfortable as possible during our stay. Mary Stenning was as usual, a 'tower of strength', and helped in every possible way. Thank you Mary, I often wonder where all your energy comes from.

**An additional comment from Bert Wood:**

'The ex-POW reunion weekend was a wonderful affair. Good food and wine, lovely guests who made short amusing speeches — the most amusing from the Bishop of Sherwood who brought the weekend to a close with the Sunday morning service. I've never laughed in church before.

The Bishop of Sherwood, merry man supreme,  
The first stand-up comic the pulpit has ever seen,  
Laughter and applause with the good news,  
A lesson for the clergy to fill empty pews.'

**CORRECTIONS**

In the article about the National Library for the Blind in the *May Review*, there was a mistake regarding circulation: 1,000 volumes are posted *each day*, not each year as stated on page 18. Quite a difference! We apologise for this error.

And in the *June Review*, in our 'Welcome' column, we stated that Mr. Frank Smith, of Tooting, London, had two adult sons when in fact, they are daughters. Sincere apologies!

## One Foot Wrong and You Were Out!

*An original Tiller Girl, Mrs. Pat Brooker, speaks to Carolyn Howell*

Mrs. Pat Brooker, widow of our late St. Dunstan, Mr. C.E. Brooker, M.M., does certainly not seem 'old'. Even though she celebrated her 87th birthday recently, the lady in a mauve dress and lace collar, beautifully made-up, who opened her door to greet me when I visited her reminded me of a flower in late summer; one of those whose lasting colours cheer us into autumn. Her smile lights up and her eyes sparkle as she tells me, 'It certainly is my year, this year, everything seems to be happening.' For, among a whole lot of other things still to come, on the day before her birthday she attended the centenary reunion of the Tiller Girls at the Old Ship Hotel in Brighton, on April 26th.

Mrs. Brooker was one of the original Tiller Girls in 1919, and she danced for two years: 'I did a season in Blackpool at the Wintergardens and then I did the whole

Moss Empire tour all over England — Leeds, Hull, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh — and then I came down to get married and that was the end of my tour. It was lovely though, I wished it had gone on.'

Coming from a musical family, dancing seemed a natural direction to take; her father was a musical director at the Wintergardens and her mother sang in the chorus of the D'Oyly Carte Opera. 'I was dance mad, I made an application and then I danced. My father was very against it. But I did it. I was always dancing, dance mad. I'd do it again too. It was marvellous.'

The original Tiller Girls dancing troupe was founded by John Tiller, a former businessman on the Manchester Cotton Exchange, and he trained them like military guardsmen, with rigidly choreographed routines and precision high-kicking. As Pat describes it, 'We used to be rehearsed to such an extent that we couldn't even walk up the stairs afterwards. A matinee every day, and an evening show every day, for six days a week, and travelling on Sunday. We had that all through the tour. It really was hard work. But as I say we loved it. They don't work like that now, they just kick. We had a dance routine and then finished up with a kicking routine which was absolutely to a T, it had to be, one foot wrong and you were out. John and Jenny Tiller were real perfectionists.'

And the regimen of personal behaviour was just as strict as the choreography: 'We were a different kettle of fish altogether to the ones today. We original ones were not allowed to speak to a boy, we were chaperoned and cossetted. We weren't allowed any funny incidents or anything outside the dancing. We used to retire to our dressing room and I knew that I was going to get married so I'd just sit and sew my



Mrs. Brooker *continued*

trousseau.' Her fiancé, like her family, didn't think a lot of it. 'He had the idea of stage door Johnnies, but it certainly wasn't allowed and, well, we were too tired to look at fellas in those days because they worked us so hard. And for only £3 a week! I even sent money home to my mother towards getting married. But it was such a lovely group, amongst ourselves, so friendly. There were 12 of us in my particular troupe.'

What were the audiences like? 'The audiences loved us, they absolutely loved us. We danced for The Queen Mother in the Palladium days. The Queen Mother really did love us. She sent us a letter about the reunion, and I've got a lovely leather-bound gold notebook from her too, she had that printed for all the original Tiller Girls. On it is printed "1886-1986. The Tiller Girls Reunion." She must have liked us to have gone to that trouble, mustn't she?'

And was the reunion enjoyable? 'Yes, but this interviewing with the BBC and ITV got a bit repetitive, and the papers and the media. All the same inevitable

questions about the hard work and who the stars were at the time, well, I could not remember. Old George Formby, he was a star, and Vesta Tilley. But then, we did our routine and went to the dressing room, we didn't worry about who the stars were at the time. Ours was just a routine that stood out, because it was like a whiplash, it was so 'at one', you know, when you were dancing. It had to be.'

Pat is friends with Hetty McDonald, who at 91, is the oldest Tiller girl and danced at the first Royal Command Performance in 1912. 'She was finishing her tour when I started mine. She went to the Folies Bergères. I was with her all the time at the reunion. I went to see her and Sylvia Hawksworth, who organised the reunion, on May 22nd. We didn't have a chance to talk at the reunion, there were so many people. So I went and had tea with Hetty and we caught up with what we had wanted to say to each other. Then we went to see the video of the BBC interview, which they did about us at the reunion, at Sylvia's, but her television broke down, so I'll have to go down again soon to see the 'girls' and the video! And I must go, because at my age I feel every day counts.'

A portrait of 20-year old Pat taken in 1919 when she appeared in the Victory Revue, Blackpool.



The Brooker family in uniform.

So she didn't really want to stop dancing when she did? 'No, not really. But my husband didn't want me to carry on, and I didn't — I was so happily married, I'd got the right man and I was quite happy.' Mr. Brooker, who was a sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, had suffered a mustard gas attack while saving another man in France during the First World War (he later received a military medal and bar for bravery) and was completely blinded in the beginning. 'He was sent to Barts Hospital and then to Blackpool to recuperate, and that's where I met him. He used to come and watch the show every night, I think he saw it about 100,000 times.'

'By some amazing coincidence he recovered his sight and was taken on in the Police Force and worked for 23 years. But of course, the mustard gas affected his lungs and his eyes and he gradually became blind, and then a St. Dunstaner.' After bringing up her children, a boy and a girl, Pat also joined the Police during the war years. 'We went through all the bombings and blastings, we all did our bit during the war, my son was in the R.A.F. and my daughter in the Army.' Her police force experience is also contributing to make 1986 a busy year, with a City of Lon-

don Police Dinner coming up in July, and the Metropolitan Police Dinner.

Besides those events, as widows are now attending reunions, she will be going to the St. Dunstan's London reunion. She says of St. Dunstan's, 'I cannot say hardly enough of them, they really are lovely to us. It doesn't matter what trouble you're in, St. Dunstan's is there.' And music plays a large part in her life, as it does for her whole family. Pat plays the organ, and every Friday evening attends a music night in Golders Green — the best of brass and orchestra.

Pat and her husband had saved money all through their working lives in order to travel later on, and when he sadly died in 1953, she determined some years later that she would do it on her own. She has been on three cruises so far to the Caribbean and all around Europe. 'I did it and I made so many friends', she says, 'My ambition now is to go on the Orient Express and to have a trip on a Concorde. And then I'll die happy.'

Well! All I can say is that if I reach 87 and I'm as adventurous and plucky and energetic and sensible as Mrs. Pat Brooker, I'll be very happy.

## SOUTHAMPTON REUNION, 9th May

24 St. Dunstaners, their wives and escorts, and three widows gathered at the Polygon Hotel for the Southampton Reunion. After a most enjoyable lunch, the Chairman addressed the guests. He hoped next year to see more widows, 'though perhaps, I could have put that in a better way!'

It was, however, on a sad note, that the Chairman had to announce the death, a short while before, of Mr. Douglas Wills. He had been involved with St. Dunstan's since 1948, and would be greatly missed. The Chairman was pleased to report that Mr. Edgar Stevens, our Financial Secretary, who was retiring in August, had now passed on his financial duties to Mr. Gerard Frost. Mr. Stevens would be overseeing the various building works that were being carried out or being completed in London and Brighton, and then had volunteered to take over the administrative organisation of the reunions.

Sir Henry went on to allay various comments he had heard about his turning up in morning dress. It was not the fact that he and Lady Leach had recently become grand-parents, nor that there was anything 'peculiar' about Southampton! He was simply catching the tail end of a friend's wedding after the reunion.

There were two world events about which the Chairman wished to comment. At last a stand was being made against an increasing level of world terrorism. How effective that stand would be, remains to be seen. 'At least it demonstrates, as it were, a hardening of attitude against indiscriminate and ruthless violence to satisfy personal hate or crackpot vengeance. This can do nothing but good.'

The second event was the nuclear power station disaster. 'There is no doubt that it was a disaster, but at the same time, we must maintain a rational sense of proportion. We are at risk at every stage of our lives. Without some element of risk, life would hardly be worth living'. Nuclear power had the potential for good and evil. It is probably due to the bomb, that there had been no major war for the last 40

years, not to say anything of the use of nuclear energy in medicine, energy, etc.' He warned of over familiarity once an innovation has been overcome. 'Perhaps Chernobyl has done just that'.

The Chairman concluded with an amusing story and hoped that everyone would enjoy the afternoon.

Ken Walker rose on behalf of the St. Dunstaners present. Although he had come to St. Dunstan's fairly recently, and had not yet taken full advantage of all that was offered, it was the smoothness and efficiency of the system which impressed him most. Ken went on at length to describe a FEPOW reunion at Ian Fraser House to illustrate the way in which St. Dunstan's organisation had worked. He concluded by paying tribute to the welfare visitors, Mrs. Vivien Jackson and Mrs. Janet Stevens, who had organised the day. He was appreciative of the hotel staff who had looked after the gathering so well.

In all, it was a quiet reunion, there being no music, but the level of conversation more than made up for that!

**Note:** Due to camera and flash trouble at the reunion, we regret that there are no photographs to record the event.

### COMMON MARKET INFORMATION NETWORK?

The possibility of an international information network for disabled people is being explored by the countries of the European Common Market. Mr. John Major, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security, reported this in a letter to St. Dunstaner, Eric Ward Rowe, who has been campaigning for a computerised information bank in the United Kingdom.

The Minister told Mr. Ward Rowe that it would be difficult to set up a national computer information bank covering all agencies dealing with the disabled. He explained that efforts in this country

tended to be directed towards improving the flow of information on a variety of different fronts rather than a single, centralised source. 'Handirnet', the computerised information project, was one of the developments in new technology being explored by the Common Market.

St. Dunstan's is represented on the Committee of the National Information Forum set up in December 1985, 'to advance the education and promote the relief of disabled and handicapped persons throughout the United Kingdom in particular by the provision of information and advice.' The Forum grew out of the Information Group set up for the International Year of Disabled People (1981). Some 20 organisations involved in social work are members of the Forum.

## READING TIME

by Phillip Wood

*Cat. No. 2618*

**A Child In The Forest**

By Winifred Foley

*Read by Judith Whale*

*Reading Time 7½ hours*

This is an autobiographical account of life in the Forest of Dean in the 1920's. The writer lived in a village mining community. The miners were amongst the lowest paid workers and life was desperately hard, everyone living at starvation level.

Almost without exception the village girls upon leaving school went into domestic service. This meant that they were no longer a drain on family resources and they, at least, might have full bellies. The writer in common with her peers left school at 14 and went into service in London. She found the city fascinating, a totally alien environment. She mistook a block of flats for a large house and when her mistake was pointed out to her, confessed herself amazed that 'people had to live in layers'.

There followed a series of jobs in various parts of the country. It is clear from the writer's account that these 'girls in service' were exploited like farm animals. For an 18 hour day with, at best, inadequate low-quality food, the standard rate of pay

was one pound a month — most of which usually found its way back to the Forest to help feed the hungry.

Through a meeting with a fellow-skivvy the author joined the Young Communists. There she met a young man, idealistic and full of words. This meeting changed the course of her life . . .

A warm and human story told with humour and compelling simplicity.

*Cat. No. 2382*

**Botchan**

By Natsume Soseki

*Trans. by Alan Turney*

*Reading Time 6 hours*

The book was first published in Japan in 1906 and the first English translation in 1973. There is no English translation of the word 'Botchan', the nearest approximation being 'The Young Master' as used by a faithful retainer. In the narrator's case the title is bestowed upon him by the dotting old servant Kyo.

His mother dies whilst he is a boy. His father, who dislikes him intensely, follows her six years later. His elder brother, who also finds 'Botchan' something of a trial, sells the house and hands over 600 yen. With the money the younger man buys himself an education and qualifies as a mathematics teacher and takes up his first appointment many miles from his native Tokyo.

He soon dubs his students 'ill-mannered oafs' and becomes involved in puerile tittle-tat-tattle and infantile intrigue which would not seem out of place within the pages of 'The Third Form at St. Ermintrude's'. He secretly gives his colleagues daft nicknames such as 'The Badger', 'Redshirt', 'The Porcupine' and 'The Clown' . . .

It was at this point that I told myself that there must have been equally boring and pointless books written, it was just that I hadn't come across any of them. How anyone could consider it worthwhile to translate this dull-as-ditchwater trivia into English or why after 80 years it is still looked upon as a minor Japanese classic, must, for me, remain one of the Great Literary Mysteries of all time.



Charlie Hague (right foreground) with his prize-winning team. Photo: Liverpool Daily Post & Echo.

## ST. DUNSTANER COACHES BLIND SPORTS CLUB

Four years ago Charlie Hague, our St. Dunstaner living in Bootle, involved himself in forming a sports club for the blind in his locality. He is now Vice-Chairman and Coach of the Knowsley Visually Handicapped Sports Club.

On May 11th his club took part in the Rotary International Sports for the Visually Handicapped, at Lancaster. They found themselves up against stiff opposition with competitors from all over England, from Ireland, West Germany and Denmark. However Charlie is able to report that they won no less than eighteen medals: nine gold, seven silver and two bronze. Most of these medals were won in the swimming events. Charlie Hague won a gold in the 200-metre breast stroke. He commented, 'Although we had no training as such, for the field events, I am very pleased. We train at Kirby Sports Stadium including an indoor facility in the Centre Suite, where we can bowl. We use the track for tandem cycling. Twice a year we go to Wales for canoeing, rock-climbing and horse-riding and in September we plan to compete in the Cumbrian Games and, who knows, we may do well there.'

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## EUROPE CASSETTE

A recorded bulletin giving information concerning the Commission of the European Communities (EEC), especially information concerning the handicapped in general and blind people in particular, will be produced five times a year in several languages, including English, by the Bureau for Action in favour of Handicapped Persons, in co-operation with the Ligue Braille, Belgium.

A master tape will be held by the RNIB Student Tape Library and by the Playback Service for the Blind, Glasgow, and will be copied free for anyone interested.

To receive a copy of the third bulletin, please send one good quality C90 cassette in a postal wallet. The label, which should give your own return address on the reverse, should be addressed as follows: (for people in England & Wales) Tape Services Manager (EEC tape), RNIB, 338/346 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JE; (for people in Scotland) Mr P. Fraser (EEC tape), The Playback Service for the Blind, 276 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5RP.



## Spring Week

By Reg Newton



The 1986 Gardening Week was opened by the Chairman, who firstly called the men to their feet to remember Mr. Wills, and one of our own members, Harold Smith, who had died since our last meeting. Our condolences were given to Winnie, Harold's widow, who joined us for this meeting. The details of the week were itemised and various suggestions for future events were discussed, and these points were noted. 53 members and their escorts listened to an interesting talk and demonstration by a member of staff of the Brighton Parks, Mr. Harris. The theme was how to make the best use of hanging baskets, tubs and containers. A vote of thanks was given for a very enjoyable afternoon by Mr. Wallbrugh, one of the committee. A point was made by the Club Secretary, Mrs. Fleet, regarding the Gardening Cassette, issued quarterly, a copy of which can be obtained from the Asst. Public Relations Officer, Ray Hazan, at HQ.

Tuesday morning found gardeners on route to the Open Air Museum at Singleton, amid parkland, with an attractive pond, streams, and with ducks, geese and chickens wandering around. Many buildings of interest, which would have been demolished to make way for motorways etc., have been moved here. There was a working water mill, grinding corn, dating back to the 18th Century; this was moved stone by stone, and reconditioned and pegged into working order. Many St. Dunstan's members who have attended the Lee-on-Solent camp and enjoyed dancing at Titchfield would be surprised to know that the Market Hall building, which dates back to the 15th Century and would have been demolished, has been assembled here. This building was moved to the outskirts of the town and it had lost its purpose, then it was offered to the Council who refused it, and then offered to this museum.

After walking around the grounds we were fully ready for our lunch at the Swan

Hotel in Arundel. From there we went to Southdown Flowers Ltd. at Wallburton; some 15 acres of glass and 2 acres of plastic covered structures, covering pot plants, roses and flowers of every description. All glass is heated; coal and gas being the source of heat, distribution by steam, and control by a thermostat-operated motorised valve. At night thermal screens are used to save heat. Andrew Spillsbury, lecturer and demonstrator, explained the extensive method of cultivation needed to supply the well known stores and hotels with plants and flowers. Many of the members were able to buy plants and cut flowers at a reduced rate. And so back to IFH.

After all the walking on Tuesday, we were glad to have a relaxed morning on Wednesday. After lunch, the party visited Leonard's Lee, near Horsham, gardens noted for azaleas and rhododendrons, but owing to the weather, most blooms were late.

One of the highlights of the Gardening Week is the visit to Wisley, which happened on Thursday. The weather was good, lunch was very good, and then we did a tour round the grounds. Many of our St. Dunstan's members, including both the Chairman and the Treasurer, knew Miss Jackson, the Welfare Visitor, who honoured us at Wisley. Her vast knowledge of agriculture put many of us to shame. In the evening Mr. Edward gave us a talk on general gardening and invited questions from the members. The rest of the evening was a social get-together and a dance at which Major Neve honoured us with his company. The Grand Lottery was drawn and the prizes were as follows:

- First Mr. S. Mills, Paddock Wood, £50
- Second Elaine, c/o Alf Dodgson, Peacehaven, £30
- Third Mr. G. Bilcliff, Hardwicke, £20

On Friday all that remained was to wind up the meeting and then the afternoon was spent at the Roundstone Nurseries, near Littlehampton.

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## COMPUTER CENTRE FOR THE DISABLED

Amongst the many facilities at the Central London Polytechnic, is the Computer Centre for the Disabled, run by its Director, David Laycock. The Centre is run on a small budget, but offers a good range of facilities to interested parties. Assistance concentrates mainly on the most commonly used computer, the BBC Micro, but any special needs are catered for.

David Laycock and his staff will carry out any repairs or modifications at cost price. He would prefer owners to bring in their own systems, otherwise they would have to be sent by some such carrier as Securicor.

The Centre offers a range of courses such as 'WORD WISE' or 'BBC BASIC'. In the case of visually handicapped students, it will probably mean joining in on the courses run for the North London School of Physiotherapy. But if there are more than six people interested in a specific subject, then David will organise a tailored course. The average cost for a 4-day course is £50 (very cheap!). A list of this year's courses is available from the Centre.

In the near future, the Centre hopes to offer a software library, and a bulletin board for the exchange of news, ideas and software.

The Director is an enthusiastic and most helpful person. The Centre should prove of great benefit to all users. For further information, please write or telephone the Centre at:  
Computer Centre for the Disabled,  
115, New Cavendish St.,  
London W1M 8JS.  
Tel: 01 486-5811 ext. 256.

*In April, Phil Duffee and Bill Shea spent four days attending a course for blind students at the Polytechnic, learning to use a talking Word-Processor with the BBC Microcomputer. Bill describes it:*

In the computer lab each student had a work station comprising: BBC Microcomputer, Disc Drive, Monitor, Voice Synthesizer and Printer. The course



*Jimmy Wright meets H.R.H. Princess Diana at a royal gala concert in aid of the Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead, recently. Jimmy is a member of the committee, with a special interest in fund-raising.*

started with a talk introducing the work station, the functions of its units and their connections. The talking word-processor program was then loaded from disc into the computer. We then went through the options available in the program, and typed some text into the computer using these options. Complete text files can be saved, retrieved, edited and printed. There are additional features to format the text during printing (margins, page lengths etc.); and embedded commands for special print features. These embedded commands will set the address, data etc. at the top of the letter. They will also set the headings, sub headings, paragraphs and page numbers in lengthy documents.

The course is for beginners and it is well worth attending, but some prior knowledge of the BBC Microcomputer and some practice with a voice synthesizer is useful. St. Dunstaners who have their own stations may, like myself be using other word-processing systems — I am using the Word-wise with the Paul Blenkhorn screen reading program. This can be confusing to start with, but this is soon overcome. The fee for the course is £50.

## A moment to spare with Sid Scroggie

### The Pax Britannica

Nuclear bombs apart, we live in an immeasurably more dangerous world than that of the 1930's. You only have to turn on the news any day to be certain of that; for what is revealed is political instability abroad, the breakdown of law and order here at home and chronic unrest in those parts of the world most likely to disturb the relationships of great powers.

At a time when Hitler was putting in hand his Third Reich's imperial aims, the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, German propaganda attacked the established imperialism of Britain. At a time when the USSR keeps an iron grip on its satellite states the voice of the Kremlin denounces imperialism as it sees the last of it in the case of Britain and attempts in this direction on the part of the USA, while, at the same time, a victim of this neo-Tsarist imperialism, Lubova Vanags, as she pulls pints in our local pub here in Strathmartine, bemoans the annexation of her native Latvia by the barefaced power of the Soviets.

Lubie spent half her war running away from the Russians, half of it running away from the Germans, and is the only person I know who devoted part of her young womanhood to loading Jews into lorries on the first stage of their journey to Auschwitz, Dachau and Buchenwald. Jews weren't popular in Latvia, they were wealthy and arrogant with it, but it may be said about Lubie, as for her Lett compatriots also, that they really didn't know what they were doing. The Soviet empire is one thing, the American empire, if it actually exists, another; but as for the British empire I have no doubt whatsoever that it was the most benevolent instance of this kind of thing the world has ever seen, and no amount of Nazi propaganda, no amount of Soviet, can alter my moral and mental stand in this respect.

I know as well as the Kremlin that we set on a war in China to safeguard the opium

trade, I know as well as the late Mr. Ghandi that we cut the thumbs off Indian weavers, and acknowledge these acts as blemishes on our imperial history, but then it's hardly likely a political experiment on such a scale should in retrospect come to be seen as entirely blameless. What I do know is that my old friend, Jimmy Johnston was in the jute trade in Calcutta in his day, exploiting the Indians as the Kremlin would say, and I know what the Kremlin doesn't, or doesn't choose to admit, that the conditions under which the workers produced hessian on the banks of the Hoogli were such that they would never for a moment have exchanged their industrial lot for those under which languished their counterparts in Dundee. They wouldn't have exchanged their lot for that matter, with that of Soviet workers in general in the USSR today. Another thing I know is that a friend of mine, Jack Orr, a member of the Indian Civil Service, spent his life in the jungles of Behar and Orissa, not dominating the peasantry with Klashnikoff sub-machine gun, but putting at their disposal the most priceless gift of civilised society: the benefits of law and justice. The worst thing that ever happened to India, which is true also of our African possessions is that abdication of rule on the part of Britain, due to moral, political and economic exhaustion, which prematurely left it to its own utterly inadequate devices.

Happy was India, happy the world in general, when a British gunboat could be relied upon to preserve a peace which reigned round the world in the days of our benign predominance. At best our mission was to bring on the world to a new vision of gradual self-realisation and autonomy; the Pax Sovietica, if ever it asserts a universal sway, would be synonymous with officially imposed obscurantism, enforced compliance, and servitude knowing no remedy save madness, humour or death.

## Ways of Life 48

### What's 'e doing it for Bill?

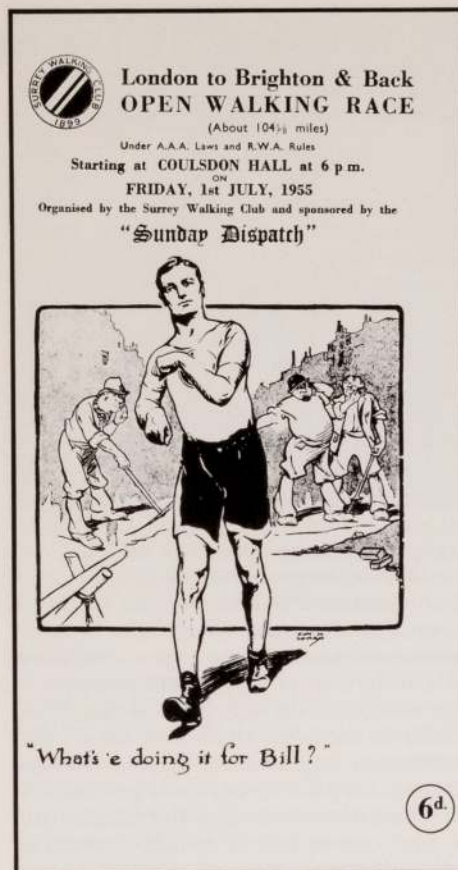
Fred Duff talks to David Castleton

*The front cover of the programme for the London to Brighton and Back race when Archie Brown and Fred Duff became Centurions.*

'It was just part of my life once I got started. Everything else had to go. If there was a St. Dunstan's race on, that was my first object. Then everything else went, even my own family.' Fred Duff, who has walked hundreds of miles alongside St. Dunstan's race-walkers, describes the way helping St. Dunstaners to compete against sighted athletes became for him an obsession.

It is not necessary to look far for the reason. Looking back over more than 40 years' racing and training with St. Dunstaners, Fred says of the Walking Section, 'It was something I looked forward to and when it folded up, finished, I missed so much meeting the lads.'

Fred Duff had been race-walking for the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association about three years when he was approached by Inspector Sapwell, who,



through failing health, was giving up assisting St. Dunstan's walkers. Fred agreed to take over the organisation of training, races and escorting. 'It was somewhere about 1941, I think the first race I had was the five miles in Regents Park. It was a big field because we always had a match with the Police at the same time. I was always an escort for a St. Dunstaner.'

He has strong views about escorting: 'Distance from the kerb was the first thing you were to think about. You were walking on the outside to be next to the traffic. When I had to use a tape I would always give the St. Dunstan's man about a yard of tape. I walked out that distance away from the kerb and he knew when that tape tightened that he was getting near. For anybody who has part sight a little word every now and again is enough.' Fred's ideal guide is, 'Somebody with a free mind, who

doesn't mind slowing down to go as an escort. This is the thing: "You are not racing," that was my way of explaining, "You are there as their eyes and for any help you can give them."

One example of neglect in escorting still rankles with Fred, 'When Archie Brown tripped on a hole at Streatham during the London to Brighton race. It was a manhole, one of those telephone things. Mick neglected to take him clear of it or warn him. Of course, Archie caught his toe in it and down he went — cut his knee. Oh, I was upset over that. I said a few words to Mick! Over the years we have had some wonderful escorts really, the majority of them policemen and some from outside clubs like the Stock Exchange, Highgate Harriers or the Surrey Walking Club.'

Some of Fred's first St. Dunstaners were Archie Brown, Tommy Gaygan, Billy Miller, Charles Stafford and Stan Tutton, 'I used to come up to St. Dunstan's on the cycle, meet Tommy, walk down to Baker Street Station; leave Tommy with my bike outside; go down, pick up Stan Tutton off the train and then meet Archie Brown at

the bus stop to go into the Park. Billy Miller always used to make his own way. That was training — every Tuesday night it was. It didn't matter what the weather was, you were there training, in fog, snow or rain. You had to race in all weathers so you trained in all weathers.

'Billy Miller had a good style, and you had to find an escort with his speed, because Billy could go! I used to take Billy along with Archie Brown out for a long stroll always, before the Brighton Race — away out in north-west London doing 10-12 hours via Watford and Kings Langley. Sometimes, Archie Brown, Billy Miller and myself would go out and stroll all the day on a Sunday.

'When Charlie Williamson went into Physiotherapy Training School at Great Portland Street I used to cycle up from Bow, meet him at the door as he came out from classes in the evening — up into the Park and then we'd do some training. Then I'd put him on his bus, this side of Baker Street, ring his wife up and say he's on so and so bus. The same with Tommy Gaygan. I'd put Tommy on the train at Baker Street, ring Audrey. At one time we

*Fred escorting Stan Tutton, number 4, in a race in Regent's Park.*





Les Dennis jokes with Dr. Roger Bannister.

Fred and Roy Mendham setting out on a training spin in 1962.



used to change at the Police Section House at Camden Town — we had the use of a room there. I used to take Charlie Stafford across to Edgware Road from there and see him on his bus. Those were pleasant days.

'I remember, once, making a mistake. Charlie wanted to do a bit of training in Hyde Park so I met him off the Green Line. We changed in the men's toilet and left our clothes with the attendant. We did a bit of training and then — I don't know what possessed me — I put Charles on the wrong bus! After he'd left me the conductor told him he was on the wrong bus and got him changed over. But, oh, I felt terrible!

There cannot be many St. Dunstan's race-walkers who have not had Fred Duff alongside them guiding and cajoling them along the road, 'I took Les Dennis on one Brighton and one Hastings to Brighton. That's a hard walk. That's 38 miles and you come over the Downs both ways — inland and then one or two quite stiff hills before you come back over the Downs into Brighton. Les was one of St. Dunstan's two

Centurions, he was nice to walk with.'

A Centurion is a walker who has covered 100 miles in 24 hours. Les Dennis accomplished this on a circuit based in Chigwell. It can also be done during the great test of the London to Brighton and back — or the 'B and B' as it is known among walkers.

One of St. Dunstan's men, Roy Mendham, made his attempt on the 'B and B'. There were two of us escorting. The weather had been very bad and he just couldn't make it. I was looking after him at the time and when he came up to the check point, I said, "Look, you mustn't stop," but he just lay down — that was it. Surprising really because I took Roy in training a lot of miles — all round Chigwell away out in Essex, no bother. I don't know whether it was just fighting against night sleep — he had done the single London to Brighton several times.

'Bob Young was the oldest man of the lot. He had a regular escort, Nobby Clark, a policeman — down at Epsom. He was a big help for Bob, living down that way, so Bob never came to London to train.'

Bob Young raced at Regents Park and, later, when the racing moved there, at Ewell. Once again, Fred Duff was the transport arranger gathering up some of his St. Dunstaners at Victoria to travel to Ewell to meet the others. There were some new names: Fred Barratt, Micky Burns, Mike Tetley and Jimmy Wright to add to the originals like Archie Brown, Billy Miller, Stan Tutton, Charles Stafford and Charles Williamson.

'Ewell was a good place — just that little journey out. Some of the wives provided tea afterwards, including Mrs. Bob Young. There was only one thing we had to watch — Mike Tetley's dog! Originally we used to go on the outside road all the time but then the traffic began to get nasty and we were confined to as much inside the grounds as possible. That didn't suit me because there were too many sharp quick turns. With blind chaps it was inclined to slow them down.'

Another older walker was George Hewett, who had come late to the sport, 'The Brighton Athletic Club did all his training. It was just a case of escorting him because their members were often racing



Racing with Charles Stafford.

in the same race. He did two London to Brightons and used to do well in the Hastings to Brighton.'

George Hewett entered the John O'Groats to Lands End walk, 'I would like to have gone with George but it was pointed out to me that if I took part that was the end of me as an amateur. It was professional. That's why I didn't go.

Much thought I gave to that though. I was inclined to say, "Well, I'm going," I've often wished since that I'd gone even if I'd cycled just as an attendant. Of course, he was late in getting to the start and he forced himself too much. The way he came through the field was terrific really. By the time he got down to Cheshire, where he had to retire, he'd done a terrific job, there's no doubt about it. He was physically very strong. I remember one Hastings to Brighton race when I took him all the way. We came to a very stiff climb and really, George was giving me a right caning coming up this hill, at Lewes. He was very strong — and a nice chap.'

But for Fred there is one St. Dunstaner and one race that stands out for him, 'I covered more miles with Archie Brown than all the rest put together. His temper-



*London to Brighton, September 1956: Archie Brown, with Fred Duff and Hughie Neilson, then the world's 24-hour record holder, nears the finish.*

ament was the great thing — never complained and he was always so pleased to see you there. I don't think there is any question about it. The highlight of my walking career was escorting Archie in the London to Brighton and back in 1955, when he became the first blind Centurion.

'It was this day we were out getting ready for the Stock Exchange London to Brighton in May and Archie said, "Is that right, Fred, you are going to do the B and B?" I told him I was thinking about it provided I could get the time to train for it. His words to me were, "It is my life's ambition to do it and if I don't do it this year I can never do it." He was in his 60th year and you were barred from doing the double after reaching 60.'

The race is so vivid in Fred's memory that he can still give an almost stride by stride account, 'It was in July and nice weather. We had a good walk into Big Ben — although we started at six in the evening it was quite warm. Turn about at Big Ben, 14 miles, I think it was about a quarter to nine. No bother. A lot of people waiting at

Big Ben. Archie got a terrific reception when we turned there.'

At Streatham on the way out of London again they had their first small problem: 'I had had my shoes repaired only about a week before and they were beginning to pinch. I had a spare pair with the attendants in the car — tennis shoes, actually, with the inside supporting sole. We sat down on the steps of Streatham Police Station and I changed my shoes. We went on through the night, well looked after. Archie had one or two good friends including his wife and her brother in a car and I had Cyril Yetcombe and Dave Elliot in the car — change your shirt if you wanted to and a dry one on from the car. We were very well fed and very well looked after.'

'Our target was to just get inside the 24 hours. I had to walk at Archie's speed. I was confident he could do it. I had taken him out on two all-night-strolls about 40 to 45 miles so I had no worries about the night. There wasn't much traffic on the Brighton Road in those days and we turned around

down at the front at Brighton. It was a lovely sunny morning and I remember saying to Archie, "What about going over and putting our feet in the salt water?" but we turned about. When we got to the top of Dale Hill we were both getting a little tired and Cyril Yetcombe stripped off and walked back with us.

'When we got to the top of Handcross hill, we were very thirsty, and Mrs. Brown and her brother were waiting for us in Handcross village. "Anything you want?" and I said "I'd like something — nothing sweet — something on the bitter side," and despite being a teetotaler, I suggested a light ale. There we were walking along with a bottle of light ale drinking this as we were going along — out of the bottle. That was the finest drink I had in the whole of the race.'

At Crawley, Fred detected that Archie had a problem: 'I went off to go to the toilet leaving Archie with Cyril and when I came out to catch them up I could see that Archie wasn't landing properly on his heels. I told the chap in the car to stop and have the bottle of surgical spirit ready. I

said, "We won't take your shoes off" and we poured the surgical spirit into his shoes. He had obviously blistered quite badly and this hardens it off. I didn't realise until we got to the finish when we discovered his heels were absolutely coming away in his shoe. They were bad but as I've said before Archie would never complain. He'd made up his mind he was going to do this 24 hours and become a Centurion.'

At the 100-mile mark at Merstham their time was 22 hours 12 minutes, 'I said to him, "Archie, you've done your 100 and you're a Centurion, What do you want to do?" He said, "I must finish the full B and B."

That meant almost five more miles to Coulsdon, 'Those last few miles were to me really wonderful, the way he was badly blistered.' They finished in 23 hours 16 minutes, 24th and 25th over the full distance. Only 26 walkers successfully covered the whole course inside the 24 hours, 'We both became Centurions but it was my delight to get him through. It was a terrific effort on his part. To see Archie there at the finish nearly brought tears to my eyes.'

*At Streatham on the London to Brighton and Back in 1955, Fred Duff and Archie Brown walk for a spell with another competitor, F. Jarvis.*





Aircraft of 35 Squadron taking off for a raid. Photo: Imperial War Museum.

## STOPPING THE SCHARNHORST

### Memories of 45 years ago

Forty-five years ago, in July 1941, the German battleship *Scharnhorst* was threatening allied shipping by its presence in the French harbour of Pallice near La Rochelle. An allied convoy in the Atlantic made it imperative that the *Scharnhorst* should be damaged and delayed in sailing, if not destroyed.

Our *St. Dunstaner*, Norman Kershaw, has vivid memories of a daylight attack by Halifax Bombers of 35 and 76 Squadrons, R.A.F., and recently met again a companion in that attack, Eric Balcomb. Both men have described the action, in which five aircraft were lost, in accounts of their war-time service. With their permission we publish these extracts.

Norman Kershaw begins: The comparative quiet of the Sgt's. mess after lunch on that day at Middleton St. George was broken by the urgent appeal for all aircrew to report to their flight offices and ground crews to the maintenance offices. It was unusual as normally you knew by lunch-time if you were on ops that night. As a new Squadron we had just worked up to becoming operational. 35 Squadron at

Linton on Ouse near York, and ourselves, 76 Squadron at Middleton St. George, near Darlington, had been equipped with the first of the four-engined Halifax bombers. My pilot, Sqn. Ldr. Walter Williams, and I, who had been together from practically the start of the war, were both listed for Operations. At briefing at 2 o'clock there was an unusual, tense atmosphere. We were told that the *Scharnhorst* had got out of Brest and that we were to fly south to Stanton Harcourt near Abingdon to attack her from there, as she had dashed down to Pallice near La Rochelle. We were joined by the crews from 35 Squadron. It was disclosed that a night raid had been laid on for that day, the 23rd; on the following day the 24th, a force with fighter escort would be sent to Brest and another to Cherbourg and thus draw the German fighters and leave our way clear to La Rochelle via the Western Approaches. Only light flak was reported from that night's raid and mistakenly the new Messerschmitt cannon firing 109 Mark F were reported to be in Holland.

Our flight plan was out to a point 50 miles from Lands End, then down to a point 250 miles opposite La Rochelle in the Western Approaches for the last leg. On this leg we were to climb from 1000 feet to 12000 feet. We used a German wireless beacon, I can't remember its name, on the Cherbourg Peninsular, to check our dead reckoning. Dartmoor Prison, the town of Princeton, and Lands End are still vivid in my memory, as was the voice of the German announcer calling attention of the German fighters on our last leg which had been completely uneventful until then.

Eric Balcomb takes up the story from the viewpoint of 35 Squadron: I remember sitting in the front turret as we skimmed first just a few feet over the water with bright sunshine, and almost unbearable heat of the sun magnified by the perspex — seeing a number of fishing vessels in the Bay — or were they fishing? Now I suspect some were plants by the enemy to report any aircraft activity approaching the occupied shores of France.

Eventually, and suddenly, the moment of truth arrived. Now to serious business. The Skipper and second pilot busy at the control in the cockpit. The Observer checking his log, bombsight, fuses etc. The W.O.P./A.G. at his set keeping radio silence. The Flight Engineer keeping an eye on his dials — petrol consumption and a lot more of intricate jobs they had to perform. Our Tail Gunner, with watchful eye reported all systems go, and I in the front turret, having checked my guns and the turrets' manipulation, searched the skies for aircraft other than those bearing the R.A.F. roundels. The target could be seen through the smoke of the flak now thrown up at us. With every near burst one could feel the aircraft lurch, and hear fragments hitting the fuselage.

In those days, 'mini-toys' were not generally known, but the battleship *Scharnhorst* berthed in the docks at Pallice looked like a child's toy — from our height at 15000 ft. From a cloudless sky on arrival in the target area, through the period of engagement the grey haze from the flak

Norman Kershaw and Eric Balcomb.





Over the sea. Photo: Imperial War Museum.

bursts, approximately 2000 ft. thick, made quite a scar in the sky.

Everything happened in one split second. A particularly loud explosion followed by metallic rattling throughout the nose of the aircraft made the aircraft lurch. The front turret became smoke-filled and our Observer having just released the bombs on the target appeared to be wounded in the legs. At that time he was lying in a bomb aimer's position just under the front turret. It was then, when I was firing at an attacking M.E.109, that suddenly the turret became inoperative and the guns stopped firing. The flak burst earlier on, smashed some perspex in the turret; my dark glasses (Woolworth's best at 6d per pair) were destroyed and one engine started to smoke with the threat of the others becoming inoperative. I seem to recall the Skipper operating the automatic fire extinguishers.

Before leaving the turret and whilst the

intercom was still plugged in, I could hear the guttural German voices which came across the air on our wave length. I could also hear our tail gunner reporting attacks by the fighters — and then his dying cry. There were three fighters attacking us in turn and it was a wonder that we did not 'blow up' there and then through their cannon fire which outranged our 303 ammunition.

Here it is difficult to write a factual and sequential report of the events which followed. By now we had no defence and were losing height rapidly. The front hatch was taken up to jettison, but possibly through prior damage by flak the hatch was jammed across the escape opening thus reducing the size of the escape area by half. There was no time to use another escape method. I recall helping our wounded Observer to the front hatch and stamping on his shoulders — to help him through the narrow opening. Then, as he left the aircraft, seeing his

'chute open and down below, the outline of a shore which as an illusion — appeared to spin crazily — from our twisting aircraft.

In the struggle to push the crew mate Observer out, my own parachute suffered some damage. With one hand clasped over the vital part — near the rip-cord — I managed to squeeze through. The ground was coming up very fast by then, and after bouncing along and nearly getting caught up in the belly with the bomb doors still open, I thankfully cleared it all, released my hand clasping the 'chute which immediately opened up as if of its own accord. I recall seeing the smashed rear turret with the body of the tail gunner slumped over the controls and then a fighter now turning its attention on me.

Suddenly the aircraft, which I thought to be already in flames, crashed below me; the heat of the explosion could be felt. I landed nearby, near a farmhouse — my movements became automatic. I recall trying to bury my 'chute, my limbs were aching through the jolt of hitting the hard ground — still in total deafness I could feel the percussion of cannon fire still firing as the Messerschmitt dived towards me — maybe to express his delight at a victory — or as he was missing me, I will give him credit to assume that it was his way to salute a conquered enemy.

For Norman Kershaw a similar trial was to come: As we made our run into the target I left the wireless to help the mid gunner. These first Halifax bombers had twin guns mounted on either side of the fuselage, not an upper turret as later on. A fighter was climbing up below us. Not being satisfied with our approach we went over the *Scharnhorst* and round La Rochelle to attack from the land side on our way out. There were six ships firing at us as well as the land flak. From here onwards it is like looking at a series of disjointed still pictures, instead of a continuous film. I had been hit in the face by the fuselage, I can vividly recall watching pieces of the wing flying past and the superstructure of the *Scharnhorst* later, the only bit visible amidst the black smoke. We banked turning out to sea. Later, going back to the wireless set, I transmitted an SOS and in plain language that I thought *Scharnhorst* had been hit badly. My guess was justified

as in the book 'Royal Air Force 1939-1945'.

It says from German records *Scharnhorst* had five hits on her that day and had 300 tons of water in her when towed back into Brest. I don't honestly know how far I got with my transmission as the next thing I remember was being in water in the fuselage. (My message was never picked up.) I was then standing at an opening realising I had to get my torn harness off seeing the flattened dinghy in the water. Then finding I was in the water with my flying boots still on, the next thing hearing foreign voices and being dragged into a fishing boat. Later a ship with guns alongside, then nothing till I was in a prison cell at Frankfurt on Main. All our crew were saved and the only casualties were Walter (later Group Captain) and myself who both had face injuries. It is incredible no one was hit by flak or the fighters as we lost two engines and got out to sea alone. Certainly we only went down as a result of losing our engine power.

*The Halifax bombers had no fighter escort and their Browning machine guns had only a range of 450 yards compared with 600 yards of the Messerschmitt 109 cannons. French newspapers commenting on the attack, last year termed it a suicide raid. Norman Kershaw concludes: It was a bloody battle in the strictest sense. If we had bombed on the first run in, then put our nose down we might have got away but some bombs would have hit La Rochelle.*

## BRAILLE LABELLING MACHINE

This is a new version of the 'Scotch Tape' labelling machine which uses rolls of self-adhesive plastic tape enabling blind or sighted users to produce labels in braille which can be fixed quickly and easily wherever needed, on books, files, control switches etc.

The labeller has its rim marked in both braille and print and, as well as the complete alphabet and numbers, also has punctuation and many commonly used contractions. It costs £48, excluding V.A.T. and is available from John Bradburn (Computer Systems) Ltd., St. James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW.

## Welcome to St. Dunstan's



*On behalf of St. Dunstan's we welcome a St. Dunstaner recently admitted to membership and the Review hopes he will settle down happily as a member of our family.*

**John Price**, of Hathern, nr. Loughborough, joined St. Dunstan's on May 12th.

Mr. Price served as a Private in the Home Guard from 1940 to 1945, and was wounded during a night exercise in 1940. He is married and his wife's name is Doris.

### PHILLIP WOOD WINS LITERARY COMPETITION PRIZES

Admiration and congratulations to Phillip Wood who has achieved quite a list of prizes in the latest Literary Competition run by the Queensland Blind Society in Australia. He has been entering this competition for 33 years, with very few 'misses', he says.

Out of his four entries, he won first prize in the short story section, for his story entitled 'A Bench in the Park', concerning two old people fantasising about their 'caring' children. He took second prize in the non-fiction category, with an essay about his impressions on being liberated on August 15th 1945, and he also won two highly commended prizes, of which one was for the following poem:

#### A Housewife's Lament (A Cautionary Tale)

O where were you when I wanted you  
For support in my hour of need?  
You were playing golf with Toby Mann,  
Another of your breed.

O where were you when I needed you  
To lighten my load of care?  
You were down the pub with the rest of the gang,  
Do you call that playing fair?

And where were you the whole of last week,  
Instead of at home, here with me?  
You were living it up at a conference,  
At a four-star hotel by the sea.

And where did I spend those empty nights,  
On my lonely couch, full of woe?  
You bet your sweet life I didn't, my love!  
I was tucked up with your dear old pal Joe!

## Short Story winners

*As stated in the June Review, Esmond Knight and Shirley Gillberry were joint winners of the short story competition. The story which follows was written by Esmond Knight, and Shirley Gillberry's will be published in the August Review.*

### THE REWARD BY NICHOLAS LACKLAND

I was still unable to realise that I was, in fact, a blind man. Now that I sat alone in a little room at the back of the house, it was becoming more and more difficult to banish the thought from my mind. Until this time there had always been people around, at the training centre and even after that disastrous raid I had not been alone, but I was on my own because my wife, Sonia, had gone to work. There was a typewriter and a large volume of Braille on the desk but I just lacked the urge to start anything. One thing, however, kept repeating itself in my mind and that was that I'd been passed over. No one rang and according to Sonia, no one even wrote. I was quickly coming to the conclusion that even old friends, just didn't want to know.

Suddenly the telephone rang and that explosion of sound made me start violently, it was like an unexpected burst of machine gun fire. It was a Mrs. Blenkinsop, a woman I'd met before the war and whom I'd helped to organise a village fair. Could we both come to a party she was giving the following Wednesday? 'O, yes, we'd simply love to' I heard myself saying with affected gaiety.

Sonia had put on her party frock and hauled out a rather mangey rabbit fur coat. We sat in the bus holding hands but not saying anything. I wondered if Sonia

### ADDITION TO CASSETTE LIBRARY

G36 (C90) Extracts from 'World of Stanley Holloway', some famous monologues read by John Shepherd.

was thinking what I was thinking, which was why exactly had Mrs. Blenkinsop asked us. We scarcely knew her. For a moment I felt angry with myself for having accepted such an invitation. Did she want to present me as a war hero? 'Just one of my friends you know'.

As the heavy front door plumped shut behind us, our ears were immediately bombarded by the cacophony unlike any other, that of a cocktail party well under way. Mrs. Blenkinsop was instantly upon us, over effusive in her welcome. She called for drinks: 'Our special dry Martini' she explained coyly and introduced us to one whose damp hand matched his sibilant opinion of the weather, and he soon slid away. No one else came near apparently and Sonia shepherded me into a corner. I turned and faced the din and the leaves of some plant fluttered about my neck. We stood, saying nothing and sipping our Martinis instantly recognisable as cheap gin with a dash of bitter beer. It was nothing new. I felt Sonia reach behind me, she'd evidently found a bowl of nuts. 'Have one of these'. She put the bowl back and we just stood there munching and I wished we hadn't come and, in any case, I would have liked another drink. I imagined a man, standing quite near and probably in uniform leering at some local beauty, intent on charming, for an impression created in such an atmosphere set on by alcohol, could lead to, anything. Mrs. Blenkinsop's high pitched voice broke through 'O, Nicky dear, I've a nice surprise for you'; so it's nick names now... 'this is Jane Somerton who's here making a film and she does so want to meet you'. I think I just gaped, unable to believe it, with my mouth open. It was not just another dream and I plunged into a torrent of over-elaborate admiration of her last movie, which I'd seen in the early days of the war and how everyone had fallen in love with her and her soft, caressing voice, which some critic had described 'as like the cooing of a turtle dove in summer trees.'

Sonia could see I was well away and, saying she wanted a word with someone she'd just spotted, left us alone. 'What was the new film about and where was it to be made?' It was about Emily Bronte, but

they were having difficulty in getting the actors they wanted. Then the memory of Hawthorne flooded back, like a bright angel entering a darkened room. 'O, yes, how interesting.' I had been there and knew the vicarage and the pub where Bramwell got drunk. I must keep her with me at all costs. I must somehow contrive to charm her. Then I remembered the nuts. I reached behind me and clumsily felt for them. I touched a bowl and presented it to Miss Somerton. 'Have one of these' I said casually. After a tiny pause she said 'No, I don't think I will' and I thought there was the smallest suggestion of a laugh in her voice. I put the bowl back, taking a couple of bon bouches and stuffing them into my mouth. I knew immediately what I'd done but I kept on talking. 'Could they use the village as it was?' She answered something which I couldn't hear clearly for it sounded as if she had a handkerchief before her face. I had taken a couple of stubbed out cigarette ends and was chewing up the nasty mash while trying to present an amiable expression. I crunched on the hardened cinder and the bitter strands of the dead fag and, worst of all, the unmistakable taste of lipstick, the grimy spoor of a discarded toy only minutes before in the embrace of pretty lips. But I was committed and must go on and finish. I couldn't spit it out, not in front of the beautiful Jane, but I had got to get rid of it, and what could I spit into and how dispose of it. I remembered in that desperate moment what my old sergeant major had said just before that disastrous raid 'Once you're ashore, Sorr, just keep going towards the objective.' Between agonising munches I attempted another question, a childish one, a silly one. She didn't answer and with an ugly gulp I swallowed the lot. I was sweating profusely and my hand was trembling as I reached out gently to comfort myself that she was still there, further and further but nothing, she had gone. Then Sonia's bright voice once again 'She's gone long ago darling and, in any case, you're talking to the aspidochrysalis. What on earth did you say to her?' It was raining outside and we were lucky to get a taxi. We sat in silence and we did not hold hands, for I had, oh such a funny feeling stirring inside of me.



Photo: John Barrow.

## ST. DUNSTAN'S BOWLERS AT WESTON- SUPER-MARE By Ted Brown

After a very good start to 1986 with a Handicap Tournament at Ian Fraser House, which most of you must have read about in the *Review* last month, this one at Weston was another kettle of fish — which reminds me of water, and believe me that is a very sore point as far as this competition went. Let me start at the beginning.

We left Ian Fraser House after having a very early lunch and the weather was just right for travelling. Now that the new motorway is available, it wasn't long before we had arrived at the service station where we stopped, stretched our legs and had a welcome cup of tea and refreshments, and then off on our last leg of the journey. We ran into a little rain as usual. After arriving at our various destinations, we unpacked, bathed and changed, and were ready for a good meal and a nice cup of tea but the proprietress of the hotel surprised us by bringing one to our room, just like home. After dinner some went to

meet old acquaintances at Ashcombe Park, whilst others went their own way and met later on in the evening. It was an early night as travelling seems to take its toll in sapping the strength from you, but a couple of pints of Guinness soon puts that right.

On Sunday morning we all went to Ashcombe Park for a practice roll up, that's a laugh for a start. Why? We should have had weight training a fortnight before we went down! The greens were heavy as they had suffered as much rain this year as all of us have, and that was too much. It was so heavy we had a job getting the jack to go its minimum of 25 yards, and when it did go over that distance the bowls were delivered. 'Where to?' you might ask, the caller at the other end shouted, 'Seven yards short,' and so on. This went on for nearly an hour, by which time we were beginning to get a little tired and frustrated, but it all came right in the end, and after two good

hours we packed up and went back for lunch.

The afternoon started off at Clarence Park where we had a cup of tea and chin wag with old friends and new. We received some bad news about one of the Bristol bowlers known to most around the bowling circuit, he had passed away the week before, but his wife, Janet, came to see us all while the tournament was on — I'm sure Charlie would have wanted that. Inevitably we finished up by having another good practice roll up with much better results, and that was very encouraging. There was only one thing we were all asking ourselves, 'When will it get warmer?' We were to find out later that week.

Monday morning came and the opening ceremony was held in the clubhouse as it was so cold and windy. The competition started off with triples, and the dress for this and every day during the tournament were woollies, wets and waterproof head-gear. To put it bluntly, the conditions for bowling were diabolical. But all the bowlers, after having their initial moan, got on with the job and did it very well. Everyone who won a game had to go from one green to another until they were knocked out, and it seemed our bowlers kept doing just that! By the end of the week legs began to sag a little, but the end product was worth it.

### Prizes

The St. Dunstan's team came away with six trophies. Three won by the Totally Blind Section: Triples and Pairs; and the other three trophies by the Partially Sighted Bowlers: runner-up in the Open Concord Singles, and winners of the Somerset Trophy singles, and Pairs. May I take this opportunity to congratulate all the bowlers for participating in a very competitive open tournament. I would like to pay tribute to the totally blind players for getting so far in the open singles, and I can assure all readers that they were bowling against opponents who could see well enough to mark matches. I do believe they got to the semi-final in one and a quarter-final in the other, so as a team you were

great, and I know you will do well in the Nationals at Southport.

Let me tell you a little about the conditions we had to contend with. Rain we are used to, providing it's warm, but the cold winds that blew as well made life quite miserable at times, but if we went on winning that did ease the pain a bit. Wednesday was the worst day of all; it rained all morning, and just before lunchtime it came down in sheets, so the afternoon was lost completely. The weather didn't improve till the Friday, which was beautiful all day, and it's a good job it was as play went on until nearly 6.30 that night. That meant bowling for over eight hours without a proper rest, but coming away with more than any other club made it worthwhile.

### Thanks

The social side of this Weston-Super-Mare week was super. We went to different places at night, and were received very well indeed. I might add that some of the people didn't want us to go home, and believe me by the end of the week several of us had sore throats, especially on the last night at Ashcombe Park Club where a large number of bowlers from different parts of the country got together and sang their favourite songs, and we must thank them all for they did for us while we were there.

Before I close, I would like to thank the driver that took us down to Weston and worked very hard every day, and in the evenings too — he earned his name of the Kamikaze Kid in his duty as the road-crossing warden, Moon boots to boot. Well done Ben lad. Now I would like to thank Headquarters for the help they have given us and will continue to give us if and when necessary. I would also like to thank Commander Conway and his staff for looking after us during our brief stay. Last but not least, the catering staff for supplying the goodies which we all enjoyed on our journey. No, I haven't forgotten the transport department, I daren't, they might make me walk home, I didn't mean that, but thank you all very much.





Photo: Andy Carnall, R.A.F.

### GEORGE HEWETT MAKES PRESENTATION TO RED ARROWS

George Hewett used to make wool rugs, and when he discovered recently, in a trunk, one last one that he had made, he decided he would like to present it to the Red Arrows as the rug was designed with the well-known R.A.F. roundel identification mark.

The Air Ministry agreed and the occasion took place at Kemble, in Gloucestershire. George made the presentation after the Red Arrows had performed an aerobatic display especially for him. He says 'They were delighted with the rug, and invited me to lunch.'

## D.F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

There should be plenty of colour and scent in the garden now with everything at its best, so keep growth continuing by cutting away all dead flowers and giving plenty of water during dry spells. Spreading fertiliser pellets in all parts of the garden will also do a great deal of good. Naturally, weeds will be growing rapidly so use both the rake and hoe all the time, checking if there are any insects about. If so, spray at once and give a dose of slug pellets.

It is a bit awkward at this time of year when you are thinking of going away on holiday, so try and get a neighbour or relatives, if they live nearby, to look over the place and give water in very dry periods, and to keep greenhouse plants in good nick. Get them to come over a while

before you leave and give them some instructions.

### Vegetables

Keep all the beds well hoed and dig over parts which have finished cropping, putting soft leaves on the compost heap. All tougher items such as stems of cabbage, cauliflower and beans should be chopped up small before being consigned to the compost heap. If you don't feel like doing this job, perhaps the local dustman will take it with the household refuse. Give a final earthing-up of the main crop of potatoes. Beet, carrots and lettuce will need plenty of water in dry weather, as lettuce tend to go to seed rapidly.

Tie in any runner beans which haven't taken to the strings and harvest any that

are ripening quickly. Where you have beans not setting as well as they might, especially because of the lack of bees this season, spray flowers with water from a small spray gun. Outdoor tomatoes will be growing rapidly and if they are the tall type all side shoots should be pinched off, as well as the main stem when it is between three and four feet. Tie in regularly and spray flowers to get a good set. Marrows will need lots of tepid water. Carry on sowing small quantities of lettuce and radish every so often to keep up a supply of salads for the house.

### Fruit

It seems, according to all sources, that bees are going to be scarce, so crops may be rather thin. Perhaps all will be well, but no doubt pests will still be coming along so get the sprayer out regularly. Birds will be attracted to ripening fruit on espalier trees, such as apricots, figs and plums, so give some protection in the shape of plastic netting. Harvest all strawberries as they ripen, keeping excess in the freezer, so you have a good supply for a long period.

### Lawns

Keep cutting the grass regularly, with the blade set at a very low level. Don't mow so often when you have had no rain for some time. Give the grass a dose of liquid fertiliser but leave the weedkiller till autumn. Don't forget to see to the edges, in order to give the whole place a really trim and neat appearance. During very dry spells it would be a good idea to set up a sprinkler in the evening to run all night, but don't get into trouble with the water authority!

### Flowers

Cut off dead flowers on all plants in order to make them push out side shoots and new flowers. Do water all the borders thoroughly in dry weather and give a feed in the form of pellets; the best, I have found, being *Growmore* which will last the rest of the season. Carry on staking taller items such as chrysanthemums, delphiniums, hydrangeas, paeonies, dahlias etc.

Roses will be in the midst of their glory, so keep them pushing out flowers by cutt-

ing down dead flowering shoots and spraying against diseases and pests. If you are in a windy area put stakes in place and tie in regularly as some roses do have rather shallow roots. Give these items a bit more soil and tread in solidly. Tie in climbing plants such as sweet peas and nip out the main growing point when it starts getting out of hand.

### Greenhouse

At this time of year the windows or ventilators should be kept wide open and never completely shut, even at night, unless you have raging gales. All plants in pots will need plenty of water and regular feeds. Pests and diseases of all kinds will be on the rampage so mix up antidotes or use smokes, started in early evening with all windows shut, even if the weather is very hot. Open up in the morning and don't work inside for a couple of hours or so. Cut down perennials that have finished flowering and dry off bulbs to ripen off for next season's show.

The weather may be good enough to get plants outside while you clean the inside, so you can replace them in the evening. Carnations and chrysanthemums may need tying and plenty of water with occasional feeds. Tomatoes will be growing rapidly with the main crop of fruit setting, so pick at once. Tie in plants and nip out side shoots as they come along. Those plants that have reached the top of the house should have their main stem cut out. Give plenty of water and feeds and it might be a good idea to spray flowers with water from a mist sprayer, to make the fruit set a bit better.

### Houseplants

Keep most of these items away from full sun but in good light. Feed and water regularly and if necessary pot on to larger containers. Don't keep plants on the window ledge at night, as even now the temperatures drop pretty rapidly and spoil flowers as they come along. One can easily get new plants by cutting off side shoots and placing them in soil in a warm place. Some items, such as african violets, can be started off from a leaf from the main plant.

## CLUB NEWS

### BRIGHTON

#### Bridge

We took part in the final round of the West Sussex Teams of Eight League on Sunday, May 11th, against West Sussex at the Horsham Bridge Club. A very friendly and pleasant afternoon was enjoyed but West Sussex had matters all their own way and won by 16 points to nil.

#### Our team:

J. Padley, W. Lethbridge, R. Evans, R. Godling, M. Tybinski, R. Fullard, R. Pacitti and A. Dodgson.

The team was accompanied by four markers: Mrs. K. Pacitti, Miss Sturdy, Mr. and Mrs. M. Douse.

#### Individuals — May 17th

R. Pacitti	70.0
Mrs. Phillips	57.5
W. Phillips	56.2
M. Douse	56.2
Mrs. K. Pacitti	55.0
W. Lethbridge	51.2
Miss Stenning	46.3
Mrs. Douse	46.3
J. Padley	43.8
Mrs. Vi Delaney	42.5
Mrs. Padley	40.0
Miss Sturdy	35.0

#### BRIDGE WEEKEND, IFH, MAY 3rd/4th

The annual Mini Congress was held at Ian Fraser House and attended by 20 St. Dunstaners. The principal event was the tournament for teams of eight between London, Brighton and Provinces, with markers assisting in making up numbers. Each team won one match but on aggregate points London were the winners with 108 points against 84 by Provinces and 72 by Brighton.

On Sunday afternoon a general drive was held when all markers took part joined by Ian Dickson, Eileen and Molly from London. The prize winners in the drive were:

A. Dodgson & Mrs. A. Clements	1730
W. Allen & Mrs. K. Pacitti	1640
I. Dickson & M. Douse	800
J. Carney & Mrs. Tebbit	740

At the end of the Congress, which was most enjoyable, the prizes were presented by Mrs. E. Dacre.

*Mr. Douse*

#### Entertainment Section

Due to an accident Bob and Joan were not present on May 7th when a party of 30 travelled to the Princess Marina Home, Rustington. The occasion was our annual visit kindly given by the 'Not Forgotten' Association. We were met at the door by Miss Seeley who is now the Vice-President, Miss Peggy Giles, Wing Commander Carvosso, and Lt. Colonel Bennett.

After the ice creams, some took a walk on the seafront, others chatted to the residents. Mrs. Dacre thanked the Association for their kindness and presented both Miss Seeley and Miss Giles with a potted plant. We were served tea with the now familiar boiled egg, after which the tables were cleared and the concert began. Les Brown, the pianist, opened the programme, Harold Taylor was the compere and comedian, followed by Syd Wright, the xylophonist, who has entertained us before, and he was accompanied by Les Brown. Miss Iris Villiers, the soprano, then sang the songs we all enjoy hearing — altogether a lovely afternoon. Bob Cunningham, the Chairman of the Entertainment Section, thanked the artistes and the Matron and staff.

On May 8th a party of 20 had a fine lunch at Brighton Technical College, our thanks to Commander Conway for the transport.

*Phyllis O'Kelly*

## FAMILY NEWS

### PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. 'Lew' Davies*, of Purley, who was interviewed recently by Radio Wales, in Welsh.

## WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

David, eldest grandson of *Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Cummings*, of Verwood, Dorset, on his marriage to Sandra Adams on June 7th.

Elizabeth, daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. 'Ted' John*, of Wallasey, on her marriage to Peter McCarthy on May 17th.

## RUBY WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. J. Bailey*, of Kidderminster, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on June 1st.

*Mr. and Mrs. R. Dixon*, of Formby, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on June 8th.

*Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Franklin*, of Hoddesdon, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on June 8th.

*Mr. and Mrs. C. Hoyle*, of Lancashire, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on May 25th.

*Mr. and Mrs. N. Kershaw*, of Blackburn, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on May 6th.

*Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Lowe*, of Hayling Island, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on May 25th.

*Mr. and Mrs. P. Saywell*, of Leamington Spa, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on May 25th.

*Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Smith*, of Norwich, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on May 11th. Unfortunately Mrs. Smith has been ill, we send our best wishes for better health.

## SILVER WEDDING

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. D.J. Purches*, of Colney Heath,

near St. Albans, on the occasion of their Silver Wedding Anniversary on June 3rd.

## DIAMOND WEDDING

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. H. Patience*, of Crawley Down, on the special occasion of their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on May 24th.

## GRANDCHILDREN

#### Congratulations to:

Mrs. Peggy Booth, widow of the late *Mr. P. Booth*, of Wimborne, on the birth of her grand-daughter, Charlotte May, born on May 9th to David and Joan Booth.

Mrs. Y. Firrell, widow of the late *Mr. S. Firrell*, of Hastings, on the birth of her first grandchild, Catherine Ann, born on April 21st to her daughter, Jeanette, and husband, Christopher Charlton.

Mrs. Q. Waller, widow of the late *Mr. W.H. Waller*, of Ham Street, Kent, on the birth of her second grandson, James, born on March 12th to her son, Richard, and his wife, Rose.

*Mr. and Mrs. W. Durrant*, of Norwich, who are pleased to announce the birth of their third grand-daughter, Danielle, born on May 17th to their daughter and son-in-law, Nicola and Barry Mason.

*Mr. and Mrs. J. Mills*, of Paddock Wood, on the birth of their grandson, Ross, born on May 18th to their son, Geoffrey, and daughter-in-law, Janice.

## DEATH

#### We offer sympathy to:

Mrs. Christina L. Gray, widow of the late *Mr. D. Gray*, of Billericay, whose daughter, Janet Denby, at the age of 50, died on May 3rd after a long illness courageously borne. She leaves a husband and three grown-up children.

# In Memory

It is with great regret we have to record the deaths of the following St. Dunstaners and we offer our deepest sympathy to their widows, families and friends.

## **A.E.V. Campion,**

*Royal Field Artillery and Royal Engineers*

Albert Edward Victor Campion, M.B.E., of Ewell, passed away on May 18th, aged 89. He had been a St. Dunstaner for five years.

He served as a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery and as a Corporal in the Royal Engineers during the First World War and was the victim of a mustard gas attack in Cambrai during 1918. Mr. Campion was discharged a year later and subsequently entered the Civil Service, retiring from the Ministry of Labour at 61 years of age. He was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the Labour Party.

Mr. Campion was a keen gardener and 'do-it-yourself' man before he lost his useful vision. He also greatly enjoyed listening to the radio. In 1983, Mr. and Mrs. Campion celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary and received a telegram from H.M. The Queen, as well as celebrating in a local hotel with many members of their close-knit family and friends.

He bore his deteriorating health with tremendous fortitude and he leaves his wife, Dorothy, son, Michael, daughter-in-law and grandchildren who gave him loving support.

## **C.T. Kirk, Fourth Middlesex Regiment**

Charles Timothy Kirk, affectionately known as Tim, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on May 23rd, aged 88. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1931.

At the age of 18, he enlisted as a Private in the Fourth Middlesex Regiment and suffered a head wound whilst on active service abroad during the First World War. He was discharged from the Army in 1919.

On admission to St. Dunstan's, Mr. Kirk was trained in boot-repairing and initially had his own small business. He was subsequently retrained for basket-work and tray-making and supplied our stores regularly with items of a high standard. In earlier years, he was a keen gardener and enjoyed cultivating plants in his greenhouse. Mr. Kirk also attended the Warminster and Lee-on-Solent Camps and at one time was an active member of the Brighton Social and Bowling Club.

Unfortunately his wife, Frances, with whom he had celebrated 50 happy years of marriage in 1969, passed away in 1976. They frequently used to visit their married daughters and their families in Canada and the USA and Mr. Kirk continued to do so, culminating in a prolonged period of residence in Calgary, Alberta, from

where he returned to the UK to live only last year. Sadly, Mr. Kirk was planning another visit to Canada at the time of his death.

He leaves his three sons, two daughters and their families in the UK, Canada and the USA. He will also be missed by many fellow St. Dunstaners who admired his great zest for living and his cheerful disposition.

## **J. Rowles, Royal Horse Artillery**

John Rowles, of Staines, passed away peacefully on May 19th in Ian Fraser House, where he had been staying since January this year. Aged 79, he had been a St. Dunstaner for almost three years.

He enlisted in the Regular Army in 1927 and served as a Gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery during the Second World War. As a result of a landmine explosion in 1940, Mr. Rowles lost an eye and was discharged from the Army in 1942. Before the war, he served in the Metropolitan Police.

Mr. Rowles greatly enjoyed his visits to Ian Fraser House and bore a long period of deteriorating health with great courage and cheerfulness. He will be missed by many fellow St. Dunstaners, all the staff at Ovingdean and, above all, by his devoted friend, Mrs. Jenny McNally.

## **J. Spink, Royal Army Service Corps**

James Spink, of Croxley Green, passed away at his home on May 3rd, aged 97. He was the second oldest surviving St. Dunstaner, having been admitted in April 1918 following his service as a Private in the Royal Army Service Corps as a motor mechanic during the First World War.

Mr. Spink successfully learned to type and was trained in joinery at which he excelled. For many years, he made trays and other items in his own workshop, some of which were sold locally, the main portion being for our stores. With advancing years and deteriorating health, he was forced to give up joinery and changed to making string bags and dog leads until 1979 when our Stores Department was closed. In earlier years, Mr. Spink greatly enjoyed his garden, but latterly his happiest hours were spent listening to the radio. He had two sons by his first wife, who passed away in 1941, and sadly, they both pre-deceased him.

He leaves his widow, Martha, to whom he was happily married for over 35 years and who cared for him devotedly.