

St Dunstons  
Review  
December  
1987



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Cover Picture: Lady St. Dunstaners at their reunion ride a vintage bus at Beaulieu.



## From the Chairman

There came a raging hurricane  
With force twelve winds and lashing rain.  
Uprooted trees left gaping pits  
Quite reminiscent of the blitz.  
Chimneys collapsed and tiles flung down,  
'Estates' came quickly to their own.

As ever in a case of need  
St. D's was there in thought and deed.  
The mammoth task of restoration  
Will spread o'er many a generation —  
While houses can be built again  
A fallen tree gives lasting pain.  
The roads were in a dreadful state  
but all turned to and pulled their weight.

Damage beyond the wildest dream  
Drew out the best and formed a team.  
Though everywhere was mess and dirt,  
Thank Heavens no St. D's were hurt.  
But now to turn from this grisly squall —  
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL

*Henry Leach*



## Christmas greetings



The staff of the *Review*, visiting staff and all other departments at headquarters, Ian Fraser House and Pearson House, send warm greetings for Christmas and the New Year, to all St. Dunstaners and our other readers.



### 1988 CRUISER SAILING COURSES FOR THE BLIND

The 14th annual Cruiser Sailing Courses for the Blind, organised by the RYA Seamanship Foundation, will run from the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Falmouth, from Sunday 26 June to Saturday 2 July, 1988. Three concurrent courses, for 12 students each, will be held at Beginners, Advanced and 'French Cruise' levels. Cost to students will be £65 per head and an additional booking fee of £5, payable on application and non-returnable (except to those not selected), will be charged.

Application forms are available from Chris Attrill, Leisure Department, RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA, Tel 01-631 4473. The completed forms, together with a cheque for £5 made payable to the RYA SEAMANSHIP FOUNDATION, should be returned as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than 16 January 1988.

### CUSTOMERS TELEPHONE LIFELINE PROTECTION

British Telecom is to give customers whose telephone is their lifeline further protection from unnecessary disconnection because of unpaid bills. Following a trial in the North and West Midlands, the Protected Service Scheme for elderly and disabled customers will be introduced

throughout the country.

Under the scheme, customers at risk can nominate a friend, relative or neighbour whom British Telecom can contact in the event of a bill remaining unpaid after the final reminder has been sent. The nominee agrees to find out why the bill is unpaid — for example, the customer may have been taken ill and is in hospital — and then try to arrange payment. British Telecom will defer disconnecting the line to enable the problem to be resolved. The nominee is not personally obliged to pay the customer's outstanding bill.

If you would like to join the Protected Service Scheme, ask your local British Telecom office for an explanatory leaflet and application form.

### NEW EMERGENCY ALARM FOR PICCADILLY LINE

There is now a new, more efficient emergency alarm on all Piccadilly Line trains. Instead of automatically applying the brakes when activated, alarm buttons will activate a warning signal in the driver's cab which will alert him to the problem. The driver will only stop the train immediately if part of the train is still in the station. If the train has left the platform when the button is used, the driver will continue to the next station before stopping. The new system will gradually be extended to other lines.



# Amateur Radio Society Weekend

by Arthur Taylor (Short Wave Listener)

The hurricane that struck the South Coast during the early hours of 16th October, made travelling conditions extremely hazardous and this obviously had an effect on the number that attended. As the day wore on, we heard more and more stories of St. Dunstaners and members of staff whose homes were seriously damaged by the storm, and the Society would like to take this opportunity to extend to them its deepest sympathy and to hope that by the time this issue goes to press their many and varied problems will have been resolved.

The planned Committee meeting for Friday evening had to be cancelled, but Ted John (G3SEJ) and Alan Reynolds (G3VRI), the only two Committee members present, were able to deal with urgent matters. Earlier, John Houlihan (G4BLJ), accompanied by Ted John went up on to the roof to inspect the damage to the aerials and try to carry out some temporary repairs. It says much for their valiant efforts because GB4STD station went on the air. We are indeed fortunate to have the practical support and interest of John in all our endeavours, indicative of which is the visit he paid to Ian Fraser House on his way home from work to offer his assistance. John was made an Honorary Life Member in 1980 in recognition of his work for the Society and we are ever grateful to him for his enthusiasm and encouragement.

## General Meeting

On Saturday morning, the General Meeting was held in the Annexe and congratulations were extended to Trevor Phillips for passing his morse test and obtaining the new callsign G0IBH, and to Arthur Holmes for passing his morse test. We hope it won't be too long before you, Arthur, obtain your licence and get on the air. Jeff Bond, VE3WJB, Canadian St. Dun-

staner from Ontario, was welcomed as a member of the Society, and it was hoped that we would soon make his acquaintance on the air and in person when he is able to attend the meetings.

In view of the successful visit to Arretton Manor in July, when the ladies found attractions other than the Wireless Museum there (!), proposals were made for future visits to other places of interest already mentioned in a previous article, i.e. Radio Establishment at Warminster and Science Museum in London. A suggested trip to Dieppe is under consideration and will be referred to the members in due course.

## Louis Varney

After lunch, members and their guests gathered in the annexe for a talk by Louis Varney, G5RV, on the early history of wireless, of particular interest because he had already made it known that he would be exploding some of the myths that surrounded this discovery. As the appointed time came and went, however, it quickly became clear that he must have been a victim of the storm and, in the meantime, members and their guests were able to get to know each other better. Louis and his wife, Névida, arrived at approximately 16.15 hours; not only had their home been seriously damaged but their journey to Brighton had been hampered by the conditions they encountered en route.

In order to avoid disappointment, however, Louis promised to record an edited version of his talk and said that he would return at some future date and give the full lecture. This synopsis will be included in the forthcoming issue of *Ragchew*, which Peter Jones (G3DRE) has, once again, kindly offered to edit and publish.

In the evening, a dinner-dance was held, and a total of 54 people sat down to an excellent meal in the Winter Garden.

Tributes were paid to the catering staff for the way in which they had coped with a most difficult situation, having regard to the fact that the kitchen roof had been damaged in the hurricane, and to the maintenance staff for maintaining a power supply under adverse conditions.

Everyone present sincerely hoped that the repairs to Louis Varney's home would be completed as soon as possible and would not delay the visit of himself and Névida to Uruguay, from where he will operate using the call sign CX5RV. He uses CW, and would welcome any contracts from the UK, particularly from our members. Louis was presented with a Society plaque as a memento of his visit.

Apart from all his other activities in the world of amateur radio, Louis Varney is the Life President of the Mid-Sussex Amateur Radio Society, with which our Society has had an association for many years. The surprise of the evening was the presentation of a St. Dunstan's shield on which a Society's badge was mounted, to commemorate the 21st Anniversary of that Society — the inscription read 'Mid-Sussex Amateur Radio Society — Congratulations on your 21st'. Louis, somewhat overwhelmed, thanked the Society on behalf of his wife and himself for the hospitality and many good wishes they had received, and said that it would give him great pleasure to deliver the shield to his Society. He repeated his promise to return, possibly next Summer, to give the full talk.

## Dinner-dance

Following the dinner, during which Louis Varney congratulated the chef and staff for wonderful repast, the company adjourned to the annexe for the dance and a most enjoyable evening. For those who do not know, Louis Varney is something of a gourmet, having started his cooking career by washing dishes in a Paris restaurant. Praise from him is praise indeed!

On Sunday morning, the shack was put to good use, and Trevor Phillips used the occasion to "break his duck" as a newly-licensed operator on the high frequency bands. The weekend also marked the

Scouts' Jamboree of the Air, and Trevor's very first contact was with a group operating from Boscombe Down. Trevor was in the Royal Air Force stationed there in 1943 and he seemed to pick on a memorable contact for his first. Later on, we were somewhat amused to hear one Hampshire Scout Group happily apologising for the fact that their station had suddenly ceased to transmit. They explained that their power supply was linked to a slot meter and had forgotten to feed it.

## Closedown

Operating was resumed after lunch, by which time a strong gale-force wind was blowing, despite which reception was still very good. It was quickly realised, however, that something was amiss when contacts reported our signals as almost unreadable. A further examination of the aerials revealed that the gale had wrought havoc yet again and, very regretfully, Station GB4STD had to close down.

So ended a very remarkable weekend. So far as the weather was concerned, Brighton and its surrounding districts were right up in the front line. Those of us who were at Ian Fraser House on that Friday morning could not have failed to be impressed by the way the staff, at all levels, coped with very difficult situation.

May we say a special word of thanks to those who, at first light, organised and operated a trolley service to the Married Quarters and elsewhere. Never was a cup of tea so gratefully received or been so welcome.

The dates of two of our meetings for 1988 have been confirmed, e.g., 23rd July and 15th October. The date of the AGM has yet to be finalised, and this information will be sent to members as soon as it is available. Arrangements to attend these meetings should be made through Miss Frances Casey, Homes Booking Clerk at Headquarters.

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**Norman Smith, recuperating after a heart attack, sends Christmas Greetings to all his friends at St. Dunstan's.**





Bill and Betty Black presenting a tie to Ted and Iris Miller.

## The Handless Reunion

by Ted Miller

On Wednesday evening September 23rd, Blind and Handless St. Dunstaners met in the Club Room at Ian Fraser House at the beginning of the annual reunion. Chairman David Bell, Treasurer Bill Griffiths, President Mrs. Dacre and Vice-President Air Vice-Marshal Colahan were in charge of proceedings. Expressions of regret that Tommy Gaygan and Audrey would not be with us because of the ill health of Tommy were made by all of us, but we were happy to hear later in the week that he had had an operation and was making good progress and had sent his love to us all.

We were also happy to meet our New Zealand Handless St. Dunstaner and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Black, who were over here for our reunion. They very soon became one of us, Miss Stenning and Mrs. Ann Colahan were with us to keep us all in order! There were loud groans when Mrs. Dacre informed us that she wanted us all

on the coach by 7.30 next morning for our journey to the Houses of Parliament in order to arrive by 10.30 a.m. It was just as well that we did leave early as the traffic into London was extremely congested and we certainly needed the extra time. When we arrived — on time — we were met by the His Grace The Duke of Norfolk, our host, Black Rod, the Honourable John Gingell and Commander Kempe and two of his trusty guides. The Duke of Norfolk was on his usual good form. We entered the House through the Old Palace Yard and Royal Entrance into the Peers Gallery where our hosts and guides gave us some of the history of the House. What a beautiful building it is and how fortunate we are to have such a heritage. We made our way into the House of Lords and we were happy to meet Lady Onslow here who many St. Dunstaners will remember from Stoke Mandeville days. We were told

about the woosack the Lord Chancellor sits on in front of the Throne and of all the tradition of the House. The public are not allowed to sit on the red padded benches in the House of Lords, as that is one of the Lords' guarded privileges. In the House of Commons the same privileges apply, and the M.P.s and Lords are all very jealous of their rights. In the members lobby, the bronze statues of Churchill and Lloyd George flank the arch which leads into the M.P.s chamber, and visitors will notice that Winston Churchill's left shoe has a lovely shining gold patch by the toe, and we were told that as new members made their way into the House to make their maiden speech they would rub Mr. Churchill's toe for luck, as does everyone who goes by. Westminster Hall is the oldest part of the Palace and provided a link with the Royal Palace of the Norman Kings — part of its structure survives from the Great Hall which William Rufus built for his Palace of Westminster in 1097-1099.

After finishing our tour of the Houses of Parliament we retraced our steps back to the Lords dining room where we had a very good lunch, a few short speeches and one by Bill Griffiths who presented the

Houses with one of St. Dunstan's plaques. It was a wonderful tour and we must thank our host The Duke of Norfolk, Black Rod, Commander Kempe and two guides for making it so enjoyable. After the short journey to our hotel, we prepared for our evening dinner where we were to be the guests of the 'Masters and Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Inn Holders' at their Hall on College Street. This is the oldest Guild in London, and their Hall predates the Great Fire of London. We received a tremendous welcome from the Master J.F. Webster Esq. and his wife, the Reverend Sheila Webster, and all the members of the Guild, and we were all pleased that our Chairman of St. Dunstan's Sir Henry Leach and Lady Leach were able to be with us. Before going into dinner I was asked to present one of the tables made by Tommy McKay to the Master, to remind the Company of our visit. I hope they all enjoyed it as much as we did, as we had a delightful evening with plenty of food, drink and good company. A beautiful silver loving cup was passed round during the evening and as it is passed to you your partner stands with his or her back to you to protect you while you

St. Dunstaners and escorts at the Houses of Parliament. The Duke of Norfolk is standing at the extreme right with Mrs. Dacre.







David Bell presents a table to Mr. J. Woodhouse.

drink, a tradition dating back to the days when one might be stabbed in the back while drinking.

The Master gave us a speech of welcome and one of the Past Masters gave us a very interesting talk on the history of the Company before our Chairman proposed a vote of thanks. We were entertained by our own Bill Griffiths, Alice, his wife, and Gwennie, one of our handless Lady St. Dunstaners. It was a very happy party that arrived back at the Harewood Hotel late that evening and our thanks to all concerned who made it such a grand day, including our driver, John.

On Friday morning we journeyed back to Ian Fraser House arriving in time for lunch and a well earned rest before our evening dinner dance at Herstmonceux Castle with Mrs. Dacre and her friends. We arrived at the Castle at about 7.30 where we were met by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, The Most Honourable the Marquess of Abergavenny and many other friends who had entertained us before, at their homes at past reunions. After Grace by St. Dunstan's Chaplain the Reverend Michael Bootes, we sat down to another splendid meal and were entertained by the Ken Lyons Trio and their music. After talks by the Marquess of Abergavenny and Mrs. Dacre we were

given a short history of the castle by Mr. Kenneth Fiennes, whose family once owned the castle, and told about the Dacre family connection with Herstmonceux.

They owned the castle in the time of Henry VIII until one member met an unfortunate end, being hung at Tyburn, the castle then passing into other hands. We had been told that there was to be a surprise during the evening and we all thought we were going to meet a ghost, but how wrong we were — at about 10.30 p.m. the hall was suddenly invaded by marauders armed with swords intent on capturing the castle. We need not have worried, however, as the castle was stoutly defended by the owner and his son, who slew the intruders with axes. After many thanks, another pleasant evening ended and we arrived back home at about one o'clock in the morning, tired but content. Saturday was a free day so my wife, Claire Loska and Sybil Bell took the opportunity to visit Dickie Brett's wife Peggie in the nursing home at Peacehaven. They found her frail but very pleased to see them, and she sent her love to all the boys and girls. In the evening our own little group and escorts had a very enjoyable meal at 'The Olde Inn' restaurant in Rottingdean.

On Sunday morning we were invited to morning service at Lancing College Chapel by the Headmaster Mr. J. Woodhouse, and we were met by the Reverend Phillip Clements, who escorted us into the chapel. They call it a chapel but it is more like a cathedral with its beautiful tapestries and windows. The style of the chapel is early fourteenth century English Gothic. The Rose Window is the largest in England, 32 feet in diameter. It's hard to believe that the chapel is less than 100 years old, the dedication service was held in 1911. David Bell gave a short talk on the founding and history of St. Dunstan's, which I am sure all the boys and girls found very interesting, and we enjoyed the sermon and the singing by the choir very much. After the service we were invited into the school dining room for coffee with the Headmaster, his wife and some of the Masters and pupils. David presented one of Tommy's tables for use in the school, and it's rather sad to think that this



'Armed Marauders' meet a two-handed reception at Herstmonceux Castle.

table is probably the last one that Tommy will make, as his health is not too good these days and he is retiring from work. I was pleased to meet Mrs. Woodhouse, the Headmaster's wife, who I knew from when I worked at Warwick Castle, for as the wife of the then Headmaster of Rugby School, she would often bring parties of boys from the school, and so it was like meeting an old friend. We were sorry to learn after the Service that Air Vice-Marshal Colahan and Ann, his wife, would be leaving us after lunch as Ann's father had had a nasty fall and was in hospital in Southampton, and so, of course, they naturally wanted to be with him. We all sincerely hope he is by now fully recovered. In the evening we were entertained in the lounge by the Brighton Barber Shop Singers, which was very enjoyable.

Monday arrived all too soon, and in the morning we had a little get-together among ourselves to discuss future plans etc., and in the afternoon we had our usual meeting with Headquarters staff. It's always nice to meet Dr. Fletcher from Roehampton — an old friend — Miss Mosley, Miss Lord, Norman French, David Castleton and Commander Conway. Mr. Weisblatt chaired the meeting and we had a very helpful and friendly discussion.

Our closing dinner took place in the Winter Garden with all our friends and

Headquarters staff. It was nice to see the President of St. Dunstan's, Mr. Beaumont-Edmonds and his wife with us, and we were pleased that two of our widows, Mrs. Fred Higgs and Mrs. Stan Southall, were able to attend with their escorts. Mrs. Pugh and Mrs. McKay also came along. David Bell was the spokesman for us all, and Mr. Webster, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Inn Holders gave a vote of thanks to us all. Mrs. Dacre, 'Our Elizabeth,' was presented with a small gift with our love and appreciation for all she does for us.

We missed Gwennie who was poorly during the weekend and had returned home early. We hope she will soon be her usual self. Also missed was Winnie, who missed the last dinner as she was on holiday.

Our New Zealand friends made a short speech and presented all the handless men a gift of a tie given by the Commercial Travellers Association who do a lot for Blind Veterans in New Zealand. May I say again how pleased we all were to meet Bill and Betty who were so much a part of our reunion.

Our thanks to all the Staff at Ian Fraser House for their help and a special word of thanks to Ted and Ann Colahan, our friends whom we missed very much on Monday.



# A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

## The King of the Cats

Mr. Fordyce, an old story tells us, was a gravedigger, and dusk had fallen one evening when a concerted mewing and wailing disturbed the peace of the cemetery. Mr. Fordyce looked up out of the grave he was just completing to see a procession of cats coming towards him. Obviously in deep mourning they moved at a stately pace, and behind them they drew a little bier, on the bier a black velvet cloth and on the velvet cloth a little crown of gold. The cortege paused, and the leading cat addressed Mr. Fordyce. 'Tell Tom Tildrum,' it said, 'that Tom Tildrum is dead.' Then the cortege moved on, the mewing and wailing died away, and Mr. Fordyce was again alone in his cemetery. These matters he was relating to his wife that evening as they sat by the fire, Mr. Fordyce at one side, Mrs. Fordyce at the other, and their cat Tom between them on the mat. 'Look at Tom,' said Mrs. Fordyce, 'how restive he is.' But sure enough, as Mr. Fordyce proceeded with the story, the more Tom pranced and fidgeted. 'You don't mean to tell me,' said Mrs. Fordyce, 'that the cat actually spoke to you. What did he say?' Mr. Fordyce repeated what the cat said, whereupon Tom sprang up from the mat. 'What,' he cried, 'Tom Tildrum's dead! Then I'm the king of the cats,' and he leapt up the chimney and was never seen again.

I've always been convinced that our Tinky in his day was the king of the cats. He never actually said so, but there was something about him, call it what you like, which distinguished him from all other cats. Though friendly he didn't fraternise

with us, but kept himself aloof, preferring the solitude of his cardboard box in the kitchen to whatever company there might be in the living room. Tinky liked to know what was going on in the world, particularly as regards cats, so we cut out items of this kind from the local paper and stuck them on Tinky's box where he could study them at his leisure, sometimes purring in approval, at other times evincing pique with an expressive gesture of one of his elegant paws. Yes, there was something undeniably regal about Tinky, an hauteur which could not but be monarchic, and this was by no means impaired by his getting knocked down three times by cars. His last accident left him permanently crippled, though not to such an extent that he could not range the garden, pick fastidiously at his munchies, and make the great leap from herb garden to kitchen window-sill which had come so to distinguish him in his prime.

If he hobbled on his back legs there was a kind of dignity about it which seemed to suggest not the base origins of Chae Clark's cats across the road but some noble line going back to the ancient Egyptian world. His purr was distinctive, loud and resonant, so that in this respect he rose above the more muted utterance of cats manifestly his inferior. No one could have called Tinky beautiful, but then how many earthly kings have been something less than handsome, and there was in his bearing a nobility of grace which transcended mere regular whiskers, colour design, and fluffiness or sleekness of fur.

Yes, Tinky was certainly the king of the cats; Margaret was as well aware of this as I was, and when it came to his end our convictions in this respect were strikingly vindicated. Tinky began to dwine, as we say in Scotland, his behaviour altered, he was obviously perplexed and unhappy, and went off his food. When spinal arthritis was diagnosed as the cause of these symptoms there was nothing for it but that Tinky should be put to sleep. Now Halley's Comet had just achieved perihelion, then on the eve of Tinky's euthanasia, the night sky burst forth in a phenomenal shower of meteorites. Winter's first snow was falling whilst in Roseangle's kitchen Tinky's old friend the vet gave him the



This photograph, taken at a seminar on Europe and the Disabled, shows Derek Prag, Chairman of the European All Party Committee on Disablement, with St. Dunstan's Eric Ward Rowe, who chaired the meeting. This was part of a busy week for Eric, which included an all Lancashire Disabled conference, a seminar on new bills affecting disabled people and his appointment as a Director of the International Aid for the Disabled Travellers Club.

needle, and as he lay in state that night, his mouse and his comb beside him under his old blanket, thunder rolled over the Sidlaws and lightning flashes illumined his peaceful, composed face.

We buried him in the garden next day, a sequestered spot between gooseberry bushes, and as Margaret laid a carnation on his little coffin a fresh peal of thunder reverberated between Craigowl summit and Tod Hill Brow. When beggars die, says Shakespeare, there are no comets seen. The heavens themselves blaze forth the deaths of princes. 'Quondam felorum rex,' will read Tinky's epitaph when we get his little stone set up, and now only one question remains forever perhaps unanswerable — upon whom has Tinky's sovereignty devolved, in whose house does his successor, lordly but unobtrusive, assume the crown of feline monarchy?

## LONG SERVICE AT PEARSON HOUSE

*At Pearson House, Freddie King receives retirement gifts from colleagues presented by Simon Conway. Mr. King served as a Nursing Orderly for 24 years.*





## Sir Edward Dunlop at St. Dunstan's

On Tuesday, 6th October, St. Dunstan's entertained to lunch a group of St. Dunstan's FEPOW's and their guests. The principal guest was Sir Edward Dunlop who was in England for the purpose of publishing his book 'The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop'.

Before the lunch, whilst the guests were having a pre-lunch drink, Sir Edward signed and made a personal comment in the books that many of the guests had purchased. Sir Edward, who had already served in Crete and Tobruk, was taken a prisoner by the Japanese in Java. In the camps he performed, under the most basic conditions, operations which have saved the lives of hundreds of fellow prisoners. Not only did he use his medical knowledge, but also his persuasive arguments with the Camp Authorities served to make life more tenable.

At the lunch Mr. Weisblatt read a letter from the Chairman of St. Dunstan's, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, in which he apologised for his absence. Sir Henry, unfortunately, had been held up on business from which he could not be excused. He did, however, send his greetings to Sir Edward and all the guests wishing them a very happy luncheon. Mr. Billy Griffiths, Chairman of the St. Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion, proposed the Toast to the guests. He said how delighted he was to greet Sir Edward, also Mr. Payne, National President of the FEPOW Federation, Mrs. Elizabeth Dacre, President of the St. Dunstan's Ex-POW's Reunion and Tom Hart, Secretary. He then went on to state how Sir Edward had come between him and the Japanese when the latter wanted to terminate his life after he had been severely wounded, losing his sight and both his hands.

Sir Edward also committed the camp doctors to look after Billy and to make sure he survived. Billy went on to say that when Sir Edward was sent off to another camp, the separation was as traumatic as losing his sight and his hands. Mrs. Dacre,

Tom Hart and Alf Lockhart were thanked by Billy for their help in the organisation of the St. Dunstan's Reunion of the ex-POW's and was pleased that they were able to attend the lunch. Sir Edward, in his reply, said how delighted he was to be at St. Dunstan's and to meet some of the chaps he had attended to in the camps again. In his book Alf Lockhart was given a special mention.

Our thanks go to Mr. Weisblatt and the staff of Headquarters for their hospitality and the excellent meal provided. The next day Sir Edward was going to America, but promised to return to England for a reunion in Blackpool.

Tom and Mabs Hart

Sir Edward Dunlop speaking at lunch.



Sir Edward with St. Dunstaners and guests.

## RNIB SPENDS RECORD AMOUNT TO HELP THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

In 1986 the RNIB spent nearly £23 million, a record, helping visually handicapped people. The details were published in their Annual Report recently. These include:

- More than £6 million on education and training.
- Nearly £3 million on publications.
- £2½ million on residential care homes, hotels and a hostel.
- £2 million on subsidising the sale of goods.
- Nearly £2 million on RNIB's Talking Book Service.
- More than £½ million on an employment service.

We quote the Director General, Ian Bruce, from his message in the Annual Report: 'RNIB is one of the fastest growing social welfare charities in the UK. But this is not growth for growth's sake. It is a response to the needs and views of visually handicapped people themselves... our services and campaigns are expensive to provide. Care cannot be bought cheaply'.

## READING TIME

By Phillip Wood

Cat. No. 3255

**A Proper Gentleman**

By Vernon Scannell

Read by John Richmond

Reading Time 7½ hours

In 1975 the author was awarded a writing fellowship. This involved a nine-month stint as writer-in-residence to the village of Berrensfeld in Oxfordshire. The 'model' village proved to be an intellectual wilderness without civic pride or sense of identity; a ghetto of red brick, booze and bingo. A 'proper gentleman' and a poet to boot, he was regarded as an interloper, living in a council flat that one of the villagers should by right be occupying.

Gradually however he became accepted by his neighbours and the habitués of the local pub where he soon became a regular (very regular) drinker. His duties as an Apostle of Culture included reading and commenting upon poems fair, bad and appalling brought to



him by optimistic locals. He gave talks to writers' circles, literary societies, colleges and schools. Of all his audiences Scannell preferred the children. They were the most attentive and appreciative.

The book is peppered with a number of amusing anecdotes, many of them alcoholic. Indeed it would seem that being a poet is a thirsty profession — there is hardly a dry page in the book . . .

Scannell has an easy flowing style and a mordant wit. A very good read.

Cat. No. 3017

### **The Kobra Manifesto**

By Adam Hall

Read by George Hagan

Reading Time 9½ hrs

I am no betting man but if I had to put money on who is the most indestructible fictional hero, I would stake my all on Secret Service Agent Quiller. He regularly collects battle scars like ordinary men col-

lect tumblers from the local filling station. And he doesn't carry a gun. He relies on his superb knowledge of the martial arts, and he knows them all.

In this offering there is a helluva flap on at HQ. Five of the top ranking terrorists in the world are making their separate and secret ways to a rendezvous. But where is it exactly? And for what purpose? Only one man can thwart their evil plans — you've guessed it, Quiller. The operation has already cost the lives of four agents, but Q, alone and undaunted, goes on his merry way. His search takes him from Rome to Cambodia, to Washington and New York, and finally to Brazil where the gang has finally settled. They've got the daughter of the US Secretary of State and are demanding a pop singer's ransom. But Quiller saves the day, the girl and an awful lot of dollars . . .

The author is no Dickens, Thackeray or even Edgar Wallace, but it's all good clean fun.

### **MRS CELIA MAYNE**

We are sad to report the death on October 27th after a short illness of Mrs. Celia Mayne — 'Bicky' Proctor as she was in Church Stretton days.

The daughter of a doctor in Bellville, Ontario, where she continued to live with her husband Bill Mayne, President of the Sir Arthur Pearson Association of the War Blinded in Canada, she undertook nursing training with the Order of St. John with the specific intention of coming to England to help care for the war wounded, and she found herself, with other members of the Canadian contingent, at Church Stretton where she immediately became a great favourite with St. Dunstaners.

One of her former colleagues at Denehurst has described her as 'Always cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic; the boys always enjoyed her company and loved to pretend that they could not understand her Canadian accent.'

After the war she returned to Canada and continued her work for the war

blinded. This led to her meeting Bill Mayne, who had been a Far Eastern Prisoner of War. He went on to a most distinguished career with the Sir Arthur Pearson Association and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and his wife shared his involvement with their work to the end of her life. 'Bicky' and Bill paid several visits to England, where they had many friends, and would have liked to attend the Church Stretton Reunion, but a family commitment prevented them from doing so. She is survived by her husband and by a daughter Laura and son Woody to whom we send our deep sympathy.

More sad news for those who worked or trained at Church Stretton is the death of Mrs. Phyllis Lang, who was Matron at Denehurst, Church Stretton, from March 1944. Mrs. Lang lived at Beeding, near Brighton, and died on November 1st. She was 84. After the war she continued to work for St. Dunstan's until 1949 at Essex Road and 8 Park Crescent. She leaves a daughter, Mrs. J. Ready to whom we offer our sympathy.

### **PYSIOTHERAPISTS IN CONFERENCE**

The 1987 Physiotherapy Conference opened in the Wintergarden at Ian Fraser House on October 2nd with an increased attendance at the Annual General Meeting.

Des Coupe, in the Chair, opened the meeting with words of welcome for Norman Daniel from Canada and Gerald Jackson, a new St. Dunstaner who trained at Church Stretton before recovering useful vision, now re-admitted as his sight has deteriorated. Also present were Peter Hall, a young trainee physiotherapist from South Africa, and an old friend in Mr. Ron Priestley. The Chairman also mentioned the presence of Llew Davies, Leslie Webber and Bob Lloyd.

The meeting heard a report from Mike Tetley on the Percy Way Library and the availability of recorded books generally. Keith Martin, Secretary to the Physiotherapy Advisory Committee, reported that there were 18 St. Dunstan's physiotherapists practising full time, and another 12 part time. The membership of the committee is unchanged for the next year and at a brief meeting of the committee members after the A.G.M., Des Coupe and Mike Tetley were re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman. There was great interest in the talks given by visiting speakers in the Conference which followed. Mrs. Penny Robinson, M.C.S.P., Director of the Professional Affairs Department of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, forecast a widening of physiotherapists' professional scope — an example is clinical diagnosis by Chartered Physiotherapists — under the new rules of professional conduct.

Some novel new thinking from a Chartered Physiotherapist, John Tindall emerged in his talk 'Touch for Health' and he had some willing 'guinea pigs' in demonstrating some of his techniques, including Chairman, Des Coupe. After lunch a last minute gap in the programme was filled by the 'magnificent seven' — Jim Allen, Eric Foster, John Harris, Norman Hopkins, Jimmy Legge, Bill Shea and Mike Tetley. They gave short, personal and

often humorous accounts of their visit to Australia for the World Congress of Physical Therapy.

The Guest of Honour at the dinner was Sir John Wilson, C.B.E., accompanied by Lady Wilson. Sir John is a famous blind man, best known for his work with the Royal Commonwealth Society, and now Senior Consultant to the International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement. He is an accomplished speaker and amused his audience with a light hearted account of the snares that a blind world traveller can encounter. Dinner was presided over by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach accompanied by Lady Leach, and amongst the guest were Mr. and Mrs. Garnett-Orme, Mrs. Elizabeth Dacre, and the Reverend Michael Bootes.

### **A St. Dunstan's Wedding**

*Cecil and Frances Pennells pass down the aisle after their wedding on the 24th October. St. Dunstaner Charlie Redford gave the bride away and the best man was Cecil's brother, George.*







The Longmynd Hotel photographed during the Forties.



David Bell and Harry Preedy unveil the Commemorative plaque during the Service.



Fred Ripley reads the braille inscription on the plaque.

## 740 DOTS REMEMBER A TOWN

*"This tablet was unveiled on October 18th, 1987. It is an expression of gratitude from St. Dunstan's to the people of Church Stretton for the warm friendship they gave to war-blinded men and women and their families during the Second World War. From 1940 to 1946, the work of St. Dunstan's was centred in this town. Some 700 newly blinded service men and women received their training here and learned to live again in this community".*

Over the weekend in October, that spirit of 'warm friendship' was rekindled. The flame had been relit some 12 to 14 months ago during a conversation between Church Strettoner and local historian, Mrs. Mary Marsden and St. Dunstaner David Bell. Time was marching on in some form of permanent memorial was to be established. So at their suggestion, the wheels of the Secretariat were put in motion.

It is interesting to note how Church Stretton had been chosen as a site for St.

Dunstan's. Ovingdean was completed just before the outbreak of war, but it was soon deemed too dangerous a location on the South coast. To quote from Lord Fraser's book, 'My Story of St. Dunstan's' of how Lady Fraser 'found' Church Stretton; 'We made several journeys through England and Wales before we hit on Church Stretton. My wife and the St. Dunstan's Secretary went and stayed at the famous Longmynd Hotel set in trees high up on a hill. Their enthusiasm could not have been very gratifying to the management, for they were inspecting it to see if it was suitable for requisitioning. They were especially impressed by the hard tennis courts, which would be an ideal site for — temporary huts! No one put down a red carpet for us when we said it was just what we wanted. The army told us to keep out. The people of the locality were doubtful and apprehensive. Their notices which said, 'Caution — blinded soldiers!' seemed to put us into the same category as dangerous dogs! We went in as gate crashers, but that did not last for long. Once we had proved

*we were human after all, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury, and the whole of Shropshire made us wonderfully welcome'.*

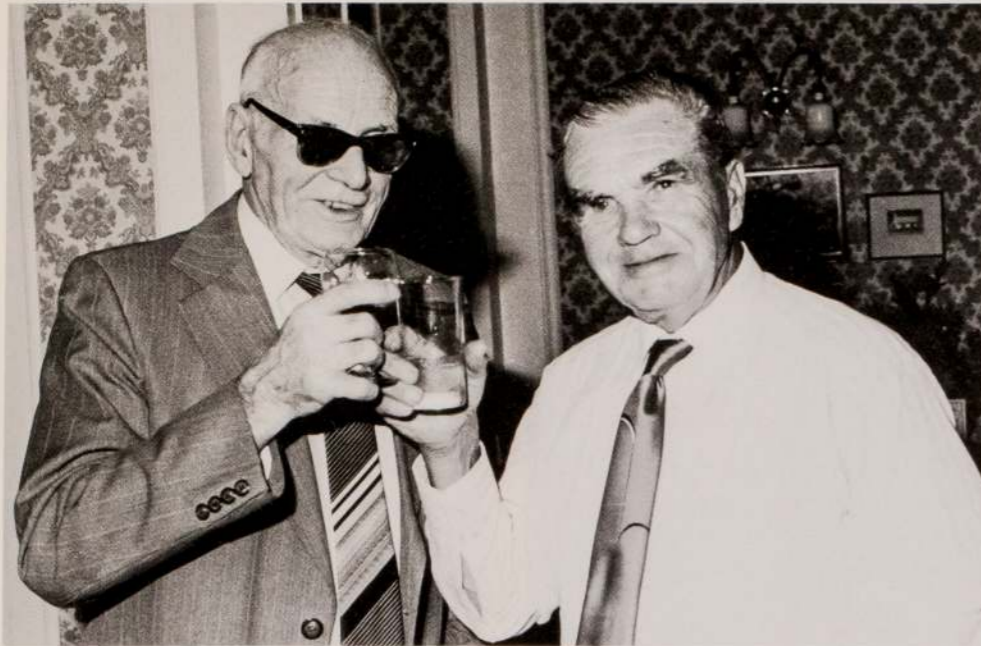
Mary Marsden recalls, 'We didn't know what St. Dunstan's was. Then hotels were taken over one by one, and the first to arrive was Harry Preedy. As battles wore on, the trickle became a flood. We had many 'guinea pigs' from the famous burns unit run by Archie McIndoe in East Grinstead. Jimmy Wright was one. They came to Church Stretton for whatever training they could manage. They learned to type if they had hands, they learned confidence, they didn't go around tapping with white sticks. They started to live again. That is when the town more or less took over. Everyone was involved. They had people to tea, to whist drives; the girls went to dances; they were the front end of a tandem. Cinemas in the area were filled with a constant buzz beneath the sound track. That was the commentaries. No one

minded or hissed at you to keep quiet.

It was not all plain sailing. There were many courageous people, and there were many with problems. Mostly, they helped each other. Inevitably, there were some who were suicidal. To this day, many will not have realised that my father and the local Catholic priest, Father Porter, set up a "bridge watch". This was the railway bridge — you can hear a train coming. Just very occasionally Dad or Father Porter would catch a young man on the bridge, an in the best psychological jargon of the time "ply him with strong drink". Not knowing quite where he was, the young St. Dunstaner would be guided back to Longmynd Hotel and handed back to his friends! People probably just thought that Mr. Wilson and Father Porter were given to drinking heavily!

This time, it was 1940 to 1946 all over again. All the hotels in the town were 'taken over', though the red carpet was





A personal reunion for Bill Morris and Guy Bilcliff.

Sir Henry speaking at dinner.



more visible this time! The townsfolk were more than receptive. Fortunately, the people waiting on the railway bridge were there for other reasons. Mr. William Weisblatt and his secretary, Miss Georgea Kent, who worked so hard to administer the weekend, were there to welcome train arrivals. David Castleton and Jimmy Wright were there with their film crew, to record the proceedings for part of a new St. Dunstan's publicity film.

#### Official Dinner

The first official event was a dinner and reception at the Longmynd Hotel on Saturday evening. The start had to be delayed a little as the Brighton coach had had to do battle with hurricane damage. There were some 140 guests present including 50 St. Dunstaners, their wives, escorts, ex VAD's and former members of staff. The Chairman, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, presiding, started by recalling that it had been a matter of priorities of who were more expendable. It was the young naval officers who were moved into the more dangerous Ovingdean and Roedean complexes during the war, while St. Dunstan's moved to Church



Sybil Bell admiring the signs from the Orange Tree Cafe.

Stretton. 'Mind you, the embossed indicators on the hand rails were most useful to those returning from a night out on the town!'

#### Six hard years

He praised the resilience and charm with which the natives of Church Stretton 'met the intruders, forming a companionship, which, in many cases, has lasted a lifetime. St. Dunstan's was here for six long, hard, years; perhaps, at once, the worst and the best in your experience, certainly, never to be forgotten.' The Chairman went on to pay special tribute to the Reverend Michael Stedman and Mrs. Mary Marsden, both of whom were at the dinner. 'From the outset, both have gone out of their way to solve problems and surmount obstacles, and we owe them a debt of deep gratitude.'

David Bell, himself married to a Church Strettoner, then rose to propose the vote of thanks. David was grateful for the way that Church Stretton had accepted St. Dunstan's so readily. They had made no special allowances, and so St. Dunstaners had been able to regain their self respect and dignity. He was more than happy that

the events of 40 years ago should be so remembered.

Mrs. Mary Marsden then spoke on behalf on the town. 'We are both proud and grateful for the gift of the plaque. You found Church Stretton a friendly and

David Bell amuses his audience.





hospitable place. But you left it a caring and responsible place as well. People newly arrived in the town sense something in the atmosphere. It is St. Dunstan's legacy. Thank you for all you gave, then and now'.

The evening continued in the hotel with friends re-acquainted after 40 years. Bill Morris and Guy Bilcliff were at Tiger Hall together and had not met since. There were reminiscences aplenty. Vi Delaney recalls a debate as to who should push her wheelchair. In the meantime, her chair slid down the hill unattached and she was tipped out into a muddy ditch. Vi's sister, Rene, would travel down every weekend from Liverpool to visit. The two remain inseparable. Tom Hart recalls being repatriated with 23 others in 1943 and arriving in the town being welcomed by cheering crowds and a band. What has remained particularly in his mind is the gesture made by an anonymous donor of three Woodbines. Mr. Bob Bridger recalled being trained as a civilian blind, as there were spare places, and then becoming a member of the staff. He played the organ at church services and at three weddings. It was a boisterous, happy and warm evening.

Both on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, an exhibition had been set up in the United Reformed Church Hall. This proved to be a most useful 'rendezvous' especially when it teemed with rain on Sunday. Besides many photographs, posters and collecting boxes relating to the past, a short video version of an appeal film made in Church Stretton in the 40's and featuring the late Ernie Russell of Leeds was shown. Joan Osborne thought that in the video she recognised her father a braille teacher, by the missing finger on his hand. Some display signs were lent by the owners of an estate agency located on the site of the original Orange Tree Café in the town square. Cakes, and nut bread 'wholesome and delicious' were advertised at one and thruppence. The hall echoed with 'do you remember when' and 'we used to'; a sheer and totally acceptable indulgence in nostalgia!

The Service of Dedication took place at the Church of St. Laurence on Sunday

afternoon. The Rector, the Reverend Michael Stedman officiated. The lesson, from the Sermon on the Mount, was read by St. Dunstan's President, Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, who himself trained at Church Stretton. Sir Henry gave the address in which he re-iterated the debt owed to Church Stretton. Four hymns were sung, each representative of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The plaque was unveiled by David Bell and the very first St. Dunstaner to arrive at Church Stretton, Harry Preedy, who spoke a few words of gratitude on behalf of all St. Dunstaners who trained in the town. They were moving words, spoken from the heart.

The plaque, carved in wood, with the lettering picked out in gold leaf, now resides in the Church of St. Laurence. Beneath, hand made by Norman French, is the braille representation of the wording. 740 rivets that summarise St. Dunstan's memory of and gratitude to a town.

Sally Bilcliff reminiscing at the exhibition.



## Poet's Corner

### INGREDIENTS OF BEING A MOTHER

By Mrs M. Marsh, wife of W. Marsh of Hartlepool

*Main ingredient for being a mother  
Teach family to care, look after one another  
Help all you can, but don't interfere  
Hope and pray they have a good career  
Because really the mother is just the start  
Of a family created with love from the heart  
As children they cling, needing lots of affection  
Though tears do start, when giving correction.*

*It's lovely when they're young and running around  
But lovelier still, when they tire and sleep sound.  
They never do know that you tiptoe round their beds  
You kiss them goodnight and rest your weary head.*

*But years hurry by and in no time at all  
They are all grown up and so very tall.  
With minds of their own, some families as well  
And I sit and wonder — should I ever tell  
How much I miss having them around  
It's all so quiet, no noise, no sound  
But then again, I can honestly say  
I've much more time to reminisce and pray.*

### THE TRAVELLERS

by J. Byles

*Like travellers we go through time  
Each on a different path  
Not knowing what there is in store  
Or how long our lives will last.*

*Our paths are linked and intertwined  
In some celestial way;  
Some may see the light ahead  
While others go astray.*

*But as the passing years go by  
There is wisdom to be gained  
As we behold the miracle  
That our lives are pre-ordained.*

*This is our preparation  
For the life that is to come  
When we shall stand at Heavens Gate  
And all shall unite as one.*

### IDLE THOUGHTS ABOUT CAMP DAEDALUS

By F. Sunderland

*I've just been down to the sea again  
To Camp Daedalus by the sea,  
I don't know what it is down there  
That holds an attraction for me.*

*I met Henry Turley, and our 'dogs' Sue and Taff,  
And everyone knows old Taff's good for a 'laff'.*

*There was P.O. George Lilley  
And although it sounds silly  
We all had lots of rides in the Tilley,  
There's Martin Webb who, of course, we call 'Spider',  
Oh dear, I forgot to go up in a glider.*

*On Monday we went to the Isle of Wight,  
We went across in the morning  
And came back at night.  
Henry T. played the spoons and banged on a tray  
We got him back safe  
And we had a good day.*

*Elsbeth Grant came along with her girls,  
Only one word for them  
And that word is 'Pearls'.*

*The archers and sportsmen came up with the goods  
While the rest of the blokes were bowling their woods.*

*We drank all the beer they had in the Mess —  
Well, maybe not all,  
But now they've got less.*

*The week has now gone,  
It sped by quite fast,  
I enjoyed every minute  
From the first to the last.*

*Now I've come to the end of my rhyme  
And it's time for me to go,  
Only one thing left for me to do  
And that is to say 'Cheerio'!*

### FREE NEEDLES FOR DIABETICS

Tony Newton, Minister for Health, confirmed recently that the UK's 200,000 diabetics who require regular insulin injections can obtain free disposable syringes and needles from September 1st. The scheme, announced in March, is likely to cost about £10 million a year. From next week diabetics will also be able to obtain a free needle clipping device which retains the used needles in a container and can be disposed of as normal household waste when full. Re-usable syringes and needles will continue to be available on free prescription to those diabetics who wish to use them.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### From Bill Shea, of Huntingdon

Your article in the October *Review*, 'Death Slide at Ian Fraser House' brought back memories of the various slides I went down during my service in the Royal Marines. Some of these were over deep rocky ravines, others over water from cliff-tops to off shore rocks. Very often there would be a number of men on the rope at the same time, following each other down in quick succession. This produced a sensation like trying to ride a bucking bronco in mid air. If you failed to clear the rope quickly enough you soon found yourself propelled on your way by a big pair of commando boots belonging to the man coming down behind you, and if you stumbled and fell you found yourself being used as a legitimate soft landing area. This was done in full battle kit with weapons using only a toggle rope, and a 'prayer'. No safety harness in those days. Congratulations to all those at IFH who went down the slide.

Congratulations also to, Ray Sherriff for his third Windmill marathon, and to Gerry Jones for his free-fall parachute jump. How about hang-gliding on skis next time Gerry?

### From Gwen Obern, of Aberdare

I wish to thank everyone who sent me flowers and good wishes during my illness. There were so many loving wishes that I cannot thank them all individually, but I would like all my friends to know how much their thoughts meant to me.

### From Alf Bradley, Northwood

Although I wrote earlier this month regarding the subject of braille reform, I am encouraged to add to my first letter some opinions which have arisen as a result of the insert by Terry Bullingham.

In spite of reading in the insert such information as ... 'The questionnaires' so far processed show a 'No' vote, and also at the recent conference the vote in favour of the new 'Summerbraille 2' was very slen-

der indeed, and further, that the 'Braille Authority are acutely aware of the necessity to avoid unwanted change,' at the same time there seems to be an accompanying message that work to prepare and present this new code is very much in hand.

Moreover, Terry writes of a 'Streamline Grade 2' which is being prepared because of 'the disproportionately large number of braille users that the stated organisations represent.' I would have thought that if a disproportionately large number were saying, 'No change please,' such preparation would be unnecessary.

Two more points arise to add to those I set out in my first letter, First, will that great dedicated army of transcribers be prepared to undertake this new code, and, second, what will happen to the thousands of books in circulation and in the braille libraries?

### From F. King, Brighton

May I request a small space in the *Review*, to say thank you to all relatives and friends who sent me 'Thank You' gifts and cards on my retirement. They are too many to contact personally. These gifts I shall cherish as a reminder of nearly 24 years I spent with St. Dunstan's. Finally thanks for everything and God Bless you all.

### From Sydney Scroggie, Dundee

Mike Tetley will be interested to know that 'On your Todd', is truncated cockney rhyming slang for 'on your Todd Sloan,' meaning, 'alone.' Sloan was an American jockey on the English race courses of his day who was so often way ahead of the rest that he was characteristically 'on his own.'

### From Stanley Lale, of Hertfordshire

My mother, who is 97, is the widow of the late Percy Lale, who died 17 years ago, and was the Estate Manager from 1920 until 1952. She receives a copy of the *Review* which I peruse.

I was very interested to read the letter from Mrs. E. Scrivener and in the photo-

graph of the staff outing published in the October edition.

Some of the names she mentioned were familiar to me and there are a number of faces in the photo to which I cannot put names. I do recognise John Forbes, then chief accountant, at the end of the first standing row, and fourth from him is Tom Graves also in that department. Third from Tom is Lillian Channing (her married name), who married a St. Dunstaner. Her husband is deceased, but she now lives in Sidmouth. In the back row, with a moustache, is Billy Banks. My father was chairman of the association for a number of years and is seated in the front row in the middle sporting a bow tie. I am aware that all the gentlemen I have mentioned are now deceased. I knew Mr. Berry when he was associated with my father, and of course his first wife. I am very pleased to hear that he has re-married, and no doubt I would remember this lady.

My eldest son, Graham, is the community transport manager for Help the Aged, so has followed in the footsteps of his grandfather into charity.

This photograph and the names recorded recalls happy memories of my association through my father of a period of over thirty years.

## ST. DUNSTAN'S BAND WEEK

### By Ken Revis

Our week at Ian Fraser House in August 1987, really did have a spectacular summit. With the help of our trombonist friend Peter Baxter we were invited to play at the 'King and Queen' in Brighton, which surely must be regarded as the most prestigious venue for Jazz Bands on the South Coast. This was on Tuesday evening when the Band — Ernie Took (piano), John Cale (trumpet), Ernie Cookson (alto), Bob Forshaw (bass), Jerry Lynch (drums), and Ken Revis (vocal) — supported by Peter Baxter (trombone), Jumping Jack Gilbert (clarinet), and John Collinson (banjo), played to an enthusiastic capacity audience. The fact is it was thrilling indeed to hear the rattle of applause after many of our solos; so we really felt we had arrived. At the 'King and Queen' we were billed as the St. Dunstan's 'Stompers' and we shall have to

see if the name sticks. The next event happened on the Thursday evening when Clive Allen brought the 'Swing Club' to the House. This newly formed Band — piano, trumpet, alto, tenor, bass and drums — played meticulous Big Band Jazz and it was difficult to believe this beefy sound came from only six musicians. They played lovely arrangements originated by their drummer and I'm sure we shall hear more of this splendid group.

On the first Monday evening we supported our dear friend Ernie Took and his Band at the dance, and that means Arthur on tenor and Lew on drums, with Joe Humphrey on accordion. For good measure the boys stayed for the following Monday dance. Tony Ross gave us two helpings of his beautiful piano playing on Wednesday — once for the 'sticky bun hour' in the afternoon and again in the evening when we listened to him at the 'Star'. One gig we were pleased and proud to do was for the charity MENCAP — on Wednesday lunch-time in blazing sun we played on the lower Esplanade, Brighton while the crowd listened, watched and applauded from the top level. On Saturday afternoon Ernie Took and the boys played for the tea drinkers in the Lounge and on the final Sunday we put on our band gear to fulfill our second engagement at The Wingrove Hotel, Alfriston, boosted by Peter on trombone and Derrick on clarinet.

Friday was a very special evening indeed. St. Dunstan's and Red Ball gave us a first class dinner in the Winter Garden and Bob, our new Chairman, welcomed the guests, including Commander and Mrs. Conway, Major Neve, Fred and Mary Neale and we were so happy to welcome Rhona (Harry Leader's widow), as Harry was such a good friend of the band. Then we took the dry route to the Annexe — for during the meal a violent storm flashed and crashed around us and it was still pelting with rain. It turned out to be a fairly wild evening of music and dancing, would you believe, until about midnight.

This has been said many times before but we really would welcome anyone who would like to join us. The band was also recorded for future transmission on BBC Radio Sussex.





Joyce and Colin Beaumont-Edmonds with St. Dunstan's, escorts and staff at the Crest Hotel.

## St. Dunstan's Ladies' Reunion

by Margaret Bingham

We are apt to think in this land of ours that the South and West got the better weather, more sunshine, lighter rain, gentle breezes and temperatures a few degrees higher than elsewhere. But not during the weekend of the 8th – 12th of October, oh dear me no. It just poured, and it was so chilly, most of us wore winter coats, etc. A mere deluge, however, was not going to spoil our annual re-union, this year the venue being Bournemouth. A welcome 'cuppa' awaited us at the Crest Hotel and the tinkling sound of teacups mingled with a variety of animate accents from all over the country. Dinner the first evening was an informal affair (with members of Headquarters' staff, Mr. Weisblatt, etc.). The meal was most enjoyable and we hoped this was 'a taste of things to come.' Some adjourned to the bar whilst the remainder went to bed to get a good night's rest as we had an early start on Friday. There were 41 of us altogether including Colin Bentley our driver and we made a very happy party, feeling warm and cosy in Colin's comfortable coach. Gwen was sadly missed but unfortunately she was in hospital for an operation.

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(Hope you are perfectly well now, Gwen).

Arriving at Portsmouth Harbour we made our way to the famous Tudor Flagship the Mary Rose, recently recovered after 437 years on the sea-bed. We had to walk very gingerly over the wet cobbled stones in the quay and the rain continued to pour. On entry to the scientifically housed hull we were warned of the continual noise of sprayed water but it was still a shock to experience the humidity. The water (ice cold) is sprayed on the timbers for a minimum of 20 hours out of 24 and they are constantly examined for signs of fungi or bacterial damage. Looking down into the huge interior nothing could be seen but a mass of beams, stays and 'fut-tocks.' The keel was made of elm but the rest of the ship was made of oak. It is estimated that this came from 36 acres of land in Southern England. What a wonderful achievement by shipwrights of that day. There was so much to hear about and descriptions were given of unusual artefacts used on fighting ships in the 15th century – a backgammon board found in a cupboard complete with its counters, some musical instruments including one



Barbara Bell has a word with a local 'fireman' at the Beaulieu Museum...

called a shawm (an early form of oboe), a 'hussif' containing cotton and bone needles, and in the barber/surgeon's shop ointments and medicines as well as crude instruments like syringes, razors, etc. In addition to the large guns there were thousands of arrows and over 100 long-bows. A guide held a cannon ball for me to feel and on the surface was an indentation of the body of a fossilised oyster.

On to the Crest Hotel at Portsmouth for a very good lunch and then we returned to Bournemouth. A few words now about the Hotel situated near the centre of the town. It is a large six storey, round building with a number of meeting rooms, bars and a leisure centre and the food is delicious and varied. The bedrooms were comfortable and well appointed and the staff were extremely kind and helpful. We had two private rooms for our use and there was a small bar. Mr. and Mrs. Garnett-Orme were our guests for dinner and he gave a very interesting after-dinner speech. A free morning on Saturday and many of us took the opportunity of visiting the shops. In the afternoon we had a most interesting cruise around Poole Harbour spoiled only by the rain and cold. (Some of us did stay under cover though).

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... while Vi Delaney tries on a helmet for size.







*At Portsmouth, Margaret Bingham handles one of the Mary Rose cannon balls.*

All managed to get on board safely but there was a problem with me in my chair, as the opening was rather narrow. With the help of our stalwart men, however, Mr. Weisblatt and David included, the difficulty was overcome. But talk about getting a camel through the eye of a needle!! There was a most interesting commentary telling us about the island, including Brown Island owned by the John Lewis Partnership and the large house used by

*Muriel Bryant rather fancied a Lagonda.*



staff for holidays. The weather had brightened considerably on our return so Colin took us on a short drive to see the small boats partly submerged by the gales of the previous day. Colin is the son of our St. Dunstaner, Fred Bentley. It was his own coach we used and he had a chair lift put in. His help and thoughtfulness were outstanding. You've got a good lad there, Fred and Betty.

We left the hotel early on Sunday for a guided tour of the Motor Museum and Palace House at Beaulieu but Ruth, who was Barbara's escort, had been taken ill and had to stay in bed. (We missed you very much Ruth and hope you are now fully recovered.) The cars in the museum were fantastic. There is no other word to describe them. Highly polished, in pristine condition, they were a joy to behold. Peugots, Daimlers, Renaults, all with solid tyres, built in the last century and the Austins and Morris Cowley open road type with their cloth roof. We were given permission to touch the vehicles and also remove the ropes to enable us to inspect them closely. Amid gasps of admiration dauntless Dorothy climbed into one large car and posed prettily behind the wheel for photos. Colin pushed me around in my chair and his interest and enthusiasm as he read the details — model, year, original cost — made my visit all the more enjoyable. Donald Campbell's Bluebird



*Muriel Bryant and Vi Delaney and their escorts outside Beaulieu Manor.*

was a beautiful car, long, sleek and elegant but nearby was a 1929 Bolster Special 'Bloody Mary'. It looked as if it had been constructed by two schoolboys in the backyard — the greyish bonnet looked like tin and sounded lit when given a gentle rap. The driver must have been very cramped in his tiny seat but it could race at 125 m.p.h. All examined a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost 1909 limousine which was discovered circa 1950 in Berwick-on-Tweed being used as a breakdown truck. Motor cycles, a 1907 Fire-engine and hundreds of small models — the Museum was wonderful.

Later we went into the Palace House and had a guided tour round to examine furniture beautifully carved by Cistercian monks in the 13th century and in the picture gallery hung beautiful paintings of Lord Montagu's ancestors. At lunch in the Beaulieu restaurant Mrs. Hudson, the mother-in-law of Lord Montagu and one of the guides, was thanked and a presentation was made. Such a charming and

knowledgeable lady! We were indebted to all the guides for their descriptive talents and it seems it gave them pleasure because of our interests in the various artefacts given to us to feel.

One, at the Mary Rose Exhibition said she hopes to see us there again. We had tea at the Hotel with our president Mr. Colin Beaumont-Edmonds and later he and his wife Joyce were our guests at dinner, a sumptuous meal. Colin made an interesting after dinner speech and Muriel presented to Joyce a beautiful basket of flowers. Gifts were then presented to all other members of Headquarters staff and Colin, our driver, was not forgotten either. The flowers and gifts had been organised, as always, by Eileen — I think she deserves a word of praise. It was a most enjoyable weekend — an unforgettable re-union — a great credit to Mr. Weisblatt, Miss Lord and Mrs. Jackson for arranging an interesting and varied programme — we are very much indebted to them and to Miss Mosley and David also for their assistance.



## HAL'S PALS

A special and new kind of doll is now to be marketed in this country. These dolls, called 'Hal's Pals', are designed to promote understanding in children of a disability. Hal's Pals, like some people, have disabilities of various kinds — one is visually impaired, one has a hearing impairment, one uses a wheelchair, another is an amputee and the fifth wears leg braces — but these don't make them any less bright, cheery and eminently huggable.

Research by developmental psychologists has found that the types of toys children play with can significantly influence how they view the real world and have a critical role in the development of the child's personality. Because children will often communicate more openly and comfortably with a doll than an adult, Hal's Pals can become important therapeutic tools for working with children who have disabilities. The dolls help children verbalise their feelings and provide a sense of identity which helps in accepting and overcoming handicaps.

Despite their disabilities, Hal's Pals radiate a cheerful, confident spirit and are involved in a variety of sports and activities. For example, Hal is a ski instructor with one leg and the doll with hearing aids is a ballerina. This positive portrayal sets a good example for children with disabili-

ties. In classes for the non-disabled, Hal's Pals are an easy way to acquaint children with what it means to have a disability and once they become familiar with it, they are much more accepting.

Hal's Pals are available through mail order from Nottingham Rehab at between £37.50 and £47.50 each. A percentage of all sales will be donated to children's charities in the UK. For a catalogue and details, write to Mr A.P. Durpin, Nottingham Rehab Ltd., Ludlow Hill Road, West Bridgeford, Nottingham, NG2 6HD. Telephone: 0602 234251.



## D. F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

May I wish you all a Happy Christmas and good New Year everywhere, especially in the garden, and hope that we have a better year than 1987.

I also hope that you in the south were not knocked about and must say that we in the north only got plenty of rain and as a consequence could not get out in the garden to make it tidy for the winter. There is little to be done at this time of the year but clear it up and dig it over, and add some manure or compost to give any new plants a good start. Orders can still be made for new shrubs, roses and the perennials, which should reach you in the spring and you can then plant them at once. Send for seeds of annuals and other items from any

well known firm or purchase them in a garden shop.

### Vegetables

Get all the empty beds dug over, and give a dose of lime in addition to some compost or manure. Give an extra dose of lime to the areas where you are to plant the cabbage family. The main digging can be done in early spring to get the manure etc. well into the soil at the time of planting. Ensure that you have some trays ready for sprouting the early potato tubers. Check any potatoes, carrots, beet or onions which are in store, particularly after very frosty conditions. Those of you in the south, and particularly the south west, can put in a

few broad beans and early pea seeds, but it might be a good thing to give them some protection when frosts come along by putting down some plastic sheeting.

### Fruit

Pruning of most fruit trees can continue until the end of the month except when there is frost about. Tree trunks can be given a spray of insecticide, to stop pests making nests in the cracks of the bark, or in case you had not earlier put on the grease bands. This will stop pests getting into the buds and opening flowers later on the spring. All currants and gooseberries can be pruned before the end of the month, and also given a dose of insecticide. Cut away suckers from the raspberries but don't prune the main stem.

### Lawns

Not much to be done here apart from spiking the grass over with a fork, especially if there has been a good deal of rain and the soil is pretty heavy, but don't do this when there are frosts about. The grass would probably benefit from a good brushing with a hard broom or brush in order to get rid of any worm casts or leaves which have come down late.

### Flowers

Beds of anemones and other bulbs may need some protection in very bad winter weather, particularly in the north, which means giving some added soil peat or compost. Some plants that are rather shallow rooted such as carnations, pinks, pansies etc. may be loosened by bad winter conditions, so give them a little more soil and tread down well. One can still plant roses, but keep all planting till spring when the bad weather which can make the soil very muddy has passed. Most of the shrubs and perennials are generally kept for late delivery when the winter is very bad. Dig over areas which are empty and add compost or manure, so that they are ready for planting in the spring. Check over tubers such as begonias and gladioli, plus dahlia roots which were dug up in early autumn and stored in peat.

### Greenhouse

Where you have plants that are growing well or coming into bloom, some heat should be given particularly at night. Keep the temperature up to 45F or a bit more in very cold conditions, and keep them growing well by watering and occasional doses of food. During good sunny conditions open the ventilators but remember to close up early in the evening. Keep the floors and staging free of all moisture as at this time of the year disease of all kinds can be rampant, especially mildew. Start forcing the azaleas, freesias, roman hyacinth and narcissus and get them well into the light, give them water and some food. This may produce some colour in the house for Christmas or early New Year. Pests and diseases may be in the air so set smokes a couple of times during the month.

### House Plants

You may have all sorts of flowering and leaf plants for Christmas so keep them near the light during the day and inside the curtains during the night. Don't however put them too near the radiators or else they will dry out too quickly. When watering, especially the african-violets, put them in a saucer of water and let them take the water they need, without overdoing it. Keep water off the leaves or you may get brown marks, in which case cut the leaves off. Flowers however should be left to almost die off before pinching them out or cutting them off, so that new flowers will grow.

## CLUB NEWS

### NATIONAL BRIDGE — HARROGATE 10-17 OCTOBER, 1987

We welcomed a new recruit to our party, Peter McCormack, a player of long standing and as far as I can recall this was his first visit. I hope you enjoyed it Peter.

Thank you Ian Dickson for your patience and hard work during the year and for making a huge success of the entire week and to Stan Medcraft our Racing



## Club News *continued*

Correspondent and Jock Carnochan "well experienced."

**Saturday evening** we started our week at the Harrogate Bridge Club playing teams of four for the St. Dunstan's Cup — this was retained by a local team. This was followed by a get-together and sing-song — Alex and Fred catered for our needs, Alex was full of gaiety, I was really surprised — it was a splendid evening.

**Sunday evening** we visited Ripon Club for a match which was keenly contested throughout — the result was in the balance until the last four hands. Ripon just scraped home. Thank you Margaret and all the company for a marvellous evening.

**Monday evening** we played the Civil Service Club — sorry we were on the losing side again. Thank you Brian Bagley (Chairman) and of course our old friend Ernie who has been supervising our needs for many years, and to all the members of the Club for the social evening they provided.

**Tuesday evening** I.C.I./electricity board at the Bridge Club. Thank you Ted Latham (Secretary) and Alex who cropped up again and ran the tournament. 'Hats Off' we were successful and won by 1960 points and with the names mentioned it provided another splendid evening.

We visited Bradford **Wednesday afternoon** instead of in the evening owing to the fact that we had to change all our arrangements. It is a wonderful Club with tables which we all admire. Once again it was a very tight match and we succumbed on the last two boards. We were supplied with a splendid tea afterwards. We thank all members of the Club for a splendid afternoon.

**Thursday evening** we were guests at the Oakdale Golf Club. This year Cedrick ran a Chicago Drive and the winners were:—

1st. Bob Evans & Wally Lethbridge — prize — 1 Bottle of Wine each  
2nd. Bob Fullard & Bill Allen — prize — 1 Bottle of Wine each  
3rd. Two beginners — Ian & Stan — prize — 1 Bottle of Wine each

We had a merry dinner the following evening!

**Friday** is the supreme day of the week — we visited the Drover Inn for a luncheon followed by a speech of thanks from Bob Evans — thanking all people involved in making such a marvellous week — needless to say he was his usual brilliance. Cedrick replied — what can I say that I have not already said in previous articles.

Friday evening we spent at the Civil Service Club — the first item being a Bridge Drive — Ian supplies splendid gifts which can only be won by the locals. This was followed by a snack and then a social and dance. Cedrick was once again in full voice, singing his heart out at the mike.

We all appreciated our new hotel, The Cheltenham Lodge Hotel, which easily surpassed our previous one. Thank you Lynn and her husband and two sons for the marvellous food and welcome that you bestowed upon us.

Thank you Harrogate once again for a delightful week — this of course included all the Clubs and people we met including the taxi drivers who were always pleasant and helpful.

## BRIGHTON

### Pairs — October 4th

R. Evans and Mrs. Barker	59.0
Mr. and Mrs. Pacitti	57.5
W. Allen and Mrs. Clements	57.0
Mr. and Mrs. Padley	53.5
Alf Dodgson and Mrs. Andrews	52.5
Mrs. Tebbit and Mrs. Douse	50.0
Mr. and Mrs. Lethbridge	48.5
G. Hudson and Miss Stenning	47.0
Miss Sturdy and Mr. Douse	43.5
W. Phillips and Mrs. Holborough	31.5

Overall results of the pairs competition for the 1987 Season.

W. Lethbridge	285.9
Ralph Pacitti	283.1
R. Evans	277.5
Alf Dodgson	272.2
Reg Goding	256.8
Ian Padley	255.8
W. Phillips	216.9

The following completed four rounds.

W. Allen	215.8
G. Hudson	199.0
R. Fullard	197.4

## FAMILY NEWS

### PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Congratulations to:

David Bradley, son of our St. Dunstaner *Alfred Bradley*, who recently gained a Master of Arts Degree in Public and Social Administration.

*Albert Fleet* of Paignton, on being awarded second prize in a local craft show.

Steven Mitchell aged ten, son of *Mr. Alan Mitchell*, who recently passed his grade two Theory of Music Exam.

Major Alan Wiles of the Army Air Corps, son of *Mr. and Mrs. G. Wiles*, who has just been awarded the M.B.E. to add to his A.F.C.

### WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*Harry Harding* of Bagborough, Somerset, who was remarried on the 19th September to *Katherine Jean Mitchell*. Until the end of the year, Mr. and Mrs. Harding are residing temporarily in Cobham, Surrey.

Mrs. F. M. Revell, wife of the late *Mr. Geoffrey Revell*, of Watford, on the marriage of her daughter, Leigh, to Steve Harding on September 19th.

*Mr. and Mrs. Alex Scott*, of Belfast, on the marriage of their granddaughter, Gillian Ruth Wilson Smith, to Mr. Paul David Scotney on 8th August, 1987 at St. Luke's Church, Duston.

*Mr. and Mrs. R. Vowles*, on the marriage of their granddaughter, Mandy Vowles at St. Mary's Church, Portsea, on October 3rd to Guy Davies. There was a picture in the local paper of the bride being kissed by a local chimney sweep!

### GRANDCHILDREN

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Barlow*, of Deepcar, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Nicole, who was born on October 14th to their daughter Denise and her husband.

Tessa Chapell, daughter of St. Dunstaner *Jack Chappell*, on the birth of her first child, Hugh, on March 9th.

*Mr. and Mrs. Mansel M. Lewis*, on the birth of their grand-daughter, Elisabeth, on July 16th to their daughter Ann Marie and her husband.

*Mr. and Mrs. L. V. Smith*, of Lancing, on the birth of their sixth grandchild, Mark James, born on July 28th to their daughter Susan and her husband John Heritage.

### GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

#### Congratulations to:

*Mrs. A. Eden*, of Sheffield, on the recent birth of her fourth great grand-daughter, born to her grand-daughter, Kathryn.

*Captain and Mrs. T. Tweedie*, on the birth of their first great-grandchild, a girl Holly Marie, born on August 29th to their grand-daughter Janet and her husband David Pudney.

*Mr. W. H. Wainman*, on the birth of his first great-great-grandchild, a son born to his great-grandson Nick and his wife Di on October 16th.

### DEATHS

#### We offer sympathy to:

*Mr. and Mrs. G. Cole*, of Shoreham-by-Sea whose daughter-in-law died in October after a severe illness.

Mrs. D. P. Coutts, widow of the late *Mr. A. J. Coutts*, of Morden, on the death of her brother, Thomas, on September 6th 1987.

The family of Mrs. Grace Gwendoline Hitchen, widow of the late *Harold Hitchen*, of Northumberland, who passed away on October 6th 1987.



## Family News *continued*

The family of Mrs. Violet Parish, widow of the late *Mr. Reginald Parish*, of Littlehampton, who passed away on September 17th 1987.

# 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.

### **W. E. Hannaford, Staffordshire Regiment**

Mr. Williams Ernest Hannaford passed away at his home on October 11th.

Mr. Hannaford had a short period of military service in 1933/34, and then from the beginning of the Second World War he served with the Staffordshire Regiment, the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. During his service he developed diabetes, and was discharged from the Army in April 1945. Back in civilian life, and in spite of some problems with his vision, Mr. Hannaford was able to work as a motor mechanic and lorry driver until 1975 when he had to take early retirement.

In the years that followed he suffered much ill health and, with the failure of his sight, became a St. Dunstaner in 1982. Very sadly his health problems continued, and within the space of a year Mr. Hannaford had to suffer the amputation of both lower legs. Nevertheless he overcame this further disability with great courage, with the help and support of his family, and he and Mrs. Hannaford were able to enjoy a few holidays with us at Ian Fraser House.

Our sympathy goes to his widow, Ada, and five daughters and their families.

### **Major John Harvie, M.B.E., Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment**

Major John Gordon Harvie, M.B.E., of Lindfield, passed away peacefully in hospital on November 3rd. He was 72 years of age and had been a St. Dunstaner for only a few weeks.

He served in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and the Royal Fusiliers from September 1939 until May 1946. During an air-raid on Southampton Docks, our St. Dunstaner was wounded by bomb splinters, losing his left eye and suffering damage to the right. His service included operations in Europe (Dunkirk), Tunisia and Italy.

Despite his health problems and deteriorating vision in his right eye, Major Harvie remained remarkably cheerful and was devotedly cared for by his wife, Dorothy, to whom

The family of Mrs. Mary Tickle, widow of the late *William Tickle*, of Widnes, who passed away on September 21st 1987.

*Ronald Wilson*, of Keighley, who mourns the loss of his wife, Edith, who passed away on October 26th 1987.

he had been married for almost 35 years.

Our St. Dunstaner worked as an accountant with U.K. Optical Holdings until he was 55 when he had to retire prematurely because of his failing sight.

We condole with his widow and all members of the family.

### **L.W. Robinson, Queens Royal Regiment**

Mr. Louis William Robinson, of Enfield, passed away on October 26th, aged 77. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1944.

Mr. Robinson served as a regular soldier in the Queens Royal Regiment from 1932 until his discharge on 1945. He was injured in Northern Ireland whilst instructing on a rifle range and was totally blinded. On becoming a St. Dunstaner he trained as a telephonist and in 1946 settled in Enfield where he and his wife continued to live for the remainder of his life. He also remained with the same firm for 28 years until his retirement in 1974. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were keen gardeners and his other hobby was music. He leaves his wife, Olive, to whom he was happily married for 42 years.

### **F. A. J. Webb, Devonshire Regiment**

Frank Webb, of Tunbridge Wells, passed away peacefully at his home on October 20th. He was 70 years of age and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1981.

Mr. Webb enlisted in the Devonshire Regiment in 1940 and whilst on active service in Imphal during the Second World War was the victim of severe gunshot wounds to his body and eyes. As a result, Mr. Webb was discharged from the Army in 1945. Despite his disabilities, he was able to remain in his employment with the South Eastern Electricity Board until retirement age. Mr. Webb suffered with Parkinsons Disease over recent years but, despite this and his other disabilities, remained remarkably cheerful. In 1985, Mr. Webb and his wife, Lilly, celebrated forty years of happy marriage.

We condole with his widow, their two sons and all members of the family.