

St Dunstons Review April 1989



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Cover Picture: Mike Tetley, with guide dog, Mark, strides out again through St. Alban's streets, the key to his renewed confidence in his pocket. See 'Mike's Mowat' on page 15.

From the Chairman

On the fourth of this month, 40 years ago, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed by the Foreign Secretaries of 12 nations: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Three years later Greece and Turkey joined, then the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955, and most recently Spain in 1982. Today there are 16 member nations, although France has withdrawn from the integrated military structure.

Each member has a Permanent Representative (corresponding to an Ambassador) and together they comprise the NATO Council under the chairmanship of the Secretary General. This is the top authority within the Alliance.

The highest military authority is the Military Committee. This is composed of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of the member countries for special meetings but routinely by permanent Military Representatives backed by an International Military Staff.

Three Commands make up the NATO strategic area: Europe (SACEUR), Atlantic (SACLANT) and Channel (CINCHAN). Each commanded by a Major NATO Commander (in brackets). I was CINCHAN from 1977-1979.

As its name implies, the linchpin of the Alliance is the North Atlantic. Whilst it can never be proved that NATO (or, come to that, the possession of a strategic nuclear capability) has prevented a major war for a record four decades, it must be a powerful and reasonable assumption that it has been a major contributory factor.

For this we are grateful and wish the Alliance well in the future.

WIDOWS AT IAN FRASER HOUSE

Following the Chairman's notes in the November 1988 *Review* concerning widows staying at Ian Fraser House, it appears that quite a number of widows are enthusiastic about the idea.

Unfortunately, space at Ian Fraser House during the more popular periods of the year is at a premium with the wide range of activities that occur, and with the accommodation of St. Dunstaners. It is unlikely, therefore, that much accommodation will be available during these peak periods, although it is hoped to make better arrangements for future years.

St. Dunstan's is keen, however, that widows who wish to go to Ian Fraser House should be able to during 1989, but this is likely to be during the off peak periods, probably during the months of October and November, although there might be a few vacancies during August.

Widows will be able to stay at Ian Fraser House for up to two weeks at a time, and as many widows have not been to Ian Fraser House since their husbands have died, and may be apprehensive of staying on their own, they are able to bring a female relative or close friend with whom to share a twin bedded room with adjoining room with shower, wash basin and lavatory.

St. Dunstan's will naturally pay all travelling expenses. If journeys are made by train, arrangements can be made to transport anyone across London and from Brighton Station to Ian Fraser House. If for health reasons a train journey is not practical, we can provide transport door to door by car.

St. Dunstan's realise that any widow who applies to go to Ian Fraser House in a period which might become fully booked with St. Dunstaners would need to know as soon as possible in order to make alternative arrangements. Therefore, all widows who have applied and received their green acknowledgement forms will know by the end of May if their booking is definite.

Christmas and New Year Bookings

Due to the demand for double rooms at Ian Fraser House during Christmas and/or New Year, and to give St. Dunstaners the opportunity to make alternative arrangements if necessary, it has been decided that all applications must be in by the end of June 1989.

After this period, if the available accommodation has been oversubscribed, a decision will be made as soon as possible as to the allocation of accommodation at Ian Fraser House. Needless to say, the factors taken into account will include compassionate or welfare reasons, the frequency of previous visits at Christmas and proximity to Ian Fraser House.

We hope that all St. Dunstaners will think this is a fair and reasonable way to deal with the bookings situation at this time of the year.

TROOPING THE COLOUR AND ROYAL TOURNAMENT

It is anticipated that we will be allocated tickets again this year for the Trooping the Colour on Saturday June 17th, beginning at 11.00 a.m., to be seated by 10.15, and for The Private View of the Royal Tournament on Wednesday, July 12th, beginning at 2.30 p.m.

Any St. Dunstaners who would like to apply should contact Homes Bookings Clerk, Frances Casey, by Tuesday, May 23rd.

St. Dunstan's 75th Anniversary

Next year, 1990, sees the 75th anniversary of the founding of St. Dunstan's and plans are being made to commemorate this landmark appropriately. We would welcome suggestions from readers which should be made by letter addressed to Mr. W.C. Weisblatt at Headquarters.

JOYCE STRACHAN

We are very sorry to report that Mrs. Joyce Strachan, a Care Assistant at Ian Fraser House from 1981 until her retirement in 1987, died on Sunday, February 12th.

A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

If 'if' and 'ands'

'Chawhoktamengro', 'hatchiwitchu' and 'kaulochiriclo' are not words heard commonly, for they belong to the English gipsies' language, and were noted down by George Borrow, who lived with gipsies in his day, in his grammar of the Romany tongue 'Romano Lavo Lil'. The words mean grasshopper, hedgehog and black-bird, and I like to think of Jasper and Pakomovna Petulengro, the king and queen of their gipsy tribe, just sitting under a hedge listening to the grasshoppers and the blackbirds, as also to the surreptitious movements of a hedgehog amongst the dry old leaves in the ditch at their feet.

'What is life if full of care', said the poet, 'we have no time to stand and stare', and the gipsies of old, once the basic needs of life had been fulfilled, had no difficulties regarding this philosophy. They regarded as madness the idea that people should work all day, save what money they could, then see out an old age with no memories to comfort it, save those relating to its own financial prerequisites. The wind on the heath was to Jasper Petulengro a sweet thing, and more than that, the symbol of all that distinguished life as understood by the gipsies, a general merging with nature, from the frenetic desire to dominate nature which was life as seen by others.

I think I would have made a good gipsy, but perhaps a better tinker, for to be a gipsy is to be in some sense an Englishman, whereas to be a tinker is to be Scottish, tinkers being in Scottish society what gipsies are south of the border. They both lead vagrant lives, but the two of them have nothing else in common, either socially, racially or linguistically. The English gipsies come down from central European antecedents, their language Indic in origin, and are dark and swarthy. The Scottish tinkers are the scattered rem-

nants of clans outlawed in times past for bad behaviour, their language retains some scraps of the Gaelic, and they run to fair skin and red hair.

Betsy White is one of these, and while George Borrow has described the Romany way of life in such books as 'Lavengro' and 'Romany Rye', Betsy gives us in her 'The Yellow on the Broom' a good idea of the Scottish tinkers' way of life. This I take a personal interest in, for a great grandmother of mine, Kirstie Stewart, was so delicately dealt with in how she was presented to me in family accounts of her that I can come to no other conclusion but that Kirstie came from a tribe of tinkers functioning of old amongst the hills and glens of Atholl. They lived in beehive huts, they moved from place to place, and there is something about their way of life, as I see it, infinitely superior to that other way of life, the standard one of contemporary society, which views tinkers in the way that the English view gipsies, as dirty, shiftless, and generally undesirable.

I think society is wrong in taking this view of tinkers and gipsies, and the fury with which it pursues its vendetta against them implies a doubt in the mind of society as to its rightness in doing so. The aim of conventional society is some kind of nirvana when all will be well, everybody at ease with the world, but this nirvana has already been achieved, in their way, by tinkers and gipsies, in that they recognise the one, fundamental fact of life, its not being attainable by any kind of society divorcing itself from subservience to nature. When you cannot sit under a hedge placidly in company with chawhoktamengro, hatchiwitchu and kaulochiriclo, but must be programming computers for star wars, then something has gone woefully wrong with the human race.

On this day . . .

by Sean Kelly

Oh, to be in Engand
Now that April's there
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the
brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in
tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the
orchard bough
In England-now!

So wrote Robert Browning, in his *Home-Thoughts from Abroad* which all goes to show that overseas travel can addle your brain. Certainly the last time I saw a chaffinch it wasn't singing on an orchard bough, just choking in the gutter from car exhaust fumes. But it's not just foreign travel that can do it — being an M.P. can in certain circumstances. For 375 years ago, on April 5th, the so called 'Addled Parliament' began sitting, before being dissolved sixty three days later. In that time, however, not a single bill was passed, and thus it earned its name.

One hundred years ago on April 20th, an Austrian son was born to Mr. Schicklgruber. I don't think there will be any street parties where I live, because by the time his son was born, Mr. Schicklgruber had changed his name to Hitler, and christened his son Adolf. Adolf later wrote 'The broad mass of a nation . . . will more easily fall victim to a big lie than to a small one' in *Mein Kampf*.

During the April of 1984, two robbers dashed into a grocery store, grabbed the cash box, and made a run for it. Well, I say the cash box, I expect that it looked like a cash box. I mean, I'm sure quite a few burglar alarms look like cash boxes, don't they?

Finally, spare a thought for the member of the Red Arrows who, 20 years ago, heard the order 'You are on fire, Eject!' As he wafted gently to the ground, he

watched his half million pound 'plane plunge to the floor and explode. He also watched one of his fellow pilots waft to the floor. The order had been meant for the other pilot.

100km Walk Sponsorship Request

by Ray Hazan

Several St. Dunstaners taking part in the 100km South Downs Way walk from 23-26th May, have generously agreed to make it a sponsored event. The HASICOM project has been adopted.

HASICOM stands for Hearing and Sight Impaired Communications. Most readers will have an inkling as to how their access to information can be curtailed by lack of sight. Imagine what it is like being deaf as well as blind — no television, telephone, radio, talking books and 'normal conversation' to name but a few!

Technology has enabled the deaf/blind to link their Versabraille terminals via the telephone line either to the BT computer or directly to other Versabraille users. They can, therefore, 'chat' keyboard to keyboard with other deaf/blind, send messages or letters to other computer users, be they handicapped or not, and receive Ceefax, Oracle and Prestel, thereby keeping up to date with news and other items.

This system is costly. A Versabraille costs £6000, and the average quarterly bill for the 30 or so users is £200 each. Any help would be gratefully received.

Members of Headquarters staff have generously sponsored both myself and the walkers as a whole. If anyone would like to add their generosity to the St. Dunstan's organised event, will they please send their pledge by letter or telephone to me at HQ.



Left to right: Russell, Timothy, Karen, and Graham visiting St. Dunstan's.

A Pioneer through Determination

Russell Franklin talks to Ray Hazan Photographs by Roberta Johnston

Had he been blinded some 20 to 30 years ago, it is likely that today, Russell Franklin of Zimbabwe would be working at a lathe or in an assembly plant. As it is, he is now a systems analyst in the computer department of a nationwide building society. That this was due largely to his own determination rather than the technological breakthrough is much to his credit. He was certainly a pioneer in his field in his own country.

Russell completed his A levels in 1975 and was due to go on to university to study mechanical engineering. Military service, however, intervened. He was called up in January, 1976 and after four and a half months infantry training, was sent up to the 'sharp end'. Shrapnel from a mortar bomb during an attack on his company base pierced his left eye and cut the optic nerve of his right.

'I was unconscious and then semi-conscious for days, and I suppose during that time, because I instinctively knew, I came to terms with my blindness. Nobody ever

told me that I was blind. All I wanted to do was to get started again, because, effectively, it's like going back to junior school, learning reading and writing skills all over again.'

Russell had been nursed whilst in intensive care by his elder sister. With her daily attendance, he was able to leave hospital after three weeks. Whilst at home, he also received visits from a braille teacher, but this was as far as his rehabilitation skills went.

In January, 1977, Russell spent some time at Ian Fraser House. During that time, he attended the RNIB physiotherapy assessment course, but was turned down on mobility grounds. 'In Zimbabwe, we don't have the bus and train system like the UK, plus distances are far greater; people drive everywhere. I decided to go away and practice my new skills and try again.'

'For a year, back home, I sat from eight until five, reading braille, typing and generally coming to terms with my skills'. A

year later, Russell was given the same assessment by the physio school, and so he turned his mind to a subject which had been nudging his mind — computers.

In 1978 in the UK, let alone in Zimbabwe, there were few blind people to be found within the world of computing. Russell, however, managed to persuade a lady, Irene Anderson, who taught evening classes in the local polytechnic to tutor him. She taught him a computer language called COBOL in the evenings, without any equipment, as was general in those days of pre desk top computers. Computer programs were punched on to card. 'Irene took me as far as she could, but then our problems really started. Neither she nor I could find a company who would employ me. I remember being told by one firm that they "did not have toilet facilities for blind people!" There followed a grey time of unemployment. But the work I had done with Irene had excited me and convinced me that this was what I wanted to do.'

In July 1978, Russell and Karen were married. Following his disappointing start in computers, Russell, with Karen's help, worked for his brother-in-law, a civil engineer. But he felt very much the office boy, with minor errands to fulfil. However, with the granting of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and the lifting of sanctions, modern computer equipment began to flow into the country. This seemed to coincide with a greater awareness and less fright of disabled people, so Russell deemed it the right moment to start making phone calls.

Only one company expressed interest, and it was their Data Processing Manager who earned Russell's respect. In order to make it fairer, Russell was interviewed in his own familiar environment at home. 'He agreed to take me for a trial period, but expressed concern at having to dismiss me if I didn't shape up. I told him I would remove myself, as I wanted a career, not a daily attendance centre'. The Central African Building Society (CABS) is the largest, and most sophisticatedly equipped in Zimbabwe. 'I had a lot of help from all around me. Heaven help blind people in an hostile environment! I wouldn't be where I am today, had it not

been for John Lewis and others, who joined CABS just before me. I had no speech synthesiser in those days. I would punch the program on to a card and get someone to run a test for me. In the evenings, Karen and I would study the results of the test run and I could then decide where I had to make corrections. For the first year, Karen and I worked until 10 or 11 every night. It was the hardest time of my life. I was under pressure, as I wanted to build up a reputation. We were also under pressure as a couple, but I have to say that Karen is the most patient and devoted person I have ever met'.

Russell's career really took off when CABS purchased a new main frame computer, which, after much trial and tribulation, enabled him to connect a braille terminal. He was now independent and highly productive. 'The biggest problem in my career has been equipment. But given the right tools, a blind person can do the right job. My equipment is my life-line, without it, I don't have a career. I think the technological developments taking place in the electronics industry now are revolutionising life for blind people, providing they have access to them'. For the past five years Russell has been using synthetic speech to access computer information. He finds this much quicker than braille, as he does not have to keep taking his hands off the keyboard.

After three and a half years with CABS, Russell was promoted to Chief Programmer, which meant he was a team leader. He had to distribute work, train, run courses and problem solve. Further promotion two years later made him an Analyst Programmer designing systems, rather than the prime love of his career, programming. In 1988, he was further promoted to Systems Analyst. Russell feels he has risen as high as he can for the moment. He feels the one area where his knowledge is lacking is in the field of personal computers (PC's), now being extensively used in the commercial world of smaller businesses. It is an area he would much like to explore, and whilst over in the UK at the end of last year, purchased a PC.

Russell relaxes in a workshop attached to his home in Harare. He is a member of a



Russell takes the chance to get some hands-on experience of a PC system.

model engineering society who build scale steam locos. Russell enjoys the mental exercise of planning a design before ever putting his hands on the lathe. To finance his trip to England, he made and sold anti-theft wheel nuts. He keeps fit in his 10 metre swimming pool.

Both in his career and in his recreational activities, Russell wants to be independent. 'It is not that I cannot accept

help. I greatly enjoy thinking about and solving a problem, then building it all on my own'. Russell has two sons, Graham (7) and Timothy (5). He also has a mound of determination and both he and Karen have no fear of hard work. These are traits which many St. Dunstaners will recognise, and no doubt be reassured still exist, despite the greater opportunities available to blind people today.

NEW GROUP TRAVEL RAIL SCHEME

British Rail is introducing a new system of discounts on group travel from April 1st.

Instead of the present system of free ticket allocation by group size, there will be a straightforward discount of 25% off the appropriate fare for all groups consisting of ten or more people. This reduction will be valid for most tickets including Saver Tickets and Cheap Day Returns, but one day travelcards and season tickets are not included.

Group travel bookings can be made at

most major stations, and further details and conditions are set out in leaflets available at most British Rail stations.

Notched Phonocards

Specially adapted prepaid phonocards have been introduced to help blind and partially sighted people to use the British Telecom Phonocard payphones more easily. The new cards have a notch cut two-thirds of the way along one side so that users can tell by touch the right way to insert them, and are available from all usual outlets.

D. F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

At the moment, I am wondering what the weather will be like by the time you read these notes, as at the moment, Spring conditions abound when there should be nothing but frost and snow. This may mean rather a poor showing of Spring colour, but hopefully the bulbs won't be too badly affected.

Vegetables

Get all ground ready for the reception of seedlings which have been hardened off in frames or other sheltered areas. Where seedlings are already planted, covering them with plastic sheeting to protect them. Give the base of members of the cabbage family an extra layer of soil in order to protect the roots. Cover the leaves of small plants with an anti-bird and aphid spray, sprinkle slug pellets along the rows. Thin out bulbous type root vegetables, such as carrots, beet, onions and parsnips. Hoe regularly, get rid of weeds, and push soil over the potatoes every two weeks or so, in order to keep the tubers below surface level. All items sown early should be given a dose of fertiliser, as these items will be growing quite well, with the first flowers appearing.

Fruit

There are plenty of aphids about at the moment, so spray all trees and bushes early in the month as the buds are coming through. Keep the hoe going around the fruit trees and bushes in order to control the weeds, and possibly put either pellet or liquid fertiliser down.

Lawns

Grass will be growing pretty well now, so get the mower out with the blades set a little lower, and trim the edge of the lawn every other time you mow. Clean all the blades after use, and put oil on the moving joints after you have cleaned up. Some liquid fertiliser and weed killer could be watered into the lawn, but don't cut the

grass for a while after using the solution. Larger weeds may have to be dug up by hand.

Flowers

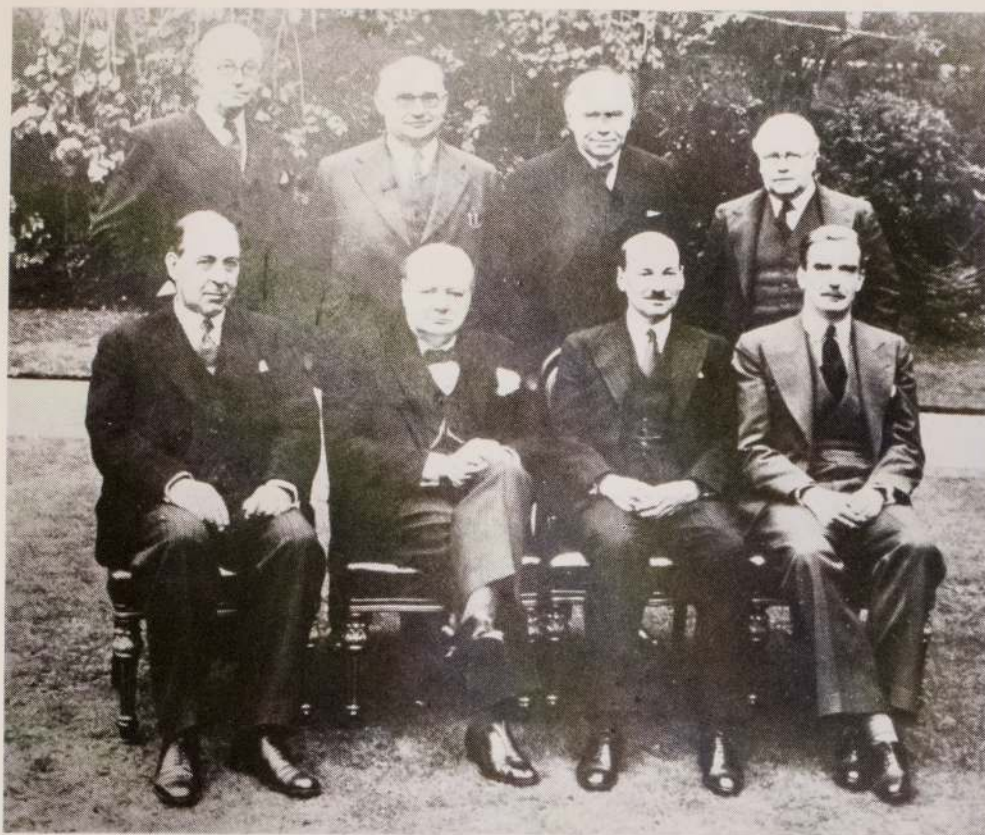
Get all the beds ready for hardy and half hardy items to flower in the Summer. Break up large patches of perennials such as lupins or delphiniums. Throw away the centre portions, split up the outer portions and place them in different parts of the garden. Fork over the soil lightly where you have the shrubs and peonies, and add some fertiliser. Spread slug and snail pellets, and spray aphid solution with liquid soap which will keep insects at bay. It might be a good thing to put some compost or manure on the flower bed soil to give roots a boost.

Greenhouse

Don't let the temperature get below 45°F, especially at night, but keep the temperature down a bit if you have plenty of sun during the day by opening the windows on the side away from the winds. Later in the month you may be able to keep them open each night. Set a smoke every two weeks or so. I find that painting the greenhouse with a special white solution helps to keep a low steady temperature in the greenhouse during the sunny periods, and does not wash off in rain. Many bedding plants raised from seeds can be put into frames now, or leave the containers outside in a sunny spot, and given a covering of plastic sheeting at night. Many pot plants to be used in the house can be potted into larger containers now. Achimenes, begonias and gloxinias will be growing very well so they should be put into their flowering containers.

Paths and Walks

See that all paths and walks are in good condition and levelled out. Also dig out all weeds, and carefully put down some weedkiller, and replace any damaged paving stones.



Churchill's War Cabinet.

The Cabinet in the Store Room

by Sean Kelly

When is a store room not a store room? When it is, in fact, used to win a world war. Curious? Read on, and learn about the most unusual headquarters of the Second World War.

Much of the important work and decision making which helped to win the Second World War was done in underground emergency accommodation which was provided to protect Winston Churchill, the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff of Britain's armed forces against

air attacks. The accommodation was, in fact, made from store rooms just yards away from Downing Street, the rooms were abandoned soon after the end of the war, and the vast majority of documents and furniture was put into storage or left where it was, and the rooms locked up.

Five years ago, following much historical research, the restored Cabinet War Rooms were opened as a museum. Mr. Jon Wenzel, who runs the museum, told me about the strange history of the Cabinet War Rooms.

"They were originally storage facilities, and this whole block was completed during the first few years of this century. The fact that the rooms are located here is a reflection of the failure of successive inter-war governments to take precautions. So, in 1938, with the threat of war looming in Central Europe, the Government woke up to the fact that it had nowhere to go, and sent out members of its staff with instructions which you could paraphrase as "For God's sake find us a basement in Whitehall which we can convert for use during this emergency."

Work began in the Summer of 1938, shortly before the onset of the Munich Crisis, when the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, flew to meet Hitler at Munich, and signed the notorious Four Power Agreement. The Rooms were formally occupied on 27th August 1939, one week before this country declared war on Nazi Germany.

"They remained in operational use right up until the last day of the war, and the surrender of Imperial Japan."

Impossible Secret

Mr. Wenzel told me of the impossibility of keeping such an operation secret. "When the Rooms were being put together in 1938 and '39, they were very secret indeed, but once the war started and the rooms came into operation, and they started to install the enormous concrete slab above our head, it couldn't be kept secret, and as you go through the rooms, you will notice that the stationery is marked *Offices of the War Cabinet, Government Offices, Great George Street.*"

They were not, however, in full use for the whole duration of the war. "This was the underground emergency accommodation for Churchill and his Cabinet, and the entire apparatus which supported Central Government. Obviously if you're a senior member of Government, getting on a bit as Churchill was, you don't really want to work and sleep in this sort of spartan accommodation. Consequently, these rooms were used to their greatest extent during the periods when there was a serious threat; the London Blitz, and the



Even in the middle of a war, some things don't change. This is the post box, cleared three times a day!

German V-Weapons offensive from June 1944 to March 1945.

"As far as the senior staff were concerned, they could escape, Churchill for instance had a flat constructed for himself on the ground floor. For the junior staff there was no alternative. There was not enough protected office accommodation space in central London, and the enormous expansion of staff meant that these people generally had to work here most of the time."

Mr. Wenzel told me how the Rooms came to be opened as a museum. "After the end of the Second World War it was decided that several of the rooms would be left much in the condition they are now, but it wasn't until 1981 that the present administration, and in particular, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, decided they ought to be open as a museum on a regular and permanent basis. The Imperial War Museum was asked to advise the Government on the historical aspects of the restoration which took a couple of years. This meant finding out exactly what had been here, particularly in those rooms which had been

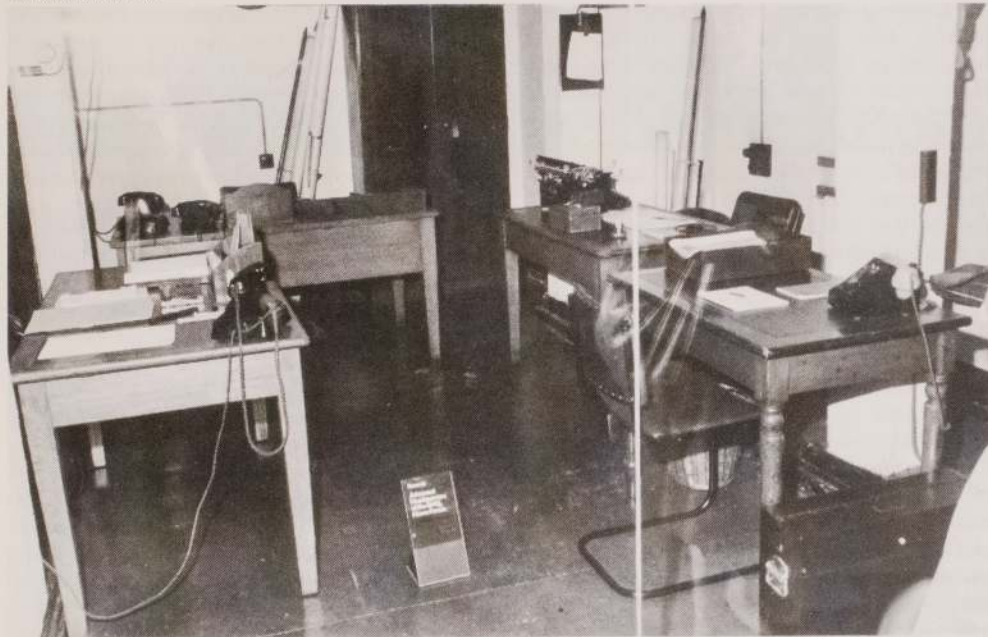
stripped out, which included interviewing the people who worked here. The rooms were then restored to their appearance during the periods of greatest use, in the Autumn and Winter of 1940 and 1941 during the Blitz, and then of course making the rooms suitable for the public viewing.'

Obviously, however, some modernisation was involved. 'We tried to do as little as possible, to the point where most of the paintwork has not even been repainted, just cleaned. However, we have over 200,000 visitors every year, and alterations had to be made, but mainly in those areas outside the actual historic display areas.'

'Within the Rooms themselves, the main thing that had to be done was to provide a decent ventilation system because the maps and documents here are all a half century old. They have now been conserved, but in order to keep them in good condition, we have to have a controlled atmosphere. This atmosphere is confined by, and the items in the rooms protected by, glass security screens.'

Attempts were made to restore as much of the original material as possible. 'In the main display rooms, it is entirely original,

Incredible though it may sound, this is the tiny room from which Britain's defences would have been co-ordinated had we been invaded.



all the documents and maps were left, and it is the original furniture. Only very minor alterations had to take place, when we knew, for instance, that something had been removed or added during the post war period.

'The remainder of the Rooms have had to be recreated, but all the documents are original — they were left here in store, and it was just a case of finding what rooms they belonged in. Scraps of carpet, desks, etc., again were put into store, and by doing the historical research, and looking at the handful of photographs which were taken here at the end of the war, it was possible to identify which rooms these came from.'

I finally asked if Mr. Wenzel had any plans for the 50th anniversary of war being declared? 'As far as these rooms are concerned the outbreak of war is rather less important than 1940, when the rooms really start to be used heavily. We do have some plans for the Blitz anniversary, though at the moment I'd rather not say what.'

After chatting to Mr. Wenzel, I made a tour of the museum. This was much enhanced by a tape, available for hire with



Churchill's bedroom and office. Notice the map covering the right-hand wall, which showed details of the mainlands' entire coastal defence network.

a portable tape player and earpiece, as you enter the museum. This recording provides a detailed guide to the museum, presented by Peter Simkins, the Imperial War Museum's historian.

There are many fascinating rooms here, including the first encountered, the room used for Cabinet meetings, where Churchill's Cabinet met more than one hundred times during the duration of the war. The Transatlantic Telephone Room follows, from where Churchill had a 'hot line' to President Roosevelt, and later President Truman. A large grey steel scrambling machine can be seen in the foreground, which was used to encode the telephone conversations made. This machine was only an intermediate scrambler which was linked to a much larger device which was stored in the basement of Selfridges Department Store in Oxford Street, and connected to the War Rooms by cables.

The nucleus of the Cabinet War Rooms follows, beginning with a room with outside broadcast equipment, which allowed Churchill to make broadcasts from the War Rooms. Another interesting room

was the one which was to be potentially used by the General Headquarters of the Home Services, who would have planned the defence of Britain from there, had we been invaded.

The Map Rooms, used throughout the duration of the war, are next. The maps and various statistical charts were kept up to date at all times, and provided vital information to anyone who needed it. The main map room was in use 24 hours a day for the whole duration of the war. I found this to be the most fascinating of all the rooms, with each wall covered from top to bottom with maps of the fronts, tables piled high with rows of bakelite telephones, and a large number of charts to examine.

Churchill's combined office and bedroom is next to the Map Room, and contains the desk from which he made a number of famous broadcasts, including an invasion warning, and one after the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbour.

A temporary display commemorating the events leading up to the declaration of war, and including the famous 'scrap of paper' signed by Chamberlain and Hitler,

concludes the museum, after which a shop selling the usual type of souvenirs is encountered.

This is just a brief summary of some of the more notable aspects of the museum, and is not a comprehensive guide to the many interesting artefacts and articles on display. I found the museum to be a unique and absorbing 'time capsule' from the days of the Second World War, and, along with the recorded guide and booklets available, provides a fascinating insight into the organisation and characters, not least Sir Winston Churchill, who planned and won the Second World War.

Situated so centrally, just yards away from Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament, this museum is a thoroughly

absorbing way of spending a few hours. St. Dunstan's is a Corporate Member of the Friends of the Imperial War Museum and St. Dunstaners wishing to borrow a guest ticket for the Cabinet War Rooms should apply to Mr. W.C. Weisblatt, at Headquarters.

Information

Closest Tube Station: Westminster. There are directions from the station, and it is a journey of about three minutes walk. Open: 10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m. last admission 5.25 p.m., but don't go this late - there's too much to take in in such a short time. Closed: New Year's Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

1989 London Marathon

by Jimmy Wright

Each year we endeavour to raise a team of London Marathon runners who agree to give their support to the Royal School for the Blind, the only major residential home for doubly-handicapped blind school-leavers and adults, which is situated at Leatherhead.

Once again, two St. Dunstaners will be among our team. Don Planner will be running for the third consecutive year, and will be escorted by Nicholas Feltham, and Gerry Jones, who has run for the Royal School on two previous occasions, is back with our team this year, and will be accompanied by Caroline Rawlings, who ran in the London Marathon last year for the first time in support of the Royal School.

Last year Don's time was 4 hours 35 minutes, and when Gerry last ran in the London Marathon in 1986, his time was 3 hours 16 minutes. Caroline Rawlings will no doubt be endeavouring to improve on her time last year of 3 hours 52 minutes. The team will, as usual, be sporting the Royal School Singlets bearing the rose which is the Royal School emblem.

If anyone would like to sponsor Don and Gerry, please contact Jimmy Wright, London Marathon Team Organiser for

the Royal School, 209 Manygate Lane, Shepperton, TW17 9ER, telephone 0932 225 950, and he will forward a sponsorship form to you.

NATIONAL METRO SPORTS COMPETITION

New River Stadium, White Hart Lane, Haringey

The venue for the National Metro Sports has been changed to the New River Stadium, White Hart Lane, Haringey. It is the only major annual event arranged specifically for visually handicapped competitors. Last year the team of St. Dunstaners numbered five competitors, indicating the growing interest among the younger members. The Metro Sports provide all the usual track events, including a 2 kilometre walking race, in which all five St. Dunstaners took part last year, and the field events include throwing the discus, javelin, putting the shot and the high-jump, very much along the lines of the sports that are arranged each year by the Fleet Air Arm Field Guns Crew during the St. Dunstan's Camp Week at *HMS Daedalus*. Entry forms are now available and can be obtained direct from Mrs. Marie Salman, 15 Kenilworth Gardens, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3AG. Telephone 01-508 7623, or Jimmy Wright on 0932 225 950.

MIKE'S MOWAT

St. Dunstaner Mike Tetley has recently begun to use the Mowat sensor to enable him to overcome the intricacies of the new traffic system used in St. Albans. It is the size of a small hand torch, and is powered by a rechargeable battery. It sends out a narrow beam of high frequency sound, inaudible to the human ear, and receives the echoes reflected back from objects. When it receives the reflected signal it vibrates in the hand so that the blind user knows that an obstacle to avoid, or the object he is seeking, is in his path. The rate at which it vibrates increases as the user approaches an object, and it responds only to the nearest to simplify interpretation of the signals.

The use of touch through vibrations is an advantage over the previous devices which gave an aural signal, as this leaves the user's hearing free for traffic sounds and the other cues a blind person uses to get about.

Previously, Mike was able to travel around the town with Mark, his guide dog, easily, but has recently found this much more difficult: 'For nearly 25 years I have been able to walk independently in St. Albans with the three guide dogs I have had in this time,' he said, 'All that changed with the introduction of the new traffic scheme. The zebra crossings on my route from the station were wiped out and replaced by the press button traffic light crossings. When I walk up to the kerb,

Mark will sit as he is trained to do - the curse is that the post with the button is sometimes many feet away. I can search for the post with the Mowat ultrasonic sensor in my hand by making a slow sweep in a circle. If my reactions are quick I can pick up the post from the vibration.' Mike uses the Mowat as an addition to his guide dog. 'It is useful,' he said, 'but it can't help with steps down because there is nothing to reflect a signal back.' He is finding that Mark is learning fast. 'He's beginning to get the idea and learning to find the right points himself,' he said.

Mike uses his Mowat to find the post with the crossing button.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mrs. R. Brown, of Hartford

May I thank Miss Mosley and staff at Headquarters, and St. Dunstan's Bowling Club for the beautiful flower arrangements, and all the friends who sent cards during my stay in hospital.

From Mrs. M. Douglass, of Ruislip, Middlesex

Thank you Bill and Reg for your kind words at the meeting.

Leslie had been in the Bridge Club for over 41 years, and loved every match. Both

he and his partner Alf Wiltshire were the only St. Dunstaners to twice win a silver cup from the Masters of Britain. I have a photo like the one in the *Review* taken by a newspaper in Great Portland Street of Leslie, Charlie Gover, Drummer Downs and Reece Warren.

May I take this opportunity to thank the staff at H.Q. for their kindness and help before and after my bereavement and also the staff at Ian Fraser House for making our holidays so enjoyable.

Blind to Misfortune

'You ought to write a book,' they used to tell Bill Griffiths and, if the saying that there is one book in us all is true, then certainly there is a book in Bill. Under the inspired title, 'Blind to Misfortune', Bill's book was published at the end of last month.

As told to Hugh Popham, a novelist and military historian who served in the Fleet Air Arm in the Second World War, 'Blind to Misfortune' begins with a vivid account, in Bill's own words, of the terrible day he was ordered by his Japanese captors to clear some booby trapped camouflage netting. In the resulting explosion he was blinded and his hands were blown off.

He quotes a quiet voice saying, 'You'll be all right,' and his reaction: 'I didn't care, the words meant nothing; all I wanted was to be released from the pain and misery.' That appears on page two. The succeeding 184 pages chronicle a remarkable story of courage in the face of the most appalling injuries.

For Bill went on to survive those injuries and the rigours of captivity at the hands of the Japanese, that so many of his fellow St. Dunstaners also endured, to take on two careers. First running his own transport business in Blackburn until nationalisation made it impossible then, later, as speaker and singer working for St. Dunstan's as he still does today.

The book records Bill's successes: among them his M.B.E.; an appearance on 'This is your Life'; voted Disabled Sportsman of the Year. Photographs show him talking with members of the Royal Family and appearing with stars of show business. Throughout Bill pays tribute to those who helped him: Alice, his wife, Sir Edward Dunlop, Sir Laurens van der Post, fellow P.O.W.s in the camps and his many friends among St. Dunstaners. His modesty and his gratitude move him to the addition of an appendix labelled 'postscript' where he lists many more who are not mentioned in the text.

It is old publicity jargon to speak of a subject as being unique but it is hard to imagine another story just like this. Better still — it is a jolly good read.

'Blind to Misfortune' is published by Leo Cooper Ltd. in hardback, 190 pages, 25 illustrations, at £10.95. It can be ordered from St. Dunstan's by returning the form enclosed with this issue of the *Review*.

Bill and Alice with his M.B.E., after the investiture at Buckingham Palace.



TAPE RECORDING WEEK

St. Dunstaners should note that the Tape Recording Week for 1989 will be from June 5th until June 9th. Please book early, and when you do so, would you please state if you are interested in the usual evening trip, the 'Evening Chorus.' The organisation is well on the way to being completed, and we are looking forward to meeting you all once more. Anyone who has not supported this small group in the past is more than welcome.

Ralph Pacitti

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE 1989

We invite St. Dunstaners and widows only to apply for tickets in the *Review* Derby Sweepstake. Please remember that every application for tickets made in the British Isles must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The tickets are 20p each and applications for them should be made as soon as possible and will be received up to the first post on Friday, May 19th. Each applicant must state the name and address of the sender and the number of tickets required, and with a stamped addressed envelope, applications must be sent to: The Editor D.S.S. Dept., *St. Dunstan's Review*, P.O. Box 4XB, 12/14 Harcourt Street, London, W1A 4XB. Cheques made payable to St. Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. Tickets will be issued consecutively and are limited to 25. The total money subscribed, less the cost of printing and expenses, will be distributed as follows:

50% to the holder of the ticket drawing the winning horse.
20% to the holder of the ticket drawing the second horse.
10% to the holder of the ticket drawing the third horse.
20% to be divided equally among those drawing a horse which actually starts the race.

No prize won in the Sweepstake will be paid to any person other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold.

The draw will take place in London on May 29th, the race being run on June 7th.

Story Competition Judges

At the time of writing, 5 entries had been received with a month to go before the closing date of 31st March.

The following have kindly agreed to be the judges: Lt. Gen. Sir Maurice and Lady Johnston. Sir Maurice is a Member of Council. John Booth is the author of a book called 'The Day War Broke Out,' which contains memories of his Yorkshire youth in those days. St. Dunstaner Jimmy Wright wrote an introduction to the book.

The judges will be convening in May to adjudicate. Letters should reach the winner and runner-up by the end of May, and results published in the July *Review*.



Classic Chess Sets

Chess is an historic game and over the years of its existence chessmen have taken many forms, some of them romantic. In his workshop in Heysham, a St. Dunstaner is re-creating some of the classic chess pieces.

Patrick Murphy casts his chessmen himself in stone powder or resin. Each piece is colourfully hand painted, some of which he also does himself but the fine detail he leaves to an assistant. He makes four different authentic replicas of classical chess sets. The oldest is the Lewis, an ancient Nordic set discovered on the Isle of Lewis, there is the Elizabethan set in which each figure represents a character of the Elizabethan Court — the Queen, inevitably, Elizabeth herself and the 'King', Lord Darnley. A very popular set is the Mandarin with its historic Chinese figures and, lastly, a modern design — depicting the Olympic Games.

Patrick Murphy does not play chess himself but he has become intensely interested in these historic designs. He has painstakingly investigated the background of each set and provides a certificate with each, giving its story.

He sells to shops at these prices: the Lewis collection and the Olympics cost £19.95 or £105 for six sets; the Mandarin, £24.95 or £134.95 for six; the Elizabethan, £29.95 or £165.50 for six, all including handmade wooden chess boards. Postage and packing £5 per order.

CLUB NEWS

BRIGHTON CLUB

We played our third League match of the season on Saturday February 18th against East Grinstead, and after falling behind in the first half were unable to overtake the deficit, and the match was lost by 4 victory points to 12. It was a most pleasant afternoon despite the disappointing result. Our team was Ralph Pacitti, Bill Allen, Bob Evans, Bill Phillips, Wally Lethbridge, Vi Delaney, Reg Goding and Mike Tybinski.

PAIRS, FEBRUARY 12th

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1st | Wally Lethbridge and Mr. Goodlad | 64.2 |
| 2nd | Bob Evans and Mrs. Baker | 60.6 |
| 3rd | Reg Goding and Miss Sturdy | 55.0 |
| 4th | Peter Surridge and Miss Stenning | 51.7 |
| 5th | Bob Fullard and Mrs. V. McPherson | 50.8 |
| 6th | Mr. and Mrs. R. Pacitti | 42.5 |
| 7th | Bill Phillips and Dr. J. Goodlad | 38.3 |
| 8th | Mrs. A. Clements and Mr. Douse | 36.7 |

INDIVIDUALS, FEBRUARY 18th

| | | |
|------|--|------|
| 1st | Mrs. Barnes | 68.2 |
| 2nd | Bob Evans | 63.6 |
| 3rd | Bill Phillips | 58.0 |
| 4th | Miss Sturdy | 51.1 |
| 5th | Vi Delaney and Ralph Pacitti | 50.0 |
| 7th | Mrs. McCaulley | 48.8 |
| 8th | Reg Goding | 46.6 |
| 9th | Bill Allen | 44.3 |
| 10th | Wally Lethbridge, Mike Tybinski and Mrs. Pacitti | 39.8 |

FAMILY NEWS

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Anthony and Andrew, grandsons of St. Dunstaner *John Cowan*, who have made a name for themselves in the world of go-carting. They compete successfully all over England, and were recently asked by

the RAC to appear on television with the late Graham Hill's son.

Rose Shed, wife of St. Dunstaner *George Shed*, of Burgess Hill, who has won three first prizes, nine second prizes, and three third prizes, for different handicrafts with the Horticultural Society.

MARRIAGES

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. R. Donald, of Hove, on the marriage of their son, Michael, to Janet Purvis, on August 6th 1988.

GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. R. Goding, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Rosie, born on November 10th, 1988, to Clive and Gill, at Much Wenlock.

Mrs. N. Jones, widow of St. Dunstaner *W. Jones*, of West Heath, Birmingham, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, born in February to her grand-daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. John Kershaw, of Brighouse, West Yorkshire, on the birth of another great grandson, Christopher Timothy, born on October 20th, 1988, to her grand-daughter Megan, and her husband Clive Jones, of Minehead.

SILVER WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. G. Briggs-Swifte, of Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, Eire, on the occasion of their Silver Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on February 10th.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. R.C. Ashmore, of Sutton Coldfield, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on February 10th.

Family News contd

Mr. and Mrs. R.G. Homewood, of Stanton, Suffolk, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on March 2nd.

RUBY WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. W. Bradshaw, of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary, which they celebrated on January 28th.

DEATHS

We offer condolences to:

The family and friends of Mrs. F.E.M. Clark, widow of the late *Mr. W.W. Clark*, of Lee, London, who passed away on October 19th 1988, aged 95. Mrs. Clark's husband, William, enlisted in the 6th City of London Regiment and was wounded in France in May 1915. He was one of the earliest St. Dunstaners to go to Regent's Park, and their eldest son, Walter, was a godson of Sir Arthur Pearson. They are survived by four of their six sons.

The family and friends of Mrs. Alice Dyett, widow of the late *Captain Colin Dyett*, of Winchester, who passed away on February 15th.

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.

L.T. Ellaway, R.A.F.

We are very sad to record the death of Mr. Leonard Ellaway, affectionately known as 'Len' on February 9th, after a short illness. He was 82, and had been a St. Dunstaner for nearly 45 years.

He served with the R.A.F. during the Second World War, and was discharged in 1945, having been wounded in Normandy, and having joined St. Dunstan's the previous year. In 1946, Mr. Ellaway opened a confectionery and tobacconist shop, which he ran with his wife, Theresa until he retired.

After retirement, both Mr. and Mrs. Ellaway took a keen interest in their garden, and grew their own vegetables. Sadly Mrs. Ellaway was in

Mr. John Jackson, of Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, on the death of his father, who passed away on February 16th.

Mrs. Daisy Greenaway, wife of St. Dunstaner *Fred Greenaway*, of Dibden Purlieu, on the death of her mother, who passed away last October, aged 90.

Mr. Bernard Glover, of Widley, Purbrook, Hants, and his family, on the death of his wife, Anne, on February 28th.

The family and friends of Mrs. Ada Elisabeth McCaffrey, widow of the late *Mr. Michael McCaffrey*, of Hayes, who passed away on February 11th, aged 93.

Mr. Ted Miller, of Leamington Spa, on the death of his brother, Tom, who passed away on February 15th.

Mr. Alexander Scott, of Belfast, on the death of wife, Annie, who passed away on February 25th.

Mr. Ray Peart, of Gloucester, on the death of his mother on February 22nd.

Mrs. Gladys Slade, widow of the late *Mr. A. Slade*, of Heathfield, on the death of her eldest brother who died in August 1988.

poor health for some years, and she died in 1976. Our St. Dunstaner managed on his own, with help from his two daughters, Gillian and Valerie, and also his kind friend and neighbour Mrs. Ann Morgan, who looked after his housework, meals, and any other help that he needed.

We offer our sympathy to all Mr. Ellaway's family, and to Mrs. Morgan.

P.R. Forster, R.A.F.

Mr. Philip Roy Forster, formerly of Sidcup, passed away in hospital on February 20th, shortly before his 71st birthday. He had been a St. Dunstaner since April 1949.

He enlisted in the R.A.F. in 1936, and served

as Aircraftman until his discharge in 1940, when he lost most of his sight as a result of illness. After the war he worked in industry, and was employed by Morphy Richards from 1950 until 1967 when the firm was taken over and he was made redundant.

He was a familiar figure in the area, out for walks with his guide dog, and was particularly fond of dancing. As a boy he had played the cornet with the Salvation Army. His other interests included listening to sport on the radio, and he would sometimes stay up all night for a special match. He also enjoyed dealing on the Stock Exchange.

When his wife became ill in the Spring of last year, he moved to Pearson House, and will be sadly missed by all the staff and his fellow St. Dunstaners.

He leaves a widow, Frances, and two daughters. We extend our sincere sympathy to them and to all members of the family.

N.D. Henman, Labour Corps

Mr. Nicholas Douglas Henman passed away at Pearson House on February 6th, aged 88. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 28 years.

Mr. Henman enlisted in the Labour Corps in 1918 and was discharged a year later. In 1920 he joined the staff of the *Evening News*, and although his sight had deteriorated sufficiently for him to become a St. Dunstaner in 1960, he continued to work for them, for a total of 47 years. His main interests were carpentry and handicrafts, and he continued to enjoy his hobbies until a few months ago. He and his wife, Emily, were interested in gardening and both were keen bowlers in the early days of his retirement. Due to her failing health they gave up their home in Surrey and moved down to the Brighton area a few years ago. They celebrated their Diamond Wedding in 1980. Sadly, his wife died at the end of December.

We offer our sympathy to their son and three daughters, and all members of the family.

A. Rumble, Royal Navy

Mr. Albert Rumble died at Pearson House on February 18th. He was in his 85th year, and had been a St. Dunstaner since November 1988.

He enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1940, and attained the rank of Chief Petty Officer. It was while serving in *HMS Centurion* in the Mediterranean, en route for Malta, that he sustained the loss of his right eye. After his discharge in 1945, he served in the Merchant Navy, and was employed by the Thames Tugboat Organisation as Chief Engineer until 1959.

His wife, Grace, to whom he was married for

60 years, sadly died in December 1988, and he leaves a son, Anthony. We extend sympathy to him and other members of the family.

P. Wood, Royal Artillery

It is with great regret that we record the death of Phillip Wood, on February 5th at Pearson House, where he had been living for the past year. He was 76 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 43 years.

Mr. Wood served with the Royal Artillery as a Gunner during the Second World War, was taken prisoner by the Japanese, and by the time he was discharged from the Army in 1947, his sight had deteriorated dramatically. Following his discharge from the Army, he undertook some training with St. Dunstan's, and then began working in industry. In 1950 he decided upon a change of career and began a training course at St. Dunstan's, soon after taking a post as Home Teacher for the Blind, which he continued until he retired for health reasons in 1966.

Between 1977 and 1987 Mr. Wood contributed many articles to the *Review*, on a wide variety of subjects of general interest, and he also wrote the reviews of new talking books, some of which were exceptionally witty. He won quite a few prizes in writing competitions, including the St. Dunstan's short story competition.

Sadly, Mrs. Wood died in March 1985, and after managing on his own for a while, he moved to Pearson House, where he will be missed very much.

We extend our sympathy to his son Christopher and daughter Judith.

W.E. Young, Durham Light Infantry

Mr. William (Bill) Young died at Pearson House on February 15th. He was aged 76, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1943.

He enlisted in 1933, and served with the Durham Light Infantry, until he was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940. He was, at that time, reported killed in action, but news then came through that he was in Stalag 9C. This was, of course, the camp where Lord Normanby started teaching braille and in later years, Bill Young always made a point of attending the reunion dinners hosted at the Cafe Royal by Lord and Lady Normanby.

He was a miner before joining the Army and after the war he went into poultry farming for some years until his health deteriorated.

He leaves two daughters, and we send our condolences to them and other members of the family.