

# St Dunstons Review December 1988





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Free to St. Dunstaners

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**CONTENTS**

Pearson House Anniversary	4
On this day...	5
Handless reunion	6
Bowling	10
Amateur Radio Society	12
Lord Skelmersdale visits St. Dunstan's	16
Lawrie Austin's Fiftieth Anniversary	18
With Christmas in mind	21
Gardening week	24
Gardening notes	27
Bridge	28
Sports News	28
Family News	29



Cover Picture: George Swanston, encouraged by his friends, and assisted by Matron King, cuts the celebratory cake at the 70th Anniversary party at Ian Fraser House.



## From the Chairman

I want to introduce our new Council member to you. He is Mr. Ken Wills who has just joined us having recently retired from being Second Master at Cranleigh School where, among many other activities, he had taught physics for many years. Starting next year you will be meeting him and his charming wife Nan at Reunions and other events.

This year is coming to an end and Christmas approaches. It is a time for happiness, for giving, for getting together, for family. To all our great St. Dunstan's Family and to those who support it Mary and I send our best wishes for a very Happy Christmas.

## 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.

### COMMANDER CONWAY

Simon Conway writes: 'Please publish my very grateful thanks for all the delightful and kind letters and cards with their 'get well soon' messages, sent to me by St. Dunstaners and their friends. I am only sorry that I am not able to reply to them all personally. I much look forward to returning to work in the near future.'

### BRIGHTON TELEPHONE NUMBERS

From now on all Brighton telephone numbers beginning with 3 have a 0 added after the first 3. The number for Pearson House and Ian Fraser House, therefore, has changed from 37811 to 307811. The dialling code for Brighton remains unchanged, however, as 0273.

### Sandy Grant Dies

St. Dunstaners who attended Tembani will be saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Sandy Grant, on August 25th, just 26 days short of his 89th birthday. Sandy was a regular visitor to Tembani, where he would, amongst other things, read to the men. He became a firm friend of all of the St. Dunstaners attending, and maintained his contact with St. Dunstan's throughout his life.

### Gardening FEPOWS Beware!

Gardening FEPOWS should note that in the coming season of events, the Gardening Week in Church Stretton, from September 5th to 12th, and the FEPOW weekend at the Barbican Centre on September 7th and 8th, overlap, and so St. Dunstaners involved in both groups will be faced with a difficult choice.

### Places available on 100km walk

There are still places available on the 100km South Downs Way walk from 23rd to 26th May, announced in the October *Review*. Would any further interested parties please contact Ray Hazan at Headquarters by the end of December.

### Brighton Social and Sports Club

At the Annual General Meeting held at Ian Fraser House on November 2nd it was resolved that life membership cards be substituted for all members in lieu of annual subscription. All St. Dunstaners and their wives are entitled to life membership by application to the Honorary Secretary, Miss Mary Stenning, on forms which are available from Ian Fraser House.





Dancing in the Winter Garden.

## Anniversary Celebrations at Pearson House

Sadie Turner pins a celebratory rose on 'Peter' Pipers lapel.



The November 1918 issue of *St. Dunstan's Review* carried a report on an 'At Home' held on the 16th October that year at West House. The occasion was the handing over of the deeds of the property, which we now know as Pearson House, by Mr. Adams, the President of the Grocers' Federation of the United Kingdom, to Sir Arthur Pearson.

The Federation had raised the money for the purchase of the House and Mr. Adams explained that a further fund was intended, 'for the furnishing of this magnificent hostel in such a manner as to ensure the comfort and the well-being of our brothers who have made such a sacrifice for us.'

At Pearson House, exactly 70 years later, on Sunday 16th October, Matron Christine King held another 'At Home'. St. Dunstaners and their guests were invited to luncheon. 75 people sat in the Dining Room and the temporarily converted Quiet Lounge, while a similar meal was arranged for those in the Nursing Care Wing who were not well enough to come down.

Before lunch Matron briefly explained the reason for the celebration before say-

ing a Grace used by the Worshipful Company of Grocers. At the conclusion of the meal and after the Loyal Toast she read a poem, 'West House' written by St. Dunstaner Tommy McKay, who was among the guests.

The weather was kind allowing the use of the new Conservatory even though the exterior doors had not been fitted. It offered pleasant and quiet surroundings for those not wishing to dance in the Win-

ter Garden where there was no shortage of couples enjoying the music of Tony Back at the electronic organ.

The festivities concluded with the ceremonial cutting of a splendid anniversary cake provided by Red Ball Catering. George Swanston, assisted by Matron, cut the cake supported by a chorus of his fellow St. Dunstaners, who had not long before delivered a spirited rendering of 'Land of Hope and Glory'.

## On this day . . .

by Sean Kelly

As another year draws to a close, I present a sort of collected 'On this day . . .' made up of all the unusual and strange events for which I couldn't find a particular date, only the year. A sort of 'On this year . . .' I suppose.

For example, it was forty years ago that a message in a bottle was found, which read: 'Five ponies and 150 dogs remaining. Desire hay, fish, and 30 sledges. Must return early in August. Baldwin.' I expect that whoever found this believed the original author had a very obliging milkman. Mine has enough problems with one extra pint, never mind 30 sledges. It transpired, however, that Baldwin was an arctic explorer, who had written the note and despatched it in 1902. I expect he got a little miffed as he stepped out of his tent every morning, hoping the milkman had left the supplies. Eventually he gave up waiting for the reply, and pressed on regardless, for it is recorded that Baldwin survived the arctic without any extra hay, fish or sledges.

One hundred and twenty five years ago, one Paul Hubert of the Bordeaux region of France was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. A mere 21 years later, all of which Hubert had spent in solitary confinement, someone noticed a little error. No matter how hard you try, even if you are the most schizophrenic of schizophrenics, murdering

yourself is a little difficult. Mr. Hubert had, in fact, been convicted of his own murder, and it was decided that he should be released. With a warning not to do it again, I expect.

Seventy five years ago, Emperor Menelik II of Abyssinia, now Ethiopia, died. Notable, if for nothing else, for the most unusual throne ever. When in 1890 the electric chair was used for the first time in New York, the Emperor decided that this method of population control was just the thing for keeping plebians in order. Three chairs were duly ordered from the American producers, and arrived, allowing 28 days for delivery, not much later. I'm sure that by now, seasoned readers of this column will be able to guess what's coming next . . . Yes, they had no electricity at that point in Abyssinia. A little put out by this fact, Emperor Menelik II decided that they could not go to waste, and so from that point onwards, one was used as the throne.

During 1963, America was fortunate to have a new quiz show entitled 'One hundred grand', which for those not familiar with vulgar American slang translates as rather a lot of money. In this show, people doubtless carried out various embarrassing actions in a bid to win one hundred thousand dollars. It was so successful it ran for three whole weeks. Today, quiz shows run for years and years. Or does it just seem that they do?



# The Handless Reunion, 1988

by Ted Miller

On the evening of Thursday September 22nd, the Handless Reunion members met in the Annexe of Ian Fraser House for a family party. After a lot of frivolous chatter and a parlour game, we settled down to listen to our Chairman, David Bell, and our President, Mrs. E. Dacre, outline the programme for the coming five days. Among our friends present were Miss Stenning, our Vice President, Air Vice-Marshal Colahan, his wife, Ann, and Major Neve. Commander Conway, who is usually with us on our first night, was unable to be with us owing to ill health. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

At 9.45 Friday morning we boarded the coach for our visit to Chartwell, home of Sir Winston Churchill. We had a very pleasant journey as the weather was fine and sunny. When we arrived at about

*Mrs. Broome, administrator at Chartwell, has a joke with Tommy Gaygan.*



6

11.45, we were met and welcomed by the staff of the National Trust and some of Sir Winston's old retainers, including Mr. Vincent, who was the Head Gardener at Chartwell for many, many years. The present Head Gardener told us that the estate consists of 80 acres made up of gardens, parklands and woodlands and that 80% of the large beech trees were lost during last year's terrible gales. They were still moving the tree trunks while we were there.

Before we sat down to lunch we were introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill, — the grandson of Sir Winston, who gave us a talk about his early childhood at Chartwell and of Winston's great love of the house and splendid views over the Weald of Kent. He also spoke of the many improvements that Sir Winston made at the house and gardens, including the famous brick wall which he built with his own hands.

After a very good lunch we left the restaurant and made our way to the house, where we were divided into three groups led by Mrs. Broome, and Colonel and Mrs. Hyslop. It would be impossible to write of everything we saw in the house, but here is a short history. When the National Trust took over Chartwell in 1965, Lady Churchill gave a great many of her own personal treasures to make the house as it was when Chartwell was the family home. In the hall outside Lady Churchill's bedroom are a number of paintings by Sir Winston, and there is a very fine portrait of Lady Churchill in the drawing room painted by Douglas Chandler in 1946. The museum rooms contain part of the collection of trophies and objects presented to Sir Winston during his lifetime and some of his uniforms. Sir Winston's study is the heart of Chartwell, and apart from the war, he was to use it constantly over a 40 year



*'Handy Andies', escorts and guests at the final dinner.*

period and produced most of his writings here. The room is essentially as he left it for the last time in October 1964.

We really did have a wonderful tour, and our thanks must go to all the staff and guides who gave us so much of their time and knowledge.

On Saturday, which was a free day until the evening, Billy and Alice Griffiths went in the morning to see Dickie Brett's wife Peggie in the nursing home, and in the afternoon my wife, Audrey Gaygan and Clare Loska visited the nursing home too. They found Peggie very bright and cheerful but very frail. She sent her love back to everyone.

We departed for dinner at the Royal Pavilion in the evening, our guests were Air Chief Marshal Sir Neil Wheeler and Lady Wheeler, and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Reid. We were also pleased to have Mr. and Mrs. Weisblatt with us, in addition to Dr. Knott and his wife, who sat at our table. The music for the evening was provided by the members of the Brighton Youth Orchestra, who played extremely well, their music being enjoyed by all.

On arrival we were ushered into the kitchen for a drink before dinner. Our guide, who is the curator of the Royal Pavilion, gave us a talk about the kitchen and the magnificent Banqueting Room, where we

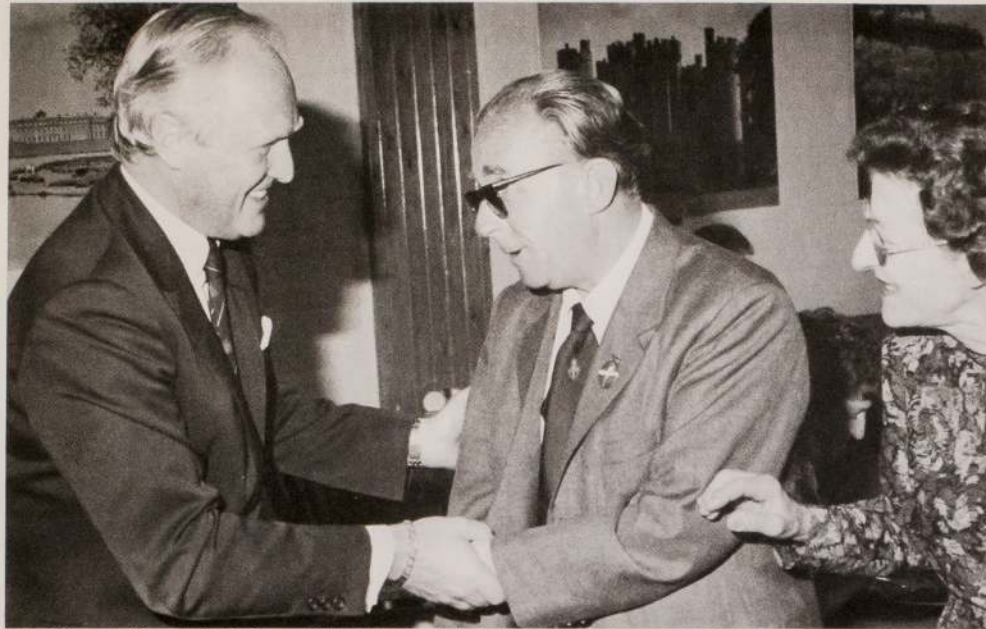
were to have our meal. The kitchen was the most up-to-date and convenient kitchen of its time when it was built. The structural cast-iron columns have been

*Miss Hamlin, Secretary at Chartwell, pins an outsize orchid on David Bell.*



7





*Mr. Winston Churchill, M.P. greets Joseph and Claire Loska.*

given a typically Pavilion flourish by being disguised as palm trees. The kitchen also contains a marvellous collection of copper cooking utensils, and a huge cooking range running the full width of the room. There is also a huge fire place with a roasting spit.

An elaborate menu for a dinner in 1817 illustrates the complexity and high standards of the cuisine — no wonder that King George IV weighed 23 stone at the time of his death. We were also told of the splendid chandelier in the Banqueting Room. Originally lit by gas, it is 30 feet in height and weighs about one ton, and was made, in London at a cost of around £6,500. On the central table is a magnificent collection of regency silver-gilt plate and gilt bronze. The most important of its kind on public view.

John Proctor said Grace, and after a good dinner and a very witty speech by our chief guest Air Chief Marshal Sir Neil Wheeler, Bill Griffiths replied on our behalf, and a memorable evening came to an end. I'm sure we were all very reluctant to tear ourselves away from such grand surroundings, and our thanks to all concerned, especially the young lady who told us of the history of the Pavilion, the

catering staff and our young musicians.

On Sunday morning after church service in Ian Fraser House Chapel, we were free until our departure for supper with Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Jones, last year's High Sheriff, at Berwick, near Lewes. This year turned out to be a most enjoyable evening, as they had invited their family and many friends to meet us. After another splendid dinner we were entertained by a piano recital, and a sing-song of all the old familiar tunes. The words of all the songs had been written out in long hand by the family on the kitchen table the night before so we would all know the words. Once again we must thank our host and all the helpers for making us so welcome to their home and the little surprise gift as we left, and I hope they enjoyed the evening as much as we all did.

On the Monday morning a group meeting was held in the annexe. Mrs. Dacre and Miss Stenning supplied the coffee and biscuits, and in the afternoon a meeting and discussion with staff from headquarters was held. Mr. Weisblatt chaired the meeting, and also present were Miss Mosley, David Castleton and Major Neve, in addition to Dr. Fletcher who keeps us up to date about limbs and gadgets from the



*A presentation for Elizabeth Dacre by David Bell.*

Limb Fitting Centre at Roehampton.

Owing to the closure of the Kitchen on the top floor at Ian Fraser House, where a great deal of repair work is still being carried out, we were unable to have our closing dinner in the Winter Garden as planned, and so at 6.30 we made our way to the Gold Room at the Eaton Restaurant, in Hove. After drinks and another excellent meal — I bet we all put on a few pounds this weekend — the master of ceremonies, our Chairman, David, rose to speak and to introduce Dr. Fletcher who gave us another of his short witty talks. After this, David thanked St. Dunstan's on our behalf, and presented Mrs. Dacre with a small gift from us all, with all our love. There was also a small gift for Miss Stenning, who helps Mrs. Dacre so much. We had our two rather special guests again this year, Joan Higgs, Fred's widow, and Ivy Southall, Stan's widow. It was grand that they could be with us. It is on these special occasions that we remember all our old comrades. We missed Ann and Air Vice-Marshal Colahan who had to miss our last night. We remembered too our friends Bill and Betty Black, who were with us last year. Mr. Weisblatt wound up the evening, putting us in the picture of what is being done on our behalf by St. Dunstan's. After having our photograph taken by David Castleton we then proceeded back to Ian Fraser House in time to get to the bar for a drink before closing time.

I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say

'Thank You' to all the staff up at Headquarters and to Major Neve and the staff at Ian Fraser House for their help and assistance over the weekend, not forgetting of course the transport staff.



*Above: Gwen Obern chats with Mr. Churchill.*

*Below: The Griffiths and Lethbridges enjoy a guided tour.*





## BLIND BOWLERS PLAY THE PROFESSIONALS

by Edna Cope

*Johnny and Edna Cope (left)  
with Tony Allcock and  
David Bryant.*



The fourth World Blind Bowls Tournament is to take place at Harare, Zimbabwe, in June 1989 and, as with most sports for disabled people, money is needed to help send a team to represent England.

To this end, Bristol and West Building Society organised a special event at Thornbury Leisure Centre, situated just outside Bristol. It was given the title 'Blind Bowlers and Professionals Tournament'. The idea was to promote interest and hopefully gain some sponsorship. The team for Zimbabwe has already been selected, and consists of six players, one male and one female in each category of blindness.

So, on the afternoon of Wednesday October 5th, eight blind and visually handicapped bowlers, five of whom will represent England in Zimbabwe, took to the beautiful indoor green, each determined to play their best, and be one of the two to partner either Tony Allcock or David Bryant in the match the next day.

The two sighted world class bowlers watched the games and agreed with everyone present that the standard of bowling was extremely high — and why not, we all wanted to be on that green the next day with the world's number one and number

two bowlers. In the end, it was Johnny Cope and partially-sighted Keith Bell whose nerves of steel and determination carried them through to the next day's play.

The four players tossed for partners, and Johnny partnered David Bryant. David Rhys Jones, the BBC commentator, was in position at the microphone, and he introduced each player to the reasonably large audience seated in the tiered seats around the green. For some reason it took longer to introduce the two famous bowlers — maybe they've won more honours than we have!

As Johnny's helper I was rather overawed at the start of the game, but any nervousness soon disappeared because of the warm friendliness that surrounded us. We had the support of friends in the audience, and David Rhys Jones, Tony Allcock and David Bryant did everything to make us feel relaxed.

It was a very close and exciting game, which ended in victory for Johnny and Tony after a measure on the last end. Bristol and West Building Society presented silver plated salvers to all participants, and also gave a cheque for £3,000 to the committee of the English National

Association of Visually Handicapped Bowlers.

Johnny and I felt it was a wonderful experience, one that we shall remember for a long time.

'It's something that may never happen again — I'm still coming back to earth', Johnny later told the *Review*.

## LOWESTOFT BOWLS TOURNAMENT

by Percy Stubbs

On Saturday September 3rd, St. Dunstan's Bowls Club, their wives and helpers travelled to Lowestoft for the last tournament of the outdoor season. Not knowing what the weather would be like at this most easterly point of the British Isles, summer clothes, and waterproofs were all packed, and fortunately on arriving at our destination the sun was shining in all its glory.

On the Sunday morning we all went to the bowling greens for a practice game, and to meet many old friends among the 85 competitors. Again the sun was shining, and it was shirt-sleeve order throughout the day. On Monday the tournament was opened by the chairman of the Waveney District Council who welcomed all of us to Lowestoft, and promised us sunshine for the rest of the week. He was right, and we were fortunate enough to enjoy one of the few weeks of real summertime we had during the whole season. We were sad to hear that Mr. Ken Dean, the tournament secretary was ill during the tournament, but through the week we had regular bulletins which told us his health was improving. Mr. Gordon Vincent with other members of his committee stepped in and did a wonderful job in making the tournament such a happy and successful one.

Our bowlers were soon taking part in the competitions, and as the week went by, most of us reached the quarter, semi, and final stages. Bob Osborne won the mixed triples with his two partners, and Jackie Pryor lost narrowly in the totally blind final. Well done St. Dunstaners — if you don't win trophies, you still win many new friends, so there are no losers really.

This tournament seems to be such a happy time, not only on the bowling green, but in the evenings when the entertainment is supplied by the people of Lowestoft.

On Monday evening we are always invited to the Lowestoft Football Social Club for a night of dancing, a good old fashioned sing-song and plenty of liquid refreshment. Wednesday evening we were entertained at the Victoria Hotel with a similar programme to Monday night. Thursday evening the St. Dunstan's party and a few close friends went to the Gorleston Pavilion to a Country and Western Show, and also we were entertained by the manager of the Pavilion, who is a very funny comedian, with his jokes and stories in the real Norfolk dialect. I had trouble explaining the meaning of some of his expressions to Bob Osborne, but this is understandable, as you can't expect a Welshman to understand good English.

Friday night the prize-giving and social evening, with a buffet and more liquid refreshment, was held at the Victoria Hotel. Bob Osborne and Jackie Pryor received their trophies, and then Jackie was nominated by the committee as the player of the tournament, for which he received a trophy to be held for a year. Surely the selection committee for the Home International must consider Jackie as a candidate to represent England, as during his short time in the bowling world, he has twice been runner up, and was winner of the National Tournament in 1988, and this year's Rose Bowl at Weston-super-Mare.

Next year's World Tournament to be held in Zimbabwe will have two St. Dunstaners on the national team, and we wish Ted Brown and Johnny Cope every success, and we all hope they will return as world champions.

On behalf of St. Dunstan's Bowling Club, may we thank Mr. Weisblatt and all at head office for the help they give us all throughout the year, and also Commander Conway and Major Neve and the staff at IFH for their kind help, always shown when we visit Brighton. To all the drivers who take us round the West Country, and finally to Lowestoft, for all their help and good company while they are with us.



# ST. DUNSTAN'S AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY WEEKEND —

## 14th/16th October 1988

by Arthur Taylor (S.W.L.)

As members of the Society converged on Ian Fraser House for their third get-together in 1988, many were recalling that it was almost precisely one year to the day since some had to abandon their attempts to reach Brighton because of the hurricane that struck the South of England, leaving a trail of damage and destruction in its wake. We were all aware that Ian Fraser House had sustained a good deal of damage during that storm and, Headquarters had advised everyone who had a booking that major building work was in progress and this could mean residents could possibly find the disturbance and the loss of some facilities could ultimately spoil their enjoyment. We were, therefore, given the opportunity of cancelling our bookings, but the amateur radio fraternity are a highly enthusiastic bunch and were not going to be easily put off by a bit of noise. In the event, the attendance for the weekend meeting was above average, and this was most encouraging.

The proceedings began in earnest on the evening of Friday 14th. Whilst the Committee were in session elsewhere, the rest of the membership gathered in the Winter Garden for an informal chat, and on this occasion we were delighted to be able to welcome three new members into our circle — David Bell, Douglas Field and George Shed. It was quite evident from the way things were going that the weekend was going to prove to be a huge success and, as matters progressed, this early assumption turned into fact.

The following morning, the Chairman, Bill Shea (G4AUJ), opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and, in particular, said it gave him very great pleasure to welcome the three new members. He then handed over to the Secretary, Ted John (G3SEJ), and the morning session got under way. In reading out the names of

those who sent their apologies, Ted said that one of these was none other than Jeff Bond (VE3WJB) who lives in Ontario, Canada. He had, in fact, intended to visit the United Kingdom this year with the object of joining in on this particular meeting, but he explained that he had not been well of late and had no alternative but to cancel his arrangements. However, he has indicated that he fully intends to make the trip across the pond as soon as circumstances permit, and there is no doubt that he will receive a very warm welcome from his fellow St. Dunstaners, especially from those who are members of the Society.

For the benefit of those who wish to contact Jeff on the air, or just to listen in to him, he has a regular schedule on Mondays at 2100 hours G.M.T. on the frequency 21.200 MHz. He will be delighted to make your acquaintance. When his membership was first announced at a previous meeting, it was suggested that the best way to remember his callsign (VE3WJB) was to think of the last three letters as standing for 'Workshops John Brown' because of its obvious connection with Ian Fraser House, and for that reason I think it is worth repeating here.

Earlier this year, a proposal was put forward that the Society should organise a day trip to Dieppe, and it was agreed that this would be arranged provided there was sufficient support from the membership. Several members intimated that they would like to participate, and Ted John said that he would like everyone who wants to take part in this cross-channel event to let him know, as a matter of some urgency, about their intentions so that all the necessary travel arrangements can be made.

In regard to the Kaleidoscope Competi-

tion introduced by the Chairman at this year's A.G.M., the closing date for entries is now 31st December, 1988.

To round off the morning session, there came the news that the Society had received a very generous gift of a Samson ETM-80 (Memory) Electronic Morse Keyer kindly donated by Herr H. Samson (DJ2BW) of West Germany, and Frank Watts (G5BM). Expressions of appreciation have been sent to both gentlemen and, in the meantime, Ted John has volunteered (!!!) to try out this advanced piece of valuable equipment and report back in due course.

On that note, the mornings proceedings were brought to a close, but it was known that George Cole (G4AWI) wished to address the meeting. George belongs to the very exclusive First Class Operators Club (FOC), whose rules of entry are so stringent that anyone who qualifies for membership can truly be regarded as a master in the art of sending messages through the medium of the Morse key. The Club is international and the membership is limited to 500 at any one time. To qualify, an applicant must be sponsored by five persons from two different continents and be capable of sending morse at a *minimum* rate of 30 words per minute with 100% accuracy. The Club recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary and, to mark the occasion, members met at the Lord's Taverners in London, which George and his wife, Elsie, attended. He spoke of his pride in being there, not for his own personal satisfaction, but because he was there as a representative of the St. Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society and, at the same time, he had been able to meet people from all parts of the globe who, until then, had been a contact via his Morse key. The function had obviously made a deep impression on him, and one incident created an even larger impression on his wallet. He related how he had given Elsie a £5 note to buy drinks from the bar. When she returned, he held out his hand for his change got only two coins dripped into it. 'Where's the rest?' demanded George. 'That's all there is!' said Elsie: 'It came to £3.50!' So if you should happen to meet George in the bar at Ian Fraser House and he doesn't sound

quite his usual self, the only reason will be that he hasn't yet come out of his state of shock!

After lunch, the President of St. Dunstan's, Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, M.C., joined the meeting in the annexe to hear the guest speaker, Tom Douglas, M.B.E., (G3BA) give a talk on his part in the operation of clandestine radio during his time as a Far East P.O.W. working on the Burma/Siam railroad. The very nature of the subject had aroused considerable interest amongst all those present, and it was also interesting to note that there were others in the building who thought so, too, because by the time Tom got to his feet, the room was crowded. Perhaps the best indication of this can be gauged by the fact that, when the tea trolley arrived in mid-afternoon, it was found that the normal quota of cups and saucers it carried were not enough and a further supply had to be brought in.

The Society has always had the happy knack of providing a speaker who is informative and interesting as well as being an expert in either his or her particular field, and Tom Douglas was no exception. From the moment he began to speak and up to the conclusion about 80 minutes later, his audience sat in rapt attention with barely a cough to interrupt his story. So vivid was his account of that period in his life that it was not difficult to conjure up in the mind the events he was describing. Perhaps more so on those occasions when he related discussions with the Japanese guards, because he was also able to put over their manner of speaking in English.

He began by saying that he had felt highly honoured to have been invited to give his talk to the St. Dunstan's fraternity and went on to provide brief details about himself. Prior to the outbreak of World War 2, he was a BBC engineer based in Birmingham and he had been a licenced amateur radio operator since 1937. When the Japanese swept across South-East Asia at the end of 1941, he was serving as a 2nd Lieutenant with the Royal Signals, in Singapore. After the surrender of the island they were taken prisoner and marched off into captivity and were given the task of building their own prison camps. This whole episode was a shattering experi-



ence to everyone and he quickly realised that as news from the outside world from then on would be virtually nil, morale was bound to suffer. He went to his C.O. and suggested that they should obtain a radio set by whatever means possible and this was agreed, even though the punishment for being found in possession of such equipment was death. Of course, actually being able to get hold of a set presented the biggest problem, but under such conditions ingenuity will always prevail and Tom was soon in business. Their big break came when a working party that had been detailed to clear a warehouse discovered a large stock of radio components. The problem was how to get them out to Tom without arousing the suspicions of the guards. Luckily they had recently received that very rare commodity insofar as a Far East P.O.W. camp was concerned — Red Cross parcels. The boxes were then filled with a selection of various components and then smuggled out to Tom right under the noses of the guards. The fact that Tom was there at Ian Fraser House and reliving those days for us, proved that he was never caught, although he was once betrayed by a fellow prisoner (not a British national) who was desperate for better treatment and had decided that this was the best way of gaining favour with his captors. He led the guards out to the latrines where the radio was normally hidden but, by sheer good fortune, Tom had decided to hide it in a different place in the bush. The guards were furious at having their time wasted and gave the young man a very bad beating. A few days later he took his own life.

Tom said that he has never been an emotional man, but there was one moment in those long years of captivity when he wept quite unashamedly. He had been working on a radio set which, he thought, would give him a range of not more than a few miles. To his astonishment the first words that he heard were spoken in English and, even more amazingly, the voice was coming from All-India Radio. After a few moments the announcer said 'We are now going over to London for the latest news.' And then, from across the other side of the world, he heard the chimes of Big Ben, and he cried.

It was not difficult for us to understand his reaction at that time, but he said that his feelings had been heightened when he realised it was his own Daventry transmitter that was relaying that broadcast to him.

Despite all the horrors of the building of the railway, there were still touches of humour. There was the occasion when a party of officers who had been working in the area of the River Kwai, had discovered a very tempting pool. Feeling hot, sticky and dirty from their exertions, they threw off their clothing and dived in. They had been splashing around quite happily for some time when one officer suddenly let out a blood-curdling scream and ran to the bank clutching the lower part of his anatomy. They all followed him to find out what was causing him such distress and when they finally persuaded him to move his hands away, to their astonishment they saw a fish hanging on like grim death! It seemed that the fish had been attracted to what must have seemed to have been something out of the ordinary to its daily diet and had snapped up the opportunity when it was presented!

The fate of the prisoners seemed to have been sealed when, after so long in captivity, they were loaded on to a train, but they had no idea where they were being taken. Conditions in the trucks were hot and uncomfortable but they were allowed to slide the doors back to get as much air as possible to circulate. After several hours of travelling, Tom said that he was sitting in the open doorway of his truck when he spotted a bomber heading towards the train with bomb doors open and in a position to attack. He shouted a warning to the others and they were about to jump off when the aircraft suddenly closed its bomb doors, waggled its wings and made off. Two days later the war in the Far East came to an end and it was then that they learned that the bomber had abandoned its attack on the train because, at the very last minute, its observer had realised that the men crowded into the doorways of the trucks were POW's. For his initiative, they were all very pleased to hear that he later received a commendation.

At the conclusion of his talk, Tom was warmly applauded by everyone present,

for this really had been an experience and a privilege to have heard this first-hand account of one very brave man's war. Jim Padley (G3NHJ) very kindly recorded the talk, and the tape will be available through the cassette library in due course.

The general consensus of opinion after another get-together in the Winter Garden on the Sunday morning was that this had been a memorable and successful meeting. At this time last year, we were paying tribute to all the staff at IFH for the way that they had coped with the situation after the devastation caused by the hurricane. Precisely 12 months later we again have to express our grateful thanks to them for the cheerful manner in which

they have carried on in very difficult circumstances.

Finally, the dates of the meetings for 1989 are as follows:—

Friday March 10th to Sunday March 12th;  
Friday July 21st to July 23rd;  
Friday October 20th to Sunday October 22nd.

The Committee wishes to point out that it is in the best interests of all members to make their bookings with Headquarters for those dates at the earliest opportunity. The accommodation at Ian Fraser House is always in great demand and it makes good sense to stake your claim now and we look forward to meeting again.

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## BRABANTA FOOD CHOPPER

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This is the Brabanta Food Chopper, seen here ably demonstrated by St. Dunstaner Tom Page. The chopper will cut any vegetable, and even raw meat.

The food is placed within the cylindrical base of the chopper, which should be on a chopping board. The top handle is then pressed down with a sharp motion, and the more you cut the finer it goes. Tom said 'I find it very useful, especially as

both myself and my wife are blind'. Brabanta also make a potato chipper which operates along the same principles. Both should be available through many high street stores, priced at around £4.40. If you should have any difficulty finding them, they can be purchased direct from:— Brabanta, Blackfriars Road, Nailsea, Bristol, BS19 2SB. Telephone 0272 810 600.







*Above: Ernie Brown's prizewinning rocking horse is admired by Lord Skelmersdale.*

*Below: Phil Duffee explains as Ray Sheriff demonstrates a talking computer.*



*Lawrie Austin explaining the finer points of archery as Jerry Lynch and Walford Davies prepare to shoot.*

## LORD SKELMERSDALE VISITS ST. DUNSTAN'S

Lord Skelmersdale, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Social Security, visited Pearson House and Ian Fraser House on 21st October. He was met at Pearson House by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach who introduced Mr. William Weisblatt, Secretary; Major Arthur Neve, Deputy Administrator, Brighton Homes; Matron Christine King and Mr. Keith Martin, Pensions and Admissions Officer.

During a short tour the Minister visited the Handicraft Room, Winter Garden and the Nursing

Care Wing meeting and talking with a number of St. Dunstaners.

Lord Skelmersdale was met at Ian Fraser House by Miss Sue Reynolds, Supervisor of Care Assistants and Dr. Martin Knott. Before lunch he took sherry with some of our lady St. Dunstaners in their own lounge. Later he saw training courses going on in braille, use of computers, typewriting and, in the workshops, wrought iron work and picture framing. He also looked in on leisure activities in the Handicraft Room, swimming, bowling and archery.



*Above: Jesse Mills shows the candlestick holder he is working on.*

*Below: Matron King explains the use of a special bath at Pearson House.*





# Lawrie Austin's Fiftieth Anniversary

by David Castleton

The letter is signed 'W. G. Askew' and dated 21st August 1938 and the opening paragraph reads, 'Dear Austin, This is to confirm that St. Dunstan's is prepared to employ you at a salary of £3 weekly plus your keep from approximately the 1st October.' Lawrie has kept it all these years along with other souvenirs and photos gathered over fifty years of service to St. Dunstan's as a member of staff and as a voluntary helper in retirement.

Lawrie's school days were spent in Highbury. Later he went to work for Albion Motors in Willesden and it was through his work there that he became St. Dunstan's first coach driver. The job that became virtually a life's work began almost by accident: 'I had been in Manchester demonstrating a coach. When I got back I was told I had an interview with St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park. The idea was to take the coach for a demonstration and go back to the works but I was offered a job.' In due course he delivered the completed coach and joined the staff in Brighton. 'It was a stormy day — it poured with rain. I arrived here, there were no men in the House because the building had just been opened. I was met by Mr. Lloyds. My next job was to Brighton Station to pick up a load of men — practically a full coach.'

Lawrie was among the first staff at the newly opened House at Ovingdean and in the following years it fell to him to be in at the beginning of other phases in the life of St. Dunstan's. He took the first coachload of St. Dunstaners to Melplash Court, in Dorset, at the outbreak of war and, later, in 1940 he began the transfer to Church Stretton. 'I moved up to Church Stretton until called up for the Royal Air Force. My wife was in London and I was in Shrewsbury. It was a bit of a tough time because we couldn't see each other because of the distance and transport was very difficult.'

Nevertheless he has some good memories of those days! 'We had two Frenchmen

and a Pole. Both the French lads were blind and the Polish chap could just see with one eye a little bit. Matron Paine said, "Lawrie, would you take these three — they want to buy forage caps at the army stores." I said I would take them in, not thinking about the language. You can just imagine when I got into Shrewsbury. None of them could speak English and I'd got to buy hats for them! We got through it. Another time the local farmers had plenty of fruit on the trees so would St. Dunstan's send up some men to pick apples. I had to take them to Hope Bowdler. These lads were all youngsters, all around the twenties. They started climbing the trees! One got up a tree, his foot slipped and a branch went up his trouser leg. There was another man with a knife trying to cut his trouser leg. We had a hell of a job getting them down. They were great fun, though. I was sorry to go into the Royal Air Force and leave them all.'

Lawrie served with a training squadron

*Lawrie Austin (left) poses with fellow ground-crew members.*



*With the first St. Dunstan's coach at Ovingdean.*

based at Abingdon and Stanton Harcourt working first on airframes and later on engines. Towards the end of the war, in 1945, he was transferred to the Fleet Air Arm, 'I was lucky because the Navy started demobbing quicker than anyone else and I was fortunate enough to get out quick back to St. Dunstan's.'

In the post-war years as Transport Manager, Lawrie supervised the upgrading of St. Dunstan's transport fleet, 'I chose my own staff which, fortunately, I had for 20 years so we were a good group. Each chap had his own job and it went very well.'

In 1978 he retired after 40 years service, 'Every day — although it is the same sort of job — was a different day and what I got out of it was helping someone who is disabled. Although I would not call it disabled. They've got a snag that's all and if you can help them to enjoy life a little bit more, whatever job they've got and help them on their way...'

By that time Lawrie was already involved in another way of helping St. Dunstaners. In his off-duty times he had been pioneering archery for blind archers. 'I started archery myself after I had an accident working on the coaches here. I hurt my back so my son suggested trying archery as a sort of an exercise, which I did

and that would be about 25 years ago or perhaps nearly 30. To be quite honest blind archery was Jock Carnochan's idea and we talked about it. We tried down in the old rifle range to see what we could do.'

The first necessity was a method of aiming blind and they tried an adjustable stand to assist the blind archer to line up on the target, 'The very first stand I ever used was an old drip-stand we had in the garage. I brought it out and put a T-piece on top, telling the man to line the back of his bow hand against that and then the spotter put him in line.'

There have been variations and improvements on the sighting system but basically it was the break-through that has led not only to the success of St. Dunstan's Archery Club but the spread of the sport among blind people world-wide. Lawrence Austin took courses with the Guild of Archers to obtain his coaching qualification. He played a big part in obtaining recognition of the Club by the Grand National Archery Society which opened the way to competition with sighted clubs. He has seen the numbers of St. Dunstaners involved increase to 35 and he has shared their delight in victories over sighted teams including the Army and Royal Air Force.





A great archery occasion at Buckingham Palace.

In 1986 he was presented with a Torch Trophy for his services to blind archery by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester. Did he feel proud? I asked. 'It is the men who have done the job. I have told them what to do and how to do it, found the faults between us and they have done the work. I've stood at the back now and said try it, it's up to you and they have pulled it off. So you can put the praise on them. I've only helped.'

Since the days when he gave up his evenings while still working at St. Dunstan's, Lawrie has gone on coming in to Ian Fraser House on Tuesdays and Thursdays for a few hours coaching, repair work, setting up and dismantling the field or the indoor range in the Annexe. 'The person who has really helped me is my wife. She has backed the whole lot. She works very often as a spotter and when we have been away and the odd thing wants repairing she has got the needle and cotton out.'

There has not been much time for his own archery: 'I was shooting about three weeks ago and I realised I need more shooting. It doesn't worry me that I'm not shooting much because the benefit I'm getting really is seeing a man get out of a wheelchair, and stand up. That's Fred Galway. When he first came to me he was in a

wheelchair but he is walking about with sticks now. He is quite happy and he says that archery did help him. That is quite a medal in itself isn't it?'

Archery has kept Lawrie in close contact with St. Dunstan's: 'I do value that. You know the time goes on and you don't realise it until someone tells you one day you've done fifty years and what are you going to do about it? I'm going to carry on as long as I can. I'm not giving up yet. I'm like the lads, I don't want to sit down. I could never do that. It is an interest, too, because they are great pals of mine really and I've known their families. I've seen their families grow up as well so you see you belong almost to the family here. I think I'd be actually lost now without it.'

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#### ADDITIONS TO CASSETTE LIBRARY

The following cassette has been added to the mailing list, and can be obtained in the usual manner.

R78, C90. Louis Varney on the History of Radio and Wireless, June 88.



By the time you read this, shopping days left before Christmas will be mercifully limited. If you are one of those people who brag about having completed their Christmas shopping by the previous June, then you will kick yourself for your haste when you hear about what is available! Be warned, though, you will need a large sack, and an even larger cheque book in some cases! I shall mention the most expensive item last, otherwise you will have nothing left in your pocket for the smaller presents.

Do you get frustrated trying to get paste out of those modern plastic toothpaste tubes? They used to be made of soft metal, which stayed rolled up! Fortunately, Keep Able (full addresses at the end of the article) supply a Tube Squeezer at £1.60. It has not been tried out by the author. The catalogue describes it as a one handed, key turning operation. Stop the turkey (well, a very small one) from sliding around as you carve by using the 'Fixit WorkStation'. A spiked surface 'grips' the item being cut. The board costs £39 (excl. VAT). You may, however, prefer to use a slicing guide priced at £10.65, to slice turkey when cold. Both boards can be used with the 'Easy Grip' knife, which has a handle more akin to a tenon saw handle, and ranges in price from £8.99 serrated blade and £9.20 smooth blade. The same company also sells 'tap turners'. These convert ordinary basin and bathroom taps into more manageable lever taps, without all the fuss of getting a plumber in. These levers fit

over either the star or round handled taps and cost from £7 a pair for basin taps and £32 for bathroom taps. Contact Keep Able for their catalogue which contains many more items than mentioned above.

Whilst on the subject of washing, how about a tap which you do not need to touch or turn on! As you place your hand beneath the spout an infra-red beam is broken, so turning the water on. Clos O Mat, the suppliers of that famous 'hands-off' loo, warn that the tap requires a high water pressure, so that this may well double the £180 cost of the tap if you have to install a pump as well.

Have you ever dreamed of stepping out of your bath or shower and being dried by sources other than your own efforts? Clos O Mat again, can supply not a hand maiden, but a 'Luxaire' at just under £400. It looks like a mirrored bathroom cabinet. At the bottom is a vent which swivels from your head to your toes, pumping out warm air. Electricity vouchers are not supplied!

It was the walrus who said, 'The time has come'. Though once Sharp ceased production of their talking clock, 'time has very much gone!' Now there is yet one more variation available via Men's Supplies from RNIB at £22.50 and called the Pyramid clock. No marks for guessing its shape, which measures six by two and a half inches at the base and is about five inches high. The 'time speak' button is on top, is easily accessible, and the whole unit appears very stable. I am not sure which is



worse, the female voice or the electronic rooster alarm call. Fortunately, the latter can be switched over to a bleep. The control settings are under the base, and not too small; all the usual functions are available and the unit comes with braille instructions. Also under the base, is the visual digital readout. If anyone can provide a sensible answer as to why a sighted person should have to pick the clock up to see the time, instead of having to listen to that ghastly read out, then they will be supplied with a free clock! The unit takes four AA batteries.

A common problem among St. Dunstaners these days, is their hearing difficulty. If you have a hearing aid with the 'T' position, do not forget the use of induction loops, which can either fit around the neck or the room. They plug into the ear-phone socket of your radio, TV, tape recorder or talking book and feed the sound directly to your hearing aid. Neck loops cost from £8 to £22.

If you do not wish to miss Christmas television programmes, then either plug some head phones, from £10, into the external socket if your set has one, though this will cut off the main speaker. Alternatively, you can get a microphone which picks up the speaker sound and directs it via an infra red beam to a set of headphones. This will not cause any of the family to be blown out of the room by the noise. Alternatively, you could always purchase a TV sound receiver at around £50 (from the RNIB via Men's Supplies). You can have that volume through an earpiece as loud as you like, while the family watches the main set. The sound receiver can work either off an indoor aerial, or be spliced into your outdoor one. Which ever method you fancy, apply to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf for a leaflet entitled 'Help with TV', which list all suppliers.

BT have quite a range of appliances to help the hard of hearing. Their 'Tribune' telephone has an amplifier and volume control. Induction coils can be fitted into handsets for a charge of £12. Bell amplifiers can be purchased for around £4, and DIY extension kits from around a similar cost. Push button as opposed to dials are much simpler for most blind people;

there is one model with extra large buttons. Another model can store up to 10 numbers in its memory, thus saving yours! For all details, ring the operator and ask for your local district sales office.

Here is a free tip for the bottom of your stocking. Many people receiving a call on one phone want to transfer to another phone in another room, and think they must not put phone number one down, until they pick up number two. This is not so. The call is only terminated by the originator, so do not be afraid to place a phone back on the hook before lifting the second, provided, it was not you who initiated the call.

The above items were just a filler for the foot of your stocking, now comes the leg-work! In 1979, St. Dunstan's and the RNIB jointly purchased the Kurzweil Reading Machine (KRM), and carried out a year's evaluation programme to assess its ability to convert print to synthetic speech. In a short space of time, the KRM shot up in price from £10,000 to £24,000 and took a trolley to carry all the machinery around. In early October this year, the second generation, the Kurzweil Personal Reader (KPR) was launched, by Sight & Sound Technology Ltd. You will, perhaps, need two stockings; one to carry the central processing unit, about the size of a portable sewing machine, weighing some 33 lbs, and measuring about 30x20x8 inches. So where are the improvements apart from the size of the CPU? In my view more important than size, is whether it can read print efficiently and accurately. I took along a paperback book, which the previous KRM read about 95% of the text. It has nine different voices, four female, four male and one child. I was not personally impressed with the additional voices, though messages, as opposed to the actual reading, can be in different voices, which is helpful. However, the degree of intonation is programmable, and the end result is far more intelligible and makes pleasant listening. An important innovation is the hand scanner. Like the 'Optacon', this is driven by hand. The camera itself containing tracking guides, but reads up to four lines at once. There is a delay before read out occurs. KPR will tell you if you tracked incorrectly. The control panel is very



much smaller, about 9 inches square, with only 14 keys. The keys can have four different functions, so you can ask for explanations from the control panel itself, thus allowing you to be independent. The keyboard clips into the CPU, which has a carrying handle. Thus, with the hand camera in your pocket, you are 'transportable'!

The KPR can plug into other computers or embossers, so giving you a hardcopy braille version of the print, or access to the permanently recorded document via your computer disk. The price ranges from £7,900 with hand scanner,

£10,000 with automatic scanner, and £12,000 with both.

Here are the promised addresses:

**Keep Able Ltd.**, Fleming Close, Park Farm, Wellingborough, Northants. NN8 3BR. Tel: 0933 679426.

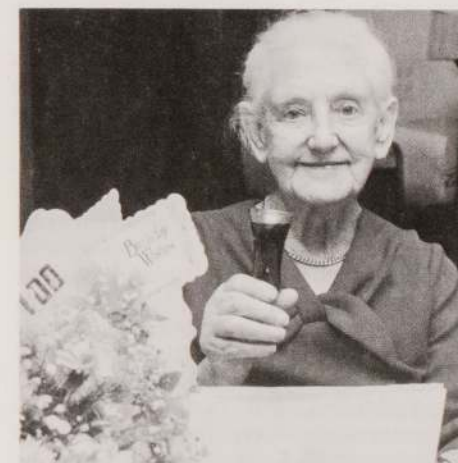
**Clos O Mat**, 2 Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire. Tel: 061 9731234.

**RNID**, 105 Gower Street, London WC1E 6AH. Tel: 01-387 8033.

**Sight & Sound Technology Ltd.**, 30-32 St. James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW. Tel: 0604 587091.

## FLOWERS FOR THE LADY

Mrs. Florence O'Donnell, widow of the late Mr. Richard O'Donnell, of Radcliffe, Bury, celebrated her centenary on 25th July. Mrs. Henderson, her visitor, described her as 'bright as a button'. Mrs. Henderson also presented her with a gold necklace chain and bracelet from St. Dunstan's at the party held on her birthday, in addition to flowers and a message from the Chairman.



Mrs. Florence O'Donnell (photo: Bury Times).



# St. Dunstan's Gardening Club Week

by Margaret Bingham

The weather was kind to us again on our second visit to Cirencester for our Gardening Week but although there was a chilly northerly wind at the beginning it did improve and most of us had a little sun-tan. As the majority of us had visited Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester in 1986 we had no problems in finding our way both inside and outside the buildings — especially to the bar!

Business began on Wednesday morning when we assembled in one of the Conference Rooms for our Annual General Meeting and matters relating to the Club. Then after coffee Mr. Ray Churchill who had — as previously — arranged the programme gave us the details of the Gardens we were to visit and the guides who would be with us at various places. (Mr. Churchill is a lecturer at the College, a very accomplished speaker, and has a wonderful sense of humour).

After lunch, as we were a large party of 52, we had to split up and embark in two coaches to visit gardens at Chilton House, Chilton Foliat, near Hungerford, the venue of the very popular T.V. series 'The Victorian Kitchen Garden'. Our two guides were Mr. Keith Sheather, producer of the programme, and Mr. Harry Dodson, the Head Gardener. We were told how the Victorians with large kitchen gardens would collect the fruit — apples, pears, etc. — and store them in a dry fruit store with the minimum of light and, after the household had been provided for, fruit and vegetables would be distributed to the less fortunate people in the neighbourhood. We were surprised at the smallness of the garden, it looks so large on the television, but it was all very interesting. The Blenheim orange melon is grown there, as large as a normal melon, olive-greenish with pale marking criss-crossing it. With these marks the fruit looked pitted but actually it was very smooth and absolutely delicious to taste!!

Our evenings were free to do as we wished. As there was a resident party from

SAGA we were able to join in with their evening entertainment — Old-time Dancing, Bingo etc., and of course there was a very good Bar! Without fear of contradiction I would say we were happy at the College, very pleasant buildings spreading out to cover a large area and the whole aspect is of small courts adjoining each other with little alley-ways between. Land is both owned and rented by the College — 2,000 acres in all and every section of agriculture is covered: farm management, crops, dairy herds, research and so on. There are about 1,100 students coming from all over the world and from all walks of life. All this large College Estate needs to be managed properly as it is a Registered Charity receiving no grant either from the Local or National Government. However it is justifiably proud of its achievements in coping with conferences and courses with its excellent facilities and cuisine.

An early start on Thursday morning for the village of Chipping Campden (Chipping meaning market) to visit the famous gardens of Hidcote. Chipping Campden is a famous old place, all the buildings in that mellow Cotswold stone and well worth having a good look round if visiting the gardens. We were free to wander round the grounds but unfortunately for me there were too many steps and so we were restricted as to how far we could go. Others in our party said there was quite an elaborate lay-out and the gardens were well kept but like all other gardens they were suffering from lack of man-power and in many cases shortage of money! Later we went to Kiftsgate Gardens which was about half a mile away, not as well known as Hidcote but just as beautiful. These gardens are owned by Mrs. Binny and are the home of the KIFTSGATE ROSE, a rambler which covers a 40 ft. high beech tree and is mentioned in the Guinness Book of Records. I do not know the colour but it must be a beautiful sight when in full bloom. On the full day excur-



Margaret Bingham and Vi Delaney admire some blooms.

sions we had a very substantial packed lunch so we either ate it on the coach or sat outside braving the coldish wind.

On Friday we had a free morning in Cheltenham. By this time the weather was just a little warmer. It would be very remiss of me if I did not mention the flowers but in every conceivable place there were brilliantly coloured blooms in tubs, hanging baskets, jardinières beside doorways and pot plants on window sills. All this beauty complemented the fine Regency buildings and made Cheltenham a town worth visiting. The shops were excellent. We made our way via Gloucester, skirting the River Severn, to Westbury Court Gardens, the earliest example of a Dutch Water Garden in England and which was restored by the National Trust. Flowers, apples, pears and plums similar to those grown in the 17th century. Some of the plants were recognisable but most did not have a name-tag so it was difficult to differentiate them from the modern flowers and plants. There was a beautiful pure white sweetpea and broom which was more spiky than we know but in all other aspects it was similar. Many of the apples and pears were huge and the smaller

apples, growing in great profusion, were a lovely rosey red. Eventually we made our own way to Newnham-on-Avon for a pre-arranged tea provided at a moderate cost by the Newnham W.I. We were made very welcome and the sandwiches and homemade cakes were delicious. We thanked them most sincerely. Our drive back to Cirencester was through Cinderford and Coleford to the heights of the Forest of Dean then via Gloucester, up Birdlip Hill and across the Cotswolds. All this time Ray was giving a running commentary on the countryside and the villages we passed through. He is a very knowledgeable person and a joy to listen to in his Cotswold 'burr'.

The next day, Saturday, we visited Lackham Gardens, the Wiltshire County Council Agricultural College and Bryn Thornton, the Head Gardener, introduced us to the beautiful and educational garden. The party made its way to the nearby village of Laycock, owned by the National Trust, for a picnic lunch and general walkabout. The afternoon was spent at Corsham Court and Lord Methuen, owner of the gracious Georgian mansion, was awaiting our arrival with Head Gar-



dener, Mr. Carlisle, and as by this time there was a definite improvement in the weather we were eager to commence our guided tour over these beautiful grounds.

The first thing that struck us apart from the beautifully trimmed lawns and colourful flower beds were the peacocks. They were very tame and ignored us completely. Mr. Carlisle told us of the rhododendron walks, walled gardens, greenhouses and the lovely scenic views visible from the riverside and woodland trails. A 'ha-ha' was explained to us — in this case a small brick wall built in a sudden dip in the ground — to discourage a very healthy-looking herd of cattle from getting into a nearby woodland. As we walked further in amongst the trees, taking care not to trip over roots and clumps of grass we realised we were under a canopy. Actually it was the leaves and branches of an oriental plane tree covering an area of three-quarters of an acre. The main trunk was about 20ft in circumference, as the branches leaned over and touched the soil so another tree grew. We had been aware of the church bells ringing merrily and at the church adjacent to Corsham Court we came across the wedding party being photographed — the bride being the daughter of Lord Methuen's gamekeeper.

Sunday morning we were free to do as we wished, some went to the church in Cirencester and others to the chapel on site which was packed to capacity. Ray kindly gave up his spare morning to give a most interesting tour of the College — it was much appreciated. In the afternoon we went on a long drive to Misenden House near Stroud, home of Major Tom Wills and family, where we had an introduction by the Head Gardener, Colin Brookes, who mentioned some of the more unusual trees and even gave us a sizeable leaf and spray of blossom from an Indian bean tree to examine. What a beautiful place this was with an exceptionally long well-mown lawn sweeping down to a large house flanked by wide flowering borders. There was a rose garden which must have been a glorious sight when in full bloom, topiary terraces, in fact everything that goes into the making of a most extraordinary English garden.



Reg & Betty Newton in the garden.

(There was even a lovely young maiden in Tudor dress, reclining on a garden seat, being photographed for a magazine.) Later we went to a nearby village teashop where we enjoyed a welcome 'cuppa' and a very nice piece of cream cake.

Monday was our last day, and what a fitting end to spend it in the lovely City of Bath. Firstly we had a guided tour by members of the Mayor's voluntary guides, a body of some 80 men and women who give up their time to enlarge on the historical features and the exceptional buildings. We all felt we had learned a lot and were indebted to our guides for giving us such an interesting morning. We met up for a picnic lunch in the gardens by the Grand Parade not far from the River Avon, and Eric and Mrs. Church who live in the area joined us there for an hour or so. After lazing in the warm sunshine for a couple of hours, we reluctantly left Bath and made our way back through the lovely Cotswold countryside and villages. Later, after an exceedingly good dinner we gathered in The Tithe Barn for a final get-together. Tom Hart thanked Ray for organising such an interesting and varied programme and also Theresa, the Conference Manager, for seeing that we were comfortable in our rooms and ironing out

## D. F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

Firstly, may I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and hope that the weather is better in 1989. There is little to do in the garden at the moment, apart from clearing and maintenance, and pruning when the weather allows. Stock up on seeds and composts for the New Year.

### Vegetables

Dig over all the empty spaces when the weather allows, and get trays ready for the sprouting of new potatoes, and place them in full light away from frosts. Discard any stored vegetables that are in a bad condition. Where you still have plants growing, protect them from very wintry weather by spreading peat or something similar on them at root level. Some of the rhubarb which is growing well can be given a dose of compost which will help it, and give protection against frost. Some broad beans can be planted if the weather is clement, although those in the north would be better advised to wait until spring.

### Fruit

Continue pruning apple and pear trees, along with currants and gooseberries, but only when there are no frosts around.

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### Gardening Club *continued*

any complaints. Presents were handed to Ray and Theresa also to Phyllis, Ray's wife, who had accompanied us on some of the tours. The drivers were not forgotten either. All in all it had been a really smashing week enjoyed by everyone of us. According to Ray we had visited gardens in six counties. I suggest our title should be St. Dunstan's Garden Ramblers Club.

I am asked to remind the Club members that the annual subscription (£7.00) is now due and should be sent to John Walbrugh. The dates of the next meetings, at Ian Fraser House, will be May 8th/12th and May 15th/19th, and bookings should be made through Headquarters.

Spray trunks with insecticide as a protection for the new season. Give the places where you plan to plant trees in spring a good dig over, and put in some peat and compost at the bottom. Trim some runners away from the stools, but leave the main pruning until March.

### Flowers

Dig over all vacant beds and put some compost or manure over the area to prepare for the spring. Where you have delphiniums or lupins, or any perennial shrubs, give them a buck up by a dose of compost, which will help to protect against the frosts. Beds of anemones and all types of bulbs will also need winter protection, especially the smaller ones. Tread down polyanthus and primula in their growing spots to protect them. Examine dahlia, gladioli and begonia tubers which you have in store, and throw out any which are going soft. Those which are showing new shoots can be started in compost in deep boxes or singly in pots. Keep them warm, and water them regularly.

### Greenhouse

Where you have plants and bulbs growing keep the temperature up to 45°F, and allow as much air as possible to circulate during the day. In addition it would be wise to set smokes. Remove plants which are starting to flower to the house where colour is needed at this time of the year. Water and feed them minimally. Azaleas, freesias, roman hyacinth and narcissi can be gently forced now. Cut back chrysanthemums as they go out of flower, and regal pelargoniums should be ready for their final pots now.

### NEW ADDRESS FOR D.F. ROBINSON

Readers of 'Gardening Notes' may be interested to know that 'Robby' moved house. His new address is: D.F. Robinson, 3 Hydro Avenue, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside. Tel: 051 625 9866.



# Harrogate Bridge Week – October, 1988

by Ralph Pacitti



The bridge players outside their hotel.

Our annual trip to Harrogate would be my first, and the clubs' second, visit to the Cheltenham Lodge Hotel. After arrival, the Saturday evening was spent playing the teams of four tournament and the St. Dunstan's Harrogate Cup, which were both won by Reg Goding, George Hudson, Alfie Dodgson and Ralph Pacitti. Our next visit was to the Spa Hotel in nearby Ripon on the Sunday evening. Maureen Maxwell made us feel most welcome, and Jack Lister kept us all under control, but unfortunately the home team came out on top.

On the Tuesday evening we returned to the Harrogate Club, where a combined team from CEGB and ICI helped us enjoy an evening playing in teams of four. The eventual winners were Vi Delaney and Walter Lethbridge with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur of the combined team. After a victorious visit to Bradford in the Wednesday afternoon, the evening was spent in the company of Norah Field, and happy memories were shared.

The following day we played at the Oakdale Golf Club, which had had many attractive changes made since our last visit. We were made most welcome, and a victorious match was played in a happy atmosphere. On the Friday the usual tradition was followed, and a number of our

hosts were invited to lunch, where Robert Evans kindly gave a vote of thanks on our behalf. Cedric Cockroft responded with his usual wit and jokes, and like a good wine only gets better. Our thanks to the staff of the Drover for the best meal yet.

As ever, the week was concluded with a drive at the Saint George Club, and after the prize giving, the evening was rounded off with sandwiches and music.

Our thanks to everyone involved who helped to make the week more successful than ever, to Ian Dickson, to Stanley Medcraft, and well done Jock Carnochan. Finally, from all of us, to all of you, God Bless and a Happy Christmas.

## CLUB NEWS

### BRIGHTON SOCIAL AND SPORTS CLUB

On Friday October 28th, the annual dinner and dance was held at Peacehaven, due to the refurbishment at Ian Fraser House, and our thanks must go to Bob and Joan Osborne for this arrangement for 83 members. The sections were well supported, although some of the fishing men were away.

The Grace was said by Bill Phillips, who we were pleased to see after his recent illness, and we wish him a complete recovery. The meal was excellent, and we offer our thanks to the waiters and waitresses. The Loyal Toast was proposed by Harry Preedy, and Mrs. Dacre welcomed our guests, the High Sheriff of East Sussex, Mr. Timothy Jones and his wife. Mr. Jones gave a short and interesting reply. The Chairman, Bob Osborne, expressed his thanks to the visitors, which included Dr. John O'Hara and Mary Stenning.

Pot Plants were presented to Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Dacre and Mrs. Stenning by Theresa Muga, Nancy Dodd and Joy Walters. Each of the ladies received a small gift at their place at the table. After the presentation the tables were cleared and dancing was begun to Ernie Took's band, whom we thank. The raffle this year had some very good prizes, and was drawn by Joan late in the evening.

Judging by the singing and laughter, a happy evening was enjoyed by all, and we would like to thank all who helped, not forgetting transport, and Commander Conway and Major Neve.

Phyllis O'Kelly

## BRIGHTON – BRIDGE

### Individual Bridge – October 22nd

1st	Mrs. Pacitti	59.1%
2nd	W. Allen	56.8%
	Mrs. Hannant	
4th	R. Goding	54.5%
5th	Mrs. A. Clements	53.4%
6th	W. Lethbridge	52.3%
7th	R. Evans	51.1%
	R. Pacitti	
9th	Miss Sturdy	46.6%
10th	Miss Stenning	40.9%
11th	P. Surridge	39.9%
12th	J. Padley	37.5%

### Bridge Pairs – October 23rd

1st	W. Lethbridge and Mr. Goodlad	65.0%
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2nd	W. Allen and Mrs. A. Clements	58.8%
3rd	R. Evans and Mrs. Barker	58.1%
4th	R. Goding and Miss Sturdy	55.0%
5th	P. Surridge and Miss Stenning	52.5%
6th	J. Padley and Mr. Douse	51.3%
7th	Mr. and Mrs. R. Pacitti	48.8%
8th	Dr. J. Goodlad and Mrs. Holborow	45.0%
9th	Mrs. V. McPherson and Mrs. Hannant	42.5%
10th	Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Douse	23.0%

### Individual Bridge – Season Results

1st	R. Pacitti	302.6%
2nd	R. Evans	289.8%
3rd	W. Lethbridge	288.6%
4th	R. Goding	274.6%
5th	W. Phillips	259.9%
6th	J. Padley (Played on four results only)	249.8%
7th	W. Allen	205.8%

Six others played on less than four occasions

### Bridge Pairs – Season Results

1st	R. Pacitti	290.7%
2nd	W. Lethbridge	280.5%
3rd	R. Evans	265.7%
4th	J. Padley	263.4%
5th	R. Goding	261.8%
6th	A. Dodgson	255.3%
7th	W. Allen	190.5%

(Played on four results only).

Eight others played on less than four occasions.

## FAMILY NEWS

### PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Gareth and Tamzin, grandchildren of Mrs. M. Douglass, widow of the late St. Dunstaner Mr. J.L. Douglass, of Ruislip, Middlesex, on their recent achievements. Gareth came top in French and maths, and first in grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 in swimming 1600 metres. Tamzin won a shield



## Family News *continued*

with a gold, silver and bronze medal for dancing, and gold bar 1, 2 and 3 for dancing, a certificate for her painting of a starling, and was highly recommended at an R.S.P.B. exhibition.

St. Dunstaner *Albert Fleet*, of Paignton, on winning a first prize for blackcurrant jam, and a silver cup for cookery in the Devon County Association for the Blind competition.

Mr. Shaun A. Griffiths, grandson of *Mr. and Mrs. Bill Griffiths*, of Blackpool, who gained an B.Sc. Honours Degree in Physics at Kent University.

Mr. Alan King, son of St. Dunstaner *Harold King*, of Dunstable, who has been appointed the Manager of two branches of Midland Bank in East Grinstead. Congratulations are also due to Harold himself, as he recently won a First Class Certificate for Macrame work.

Mr. Steven Mitchell, son of St. Dunstaner *Mr. A. Mitchell*, of Congleton, who passed his Grade 3 Clarinet exam with merit.

Jayne, daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. G.T. Parr*, of Mark, Somerset, on obtaining a B/Tec National Diploma in Business and Finance, and gaining a post with the Somerset Health Authority.

Mrs. Stalham, wife of St. Dunstaner *C.W. Stalham*, who recently received the 'Olerman Ellis Award' for outstanding services to the deaf. Mrs. Stalham suffered from cerebral meningitis when she was a year old, and has never had any hearing.

St. Dunstaner *Tom Whitley*, of Elsenham, who won two prizes in a local Flower and Crafts show recently. He gained a first prize for three mixed dahlias, and a second prize for a wooden tipper truck. His wife, also won a first prize for hand knitting.

## GOLDEN WEDDINGS

### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. H. King*, of Dunstable, Bed-

fordshire, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on October 15th.

## RUBY WEDDINGS

### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. R. Donald*, of Hove, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on October 26th.

*Mr. and Mrs. J. Woods*, of Orpington, Kent, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on October 10th.

*Mr. and Mrs. E. Sturgess*, of Aylesbury, on their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, celebrated on October 22nd.

*Mr. and Mrs. D. McGoohan*, of Goring-by-Sea, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on October 25th.

## GRANDCHILDREN

### Congratulations to:

Mrs. J. Groves, widow of the late *Mr. D. Groves*, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Donna Rose to her daughter, Wendy, and her husband Peter Swarbrick, born on October 7th.

*Mr. A. Lockhart*, on the birth of a grandson, Geoffrey Lockhart Neal, born to his daughter, Jean, and her husband Peter Neal, on November 3rd.

Mrs. Sheila Ostle, of Cockermonth, widow of the late *Mr. I. Ostle* on the birth of a grandson Adam on October 14th, to her daughter Christine and her husband.

## GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

### Congratulations to:

Mrs. A.E. Miles, widow of the late *Mr. J.M. Miles*, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, Rachel Marie, born on June 21st to her grand-daughter Tracy, and her husband Steven Packman.

## Family News *continued*

Mrs. F.E. Simpson, widow of the late *Mr. J. Simpson*, of Herne Bay, on the birth of a baby girl, Emily Jane, to her grandson Mark and his wife Sandra, on February 14th.

## DEATHS

### We offer condolences to:

*Mr. W. Horn* on the death of his aunt Mrs. Florence Bush, widow of the late Mr. S. Bush, of North Harrow.

Mrs. Elsie Cole, wife of St. Dunstaner *George Cole*, of Shoreham-by-Sea, on the death of her brother in South Africa in August.

The family and friends of Mrs. Edith Florence Gosney, widow of the late *Mr. H. Gosney*, of Rottingdean, who passed away on October 16th.

## 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.

### E. Grainger, East Lancashire Regiment.

Mr. Ted Grainger passed away on October 14th after a short illness. He was aged 82, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1942.

Mr. Grainger served with the 1st East Lancashire Regiment from 1925 to 1942. He was blinded by an exploding anti-tank grenade, and joined St. Dunstan's the day after his discharge from the Army in November 1942. After taking courses in braille, typing and basketmaking, he then undertook industrial training, and afterwards worked as a press operator, and also did some inspection work. Despite some health problems which caused difficulties at times, Mr. Grainger continued in full time employment until retirement age. Shortly before retirement, Mr. Grainger married Lily Mullen who had been a loyal friend to him for many years, and, once retired, they spent much of their time working in their lovely garden, and more recently enjoyed holidaying at Ian Fraser House.

We extend our sympathy to his widow, Lily.

### F.H. Morgan, Monmouthshire Regiment.

Mr. Frederick Herbert Morgan, of Seaford, passed away in hospital on October 20th, four days after his 96th birthday. He had been a St.

The family and friends of Mrs. Christina Gray, widow of the late *Mr. D. Gray*, of Billericay, who passed away on October 26th, aged 90.

Her son, Roger, and the friends of Mrs. Josephine Greatrex, who passed away on October 14th. Mrs. Greatrex was the widow of St. Dunstaner *Harold 'Bunny' Greatrex*, and before her marriage she worked as a Handicraft teacher at Ovingdean.

*Mr. Harry Meleson*, of Wembley, on the death of his brother, Martin, in America on September 11th.

The family and friends of Mrs. Doris Pemberton, widow of the late *Mr. W.G.T. Pemberton*, who passed away on October 25th, aged 101, two months short of her 102nd birthday.

Dunstaner only seven months.

Throughout the First World War, Mr. Morgan served as a Rifleman in the Monmouthshire Regiment. Whilst on active service at Ypres, he suffered a gunshot wound which resulted in the loss of an eye. Nevertheless, he was able to work as a ship's store merchant until he reached retirement age. Although the sight in his remaining eye deteriorated significantly, he remained highly independent, living in his own home where he looked after himself to a great degree, with the help of his close-knit family.

Mr. Morgan was a widower, and we extend our sympathy to his two sons, grandchildren, and all members of his family.

### J.T.F. Morrish, R.A.M.C.

Mr. James Thomas Frederick Morrish, of Peacehaven, passed away at Pearson House on October 12th, aged 70. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 18 years.

Mr. Morrish enlisted in 1940 and served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was wounded in Italy, in 1941 and became a P.O.W. He joined St. Dunstan's in 1970, having retired from his employment as an analytical chemist. He trained for quota work as a stool maker, and



## In Memory *continued*

also greatly enjoyed woodwork and toymaking. Formerly, whilst living in Essex, he had been a keen gardener and had won a number of prizes in local shows. This year he and his wife made a long planned visit to their daughter and grandchildren in America, sailing in the QE2. He will be sadly missed by the staff and his many friends at St. Dunstan's.

He is survived by his widow, May, their daughter and her family, to whom we send sincere sympathy.

### **J.W. Thwaites, Royal Artillery.**

Mr. James William Thwaites, of Blackpool, died on September 21st, aged 80. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 17 years.

Jim Thwaites served as a Gunner with the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946, and spent three and a half years as a Far East Prisoner of War. Although these years took their toll of his health, he worked as a gas fitter for some years after his discharge from the Army, until in 1953 he was obliged to take early retirement.

All his life, starting at the age of seven, Mr. Thwaites worked for the Royal British Legion. As a child during the First World War he went from house to house for the appeal to provide walking sticks for the wounded soldiers. In 1973 he was awarded a gold badge in recognition of 25 years work for the Burnley branch of the Royal British Legion, serving as a Member, and as President for a while, until he was made life Vice-President. Also, in 1978, Mr. Thwaites was awarded a certificate of Life Membership for Meritorious Service, by the National Executive Committee of the Royal British Legion.

Jim also worked as a Welfare Officer for the FEPOW Association. He was widowed in March 1986, and continued to live alone with some help from his great friend, Mrs. Guddridge.

We extend our sympathy to his daughter, Brenda, and all his family and friends.

### **R.J. Vowles.**

Mr. Raymond John Vowles, of Portsmouth, passed away in hospital in Northampton on October 10th. He was aged 76 and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1943.

Mr. Vowles enlisted in 1936, and was injured by flying brass while working on machinery at a Government Dockyard. After training at Church Stretton, he returned to H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth, where he worked until 1974 when he retired due to ill health. A year before retiring, he was presented with the Imperial Service Medal by the Admiral in charge at an official ceremony in recognition of his long service. As detailed in an article he wrote for

the *Review*, it was during this time that he was one of the engineers on duty when King Edward VIII came to the dockyard the day of his abdication.

He was interested in music, particularly the piano, and pursued this hobby as a younger man by playing in a dance band.

He was married to his wife Julie for 47 years, and leaves a son and two daughters, and grandchildren. We send our condolences to them and other members of the family.

### **J.B.K. Walton, Durham Light Infantry.**

Mr. Joseph Baker Kelly Walton, of Pearson House, passed away on October 24th. He was aged 69, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 37 years.

Mr. Walton enlisted in September 1939, and served as a Private in the Durham Light Infantry until his capture in 1940. He was then a Prisoner of War in Germany for the next five years, during which time he contracted tuberculosis, and his eyesight was very seriously impaired.

Joe had been employed as a bus conductor before the war, and later on took up telephony before finally retiring in 1979 on health grounds.

His first wife, Victoria, died in 1977. He remarried in 1980 but divorced his second wife in 1985. He leaves seven daughters from his first marriage, and we extend our sympathy to them and other members of the family.

### **A.C. Warren, Royal Navy.**

Mr. Anthony Charles Warren, of Pearson House, passed away on October 13th 1988. He was 60 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for nearly 25 years.

Tony Warren served in the Royal Navy after the Second World War, his sight beginning to deteriorate during this time. He joined St. Dunstan's in 1953, and soon afterwards went to Ian Fraser House to take a course in braille, typing and rug-making. Tony and his wife kept a small-holding, which was very successful from 1958 until he began to have some health problems during the 1970's. Being a clever carpenter Mr. Warren then took up woodwork as a hobby occupation.

In October 1976, Tony had a severe stroke, and spent some time in hospital. Sadly, he did not recover enough to return home to his wife and small daughter Emma, but lived instead at Pearson House. He will be missed by the staff of Pearson House.

We send our deepest sympathy to his widow, Gaynor, and to Emma, and to his elder daughter Angela and her family.