



**St Dunstons
Review
December 1989**

DECEMBER 1989

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Cover Picture: During the Pearson House Celebrations, Lady 'sings' to the music of her master, Tony Back.



From the Chairman

For once I have only one really important thing to say. It is, quite simply:

*A very Happy Christmas
to you and your families
and very best wishes to you all
for 1990 —
our 75th Anniversary year.*

Henry Leach



NOTICE BOARD



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, widows and our other readers.



SAILING COURSE FOR THE BLIND

The 16th Annual Cruiser Sailing course for Visually Handicapped People, organised by the RYA Seamanship Foundation, will take place from the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Falmouth, from Sunday July 1st to Saturday July 7th, 1990. The French Cruise will start on Saturday June 30th, at either the Hamble River, or from Plymouth.

Three concurrent courses, for 12 students each, will be held at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels. The cost in 1990 will be £80 per head and an additional booking fee of £15 — payable on application will be charged. This is non-returnable (except to those not selected).

Application forms are available from Geoff Reid, GDBA Adventure Group, Alexandra House, Park Street, Windsor, Berks, SL4 1JR. Previous participation on several courses does not bar application.

Completed application forms together with a cheque for £15, made payable to 'GDBA Adventure Group' should be sent

to the above address, no later than Friday January 19th, 1990.

COMPUTER VIRUS AT R.N.I.B.

On Friday October 13th, the staff at the Royal National Institute for the Blind discovered a virus in their computer system. To the uninitiated a virus in a computer programme occurs when a piece of contaminated information is fed into the computer. This information then sets about destroying or distorting the programme, and can spread through a system if allowed to go unchecked.

Luckily the virus in the R.N.I.B. computer only affected the Employment Development Technology Unit (EDTU) leaving the main computer system unaffected. Nevertheless, the virus may have destroyed six months of work, about £25,000 in cash terms.

The source of the virus remains a mystery, although it may have come in through a connection with a public electronic bulletin board. The R.N.I.B. are now taking steps to screen for viruses before they enter the system.



The 1989 St. Dunstan's Team with, in the background, Sir Henry Leach.

BRIDGE CLUB AT HARROGATE

by David Castleton

A team representing St. Dunstan's Bridge Club was in Yorkshire during the first week of October for their annual series of matches with local sighted clubs. This year their luncheon, on 6th October, at The Drovers Inn, Bishops Thornton, not far from Harrogate, had an added significance. It was a celebration of St. Dunstan's 50th visit to Harrogate. The guests were representatives of all the clubs who entertain them and presiding over the occasion was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, accompanied by Lady Leach.

Although St. Dunstaners had played bridge from the very early days of the organisation a Bridge Club was not founded until 1938. It was at this time that a team played a match against Mount Pleasant G.P.O. and lost. Harry, better known as Charlie, Gover immediately persuaded the G.P.O. captain, Alf Field, to teach St. Dunstaners the G.P.O. winning system, the then new Stern system, and Alf

became the Bridge Club's mentor.

In 1940 some G.P.O. staff were evacuated to Harrogate, Alf Field among them. It is not surprising that he immediately thought of his St. Dunstan's friends and engineered an invitation for them to spend a week-end in Harrogate to play bridge. Thirteen St. Dunstaners arrived in Harrogate in December, 1940 to begin an annual series of visits.

This year 14 St. Dunstaners were there to carry on the tradition and express their thanks to Cedric Cockroft, who now coordinates all the arrangements in Harrogate. It had been hoped that Mrs. Nora Field would be able to attend to represent her late husband but she was on holiday in Ireland. She sent a message of greeting: 'I am sorry I cannot be with you on this memorable occasion which I am proud to recall was originated all those years ago by my husband, Alf Field, (with a little help from his friends). I wish you all

good health and success in the years to come.'

Sir Henry Leach gave the formal expression of St. Dunstan's thanks in his speech after lunch but he began with a confession: 'I have to admit to you that, unlike my wife, I do not play bridge. On the rare occasions when I have ventured into this erudite arena I have experienced difficulty in grasping the language and in restraining my irritation when criticised by my partner — who I had previously, if ingenuously, supposed was on my side — for departing from some native ritual called a convention. So if ever bridge features at home I prefer to keep the fire going and provide regular liquid logistic support to the contestants — rather than personally participating in the battle of wits.'

On a serious note Sir Henry contrasted his own difficulty in mastering the finer points of, 'A very good and thoroughly stimulating game' with St. Dunstaners' achievement relying on their finger tips and braille. 'Ladies and Gentlemen, I take my hat off to you for mastering this skill and pursuing it so successfully. Well done — and long may you keep it up.'

'That's only part of the story', Sir Henry continued, 'It is some 50 years since Alf Field first invited St. Dunstan's bridge players to Harrogate and Jack Habisch put them up at the Salisbury Hotel. Many of you here will remember that, I'm sure. Ever since then there has been an annual visit from, initially, a short week-end through a long week-end to, now and for many years past, a full week and with the extra time have come more contests, more meetings and more friends among the clubs: Harrogate; Crimple House; I.C.I.; Bradford; Ripon; Moortown; York; Central Electricity; Oakdale and Civil Service, to name but a few. As one gets older two things in life stand out as being of increasing importance: good health and good friends. Looking around these tables you seem to me to be pretty healthy. And certainly in this club you have gone a long way down the road to making many good friends.'

Cedric Cockroft replied on behalf of the guests in a witty and amusing speech through which the message came through



Cedric Cockroft speaking.

very strongly that the company of St. Dunstaners was greatly appreciated. He paid tribute to those in the past who had been involved and said that he would be happy to continue to organise the St. Dunstan's week with the enthusiastic co-operation of the clubs.

In the 1989 series of matches St. Dunstan's lost the Harrogate Cup to Cyril Campbell's team of four. They also lost to Ripon, Central Electricity and Bradford. There were wins against Civil Service and Oakdale Golf Club where a plaque was presented to St. Dunstan's commemorating their 50th and Oakdale's 75th anniversaries.

Speaking to the *Review* afterwards, Bill Phillips, Captain, expressed the thanks of St. Dunstan's Bridge Club to Sir Henry and Lady Leach for coming to the 50th anniversary luncheon. 'Attended by representatives of all our good friends from Harrogate and District and special thanks from us all to the organiser and our dear friend, Cedric Cockroft.'

HOLIDAY 1989

by Colin Beaumont-Edmonds

This really started when the St. Dunstan's Conference in Melbourne was over (a report of which has already appeared in the *Review*) and we flew to Sydney to meet my brother who drove us out to his home at Lawson, 40 miles to the West in the Blue Mountains, which get their name from the blue haze which hangs over them from the gum trees. We were only there two whole days, but during this time we went out to lunch at Mount Victoria, which overlooks the Megalong Valley. When the first settlers drove inland up this valley they were met by a cliff 660 metres (1302 feet) high and it was not until they followed along the top of the ridges that made up the sides of the valley that they were able to reach the plateau and backland.

Australians have always been strong traditionalists and in spite of Christmas taking place in the height of summer, the shop windows are decorated with cotton wool snow; on this occasion at the Victoria Hotel, they were advertising a Yuletide festival with all the decorations and meals connected with Christmas and being 'midwinter' there would be log fires, short days and perhaps even snow, for it does fall up there!

On leaving my brother, Joyce and I flew to Cairns for five days in the hot sunshine – and heavy rain! On the wet day we went out to The Great Barrier Reef, which is 1200 miles long, 20 miles wide and 400 feet deep. Corals only grow in sunlight just below the water, which shows the level rose as the ice from the Ice Age melted. The coral there is grey, but the fish are beautifully coloured, mainly in blues, greens and yellows. Joyce watched them through the glass-bottomed boats which took us quietly amongst the different types of coral.

One was reminded of the inhospitable climate and the rain forests that used to exist North of Cairns when we travelled on the Kuranda Train, for the line was built in 1851, and took 1500 men five years

to complete, many dying as a result of disease; it is only 15 miles long but includes 15 tunnels and 32 bridges, some of wood and others of iron. Some of the views were quite spectacular, especially as we passed the Barren River Falls, as the water poured off the high tableland. A coach took us to the Tinaroo dam on the same river and near Ashton, where David Beattie, who was at the reunion, used to have his dairy farm. We had our tea while taking a trip around Barrine Lake in the rain forest, watching fish, turtles, brush turkeys and pelicans feed. Finally we drove off the tableland down the new road with its 200 bends, whereas the old road had 600.

Our last day in Cairns was gorgeous, and we cruised up the Trinity Inlet on the Terri Too close to the mangrove swamps; these are the only trees which grow in both fresh and salt water at the same time. Forty-eight hours later we were with friends near Seattle, having flown direct from Sydney to Los Angeles, followed by two hops up to Seattle. Our friends live about 40 miles out of the city, in the country overlooking the Puget Sound. One morning we watched an aircraft carrier with a submarine and their escort of destroyers sail up to the Trident naval base near the end of the Sound. The weather was like an English spring with sunshine and showers, and on one of the sunny days we drove through Port Gamble, which is still kept as a Victorian sawmill town. Then it was on to Port Angelus, which is the Port of the Vancouver ferries, we could see the island about 20 miles away. From there we ascended to Hurricane Ridge, where we were above the snow line. At the side of the road were banks of snow three feet deep. From this elevated position we had a superb view of the pine forests in the sunshine. On the way home we stopped to look at Port Townsend, which is now another tourist attraction, for it was originally to have been the major

Holiday 1989 *continued*

port, but Seattle surpassed it, being in a more sheltered position and at the end of the railway line.

For many years Joyce and I have longed to see the Rockies, so on leaving our friends we flew to Vancouver and began a five day coach trip which would take us to Calgary. It was now the beginning of June and the sun was warm and the snow was melting, so all the rivers and falls were full and sparkling. The Canadians take great care of their National Parks, and the scenery is certainly magnificent. Grizzly bears are seldom seen together, but we were fortunate to see two young ones close to the road, while a black bear, which, for some reason, are usually brown, leapt away from the bank as our coach approached it. In Banff we visited a reserve to see a herd of buffalo, and a group of ground squirrels which ran around close to the road in the hope of being thrown food from passing cars, although it is strictly forbidden.

We spent one night at Lac Le Jeune and intended to walk around the lake after dinner, but one of our party advised us not to as we would be bitten by midges, so we spent the evening chatting together. You can imagine our surprise when it transpired that she had come to England during the war with the Red Cross contingent and knew all the Canadian V.A.D.'s who came and worked with St. Dunstan's at Church Stretton.

The Athabasca Glacier is near Jasper, and before arriving there we had the opportunity of going on to the Columbia Ice Field. We travelled the last mile in a snowmobile and then at 7,200 feet got out and walked on the hard snow. On the way up we passed short stubby trees, for the climate at that height only allows them two months growing each year. The next day we took the cable-car to the top of Mount Whistler, from where one had a wonderful view over the lakes and forests. The lakes are almost turquoise blue due to the very fine dust eroded by the glacier over thousands of years.

Our last week in Canada was spent with our nephew and his family 14 miles out of North Bay, which used to be a timber felling area, but there is little of this left now.

While there we drove a further 90 miles north to Sudbury, a nickel mining centre set in a barren rocky terrain which resulted in it being used to rehearse the moon landings. The nickel has been mined at various levels, and parties are now taken down to the first level where trees and plants are grown from seed in boxes, this can be done because the temperature is so constant and the amount of artificial light can be accurately controlled to the best advantage. It poured with rain during that visit, but otherwise it was hot sunshine. For the second year there was a plague of caterpillars which seemed to be on all kinds of shrubs and trees, except maples, and there were lots of flies and mosquitoes.

We were away for almost seven weeks and thoroughly enjoyed it, but it was lovely to return home to the quieter atmosphere of Sidmouth.

A LIVING HEIRLOOM

Quite a few families have prized possessions passed down from generation to generation, usually in the form of family silver and china, or maybe even an old item of furniture. But very few families can boast a living heirloom, for that's what the Chatfield family, of Worthing, West Sussex, have in the form of a one hundred year old aspidistra.

Mrs. Lorna Chatfield received the aspidistra from her grandmother, some 30 years ago, she in turn may have inherited it from her mother, this would make the plant well over 100 years old.

The plant which measures roughly 40" by 22" has no intention of going to seed despite its great age. When a stem fell off the plant recently Mrs. Chatfield gave it to her daughter, Jennifer, who planted it creating an offspring for the ancient plant, and ensuring it stays in the family.

It would be interesting to see if any St. Dunstaners have a plant older than Mr. and Mrs. Chatfield's. If you have why not drop us a line and tell us about it.



A portrait of Sydney Scroggie, painted from sketches the artist made in the hills, has been hung in the McManus Gallery, Dundee. In the group on the left (from r. to l.) are Syd Scroggie, Les Braes, Margaret Scroggie, and Syd's twin brother, Jock.

UNSEEN YET SEEN

by David Castleton

Why do so many people want to climb hills? Sydney Scroggie, the *Review's* regular and idiosyncratic columnist, has his own views along these lines: faced by a world full of insoluble problems we substitute one, 'Not so easy that it can be simply solved, yet not so hard it does not permit of solution, granting we apply to it the maximum of mind, body and moral fibre of which we are capable; and so kidding ourselves, at least for a time, that in the solving of this problem, the achieving of this end, all the problems that bedevil the world and us are at an end.'

Perhaps that is the answer he muses in a recently published book, *The Cairngorms Scene and Unseen*, before a typically Scroggie demolition of this argument with the words, 'The hills are beautiful anyway, and maybe that's reason enough.' His own continuing obsession with the hills, totally blind and with an artificial leg, is a mystery

to be pondered, he suggests.

The mystery is unravelled in the pages of this book. For the reader soon learns through his prose and poetry that Sydney still sees the hills in his mind's eye, he relishes the challenge of rock and weather and cherishes the memories of people and places he has garnered in a lifetime climbing and walking the Scottish hills.

The Cairngorms Scene and Unseen is a litany of Gaelic place names interspersed with anecdote and history — the real origin of the kilt, for example. The reader travels with Sydney from bothie to bothie, accompanied by that croaking ptarmigan that follows him around, meets the highly individual characters who live among the hills and enjoys the gossip among good companions tucked in sleeping bags with the primus roaring.

The book is well illustrated with line drawings and with photographs taken by

Tom Weir, who also wrote a foreword. It is singularly appropriate that it should be published by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust in the centenary year of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. For anyone who has looked up at a hill, great or small, and decided to get to the summit it will be a 'good read' and one to which the reader will, I am sure, return to again and again. Just as he will return again and again to his own favourite hills. Sydney Scroggie certainly will and he concludes his book with this poem:

*I will attempt the Capel Track,
Old, stiff and retrograde,
And get some pal to push me on
Should resolution fade.
For I must see black Meikle Pap
Against a starry sky,
And watch the dawn from
Lochnagar
Once more before I die.*

*The golden plover whistled there
Before the fall of man,
And you can hear the brittle croak
Of lonely ptarmigan.
No heather there, but boulders bare
And quartz and granite grit
And ribs of snow, bleak, old and grey
As I remember it.*

*And if I do not make the top
Then sit me on a stone,
Some lichen'd rock amongst the scree,
And leave me there alone.
Yes, leave me there alone to hear,
Where spout and buttress are,
The breeze that stirs that little loch
On silent Lochnagar.*

'The Cairngorms Scene and Unseen'
by Sydney Scroggie.
117 pages, illustrated, hardback. £6.25
Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

Handicraft Sale at Pearson House

by Patrick Flanagan

Where could you find a panda, an old English sheepdog and a robot, all in the same room? No, not the zoo, but at the sale of handicrafts which was held at Pearson House on October 26th. The sale proved so popular that nearly all the items were cleared within a couple of hours. Things got so hectic at one stage that the room resembled the floor of the stock exchange, with prospective buyers milling about with notes in their hands.

The items on sale represent many months work by the 11 or so St. Dunstaners who make up the Handicrafts Section. Overseeing the sale was Ernie Brown. Ernie, who won a prize at last year's National War Pensioners' Homecrafts and Arts Competition was delighted with the way the sale progressed. 'It's nice to think that people are interested in our work, and it's an excellent way of keeping the men occupied,' said Ernie. Although he did admit he wasn't too keen on canework.

Ernie explained that even with handicrafts fashion dictates what will sell. A few years ago we couldn't make enough frogs, this was due to the popularity of Kermit

frog from the Muppet Show. Now you can't give them away. 'Today children go for the 'moonbuggies and robots'. 'Toy trucks are another good seller,' said Ernie, clutching one of the unsold green frogs. 'Everyone has their favourite toy, I prefer the hedgehogs and the moles.'

The handicraft section don't just make toys, they also make a range of more practical items such as household furniture and shoes, the hand-stitched moccasins were much sought after, while the miniature sets of drawers make an ideal jewellery repository. Over £500's worth of stock was sold on the day, which is a considerable sum to raise without the aid of outside advertising. Mrs. Joan Dear who has supervised the Handicrafts Department for the past 13 years was also happy with the sale, although she and her assistant, Amy Howell, hadn't much time to relax.

One gentleman was so impressed with the quality of the stock that he purchased over £200 worth of toys. Ernie suggested that he was Father Christmas in disguise. He may well have been.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Enid Otton, Ovingdean

May I express my sincere thanks to all the St. Dunstaners, Major Neve, Staff and Escorts for the gifts, cards and super bouquet given to me on my retirement on September 29th. I would also like to thank the St. Dunstaners for the St. Dunstan's Plaque, it will have a special place in my home. I am looking forward to enjoying a happy retirement with my husband, but I will always remember St. Dunstan's with fond memories.

From Maisie Streets, Birmingham and
Diana Hoare, Winchester

We would like to thank all concerned with the gifts of the beautiful rose bowls, gift tokens and cards with so many signatures. The bowls will be our most treasured possessions, they will be a perpetual reminder of so many very happy times and good friends made over the years at Lee-on-Solent. Camp week was always the most fun of all the year. So best wishes and thanks to you all.

TOM TAYLOR ON TELEVISION

Watch out for Tom Taylor who appears on Granada Television in December. Tom conducted an interview with Canon Frank Wright recently at The Friends' Meeting House, Sedbergh, North Yorkshire, which Granada filmed. The interview will form part of the 'Meditations' programme, and can be seen on Sunday December 17th, at 11 a.m.

REFLECTIONS

In the first of what is hoped will be a series of articles Captain, The Reverend C. Le M. Scott, St. Dunstan's Chaplain reflects on his varied career.

I was invited, about twelve months ago, to be the Chaplain to St. Dunstan's and was surprised as well as delighted that I should be given such an honour. The same reaction has occurred at other periods of my life. I passed the examination to enter as a Naval Cadet in 1931, and wondered whether this was above my deserts. And then, from ship to ship, I continued a life of surprises. Early in the war I put in for the long course in Naval Gunnery. Gunnery Officers were supposed to have mathematical skills of high order, bad temper and loud voices. I feel sure that Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach met those exacting standards, a little later, with greater finesse.

That typical reaction, a delighted amazement, came also when a certain young woman agreed to marry me; amazement which continues to this day at the endurance she still shows, after 47 years.

I served in many ships, large and small — as down-trodden snottie, as bewildered Staff Officer, even in command. I loved it all, except for the bits which I have firmly forgotten. A lot of activity and many fine shipmates; and many a providential rescue from the results of my mistakes. In 1951 I went to my Master (I was serving in the Admiralty) and said I was asking to retire. What for? He said. To be a parson, I said. Good God, man, he replied, think first once in your life.

I became an Assistant Curate (like Junior Midshipman on half pay) and then a Vicar; first in London, at Marble Arch, and then in a beloved Surrey village. We have known many wonderful women and men, boys and girls.

So, what about religion? Well, I think it is a good thing. I will ask the Editor to let me say why in later articles, but will start

GARDENING WEEK AT CHURCH STRETTON

by Margaret Bingham

It was decided unanimously at the A.G.M. at Cirencester, in September 1988, that Church Stretton should be the venue for our away meeting in the autumn of 1989, and accommodation was booked at the Longmynd Hotel for one week from September 5th. We all arrived at 5 p.m. and it was just a matter of unpacking and getting ready for dinner.

On Wednesday morning we gathered in a small ballroom where we held our A.G.M. Tom Hart gave us details of the forthcoming gardening activities. There was only one alteration and that was the visit to a herb garden at Staunton on Arrow. He had carried out a recce and found the road to it most unsuitable for our coaches so another garden was found in the same area. Tom also suggested that some other Club member might like to do the write-up for the *Review* to give another aspect on our gardening activities, but no one volunteered. John Walbrugh, our Treasurer, said the Club was in a very healthy state and the subscription would remain at £7.

After a substantial three-course meal we went to our various rooms to prepare for our visit to Shrewsbury where members of the Shrewsbury Horticultural Society were awaiting our party. There followed a visit to St. Chad's Church and then

Reflections continued

with this little piece about the Duke of Wellington.

He did not approve of commonplace discussion on sacred subjects; prayer he regarded as a duty; of the Lord's Prayer he used to say that it 'contained the sum total of religion and morals'; and he thought that it was the Church of England which makes us what we are — a nation of honest men.

A happy Christmas to you all!

a visit to the Quarry. The style of the Church is very rare, it is circular, the intention being to bring the congregation into immediate contact with the focal point of the huge building — the altar. The first stone for this remarkable and unique building was laid in 1790, but there is evidence that a church stood there from about 780 A.D. when it was founded by Offa, King of Mercia. Points of interest are the curtained stalls for the Mayor and Town Clerk, and the sanctuary window, where both stained glass and enamelled glass are used. There is also an Indian Mutiny memorial to the 53rd Shropshire Regiment. After this very interesting visit our hosts led us to the Dingle for a guided tour of the whole lay-out contained in the Quarry nearby.

The Shrewsbury Horticultural Society is a well-established and thriving one with a good many members and a large committee of some 41 men and women. Some famous people have been associated with the Society including Percy Thrower, Charles Darwin and many Royals. The whole venture began in 1877, and has continued to grow until now it has achieved near-perfection with its floral arrangements, honey, wine and even craft fashioned from beeswax. In fact every aspect of horticulture. The judges take time with their decisions on the various exhibits as reputations can so easily be damaged — even destroyed — on their opinions. Any person, gardener or not, can display their giant leeks or bunch of sweetpeas, not for the possibility of an award but for the prestige of having shown it at a Shrewsbury Horticultural Society's Show.

As we were such a large party, almost 50, we were divided into smaller groups and made our way to Shrewsbury's showpiece, the Quarry, and its centre piece the Dingle. At first sight the latter was such a breath-taking spectacle it really did cause people to gasp in wonder. A tranquil pool

reflecting the beautiful azure sky above, one or two moorhens creating the slightest of ripples and a large weeping willow surrounded by small flowering shrubs on an island in the centre. The flower beds were a mass of colour, a combination of simple elegance and formality, the eye being drawn to the lovely trees and shrubs in the background and the new stone bridge with a view of the statue Sabrina, Goddess of the River Severn. We had a little walk from there but we did not mind as it was such a glorious day. A much needed cup of tea had been laid on for us at the nearby St. John's Ambulance Headquarters, by members of the Society. Cup of tea did I say! It was more like a feast, with home-made cakes and pastries of every description and the trestle tables groaned under the weight of the goodies. We did justice to the food however, but I think we all wished we had not eaten such a large lunch at the hotel. The final touch was the gift of a scented plant — geranium, lemon, eucalyptus etc. — given to us when we reached the coach and so we hold a deep sense of gratitude to the Shrewsbury Horticultural Society for making our visit such a happy and memorable one.

It was Wednesday when Tom decided to have a day in bed at the hotel as he was a little under the weather. Hope you are improving, Tom.

Thursday was the most hectic day of the week when we took a packed lunch and spent the day at Powis Castle, starting with a guided tour. I did not get the name of the lady but the gentleman was a Mr. Trevor Cracknell, who hailed all the way from Rottingdean, East Sussex, so was well acquainted with St. Dunstan's and all it stands for. It appears the origin of the castle is unknown but the present building was probably begun sometime between the 13th and 14th centuries. Sometimes referred to as the 'Red Castle' because of the colour of the stonework. Standing on a rock it is in a very imposing position and the height provided a natural defence against marauders. It seems the whole history of the castle is centred around three families, a dynasty of Welsh Princes, the Herberts and the Clives (Clives of India). Some walls of the interior are festooned with beautiful tapestries dating back from

the Middle Ages and marble busts and paintings by known and unknown artists fill every conceivable space. Beautiful furniture was created by masters as were clocks and gilded brass mirrors inlaid with enamel. The terraces were blasted out of the rock and the formal gardens were eventually created in the style they are in today with ornamental shrubs, trees and flowers. The view to the mountains in the distance is magnificent. It seems during very cold weather frost lies in the garden in the valley and makes a mulch some six to eight inches deep.

In the evening Miss Angela Mansell and Mr. Martin Ford, of Shropshire Radio's Gardening Programme and Shrewsbury Horticultural College addressed us. Miss Mansell spoke of her interest in flower arranging and how she helped in the floral decorations at Caernarvon Castle at the installation of Prince Charles as The Prince of Wales. She gave hints on how to prolong the life of cut blooms and how some, like lilac benefitted by being gently swished across water. Her talk was very amusing and she told some good stories with the appropriate dialect. This and the fact that she had a very clear speaking voice was explained when she remarked she had some acting experience. Mr. Ford gave many more details of the Horticultural College and his association with Radio Shropshire's Gardening Programme. (I wonder if any St. Dunstaners will send a query?) We are greatly indebted to them for giving such interesting talks.

Friday morning was free but in the afternoon we visited Hodnet Hall Gardens in the little village of Hodnet, the home of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Heber-Percy. Not such a nice day weather-wise being misty and cold but that did not prevent us from making the most of our visit; a few did go into the cafe for a hot cuppa but the more hardy ones made a bee-line for the water gardens and pool with a chain of pools at different levels. It is thought that they are fed by underground springs as they rarely freeze over. The tinkle of gently cascading water could be heard in a few places. Ferns and other water-loving plants flourished round the edges and different species of trees including the willow were reflected in the

water. Roses and fuchsias were to be seen and hydrangeas still showed blue or crimson. One solitary black swan swam lazily about ignoring ducks and dabchicks. (Its mate died in the winter, but there will be another pair soon.) On the way to the vegetable gardens we passed a large dovecote built in 1656, but cannot recall hearing any cooing. We did hear a donkey braying, a friendly beast, and he liked the mints Bernard proffered. He also took a fancy to my coat sleeve. His name was Brambles! A very pleasant and interesting afternoon with a multitude of unusual trees and shrubs (as well as its pools) that were planted so as to give colour throughout the seasons. Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Heber-Percy for allowing us to visit these most beautiful gardens.

On Saturday morning most of us visited Ludlow market, about 12 miles away. Not a large one by any means but it was a pleasant interval and a few bargains were picked up. By this time the weather had changed and we were getting a lot more rain, but it was quite mild. Saturday being a free day it was a good opportunity to look around Church Stretton and note the changes which had taken place since the war years. The Plough is now a solicitor's office, the Vaults has the same exterior but the interior has been extended and now has a large selection of draught beers and wines. The Kings Head and Bucks Head are still pubs owned by two brothers. Tiger Hall and Brockhurst are flats, and Belmont (where the girls were housed) is a private house. Denehurst is a pub/restaurant and is open for various functions and is mainly used by the young. Longmynd Hotel has been extended and 'inmates' of the 1940's said they noticed some alterations inside. We had a happy week there; excellent food, comfortable rooms, obliging and understanding staff. What more could we want?

Hergest Croft Gardens which we visited on Sunday afternoon was quite a distance, through beautiful countryside and tiny villages. Tom thought it would be a treat for our sighted escorts, he was right, although it drizzled on the outward trip, though I am happy to say it did improve a little later on. (Did anyone see the antique shop 'Junk and Disorderly'?) The trees and

shrubs at Hergest Croft were collected from all over the temperate world — many grown from seeds sent back by explorers from China and the Far East. Extending over an area of 50 acres or more there are numerous walks, groves and paths showing to advantage various trees, flowers or shrubs such as the sycamore walk or the maple grove. In the shop there were various plants for sale and as usual a few of us were tempted to buy.

On Monday morning we had a conducted tour of Ludlow by members of the Ludlow Historical Research Group, they gave us the history of the town and of its importance in the County in days gone by. There were many beautifully preserved buildings erected during the 14th and 15th centuries and the Parish Church, where we were taken when it started to rain, was built in 1100 A.D. The Church has beautiful stained glass windows and a unique feature is the tilting seats of the choir stalls. If the chorister became tired during the lengthy period when he was on his feet singing chants or hymns he could lower his bottom on to the tilt to ease the strain on his legs. If, unfortunately, he fell asleep it would drop with a loud bang and no doubt would awaken the rest of the congregation.

We had our winding-up meeting in the afternoon and the Club in toto agreed it had been an excellent week, well thought out and brilliantly executed. Tom was congratulated and we thanked everyone who had helped to make our Gardening Week such a success, including Bob Price and Redana whose knowledge of the neighbourhood played a major part in the selection of the venues. We were pleased to have the company of Mr. and Mrs. Weisblatt at dinner on Saturday and also during the Sunday programme whilst Mary Frith was with us for a few days acting as Tom's escort. Colin Bentley's coaches were in use throughout (sadly one of them was vandalised one night) and the drivers were most considerate with their help and assistance. A final reminiscence: On a building lay-out we noticed a group of bungalows or houses at Church Stretton are to be named 'St. Dunstan's Close', a lasting material reminder of St. Dunstan's connection with Church Stretton.



The cutting of the Anniversary Cake by Leslie Copeland and Stan Tutton.

PEARSON HOUSE CELEBRATION

Story and pictures: David Castleton

Care Assistant, Liza Butcher with Bill Fitzgerald.



Sunday 15th October was the date; Pearson House the place where it was all happening. The occasion was the celebration of the 71st Anniversary of the handing over of West House, as it was then, to St. Dunstan's by the Federation of Grocers' Associations. Forty-three St. Dunstaners with their 26 guests enjoyed a special luncheon before the party really got under way in the Winter Garden where there was dancing to the music of organist, Tony Back, and singing by special guest star Lady, Tony's old English sheepdog, who barked tunefully to 'How Much is that Doggie in the Window' played by her master.

There were no formal speeches after lunch but 'Father of the House', George Pullen, took over the microphone briefly to thank Matron Chris King and the caterers and staff on behalf of his fellow St. Dunstaners.



The Loyal Toast. Ernie Brown, Fred 'Jack' Hobbs and Bob Fearnley are the St. Dunstaners.

Dancing in the Winter Garden.





Harry Wheeler singing along with Tony Back.

Matron King presented some interesting historical information about Pearson House and the building which preceded it on the site.

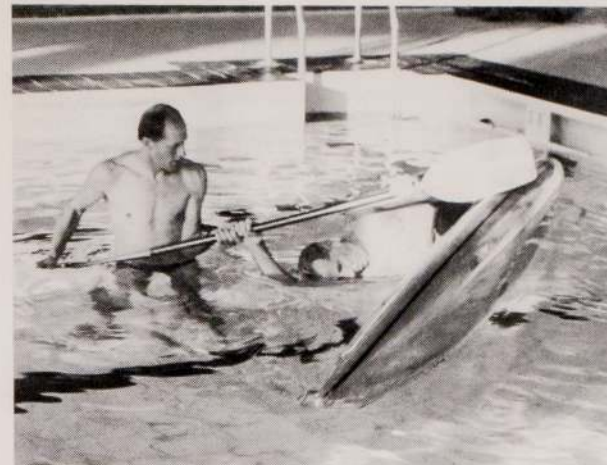
'The construction of Kemp Town began in 1823,' she explained, 'And in 1824 a Major Villeroy Russell, who owned land there, planned to build a large mansion house for his own occupation to be called Portland House and a double row of houses to be known as Portland Place. The width of Portland Place was determined by the width of Portland House — giving it an uninterrupted view of the sea.'

'Work on the big house began in May 1824 and by the summer of 1825 it was well advanced. On September 12th, 1825 it was entirely destroyed by fire.' Matron read a brief extract from a local history which described vividly the efforts of the fireman to save the building as the water supply dried up and the scene as a crowd

gathered and a detachment of Foot Guards ringed the house to maintain order. The glare of flames, it said, was visible as far away as Worthing. Worst of all for the Major was the fact that he was not insured, a contract of insurance was to have been drawn up a week later.

Not surprisingly, the house was never rebuilt, 'Instead three houses were built to form part of Portland Place,' continued Matron, 'West House, Portland House and Portland Lodge. Prior to 1847 West House and Portland House were occupied by the Earl of Abergavenny and Brighton College began its life in Portland House.'

In 1918 St. Dunstan's moved in and since then there have been further rebuildings and renovations but the house still commands the view of the sea down Portland Place. On 15th October it echoed with the sounds of goodwill and good company as it has over 71 years.



RIVER DEEP MOUNTAIN HIGH

Recent visitors to Ian Fraser House were Barry and Gwyneth Ellis. Not long ago Barry had the responsibility of making sure Ray Sheriff did not fall off Crib Goch in Snowdonia. Not satisfied with that adventure Ray Sheriff prevailed upon Barry, master of all trades, to teach him to 'loop the loop' in a canoe. Our pictures show St. Dunstan's great survivor, surviving yet again.



There's nothing quite like ...



Just messing about in boats.

Diary of a Day Trip to Dieppe

by Sue Reynolds

Sometime before July 23rd.

My job at Ian Fraser House is nothing if not varied, and one day I was having my usual fight with the bed boards trying to fit a quart into a pint pot when I was asked by Tom Hart if I could escort him on a day trip to Dieppe with the Amateur Radio Society. I was cheered up no end and readily accepted. Then Tom told me it was a 6 a.m. start, it's a good job I like getting up early.

Saturday July 22nd.

Decide to reclaim my old room in Ian Fraser House and set alarm for 0500 hrs.

Sunday July 23rd.

0500 hrs. Alarm rings and I leap out of bed, have a bath etc. and breakfast on rolls and marmalade brought from home.

0550 hrs. Go to front of Ian Fraser House armed with list of travellers and tickets for whole party. Discover I'm the lucky one who has had breakfast, the general arrangement for tea and toast all round seemed to have gone awry. When Paul James arrives as guest, presumably having breakfasted at home, I'm surprised he is not lynched.

Beryl John, who is not going on the trip, arrives to help count the party on board. So with two women in charge the whole job is completed speedily and efficiently. We set off on time and pick up a couple of people on the way. Before we leave the coach, Ted John does his school master act and tells everyone what time to be back at the ferry terminal, or else.

0700 hrs. Ferry 'Versailles' gets under way. St. Dunstan's party heads straight for the cafeteria and vast supplies of croissants and coffee. The party then disperses around the ship and Tom and I and Ted and Mary Frith, base ourselves in the bar, but as it's a bit early for serious drinking

we do take a stroll around the promenade deck and get organised with hand-held radios.

During the trip we plan our day and all agree that lunch will be a first priority once ashore. Almost two years previously Mary and I had a mini-break in Dieppe and because of the incessant rain we spent most of our time in restaurants and therefore have a fairly extensive knowledge of Dieppe cuisine. We recommend L'Armorie on the quayside and we are all agreed this will be our first port of call. We also discuss the standard of our combined French conversation and decide that my rusty 'A' Level is probably the best, but I have also brought my phrase book in case we hit desperation stakes, remembering the trouble Mary and I had before, when Mary wanted winkles as a starter.

1100 hrs. (our time) Douze heures theirs. St. Dunstan's party disembark (got to get the nautical terms right when there are several ex-Navy types in the party). Actually as it's a combined services operation and we are about to set foot in Normandy perhaps I should say we all landed in Dieppe. Then in accordance with R.A.F. procedure you might say we all taxied to our dispersals, or to put it in plain English, we all went our separate ways. As we planned, our little gang of four head straight for L'Armorie.

12.10 heures (their time). Madame La Patronne shows us to a table and we order an aperitif while we study the menu. We all like the sound of the royale version of the sea food platter so we opt for that and of course, some wine. While waiting for the meal, Ted tries to call up Mick Houlihan, but without success. Mary and I watch the antics of the lobsters in the tank beside our table and give Tom a graphic description. We also watch the preparation of the shellfish that is heading for our platter. Our first inkling of its splendour is

the arrival of an impressive array of cutlery. We each get a pair of nutcrackers (for crab claws), a thing like a forked crochét hook (for winking the flesh out of crabs) and a small wide fork. When the food arrives, Mary and I burst out laughing and have to explain ourselves to the chaps: the platter is enormous, at least 2ft. 6ins. long and about 1ft. 6ins. wide and piled high with every imaginable kind of shell fish and decorated with sea weed and lemons. Perhaps we should call in the rest of St. Dunstan's party to come and help us get through it. The lemons are beautifully cut and each contain a large prawn skewered in place with a hat pin which also doubles as a winkle picker. There is also bread and some lovely Normandy butter in a mushroom shaped cooler which fascinates us all. We all thoroughly enjoy ourselves tucking into the E.E.C. fish mountain, although Mary and I have some qualms when we realise the crabs still contain their 'dead men's fingers', we discuss exactly which bits one needs to discard as we do not feel that the escorts' duty includes poisoning St. Dunstaners, although come to think about it, I seem to recall I fall into the same Chinese zodiac sign as Lucrezia Borgia! Ted also gives up in disgust on the winkles as some of the little blighters are most reluctant to come out of their shells. Instead he has another bash at contacting Mick Houlihan.

This time he is successful and we discover that he is enjoying lunch in a restaurant near the castle in company with Paul James and their wives. Meanwhile, back at the fish mountain, we do appear to be making some headway as Madame clears some of the debris for us. We finally admit defeat on the last remnants of the platter but we still have room for dessert. The Houlihans and James's have been in touch again and have long since finished their meal and started to explore the town. They tell us there is a horse show near the seafront and the shops will close at 3 o'clock. It's nearly that already, so we decide to get our shopping on board the ship.

1500 heures-ish (how's that for Franglaise?) We reel out into the street and head for the sights. We've only got just

over an hour left so we head for the cathedral. Its dedicated to Ste. Jacques and stands in a cobbled square which doubles as a cheese and vegetable market on Saturdays. It is also one of a few buildings in Dieppe to have survived the fire of 1694 and its tower is Fifteenth Century. Fortunately its history does not tax my French too severely because there is a board in English telling us all about it. Out of the Cathedral we stroll around the shopping area and at this stage Tom and I lose Ted and Mary — don't ask me how. Anyway Tom and I take a turn towards the seafront and pass a jazz band playing in a piazza near the church of Ste. Remy. We also pass by the horse show but the highlight of our promenade is the lady who is kicking the automatic loo (like the ones in Leicester Square) because it swallowed her francs and won't open its doors. If my French were up to it I'd point out to her that she's better off locked out of it, than in it.

1600 heures et quart. We return to the ferry terminal where we find the rest of the gang who all seem to have had a good time. We inadvertently find a scheme for jumping the queue to get back on to the boat. Because I hold the ticket for all of us, the Frenchman on duty calls out for all, and Tom and I count everyone back. We wait a while then I leave my name with the chap and details of our party so that if we have missed someone he will let them through.

1730 heures. The ferry 'Chartres' sails for Newhaven with a tired but happy band of St. Dunstaners. We head for the bar and a sortie to the duty free shop as well. We do that in relays so as not to lose our seats in the bar.

2100 hrs. BST. We arrive at Newhaven and it's back on board the bus to Ian Fraser House.

If everyone else enjoyed their time across the channel as much as we did I think I can safely say that the St. Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society had a great day out in Dieppe, on Sunday July 23rd.

Observations

by Patrick Flanagan

The English have been known for generations as a nation of animal lovers, with man's best friend the dog finding a special place in their affections. Now it seems the poor old pooch finds himself under attack from every local authority in the country over his alleged fouling of footpaths and public areas. Granted they do cause a bit of a nuisance, but compared to some of the other problems facing society in the late 20th Century, it's rather insignificant.

Some local authorities have already banned dogs from public parks leaving dog owners with no alternative but to walk their dogs on the streets. One of the reasons which may explain this recent war on dogs is that they are such easy targets. When did you last hear a dog ask a question in the House (don't answer that question) or see a dog writing a letter to *The Times* (don't answer that one either). Dogs of course can't defend themselves against attacks in the media or in the town halls, so they become the ideal target for local politicians in search of a cause (or publicity).

All this diverts our attention from the real villain of the age — the car. It is the true street fouler, the average family car pumping up to half a ton of dangerous chemicals and metals into the atmosphere every year. Yet you will seldom hear our elected representatives denounce cars or call to ban them in public areas. The reason being he/she probably drives one, and the voters that keep them in power do likewise. (The vote has yet to be extended to the dog).

Whole sections of cities and countryside have been destroyed to make way for motorways and still the roads are congested. Luckily, not everyone at the top is blind to the motor madness. The Prince of Wales recently called for cities to be built on a more human scale, where people come first, and machines would serve, not rule.

There is no precedent in history where a civilisation become so dependent and so obsessed by a mode of transport. The Romans began to have the same problem 2,000 years ago, but being the pragmatists that they were solved their problem in a stroke, or rather with a stroke. They also had traffic problems with the original form of horsepower. The peace of the great city was shattered by the YUPPIES (or Pharisees) of the day. Turbo charged chariots and souped-up stallions were milling through the city causing numerous accidents. Finally, a senatorial decree was passed forbidding all vehicles entering the city during the hours of daylight. Violation of the decree resulted in a fine and a public flogging.

Perhaps if modern-day traffic wardens donned a toga and armed themselves with a whip there would be less parking problems. It would certainly lend a new meaning to the expression 'whiplash injuries,' meanwhile it's time to enter the arena and face gladiatorial combat with the civic authorities i.e. take my dogs for a walk.

THE LATE ERNIE COOKSON

Mrs. Joan Penfold, Ernie's sister, sent us this further information on his service before coming to St. Dunstan's.

In 1937, Ernie enlisted in the Royal Engineers and, after training, served four years in Gibraltar with the rank of Sapper, of which he always remained inordinately proud, returning to the U.K. in 1942.

In April 1943, when he was stationed at St. Mary's Barracks, Chatham, he was injured in an air raid. A barrack wall collapsed, killing another Sapper and leaving Ernie with severe head and eye injuries, resulting in his blindness.



Milton's Cottage, at Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire.

JOHN MILTON'S COTTAGE

by John C. Colligan, C.B.E.

The birthplace of Louis Braille at Coupvray is known worldwide and has rightly been recognised as an international place of pilgrimage for blind people. Far less well-known is another place situated in the heart of idyllic Buckinghamshire countryside in rural England, set in the ancient village of Chalfont St. Giles, which itself is over 1,000 years old.

John Milton, probably the world's greatest blind poet, prominent in public life in the days of Cromwell and the Restoration, came from London to this cottage in 1665, with his third wife and one of his daughters to escape from the Great Plague and from political persecution. Two of his great works *'Eikonoclastes'* and *'Defence of the English People'* had been ordered to be burnt by the common hangman, and he went for a while in fear of imprisonment and was forced to keep in hiding.

A disappointed, disillusioned man of over 50 years of age, he turned his atten-

tion to writing poetry, notably the completion of *'Paradise Lost'* followed by the epic *'Paradise Regained'*. He had some years previously become totally blind.

The cottage itself, which was built towards the end of the 16th Century, is of sufficient age and interest to merit a history of its own. Perfectly preserved and beautifully situated in a lovely old English garden, it remains a reminder of life in the 16th and 17th Centuries and contains a museum of many relics of John Milton and a library which contains first editions of *'Paradise Lost'* and *'Paradise Regained'*, translations of Milton's works in many languages, together with a copy in braille; portraits and busts of Milton including a copy of Van der Guchte (1792), etchings by Cipriani (1760) and other memorabilia including letters, documents and a lock of Milton's hair.

The cottage is maintained by the Society of the Friends of Milton's Cottage in the U.K. and the U.S.A., and occasional



John Milton.

grants from Trusts and Local Authorities. It is open from March to October, except on Mondays (apart from spring and summer bank holidays). Parties (especially of St. Dunstaners) would receive a very warm welcome from the Resident Warden, Colonel Douglas Clark.

Chalfont St. Giles is easily accessible from London either via Marylebone or Baker Street (LT) stations.

John Milton's Cottage
Chalfont St Giles
Bucks HP8 4JH
Telephone: (024 07) 2313

Admission cost: Adults £1, Children (under 15) 40p. Parties of 20+ 80p each.

Opening Times: March 1st - October 31st except Mondays. Open also on Spring and Summer Bank Holidays. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2 - 6 p.m. Sundays 2 - 6 p.m.

EDITORS NOTE: The Trustees of John Milton's Cottage urgently require braille copies of John Milton's works. Any St. Dunstaner who may have a spare copy should contact the Editor, at Headquarters.

JOTTA

by Norman Hopkins

This is a braille computer, produced by Pathway Communications at Hereford, and a few weeks ago I went to their offices for a demonstration. I am a complete novice in this field and would not know a 'Data base' from an 'Ascii'. However I have been looking round for some time for a word processor to suit my requirements, and have settled on Jotta.

The machine is light and portable, measuring approximately 7 x 5 x 2 inches and has rechargeable batteries. The keyboard has the six braille keys in a shallow V formation and a function key positioned between them and the space bar. The rear of the computer houses sockets for: battery charger, earphone, printer, embosser and disc drive.

Jotta's memory is arranged in six files, each with a capacity of 20 thousand braille characters, and will take grades 1 and 2 braille.

The built-in speech synthesiser is more intelligible than most and has means of altering tone, speed and volume. The battery lasts for about six hours before it needs recharging but it can still be used whilst on charge. Jotta has a memory protection battery in addition to the main rechargeable ones. The unit has an interesting 'user abbreviations' feature which allows you to make up and store your own code as it were.

I have been teaching myself from a fairly comprehensive manual and find the machine very easy to use. My typewriter is already redundant I feel! The Jotta is an ideal tool for the brailist for taking notes, writing letters, keeping directories of telephone numbers and addresses and for keeping records of cassettes or gramophone records, etc. There is greater potential obviously if used with a disc drive.

Although I am getting used to the keyboard now, I felt that the function key might be better placed above the braille keys as I was in a little confusion at first with this key and the space bar. This is a minor point and just needs application and practise. I am well satisfied with Jotta.



Cousin Bette

Author: Honore de Balzac
Reader: Andrew Timothy
Duration: 15.25 hours
Catalogue number: 2293

Balzac, arguably the greatest novelist of all time, wrote "Cousin Bette" when he was at the very summit of his powers. In it, he turns his all-seeing gaze onto the vice and crime of Paris's "demi-monde" in the 1830's, and, with his descriptive genius, he enables his reader to borrow his eyes and ears. The result is a wonderful succession of rapidly changing scenes, packed with unforgettable characters, each with his or her strengths and weaknesses. There is nothing dull or heavy about this book, as it tells the story of the Hulot family, who have old-fashioned notions of honour which make them vulnerable in a money loving, money grabbing society. It also tells of Bette, their poor relation, a dark-complexioned old maid, who hides her even darker malice and resentment behind a veneer of devoted gratitude.

What happens in the book as Bette seeks the Hulot's ruin, I'm not prepared to tell you. What I will say though, is that I'm confident nobody is ever going to tell me they failed to enjoy finding out.

A wonderful succession of rapidly changing scenes

* * * * *

The Healing Knife

Author: George Sava
Reader: John Webster
Duration: 10.25 hours
Catalogue number: 2016

What pathetic claptrap this is! What balderdash! The chap who wrote the nonsense in this book must have been both a humbug and a fool if he thought anyone would be gullible enough to swallow such tripe. And to call it an "autobiography", well, you might as well call a crocodile "a long-nosed truffle-hound".

I asked for it, by the way, because I thought I'd receive the life story of a great man of medicine, but as soon as I reached the part where the author in his youth, presumably working from instinct, performs open heart surgery on his friend, with a jack-knife and no anaesthetic, then I knew they'd sent me "a tale told by an idiot"; not the life of a great man.

"If you can believe this sort of stuff", they used to say, "you can knit fog and plait sawdust". There's one episode, for instance, when Sava claims to have "hitched a train ride" half-way across Europe sitting astride a buffer, if you please. What sort of stupid buffer would believe that one? I have more faith in my two Irish pals, when one says he once paddled UP Niagara Falls and the other swears he watched him do it.

Listening to someone blowing his own trumpet, was never amongst my top-ten favourite pastimes, and when some chump like George Sava wants to tell me he is the bravest, the cleverest, the noblest and the greatest, I try my best to keep him away from my friends. So I suppose what I'm saying here is don't touch "The Healing Knife" with a barge-pole, because even as a fairy-story it's a bit grim.

Open heart surgery with a jack-knife

* * * * *

D. F. Robinson's

GARDENING NOTES

First, may I wish all of you gardeners the very best for Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope that you have all the best in the flower garden and greenhouse and good quality crops of vegetables. Now is a good time to dig over all the empty places and put some manure or compost on top making sure there is no frost about. Some trees, shrubs and perennials can be planted as long as the weather is suitable. It is also a good time to get repairs to the greenhouse, frames, sheds and tools done. Ensure that you have plenty of good pots and seed troughs which you will need soon.

Fruit

Pruning of all fruit trees can be carried out till the end of the month if there is no frost about. Spray the trunks of the fruit trees with insecticide and put on grease bands. Put the bands on the trunks about 1½ to 2 feet above ground level, again this should be done in frost free weather. Wait until the spring before planting any trees. Currants and gooseberries should be pruned now. Strawberries can be planted in pots in the greenhouse early in the New Year. Use 5 inch size containers using a peat sand soil compost.

Vegetables

Keep the hoe going regularly between any growing crops and get all other empty beds dug over for the coming months. Get the trays for the seed potatoes ready for the New Year. Check over the stored potatoes, onions, carrots etc., and throw out any item which shows any sign of rot. Rhubarb could be covered for forcing in order to give you a good early crop for the kitchen. Some broad beans and peas can be sown in warm areas to give an early crop for the kitchen. Lettuce and radish can also be sown in the greenhouse.

Flowers

December is a good month to plant climbers. Give them a good bed which has been well dug over with compost or manure placed in the bottom to give them a good start. Make sure they are set in well before pressing in with your feet and put in a stake and tie as protection against strong winds in the early stages of growth. The empty places along the border should be dug over thoroughly and given a dose of manure or compost ready for plants in the New Year. Give shelter to the bulbs which show signs of growth especially in hard weather. Some of the perennials such as carnations, pinks and pansies should be pressed firmly down in the soil since severe winds can take them out of position and expose them to frost. Some of the roses can still be planted but it would be better to leave planting until early spring.

Greenhouse

Keep the temperature under glass well above freezing at about 40°F - 50°F, but well above this if you have a very severe winter. However, do give plenty of air by opening the windows on the side opposite the wind, remembering to close again in the afternoon. Keep the plants which are growing well near the glass so that they have plenty of light. Move the pots from time to time so that they grow at an even height. Give them water every so often and an occasional feed. Pick off all bad and dead leaves. Plants which are in full flower can be taken into the house for a good show, but place them in a position with plenty of light. Azaleas should be forced now but cacti kept dry. Chrysanthemums which are going out of flower should be cut back to give cuttings for next year. When all the cuttings have been obtained the plants can be destroyed. Freesias, Roman hyacinth and narcissi can be forced. Fumigate the house if greenfly or any other pests are about.

A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

May Anderson

Glen Clova in the Angus Hills is my spiritual home. Such names as Braemanzion, Tarrabuckle and Newbiggin are music to me. It's over 50 years since I first climbed the Dreisyh and Broadcain, sniffed the air of Corrie Winter, crossed Jock's Road and the Capel Track, roughed it in Sandy Hillocks hut, or sat around the harpers fire with the Tilly lamp hissing and the budgie tinkling the bell in its cage.

My wife Margaret and I have done pretty well everything there is to do in Glen Clova, including the top of every hill, big and small, which encloses it. It's a fact that of all the people now living and working in the Glen not one of them has anything like as long a connection with it as I have.

We were delighted to find out that our St. Dunstan's visitor, May Anderson, knew Glen Clova of old, an arrangement was made, and only recently we found ourselves surveying the glen from what they call the View Point. The River Esk glinting below, Cairn Derg and the Scorries against the sky, Sitka spruce rustling in the breeze. A thousand memories thronged my mind, adventures in these parts of old, activities of a cannier kind as a youth gave way to middle age, and middle age to what can only be called the onset of decrepitude. May has her memories too, in particular of Big Jim Fearn who used to drive the Glen bus. Deep-voiced, fag-smoking, and with an eye for whatever moved, deer, fox, wildcat or bird, between Dykehead of Cortachy at the bottom of the Glen and Braedownie 15 miles up. Look at this, las-

sies, he used to say, stopping the bus and getting them all out; 'there's a starling nesting here, as you'll see, in the Wester Eggie boy's letter-box.' Or he would point up the hill at Kilburn where a roe-deer had caught his eye amongst the boulders and bracken of the Crag of Inchdowrie. Again, he would empty his bus at Gella Bridge, where the road crosses the Esk, to show passengers where the salmon had made their redds, a kingfisher might be seen, or in the swirling water a dipper dived after minnow and stickleback.

May could transact her St. Dunstan's business here in the living-room at Roseangle, Tarty our cat on her knee, the grandfather ticking, but how much more pleasantly could she do so with the breeze of Glen Clova about her, first sniffed in her girlhood, the vastness of the Corrie and hill around her, and sweet and silvery from the forest below, the song of the first willow warbler.

CLUB NEWS

BRIGHTON CLUB - BRIDGE

Sunday October 28th 1989

Individuals - Results:

1st R. Goding and Miss Sturdy	59.0
3rd Mrs. Tebbit	58.0
4th Mrs. Hannant	56.8
5th R. Palmer	50.0
6th B. Allen	47.7
7th B. Phillips	46.6
8th W. Lethbridge, Mrs. McMillan and Mrs. Barnes	45.4
11th J. Huk and Mrs. McCauley	43.2

Pairs results:

1st J. Huk and Miss Sturdy	58.3
2nd B. Allen and Mrs. A. Clements	54.2
3rd B. Phillips and Mrs. Barnes	50.7
4th W. Lethbridge, Mrs. McPhearson, R. Goding and Mr. McMillan	50.0
6th C. Clements and Miss Stenning	46.6
7th Bob Evans and Mrs. Barker	45.8
8th Mrs. Evans and Mrs. McCauley	44.4

FAMILY NEWS

CORRECTION

In the November issue of the *Review* we stated that the late Mr. John Inness, of Batley, West Yorkshire, retired in 1946, when in fact he worked until 1976. We apologise for our mistake, and again send our sympathy to his widow and family.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Mr. Albert Fleet, of Paignton, who raised over £200 for cancer research by raffling the large toy English sheepdog that he made.

Mrs. Peggy Giffard, wife of *Mr. Dennis Giffard*, of East Preston, Sussex, who has been awarded a Certificate of Civic Pride for Voluntary Services to the Community by the Chairman of Arun District Council (Councillor Lyons) at a garden party on September 2nd.

Mr. F. R. Mills, of Tavistock, who received first prize for carrots and second prize for a wooden lorry in the Devon County Show at Exmouth. The show which took place earlier this year was organised by Devon County Association for the Blind.

Geraldine Morris, daughter of *Mr. and Mrs. David Morris*, of Newquay, Cornwall, who obtained an Honours Degree in physical geography from Plymouth Polytechnic, in June.

Conrad Wagstaff, son of the late 'Curly' *Wagstaff* and Mrs. *Wagstaff* of, Whimple, Devon, on passing the entrance examination into the R.A.F.

BIRTHS

Congratulations to:

Jamie and Shauna Cuthbertson, of Glasgow, on the birth of a baby girl, Megan Jane, on October 16th.

GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. F. Bentley, of Saltdean, on the birth of a grandson, Robert Alex, on September 26th, in California, to their son, Robert and his wife, Janet.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Blackmore, of Stubbington, Hants, on the birth of two grandchildren. Maria Jane, who was born on July 11th, to their daughter, Christine, and her husband, Steven Wearn, and Matthew Robert, who was born on August 2nd, to their son, Paul, and his wife, Sue.

Mr. and Mrs. George Roake, of Saltdean, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Lauren Louise, on September 1st, to their daughter, Alison and her husband, Stuart.

Stan Tutton, of Pearson House, on the birth of a grandson, Luke Nathan, on June 19th, to his daughter, Jeanette, and her husband, Mike.

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Simmon, of Harrogate, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, Catharine Elizabeth, who was born on September 21st.

Stan Tutton, of Pearson House, on the birth of a great grandson, Jason Christopher, on June 29th, to his grand-daughter, Elaine and her husband, Keith.

Family News *Continued*

MARRIAGES

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. David Clarke, of Sevenoaks, on the marriage of their son, Rory, to Miss Carol Pawsey, on May 6th.

Mrs. Patricia Lovejoy, of Soberton, on the marriage of her daughter, Julia Rose, to Russell Brinkman, at Soberton Parish Church, on September 23rd.

RUBY WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Minter, of Ruislip, who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on October 29th.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Statter, of Alveston, Bristol, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on October 29th.

DEATHS

We offer condolences to:

The family and friends of Mrs. C. V. Cumberland, of Burgess Hill, widow of the late *Richard Cumberland*, who passed away on October 4th, aged 85.

Mr. C. Fisher, of Ower, Hants, on the death of his mother, Mrs. Daisy Fisher, on September 22nd.

The family and friends of Mrs. E. Leigh, of Warrington, Cheshire, widow of the late *Maynard Leigh*, who died on October 5th.

Mrs. Isobel Parsons, wife of *Albert Parsons*, of Southwick, West Sussex, on the death of her sister, Mrs. Hilda McColgan, on August 12th, followed by the death of her brother, Mr. Roy Constable, on August 15th.

The family and friends of Mrs. E. Shaw, widow of the late *James Shaw*, of Upper Basildon, who passed away on October 13th.

In Memory

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

W. Black

It is with sorrow that we record the death of Bill Black who passed away on October 10th, after an illness which he suffered for some months.

He had been wounded by a booby trap explosion while serving as a Gunner with the Army during the Second World War, losing his sight and both hands.

It was after meeting Tom and Audrey Gaygan during a visit they made to New Zealand that Bill and his wife, Betty, were invited to have a holiday with us at Ian Fraser House to coincide with the Reunion of our Handless St. Dunstaners in 1987. They enjoyed every moment of their visit and made many friends with whom they continued to keep in touch after returning home.

We extend our sympathy to Betty and all members of the family.

J. Britton, York and Lancaster Regiment

Joseph Britton, formerly of Kinsley, passed away at Pearson House on October 28th, aged 75 years. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1945.

Mr. Britton was a miner in Yorkshire before enlisting in the Regular Army in 1933. He served in World War Two as a Lance Corporal with the 2nd Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment until his capture by German Forces in 1942. After being liberated in 1945, he was wounded in a booby trap explosion at Regensburg, losing his sight and both hands as well as suffering impairment to his hearing. Despite his disabilities he became a proficient typist and trained at St. Dunstan's for shop settlement. He and his wife, Emma, ran a successful fish and chip business until 1960. Mrs. Britton died in 1968 and a year later he remar-

ried. Sadly, his second wife also died, and in 1971 he became a permanent resident at Pearson House.

We extend our sympathy to his sister and all members of the family.

D. J. Purches, Royal Navy

We are sad to record the death of David Purches, of Colney Heath, St. Albans, on October 31st, after a long illness. He was 49 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1968.

Mr. Purches enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1956, and took his discharge in 1959. In 1967 he had his first kidney transplant and over the next ten years he had two more. On his admission to St. Dunstan's he trained as a telephonist and from 1971 he was employed by Hatfield Polytechnic, where he was a popular and much valued member of staff until his retirement in 1986. From then on his health deteriorated steadily, but throughout he was looked after devotedly by his wife. In earlier days he had been keen on sport and in 1973, he won the Archie Brown Trophy for walking. His main hobby was gardening which he continued to do as often as possible despite his illness.

We offer our deepest sympathy to his wife, Maxine, to whom he was happily married for twenty-eight years, and their son, Kevin.

L. V. Smith, Royal Engineers

Leslie Vernon Smith, of Lancing, passed away at home on October 25th, aged 64. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1967.

Mr. Smith enlisted in April 1943, and served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers until his discharge in 1947. In 1951, he married Margaret Hind, daughter of St. Dunstaner, the late Mr. B. Hind, and they had five children. The family lived in the Midlands for some years where Mr. Smith farmed a small holding, which he greatly enjoyed, preferring the countryside to town life. He was a skilled basketmaker, and his hobbies included breeding birds, gardening and D.I.Y.

We send our sympathy to his widow Margaret, his children and grandchildren, and all other members of the family.

G. E. W. Young, Royal Tank Regiment

Mr. Geoffrey Ernest William Young, of Telcombe Cliffs, passed away at Pearson House, on October 18th, aged 78. He had been a St. Dunstaner since 1987.

At the end of 1940, Mr. Young enlisted in the Royal Tank Regiment with the rank of Trooper. While on active service at El Alamein he suffered a severe injury to one eye and, as a result, was discharged from the Army in 1945. Mr. Young worked as a printer until his retirement. Mr. Young worked as a printer until his retirement at the age of 69, but unfortunately, in his remaining eye deteriorated.

Geoffrey Young's main interest was listening to sporting events. He also enjoyed radio and talking books as well as visits to Ian Fraser House with his wife.

We extend our sympathy to his widow, Anne, with whom he celebrated fifty years of happy marriage in June, 1987, and to their son and daughter-in-law to whom he was devoted.

J. J. Wheeler, Royal Engineers

John James Wheeler, of Wembley, died suddenly on October 23rd, aged 69. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 29 years.

Mr. Wheeler enlisted in the Royal Engineers in 1940, and took his discharge in 1946. In 1944, he lost the sight in one eye due to an accident but did not become a St. Dunstaner until 1960, when five operations had failed to save the sight in his other eye. He trained for industry and worked with three London firms until 1969, when he took early retirement due to ill health. He became a very good quota worker for St. Dunstan's and when the stores closed turned his skills to toymaking. In 1982, he helped organise the picture framing technique for the course at Ian Fraser House.

Mr. Wheeler's hobbies were gardening, fishing and radio. In later years he and his wife enjoyed spending the summer months in their caravan in Essex. They celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary in 1983, and their first grandchild was born last year.

We extend our sympathy to his widow, Mary, their daughter, Sylvia, and to all the members of the family.