



Puddlelum's Rest

**St Dunstons
Review
May 1987**



From the Chairman

It is with great regret that I have to tell you that Penny Goodwin, our Matron at Pearson House, is retiring early because of ill health.

For the past six years she has led her team of dedicated Nursing Staff and spared no pains over the care and comfort of St. Dunstaners staying at Pearson House. More recently she has battled with fortitude against her illness and the fatiguing effects of its treatment, at a time when continual re-organisation and adjustment were needed to minimise the disruption of reconstruction and improvement. Now, on strong medical advice, she has reluctantly agreed to give in and take a rest.

In saying goodbye we send her our best wishes for a long and happy retirement and our grateful thanks.

Henry Leach

St Dunstans Review

12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB

No. 790

10p MONTHLY

Free to St. Dunstaners

MAY 1987

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ARTIFICIAL LIMB & APPLIANCE CENTRE SERVICE

The Government is to make important changes in the artificial limb and appliance centre service. The first of these were announced in the House of Commons by John Major, Minister for the Disabled.

The Government has established a Special Health Authority under the Chairmanship of Lord Holderness. This interim body will take over the management of the Limb and Appliance services in July, and in addition, carry out a transition, by 1991, to integrate these services with the Regional and District Health Authorities where they will have stronger links with occupational therapy, physiotherapy and rehabilitation services. The Vice-Chairman will be Professor Ian McColl and the names of eight members of the Board will be announced shortly.

Some St. Dunstaners may remember Lord Holderness who, as Richard Wood, then Minister of Pensions and National Insurance, visited Ian Fraser House in November 1963. He served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps in the Second World War and was severely wounded, losing both legs.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

We may be allocated tickets again this year for the Trooping the Colour on Saturday, June 13th in the morning and the Private View of the Royal Tournament on Wednesday, July 15th in the afternoon. Any St. Dunstaners who would like to apply for tickets should contact me at H.Q. by Tuesday, May 26th.

Mrs. Alison Johnson

SPONSORED SWIM

Ray Peart, of Gloucester, has completed a sponsored swim in aid of the Ferry Disaster Fund. At the Gloucester bath, where he swims ½ mile every morning, he increased his effort to almost 1½ miles in an hour and has raised £444.50 for the Fund.

CITATION FOR SERVICE

The Citation for Service has been awarded by National Council of Veterans Associations in Canada to D.M. Dorward — a St. Dunstaner and Executive Director of The Sir Arthur Pearson Association for the War Blinded — 'for achievement in National Service to Canada's War Veterans and Widows of those bereaved by war.'



Cover picture: First steps towards renewed independence for Jamie Cuthbertson, Royal Engineers, at present in training at Ian Fraser House.

THE NEW GADGET

by Ralph Pacitti

Hector Munro eased himself out of bed and crept round to the other side. Looking at his wife, who was still sleeping, he thought, 'How lovely you are my dear after these years together.' As he went out of the room, quietly closing the door, he smiled as he heard Helen say, 'Be careful Hector.' In the bathroom he put on his old clothes and his favourite boiler suit on top. Going down to the kitchen he picked up his sandwiches which Helen had prepared the night before and left the house by the back door.

The village of Kingston on the Moray coast was asleep as Hector walked through. Like other villages in that part of the country, with the coming of winter it seemed a deserted place. It was however, a happy village with a good community. He decided he would go across the golf course to the Spey where he had hopes of a good catch. Hector thought as he walked over the course how easy it was to pick up a salmon when the sea was high. After a good rainfall it was not unusual to find a fish on the seventh tee. Some years previously Hector had told some holidaymakers how the word 'par' had entered into golf. Without a smile he told them it was derived from the name salmon par, a tiny fish.

It was not quite 3 am and all was quiet and still, but Hector proceeded warily, as some keen fishermen could still be around and the one person he did not wish to meet was Duncan Fraser, the water bailiff. Hector had known Duncan as a lad. He himself had already been retired some six years. As he went on his way Hector experienced a feeling of great excitement. He did not think one should pay for what was God-given. At the early hour the sky looked beautiful and Hector had often thought of putting this beauty on paper, but he knew his feelings were beyond explaining.

All he carried was a torch, a hand line with a hook, and his New Gadget. He had worked hard experimenting with this,

which consisted of a lead weight that would carry down four compartments each containing fish food. In the bottom compartment he had put some lovely red worms which he had soaked in milk. The next contained pieces of chocolate biscuit; the third compartment contained pellets of the kind used on trout farms and the top one had a mixture of all the other three. The theory was that all this feed would go down slowly until at a certain level the pressure of the water would act on the smallest and weakest panel, which in turn would release a trip opening the bottom of each compartment. Hopefully a salmon would become very interested.

As Hector walked quietly along all he could hear was the slow movement of the river. He felt in a very happy and contented frame of mind. Passing the old railway bridge he was reminded of the days when he, Helen and the children would take the train to Elgin. What happy times they had. Pausing for a moment, in his mind's eye, he could see the salmon coming out of the water, especially after a rainfall. On a fine day with the sun shimmering over the sea, it was like silver bars waiting to come up this great river. Ah yes! He'd had a few salmon from this spot in his day. The pool he was making for this morning was another three hundred yards further along. From now on he would be exposed but he could see the huge rocks jutting out of the river. He made his way slowly along the bank and thankfully saw no sign of Duncan. There was a very convenient rock where the pool began and he moved onto it as lightly as possible, making sure it was firm enough for his weight.

Taking out his Gadget from under his bonnet, he carefully unfolded it as though it were a very fragile and precious article. He attached the weight and lowered. Heart pounding with anticipation he waited a full ten minutes before raising it again. He nearly fell in the river with excitement. His Gadget had worked!! It

was now evident that salmon were there. Hector then carefully folded his Gadget and put it under his bonnet and the weight he put in the pocket of his boiler suit. By this time he was feeling hungry and reached for his sandwiches, which in his jubilant mood tasted very special indeed. 'Here's to success' he thought.

The morning was gradually coming lighter so he decided he would work for an hour and then return home if nothing happened. He took a good look around. Everything was still. He flashed his torch at intervals of a minute and seeing no movement decided to use his hand line. Taking off his boot, Hector removed a nylon line which had attached to it a number of lead pellets to keep it well below the water line. Before lowering the line he put the remainder of the bait onto the hook. In order to prevent the line becoming caught up on the rocks he kept it moving. Twenty minutes had now elapsed, when suddenly Hector felt a movement. 'Ah ha' he muttered, 'Got you'. As daylight was fast drawing near, he hoped the fish would not give too much trouble. He pulled on the line to give himself an idea of the weight of the fish. The salmon put up little struggle which enabled Hector to land it quite quietly. He felt quite dizzy with success then he saw that he had indeed landed a beauty weighing about 11 pounds. 'With all the family coming for Sunday lunch,' he thought, 'what a feast indeed.'

Hiding the Catch

Hector quickly moved off the rock and from the top pocket of his boiler suit he took a large plastic bag in which he hastily put the fish. He then placed the bag and contents in the back of his boiler suit and firmly buttoned up the front. Obviously, the top part of his suit looked much larger but he had done this so many times in the past that it felt quite normal. He decided to make his way home by the same route as he had come, but as he no longer felt the need for caution, he walked sharply. However, as he left the golf course, to his consternation he came face to face with none other than Duncan Fraser.

'Now then Hector,' he said, 'you are up very early this morning'. Quite taken

aback Hector stammered 'Oh, it's yourself Duncan. It seemed a fine morning so I thought I'd have a wee stroll. Helen didn't sleep too well, so naturally I didn't either. You know, fine Duncan, she hasn't been too well recently.' Hector went on quickly 'How is your Jean? I heard she had had a bit of flu.' Duncan gave him a knowing smile and without answering his question said 'I know one thing for sure Hector, Kingston would not seem the same without you'. 'Oh indeed Duncan' said Hector, 'you are a fine man and much respected'.

Hector bid the water bailiff 'Good morning' and made to move off, but quickly realised he obviously could not turn his back on him. So he took a half step backwards, and again said, 'Well, good morning to you Duncan, I am off'. Hector gave a huge sigh of relief when the Bailiff said 'Cheerio Hector, see you sometime' and walked off. Hector walked on feeling his luck was in, when he heard Duncan call 'Hector'. 'Yes Duncan' he answered, and with a knowing grin Duncan called 'Enjoy your Sunday lunch!'

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DERBY SWEEP

By Mrs. E. Ollington,
of Church Crookham

It's nice to know the widows are now included in this popular excitement. I always attended with my late husband the Derby Day outing with the London Club members from Headquarters, and oh what lovely memories it brings back to me of the lads of the First War who attended each year on the coach with our sing-song with the mouth organ and accordians.

DAEDALUS CAMP

Will all those who wish to apply for a place at HMS Daedalus this year please remember that their applications should be in by the 19th May at the *very latest* — contact Elspeth Grant, Saffron Walden (0799) 22874.

A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

The Silver Screen

A wartime issue of the *Dundee Evening Telegraph and Post*, one recently discovered in a forgotten nook along with a gas-mask and a stirrup-pump, discloses the fact that in those days there were no fewer than 27 picture-houses in the city. Well I remember them all, from Green's Playhouse with its marble and palms and goldfish, its commissionaire done up like an officer of the old Austro-Hungarian empire, to such as the Regal, which stank of Jeyes fluid and had hard, wooden seats, and if I could somehow raise sixpence I could get a poor seat in the first, if threepence, not a bad view of the screen in the other. Jack Hulbert in *The Camels are coming*, Eddie Cantor in *Roman Scandals* — this was the sort of stuff they had on offer, and if you missed it first time round at the grand cinemas, the ones with the Wurlitzer organ, you could pick it up later at the fleapits and bug-houses with which the pends, wynds and alleys of Dundee abounded.

Shandie's was one of these latter, a corrugated iron structure in Shepherd's Loan, and it was here I was to have an experience at the age of 11 or so which I always look back on as a turning point in my life, *The Cat Creeps*. This starred Helen Twelvetrees, was filmed in an eerie blue light, and was so terrifying that I followed with a kind of morbid fascination its progress in picture houses all over the town, each less salubrious and more insanitary than its predecessor.

At an earlier era there used to be matinees for children in a converted theatre called Her Majesty's in the Seagate, and here it was all Tom Mix, Ken Maynard and



Rin Tin Tin, vast clouds of dust rising from the upholstery as the excitement mounted, things being flung about, and attendants with flashing torches quite unable to cope with a situation amongst the young audience tantamount to riot. These were the days when employment was hard to come by, husbands drank and smoked away what dole money there was, and wives not only got emotional release in the romantic atmosphere of the picturehouse, having a good greet as they said, but also saved on coal what they spent at the Regal or Shandie's.

The last picture I saw in Dundee, 24 at the time, was *Sullivan's Travels*, with Joel McRea, I squired the wife of an overseas-posted friend of mine to the performance, and there are two sequences of this Preston Sturges film which forever remained in my memory. The tramp has stolen money and is making his getaway in mist and darkness over innumerable sets of railway lines in a marshalling yard, a train appears, its headlight dazzles the tramp, he doesn't know what line it's on, and jumping as he imagines to save himself, is killed by the train, a boot and a flutter of banknotes indicating his end.

Again, we are transported to *Sing Sing*, where convicts are shown watching a Mickey Mouse cartoon, hard men, brutish, and condemned to long terms of imprisonment for crimes too heinous and abominable to admit of extenuation. First they watch in stony silence, their dour and intransigent faces scanned by the camera, but gradually their hostility relaxes, melted by the magic of Disney, reluctant

smiles lead to laughter, and the camera leaves them at last convulsed with mirth, tears running down their cheeks. It's in such sequences as these that film stakes its claim to stand on a level with art as understood by Michaelangelo, Mozart, Shakespeare, and whatever other exponent of pre-cinematographic creativity.

I was drawing to the close of my association with the silver screen, for with *Bianconeve elle Sette Nani*, *Maria di Scotia*, and *Henry the Fifth*, all seen in Rome, my cinema-going came to an end. Blindness is not the ideal attribute for appreciating *The Battleship Potemkin*, *Man of Aran* and *Citizen Kane*. The Shakespeare was rushed out to CMF on the dubious assumption that if the English could beat the French using the long bow at Agincourt, then it was a foregone conclusion the Allies could beat the Jerries on the Senio with bren guns and 3-inch mortars; and as for *Maria di Scotia*, it was on the recommendation of a friend of mine, a Scotsman, who had seen the film in Dundee, that I put down my liras, entered a Roman cinema, and sat down to find out how Hollywood had handled a key period in my nation's history. There was an immortal moment, my friend said, he didn't want me to miss. It came when John Knox enters a Holyrood ante-chamber, to descry a languid figure inside. 'Hi ya, Darnley,' says Knox, 'still hangin' around.' My mind drifted back to the first time I was ever at the pictures, it was Christmas Eve in Montreal, and the film was *Robin Hood*, with Douglas Fairbanks. Something unexpected happened on the screen, whereat my elder brother Jim leapt to his feet. 'Great Golly,' he cried, 'What done that?', and in these words is encapsulated the magic of film as it must ever affect its votaries both old and young.

ROYAL ENGINEERS 200

Scuttling over the pedestrian crossing near the Royal Albert Hall on February 14th, a voice to my right called 'Good evening Sapper Revis.' It was David Bell, with Sybil of course, and we had been to one of the several events for this year to commemorate the grant of the Royal

Charter to the Corps of Engineers 200 years ago.

In the great hall, which was packed with Sappers past and present we were entertained by massed bands: the Corps Band and the R.E. Band from Germany, Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band, as well as the Queen's Ghurka Engineers pipes and drums who marched around the arena. There was a display of uniforms through the ages and all got a mention — divers, tunnelers, bridgers, bomb disposers and armoured engineers. It was a rousing evening ending, of course, with 'Hoorah for the C.R.E.' sung enthusiastically by all of us, 'Wings', the Corps March, and the National Anthem. I was sitting with about 30 of my B.D. pals and Richard Baker did a splendid historic commentary. I did smile when he, ex-Navy, used the words 'they tell me' when mentioning the fact that the Royal Engineers were playing about with torpedoes before the Royal Navy.

K.C.R.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH WALKING?

All of us at some stage have experienced difficulties while walking. It might be due to a cracked, uneven pavement, or because wet leaves, snow or ice haven't been removed from footways. The intrepid pedestrian in England faces a hundred obstacles during his journey: dodging rubbish, dog dirt, scaffolding and parked cars, never mind crossing busy roads. All the inconveniences or dangers, and the reasons for them, together with recommendations to improve the situation, have been researched by the National Consumer Council and published in a report, 'What's Wrong with Walking?' If you would like to delve into the findings, the report is available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office and good bookshops, at £4.95.

There is also a National Consumer Council's Action Guide for pedestrians, entitled simply 'Pedestrians' and it is available from Pedestrian Action, National Consumer Council, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH, for £3.

READING TIME

by Phillip Wood

Cat. No. 3142

A Postillion Struck By Lightning

By Dirk Bogarde
Read by Gabriel Woolf
Reading Time 11½ hours

Dirk van den Bogarde enjoyed a secure, comfortable middle-class life in rural Sussex. His father was Art Editor on *The Times* and he owned a car. Not any old car but an Italian job in gleaming aluminium. Each year the family spent a month on holiday in France accompanied by the faithful servant, Lally.

He was hopeless at school which he found excessively tedious and boring. In desperation his father packed him off to live with relatives in Scotland and for three years he attended a tough Glasgow technical school where he fared no better. He was brought back home and sent to Chelsea Polytechnic on an art course.

Here he studied under Graham Sutherland and Henry Moore, both of whom predicted a bright future for their student. His father was delighted, he had long dreamed of his son joining him at *The Times*.

But the young Dirk would have none of it. His heart was set upon becoming an actor. Finally his father relented. His aunt in London would give him a bed and he would receive an allowance of ten shillings per week for one year. If after that time he had not succeeded in his chosen profession he would join the art department of *The Times*.

He did *not* become an overnight success. There were times when he almost starved and was reduced to stealing milk from doorsteps, but slowly, very slowly, the breaks came along . . .

The absorbing first volume of the autobiography of the multi-talented Bogarde.

Cat. No. 376

The Savoy

By Stanley Jackson
Read by David Geary
Reading time 11¼ hours

In 1246 Henry III presented a piece of land between 'London and Westminster' to Count Peter of Savoy, the Queen's uncle, at an annual rental of three barbed arrows. There the Count built a magnificent palace, but soon, disgusted by the attitudes of the xenophobic English, crossed the channel, never to return.

In the 1880's Richard D'Oyley Carte built a theatre on part of the land to present the immensely popular Gilbert & Sullivan operas. To the astute impresario it was a logical step to build an hotel to cater for the rich Americans who flocked in their thousands to see the operas. And so, 650 years after Henry's gift of land, the Savoy was born. It was the first hotel to be lighted by electricity and it had 70 bathrooms. The price of a single room was six shillings and for a double room twelve shillings a night. Significantly, the first gold sovereign taken on the first night, August 6th 1889, was paid by Mr. Harry Rosenfelt for a bottle of *Moet et Chandon*. Mr. Rosenfelt was a Chicago millionaire. The coin remains today one of the Savoy's treasured souvenirs.

For D'Oyley Carte nothing but the best was good enough for his hotel and under the magic of Cesar Ritz and Auguste Escoffier the Savoy was soon established as one of the great hotels of the world, a position which it still enjoys today.

A fascinating, if rather overlong, study of the Savoy and the great, the famous, and the outrageous, who have graced (and occasionally, disgraced) it over the past 98 years.

Cat. No. 1868

Old St. Paul's

By W. Harrison Ainsworth
Read by Andrew Timothy
Reading Time 18½ hours

It is a fine morning in April 1665. John Blundell, grocer of Cheapside, is at morning prayers with his family and servants. He asks God for deliverance from the plague.

His prayers are unanswered. Soon the Great Plague spreads rapidly and inexorably throughout London. Countless thousands die in the houses and in the streets. Great areas of the city are laid waste, devoid of human presence. All trade comes to a halt. Grass grows unchecked in the once-busy streets and the pest-houses and plague-pits become a permanent feature of the London landscape. Coffin-makers and pest-nurses grow rich on booty stolen from the corpses.

Running like a thread through this moving and graphic story of the Great Plague is a tale of true love and the many attempts by a debauched nobleman to abduct the beautiful daughter of the grocer and the part played by the great cathedral in their lives . . .

Written in 1841 this is a fascinating mixture of *Grand Guignol* and pure Victorian melodrama. All the villains are thorough-paced scoundrels, all the good are superlatively good. The full horror of the Great Plague is most vividly portrayed.

Cat. No. 4318

Tales from the Newgate Calendar

By Raynor Heppenstall
Read by Tom Crowe
Reading Time 8 hours

During its long and turbulent history Newgate Prison has housed a goodly proportion of the nation's criminals, many of whom achieved lasting notoriety through the pages of the *Newgate Calendar*. The first of these to be dealt with in the book is the pirate, Captain Kidd.

Kidd, unaccountably, changed from respected Royal Navy captain to pirate in

1696. Apparently he was less than proficient in his new career for after only five months under the Jolly Roger, he was captured, tried and hanged.

One of the most colourful characters was undoubtedly Jonathan Wilde (both Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding wrote about his exploits). He ruled the London underworld like a Mafia Godfather. He had a unique way of dealing with any of the gang who stepped out of line. He simply handed them over the 'blood-money'. He enjoyed the lifestyle of a dandy and a gentleman until he made the fatal mistake and ended his days on Tyburn Tree.

Jack Shepherd, arch-criminal and twice escaper, achieved a curiously macabre kind of immortality. His skeleton is preserved in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

A most enjoyable read — if you like this sort of thing. It chronicles in some detail the villainy of the ungodly and how they finally perished.

Welcome to St. Dunstan's



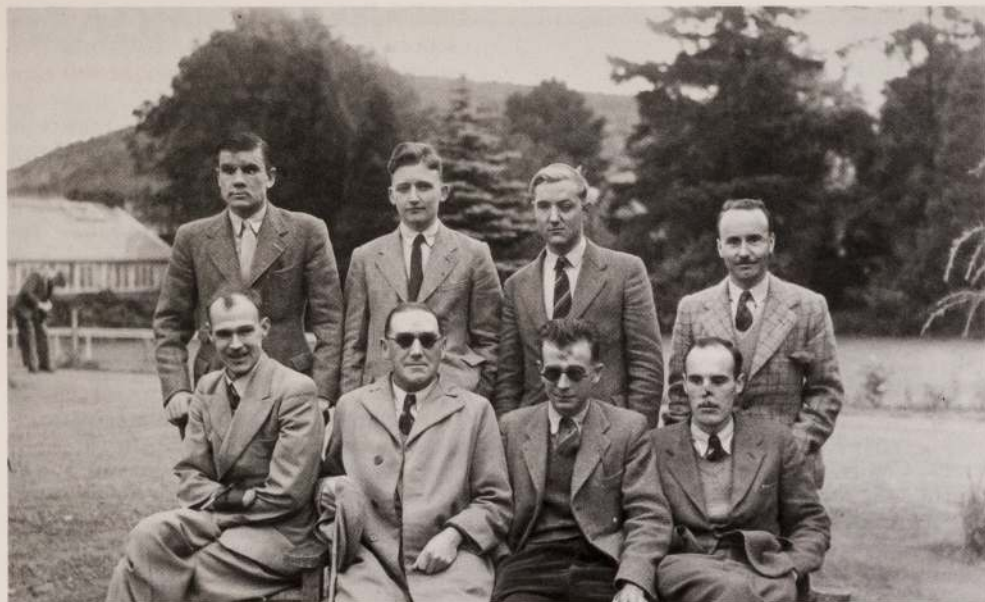
On behalf of St. Dunstan's we welcome St. Dunstaners recently admitted to membership and the Review hopes they will settle down happily as members of our family.

John Griffiths, of Birmingham, joined St. Dunstan's on March 9th.

Mr. Griffiths served with the Royal Berkshire Regiment during the First World War, and was wounded on the Somme in 1916. After his discharge from the Army, Mr. Griffiths worked all his life as a G.P.O Storeman. He is a widower, and shares a home with his daughter and grand-daughter.

William Kenneth Taylor, of Liverpool, joined St. Dunstan's on March 9th.

Mr. Taylor served in the Royal Engineers during the Second World War, and was injured in 1943. In recent years Mr. Taylor worked as a radial arm driller, but was forced to give this up owing to ill health.



The late Geoff Preston, seated left in the front row, with a group of friends at Church Stretton. The other St. Dunstaners are: (front row, from left) the late George Goodwin, Howard Simcocks, John Windsor; (back row) Ken Revis, the late Harry Devenport, the late Ted Barton, and Paul Baker.

A Sense of Humour or — The Autobiography of a Husk Part One

by Geoffrey Preston

In 1947 the late Geoffrey Preston, compiler of crossword puzzles and former contributor to the Review through 'Nelson's Column', completed a short autobiography covering the early years of his blindness and his time at St. Dunstan's. Mrs. Isobel Preston has kindly permitted us to extract those sections of Geoff's manuscript which refer to days at Church Stretton and, later, Avenue Road, and these are reproduced below.

Friday, January the 22nd, 1943, was a lovely day in the region of Hoshiarpur in the Punjab. Lieutenant G. A. Preston was busily occupied in giving his company of P.M's, a little target practice and grenade throwing.

Subedar Fateh Mohammed was delegated to supervise the grenade throwing after Preston had demonstrated what was required by throwing the first one. The officer then proceeded to view, and remark upon the antics of the riflemen.

An hour had elapsed when Preston arrived once more at the scene of the grenade throwing. The Subedar reported all

thrown, but four unexploded, which did not please the Lieutenant who, as senior officer on the job, had the pleasant task of demolition.

The first went according to plan but on straightening up from preparing the last one he seemed to be weeping from the right eye and felt himself sagging at the knees. My God, he thought, won't the chaps think I'm a twerp. Then he felt himself falling on a live bomb and terror-stricken he passed into temporary oblivion.

He came to on a stretcher with the Subedar at his side with a drink of water

handy. Having enquired if there was anyone else hurt, the answer 'no' relieved him considerably. The Subedar spoke a little English and Preston correspondingly little Urdu, so the latter was glad to hear the voice of an English speaking Havildar by his side.

'What is it, Sharif?' he said.

'Nothing', said the Havildar, "Only a hand and an eye".

I arrived at Church Stretton on March 31st, by train via London where I lunched with Lady Fraser and made a bad mistake regarding her height. Whilst walking by her side out of lunch I felt a touch just below my shoulder and said, 'You're rather tiny aren't you?'

'That is my shoulder', Lady Fraser replied.

Impulsive speech always irritates both utterer and utteree. Feeling rather foolish, a most usual circumstance in those days, I departed with the Orderly for Paddington, caught the train, and arrived at Tiger Hall, St. Dunstan's hospital in those times, in the evening. Here I met Matron 'Possie', short for Postlethwaite, and several nurses whose names I did not assimilate immediately.

After a pleasant meal I went early to bed in a room with two empty beds. Next day was very quiet but a walk in the morning with a coffee at the end of it passed the time pleasantly and in the afternoon I tea'ed at 'Battlefield', the house to which I would go after hospital. There were very few present at that tea. Captain Halloway, called 'Skip', Ken Revis and his wife, who was living in the district, Edward Dunlop, a Canadian, Edmund Barton and Mrs. Irvine, the Matron. Stewart Spence was out to tea but I was to go to the tavern with him next evening. The party was memorable because Skip gave me a cigarette and in this process burned all the hairs off my right forearm. I escaped without discomfort on account of my good nose. It was time for the Easter break and all the chaps were going away except Spence, who was to join me at Tiger Hall.

Easter in Tiger was good fun and my room was full, the other two being Spence and a newcomer, Geoffrey Treglown. We lived a quiet uneventful life except for odd incidents such as my heaving a pillow at Spence and its coming to rest half out of an open window one rainy morning. We were quite a trio to have in one room, hav-

Tiger Hall, Church Stretton. Through the trees in the background is the Longmynd Hotel and some huts originally used for training.



ing between us one useful hand, the Padre's left, three useful legs, two of the Padre's and one of my own, and half an eye, quarter each to the other two.

Another Canadian arrived at Tiger before we moved out, a chap named Jack Miles who fortunately had a degree of sight left him and he never moved into training. He was closely followed by Harry Devenport but before he came Spence and I had moved to "Battlefield", the house of the tea party. All the members of that party were there, plus Colin Beaumont-Edmonds who had been out on the previous occasion.

Thus in late April 1944, my particular puzzle was presented to the staff of St. Dunstan's. I knew, however, that only one person could solve the problem although helpful suggestions might ease it considerably. A medical board at the end of April graded me E instead of my usual A.I. I was not surprised.

I read a little economics, Nelson and his Captains, Wellington's and Marlborough's lives and we had a team to attack a daily crossword. On June 7th I went for a final overhaul to a head hospital in Oxford, where all they could tell me was 'We can remove the piece from the head but if we do you will be paralysed and bedridden for life, but you must continue with the massage'.

Gadgets

My army career came to an end on June 8th and I returned to 'Battlefield' on the 15th. At once I was sent to Roehampton to get a new end for my right arm. They were very good and since my arm was so long that an artificial one could not be fitted they made me an armlet with a loop for a cigarette holder up from the wrist a little. This, with attachments enabled me to eat, drink, shave, clean teeth (mine), smoke, brush my hair and type. It was July when I took delivery of all these gadgets and by that time Dunlop had returned to Canada and George (Squire) Goodwyn had arrived. I decided that crossword puzzles had to be composed by someone. Why not me? So with the assistance of Mrs. Hilary Druce I began.

July saw me learning to type. Eighteen words in forty-five minutes was my best. Then, after a sports day, summer holidays with four weeks rest at home.

After a pleasant holiday we all came back, all except Skip that is, to a full house. Paul Baker, Vincent Docton, John Windsor, a Canadian, Howard Simcocks and Walter Thornton. I must point out again that we were the smallest, least significant house in St. Dunstan's but our population was quite large enough for the premises to be well filled. I waded into my puzzle making and typing and in a month got up to two words a minute. For my lessons I went into the village to a bunch of Nissen huts where the chaps came to learn to read and write once again, rug-making, basket making, upholstery, lathe operating, pressing and any academic education they might require.

Confidence and Competition

However, to my way of thinking, the restoration of confidence and competitive spirit throughout the whole organisation was the most beneficial to us trainees. The steady outflow of men who had achieved the necessary efficiency to get a job in the world again, was another stimulus. In September, I began to play bridge and chess once again by remote control because I could neither hold my own cards nor move my own pieces but I had persuaded my left hand to turn door knobs. Walter Thornton was my chess partner and we sometimes played in bed as we were in the same room. When I made a particularly good move, which was seldom, he would decide it was time to curl up and when we resumed the game I had forgotten my plan of campaign.

At Church Stretton, a small village some 12 miles south of Shrewsbury, we had both a large domestic and administrative staff. A small school, two hotels and a house contained the two hundred or so customers we had, or should I say casualties; and another house for the girls - God bless 'em. In the middle of the village Nissen huts served as classrooms and other training previously mentioned. One large hut we had for dances, concerts,

plays and the like, and it had a canteen on one end. Another house near the big hut was occupied by the Commandant, Air Commodore Dacre, and the administrative staff and Matron Paine, the over-all Matron. We offered training to any blinded allied soldiers and had all kinds except Russians. As you must realise this created a language problem which appears on the face of it almost insurmountable. However, it has in most cases been overcome and braille, a system of reading and writing by various arrangements of 6 small raised dots, has been taught to many blinded, non English speaking allies, in English.

'Old Boys'

We all assembled once more at 'Battlefield' in early January with the exception of Ken Revis and Colin Beaumont-Edmonds who had now become 'Old Boys'. That reminds me that like any school we had occasional visits from old boys. Amongst those I met were Charles Cooper, studying massage, Bill Robinson, a Canadian, assistant labour manager in a chemical factory, Esmond Knight, the actor and Robin Buckley, a naval commander lecturing in a torpedo school. It was only through the kindness of the retired Bishop of Bristol next door, who let us have three beds for casualties and two for orderly staff that we all managed to live at 'Battlefield'. Things were getting tight and if several of our number had not been in and out of hospital it would have been impossible to live there. I was still making puzzles and feeling dissatisfied with them because I felt I could do much better. We had a small chess club which Thornton and I joined and we foregathered each week in one of the Nissen huts.

A bit of elementary French was taught me which did not improve that which I had from my school days and my typing was steadily improving in accuracy and speed.

This is a description of my typewriter. Basically it is a standard portable machine with a light metal plate made somewhat like a flight of steps covering all the keys, each key is shown by a small hole in the



St. D's "XMAS PIE" 1944.
"I.T.M.A." Freddie Higgs with Stan Southall as Mrs. Mopp.
Entertainment at Church Stretton in 1944: the late Freddie Higgs and the late Stan Southall in St. Dunstan's version of the famous radio show 'I.T.M.A.'

metal, through which the metal finger at right angles to my right arm can strike the requisite letter. I suppose that is as clear as mud but it should serve. It is an adaptation of the Research and Engineering Dept., of St. Dunstan's with Peter Nye as moving spirit.

Mrs. Druce, my crossword helpmate, was assistant entertainments officer and I told her I would like to thank Charlie Kunz if he came to play to us because I believed he was instrumental in the early movement of my left leg. I believe in sympathy between limbs and that the left leg reacted to the right's beating time to the records of that artist's piano playing. He did come and play whilst I bit my lip and tried not to think back. I met and thanked him afterwards and he seemed pleased and presented me with a little memento. On February 24th I had a fine birthday tea party at a wonderful little place two and a half miles from us, Chelmick, where three sisters served the best tea in England, or so we all maintained.



Brockhurst.

Just before Easter it was announced that 'Battlefield' would be too small to contain us for the summer and we were to move to the little school, Brockhurst, temporarily. After a quiet fortnight at home we returned to begin life at Brockhurst. Malcolm McClaren, Jimmy Wright and Tom Burge, a Canadian, were added to our numbers and Charles Cooper an old boy returned to polish up his braille for exam purposes. Howard Simcocks had left us as well as Ted Barton.

Brockhurst was nearly a mile from Stretton on the top of a hill, a perfect site for a monastery, which I believe it now is. The distance from the village necessitated transport for such lame ducks as myself to go to their work in the village. The driver, Mrs. Bach, pronounced Back, was my opponent in several chess games at which there was little to choose between us.

In May, VE Day brought us a short holiday and many aching heads. Shortly after this, Sammy Stinson arrived to join the fold. Bad luck to miss the end by a month or two but it could always be worse.

In July, I learned by heart a crossword pattern from a paper and decided I could make a complete puzzle in my head without further assistance. The result was far my best effort to date although the mental

concentration nearly melted the silver in my head. It was a sense of poetic justice which prompted me to send that first one to St. Dunstan's *Review* so that my partners had first crack at my first puzzle. However, I still tried hard to get a start without success. Paul Baker and Walter Thornton went at this period and with one or two in hospital we were reduced in numbers when Zigmund Stepek arrived. He was a Pole without English and a very quiet character besides. The first word he learnt was 'Sherry', I taught him that. We were told that after the holidays our numbers would be small enough to warrant our return to 'Battlefield'. My old partner Stewart Spence went to hospital at this juncture. During the holidays I made five or six puzzles without half so much strain and after a week on the East Coast came back to Stretton refreshed but there was no encouragement from the newspaper world so it was suggested to me that I might make a book of fifty puzzles which I proceeded to do. That September, Alan Milne and Arthur Finney arrived just in time to be present at the nuptials of Bill Robinson. 'Battlefield' was the scene of the reception and we had a great deal of fun and games after the crowd thinned out. At a dance in the house that evening I ran into an American voice and assuming

it was Mrs. Bach, the driver, enquired how her husband was.

'I have no husband', was the reply, 'You have forgotten me'.

'The Druids'

I thought hard and remembered a bridge game in November, 1944. 'Then you must be Miss Pepall'. I was pleased with myself when I was right and enquired the reason for her presence. She informed me that Mrs. Irvine was off for ten days and she was the Matron. At 11.30 that night I retired quite merrily and my room mate Ziggy, the Pole, appointed me his subsidiary English teacher and demanded a lesson there and then.

This wedding day was September 15th, and just before it Captain H. E. Peter Pyne on leave from Kenya, came to give us a hand out in our various pursuits and he helped me considerably with my puzzles Peter Pyne and I had quite a bit in common since we had both started our working life in a bank, both backed horses and liked beer. He was a great asset because we had formed a society known as 'The Druids' which had various rules which were firmly administered by the chairman at each meeting in 'The Plough', where many good evenings were spent with sandwiches and cakes and jugs of beer in a private room. Tom Burge was our Treasurer and high in order of Druids. Bertie McConnell, the Irishman, was also high in the order and yours truly was but an ordinary member. It was all a question of capacity and Alan Milne and I were no mean performers, but Bertie, Tom and Peter were the 'Archbaskets'.

Avenue Road

Miss Pepall left us and we heard in October, that she had opened, and was Matron of 9 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, where already Peter Matthews, Harry Devenport and a Yugoslav were domiciled. The latter came up to us at the end of the month for training. Avenue Road was part of a plan to move the whole organisation out of Stretton, which had been a refuge from bombs. In 1940, St.

Dunstan's training centre had been evacuated from Brighton to Stretton and the plan was to move back in 1946, but the problem was the number that Brighton would accommodate was exceeded by the number at Stretton by a small margin, which approximated to our numbers, so we were to go to London. Bertie and I were instructed in early November that we travelled on the 14th. We did so and were met at Paddington by Miss Pepall, who surprised us by seeming pleased to see us. I had by now some forty-three of my fifty puzzles and planned to finish by December 9th.

London

Three of us came to Paddington on November 14th. The third was Harold Bradbury, 'Brad', 'Cadbury' or 'Chocolates', being his general form of address. In the early days at Avenue Road, Bradbury missed his cronies on the staff at 'Battlefield' and I had twenty-five days to complete my fifty puzzles, of which I had made forty-three, but five were mislaid at Stretton so that twelve, not seven, were needed. The house had four fellows when we arrived, Stewart Spence had come out of hospital a week before, Peter Matthews and Harry Devenport had jobs and were busy looking for somewhere to live. The fourth was a new addition, Michael Neville, who had a crack in the head and one leg and some sight. The staff consisted of Miss Pepall, Matron, Miss Pamela Metcalfe, also Red Cross, two orderly staff and two domestic staff. On the first evening Bertie and I were introduced to the Prince George of Cumberland, a local tavern, of which Con Andrews, a retired Corporal Major of the Blues, was the most genial landlord. Miss Woolrych taught braille and typing but at the time had few customers. Both Bertie and I had passed our typing tests and all Bertie wanted was braille shorthand.

Geoff Preston's account of life in London at Avenue Road — including adventures at the Derby and work as a proof-reader of Talking Books will appear next month.

FUNERAL GRANTS FOR WAR PENSIONERS

Improved arrangements are being introduced from 6th April, 1987 for the payment of funeral expenses for war pensioners who die either as a result of their pensionable disablement or whilst they are receiving or, are entitled to, constant attendance allowance.

It will no longer be necessary for the family to ask the War Pensioners Welfare Officer to arrange the funeral in order to receive payment for the cost. Instead the family will be able to arrange the funeral privately and claim the cost of a basic funeral.

A claim for a funeral grant should be made in writing to the War Pensions Branch, North Fylde Central Office, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3TA, as soon as possible and not later than 3 months from the date of the funeral.

The person making the claim will then be sent a formal claim form and asked to give details of the death and the funeral. However, if it is clear that a widow or dependent would be entitled to a funeral grant but has not claimed, then a claim form will be sent to them by the War Pensions Branch. Claim forms will be dealt with as urgently as possible.

The grant will be payable for funerals in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and can cover the cost of expenses for:—

- necessary documentation
- an ordinary coffin
- transport of the coffin and bearers and one additional car
- a reasonable amount for flowers
- undertaker's fees and gratuities
- chapel's, organist's and cemetery or crematorium fees for a simple funeral.
- any additional expenses arising from the requirements of the religious faith of the deceased, not in excess of £75 where the death occurred away from the deceased's home, the cost of transporting the body within the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland

either to that home or the undertaker's premises

the reasonable travelling costs of the return journey within the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland by the person concerned in connection with either the arrangement of or an attendance at the funeral.

The undertaker will be required to give details of the costs of the items covered by the grant, which may of course be less than the actual cost of the funeral.

SPEAKWRITER 2000

SPEAKWRITER 2000 is an affordable, add-on module to most electronic typewriters. Compact, easily transportable and with high quality speech output, in either letter or word mode, it transforms a standard typewriter into an effective personal communications system.

The SPEAKWRITER voices every typewriter key and command, identifies margins, tab locations, line and column positions on the page and also reviews the last two lines typed. It has an audio-storage capability and an advanced mode of operation, which allows up to four pages of information to be stored into memory at a time. Corrections are made simply by using the text editor controls which are simple keyboard commands for delete, insert, locate and replace text.

For further details and price, please write to: Techno-Vision Systems Ltd., 1 Birch Barn Way, Northampton, NN2 8DT. Or phone: 0604 843557.

NEW RAISED DIAGRAM SERVICE FOR BLIND PEOPLE

RNIB has launched a new service producing raised diagrams for blind people on request. For a tactile version of any diagram you choose, from street maps of the local shopping centre to biology diagrams for schools, just send an ink drawn master copy to RNIB's Copying Service for Raised Diagrams at Braille House, Goswell Road, London, EC1. Subscription for the service is only £3 and the cost of each A4 copy is 60p.

D.F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

The weather may be showing signs of summer and one hopes there will be good crops of vegetables and fruit plus a fine show of colour in the flower beds. There will probably be signs that insect pests are on the way, so get sprayers going quickly. If you have some dry spells after strong winds and sunny periods, keep plants lively and roots working properly by using the hose in good doses. Lawns will be looking nice and green with good growth. Greenhouse heating should be cut off during the day and even at night if the weather has been mild, but watch out for cold spells. Plants will need watering and some feeding as they really grow fast.

Vegetables

Keep the hoe going between growing plants and if there is any sign of insect pests, get the sprayer out. Sprinkle a few slug pellets between rows of plants to keep slugs and snails from eating leaves. Keep plants nice and moist especially in dry spells by using the hose. Broad beans and peas will be growing rapidly and getting a bit tall, tending to topple over, so get some canes in place with strings attached to keep them upright. Plant out early sown cabbage, cauliflower and sprouts which you have hardened off. Remember to give the area where you are setting them out an extra dose of lime and add calomel dust to the holes as you plant them, plus a soil pest deterrent such as *Bromophos*. Plant firmly and harden in with your feet and do remember to water in.

Salad items can be sown outside in small doses every so often to keep the house supplied. Sow runner beans in warm areas, but I hope you have some earlier sown ones hardening off for main crop, in beds already dug over with plenty of compost at the bottom of the rows. Make sure that you have stakes in place for plants to grow up later on. Some tomatoes which were grown under glass and hardened off can be planted out in warm, sunny places but I think in the north you should wait till next month.

Fruit

Give all fruit trees a good mulch of manure or compost, especially on dry ground to keep roots nice and moist. Where you have been having rather dry weather, give soil round trees a good dose of water via the hose before putting on the mulch. On young trees which were only recently planted, don't let too much fruit set, keeping them down to a dozen or so, plus keep soil at root level moist by using the hose frequently.

Thin out suckers on raspberries and also cut away any surplus runners above the number wanted for new plants next season. Try and get some clear straw to lay down under plant leaves and flowers which are setting fruit so they can be kept clean of soil. Use insecticides on fruit trees and bushes as there may be signs of insects such as greenfly and caterpillars which always have a good chew on leaves and make a mess on flowers setting the fruit.

Lawns

Grass will be growing rapidly now, so give the lawn a cutting at least once a week with the blades set fairly low. It might also be a good idea to use one of the special lawn fertilisers, but only if the soil is fairly moist. Keep edges tidy by using one of those long handled shears which make the job easier. By doing edges regularly you will keep the grass from growing on the borders of beds.

Do remember to clean up blades after use and oil the moving parts.

Flowers

Where you have half hardy annuals raised from seed under glass and hardened off plant these out if the weather is good, but I think those of you in the north might wait until the end of the month or early next month when things are more like summer.

Do ensure bulbous items such as begonias and dahlias are really well grown before being planted in their beds or troughs.

Geraniums will also be starting to show signs of good flower buds so get them in their summer flowering places.

When you want perennials grown from seed such as aquilegia, delphiniums, lupins, etc., get them in outdoor beds to make good flowers for next season. Auriculas, primulas and primroses can also be started from seed to make good plants for a spring showing next year. All these seeds will germinate better if you cover with some plastic sheeting and this will keep the birds from having a go at the seeds.

Sprinkle some Growmore all over the flower beds and don't forget to keep the hoe going regularly to combat the weeds and to open the soil to make better growth for the flowering plants.

Some taller growing shrubs and perennials can be kept in good order by putting in stakes and tying round the plants to keep the wind from blowing them all over the place. Don't forget to water bedding plants after you have put them in position.

Greenhouse

Keep windows open during the day especially during really sunny weather but close at night until the end of the month when summer really comes along. Keep the atmosphere moist by spraying plants and give a good dose on the floor.

There is a good possibility that bugs of all kinds will be on the rampage so get out

smoke cones, using the combined ones to combat insects and disease. Set them in place during the early evening in the middle of the greenhouse with everything closed up. Open the door and the windows in the morning and leave open for a couple of hours before working inside.

Get the glass shaded over with *Coolglas* to cut down the full force of the sun so that you won't get any burning of leaves and flowers. Once dry it won't be washed off by rain and will stay in place for the rest of the summer.

One can still start achimenes, begonias, freesias and gloxinias if you see some available in the shops. They will be quite cheap and still give good flowers later in the year. Seeds of these items plus streptocarpus can be sown for next year.

Calceolarias, cinerarias, coleus and all types of primulas can be sown but don't expect flowering plants until about Christmas or a little after if you have heat.

Get cyclamen and azaleas re-potted in new compost and set outside in warm shady spots and remember to water in and give more if no rain comes. Tomatoes will be coming along well, the early ones with fruit on the lower trusses may be showing some colour. Water well and give special feed twice a week. Nip out all the side shoots but obviously leaving flowers. When the weather is very sunny and warm it would be a good idea to spray flowers with water to make the fruit set.

CLUB NEWS

BRIGHTON — Bridge

Pairs — March 8th

R. Pacitti & Mrs. Pacitti	66.7
Mrs. Vi Delaney & Mrs. Tebbitt	59.2
R. Evans & Mrs. Barker	57.5
Mrs. Douse & Mrs. Holborow	55.0
W. Lethbridge & Mr. Goodlad	52.9
G. Hudson & Miss Stenning	48.3
A. Dodgson & Mrs. Buller-King	48.3
Mrs. Bushell & Dr. J. Goodlad	46.7
M. Tybinski & Mrs. Blackman	45.8
W. Allen & Mrs. McPherson	42.5
J. Padley & Mrs. Padley	40.0
R. Palmer & Mr. M. Douse	37.1

Individuals — March 14th

R. Pacitti	55.7
Mrs. Barker	55.7
Mrs. Pacitti	54.5
R. Goding	52.3
G. Hudson	50.0
W. Allen	48.9
W. Lethbridge	48.9
Miss Stenning	48.9
M. Tybinski	47.6
Mrs. Vi Delaney	46.6
R. Evans	46.6
R. Palmer	44.3

W. Sussex Inter Club League Teams of 8

We played our second match against Crawley on March 15th and our visitors won by 12 victory points to 4. Our players were: W. Lethbridge, Mrs. Vi Delaney, R. Evans, R. Goding, M. Tybinski, W. Allen, R. Pacitti and A. Dodgson.

FAMILY NEWS

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Julia, daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. T. Parkinson*, of Blackpool, who belongs to the Holy Family Spectrum Youth Group in Blackpool and participated as a member of the team which took part in the National Association of Youth Clubs Super Dance in 1986 and were the winners for Lancashire. They then represented Lancashire in the North West regional finals in which they came third.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Yvette, youngest daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. G. Breerton*, of East Molesey, Surrey, on her marriage to Hugh Hart on April 25th at St. Peter's Church.

Lynn, youngest daughter of *Mr. J. O'Hara*, of Wimbledon, London, on her marriage to Timothy Barford on October 18th 1986 at the Holy Trinity Church in Wimbledon.

Sharon, daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. A. Naylor*, of Mansfield Woodhouse, on her marriage to Shaun Dibble on December 24th 1986.

RUBY WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. I.R. Turner, of Thorlby, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on April 9th.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Gimber, of Whitton, near Twickenham, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on April 3rd.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Loach, of Dudley, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on March 15th.

Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Read, of New Haw, Weybridge, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on April 5th.

Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Stanley, of Peacehaven, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on April 5th.

GOLDEN WEDDING

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Roston, of Weybridge, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on March 31st.

GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. R. Bailey, of Southampton, on the birth of their twelfth grandchild, Carrie Ann, born on January 7th, to Jenny and John Bailey.

Mrs. M. Mitchell, widow of the late *Mr. A. Mitchell*, of Chichester, whose son, Nicholas and his wife, Ursula, have adopted a brother, Paul Robert, for their son, Gareth.

DEATHS

We offer sympathy to:

Mr. H.J. Boorman, of Faversham, and his daughter, Margaret, on the death of Mrs. Winifred Boorman on March 24th, aged 86. They had been married for 56 years.

Mr. J. Proctor, of Rottingdean, on the death of his brother on February 25th.

Mr. W.J.D. Vickery, of Plymouth, on the death of his wife, Emily, on March 26th, in hospital.

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.

R.C. Birchall, *The Buffs*

Robert Cecil Birchall, of Bearsted, died suddenly in hospital on March 15th, aged 65. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1984.

Mr. Birchall enlisted in The Buffs in July 1941 and was wounded two years later whilst instructing with a two-inch mortar. He suffered amputation of one arm and injuries to the other, and was discharged in 1944. After the war he worked in Birmingham for 12 years as a quantity surveyor before transferring to Kent County Council. Sadly, his vision deteriorated and he took early retirement in 1982. He was keenly interested in his local church, Holy Cross, Bearsted, and was working hard on its extension up to the time of his death.

He leaves his widow, Gwyneth, and their daughter, Angela.

S. G. Reynolds, *Royal Fusiliers*

Sydney George Reynolds, formerly of Hunstanton, passed away on March 25th, following a short illness. He was aged 90. Mr. Reynolds joined the Royal Fusiliers in 1912, at the age of 16 and served in the First World War. He attained the rank of Platoon Sergeant and was severely wounded in France, in March 1917. He was discharged in 1919. Mr. Reynolds became a St. Dunstaner in 1985. He is survived by his second wife, Ethel, and his son by his first marriage.

R.H. Finch, *Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve*

Squadron Leader Ralph Herbert Finch, of Leamington Spa, passed away on March 12th, aged 86, following a prolonged period of ill-health which he bore with great fortitude. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1976. For the past few years, he and his wife, Joyce, had been permanently resident in a nursing home, and they would have celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary next year.

Mr. Finch was in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and was a Squadron Leader from his enlistment in 1940 until his discharge in 1945. He was a Cambridge graduate and for many years practised as a Barrister and a Solicitor. In earlier years, he greatly enjoyed his visits to our Brighton Homes and attending our reunions. He had been a keen fisherman, but subsequently took up several hobbies including bowling, swimming, bridge and handicrafts.

He leaves his widow, Joyce, his daughter, Valerie, son, John, grandchildren and members of the family.

A. Slade, *King's Royal Rifle Corps*

Arthur Slade, of Heathfield, passed away on March 28th, following his admission to hospital. He was 74. Mr. Slade enlisted in the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1931, and in 1936 was posted to Palestine. In 1938, he was transferred to the Reserve but at the outbreak of World War II was posted to Egypt, returning to the U.K. in November, 1940. He was discharged on medical grounds in 1942. He became a St. Dunstaner in December, 1986. Mr. Slade leaves his widow, Gladys, to whom he had been married for 45 years and who nursed him devotedly. There are no children.

J.R. Yabsley, *Royal Air Force*

John Raymond Yabsley, of Tredegar, passed away unexpectedly in hospital on March 13th, aged 67, having been taken ill whilst on holiday with his wife, Monica, at Ian Fraser House.

Mr. Yabsley became a St. Dunstaner in 1979 following service in the R.A.F. during the Second World War. He enlisted at the age of 20, serving as a Leading Aircraftsman and was discharged in September 1946 having suffered great deprivation as a prisoner of war of the Japanese. In civilian life, he rose to Chief Welfare Officer of the British Steel Corporation in Ebbw Vale, and retired in 1978.

In earlier years, Mr. Yabsley was greatly interested in music and drama and was a keen amateur dramatic player. He was a fine actor and, in fact, was offered an opportunity to turn professional in the 1950's but declined. On admission to St. Dunstan's he undertook a typing course at which he became very proficient. He was a man of varied interests but his main hobbies in later years were gardening, tending an allotment and, in particular, rug-making at which he excelled and for which he was awarded a trophy at the Welsh DHSS Exhibition in 1983. He was also greatly involved with Masonic and Rotary activities and provided a great deal of financial support for the Royal British Legion by fund-raising. Mr. and Mrs. Yabsley, shared many happy holidays together at home and abroad, and sadly, had been looking forward to celebrating their Ruby Wedding Anniversary in April.

He leaves his widow, Monica, his daughters, Beverley and Geraldine, and their families.