

# St Dunstons Review

April 1990



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Free to St. Dunstaners

APRIL 1990

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Cover Picture: Mr. Norman Follis who was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire seen here with his wife, Joan, outside Buckingham Palace. Norman received his honour for services to the blind and the community in Wales.

## From the Chairman

On the 22nd of this month, 75 years ago, the Germans first used Chlorine Gas – in the 2nd Battle of Ypres. No need for me to enlarge on its devastating effects which are personally known to some readers of this Review. Suffice it to say that it choked you to death. During the following two years Phosgene and Mustard were also extensively used. In this St. Dunstan's 75th Anniversary Year it is relevant to recall that in one form or another it was Gas that was a main contributor to the build up of numbers in the early days. Gas was not used operationally in World War II. The Germans had developed some particularly beastly and sophisticated variants (the Nerve Group – tasteless, odourless, colourless, largely undetectable and agonisingly lethal) but fear of massive retaliation in kind was sufficient deterrent.

All war is unpleasant. It brings out the worst as well as the best in people. But there is something supremely vile and inhuman about resort to Chemical and Biological weapons of mass destruction. Let us hope that the current international negotiations seeking to ban their possession and use will prove effective – though there must always remain the risk of some rabid nut-case developing his own 'back garden thing' and running amok.

And so back to eyes. You have all heard of lasers and probably know much more about them than I do. Their skilful use in the medical field amounts to a breakthrough and, as technology develops, may in time considerably replace the surgeon's knife. Militarily they can revolutionise accuracy in weapon aiming. They can also blind the enemy but so far the application of this facility on a wide scale presents technical problems.

I leave you to think about whether the development of such an 'incapacitator' would be for good or evil.

*Henry Leach*



## NOTICE BOARD



### TROOPING THE COLOUR

It is anticipated that there will be tickets allocated again this year for Trooping the Colour, on Saturday, June 16th. The ceremony will begin at 11.00 a.m., with everyone being seated by 10.15 a.m. Tickets will also be available for those wishing to attend the private view of the Royal Tournament held at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 11th.

St. Dunstaners who wish to apply should contact Frances Casey, Homes Bookings Clerk, at Headquarters, by Monday, May 14th.

### THE WAR DIARIES OF WEARY DUNLOP

St. Dunstaners, particularly those who were prisoners of the Japanese, will remember the name of Sir Edward Dunlop. In 1987 *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop* was published. This account of his time as a captured army surgeon fighting for the lives of his fellow prisoners: as a doctor dealing with the terrible effects of overwork, malnutrition and tropical disease and as a senior officer dealing with their Japanese captors was compiled secretly on scraps of paper. It forms a unique record of the lives of prisoners who survived those terrible years and those who, sadly, did not.

A second edition was published on 12th March by Viking Books, and is now available in bookshops. For anyone interested in the history of the Second World War, or indeed, interested in the capacity of human beings to survive unimaginable hardships, humiliation, torture, disease and despair, this is a second opportunity to add an important history to their library. It has 138 illustrations, many of them reproductions of drawings made in the

camps by Jack Chalker, Ray Parkin and other artists among the prisoners.

*The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop – Java and the Burma-Thailand Railway 1942-1945; 401 pages, illustrated. Viking Books £17.95.*

### ADDITIONS TO CASSETTE LIBRARY

The following may be obtained by sending the appropriate number of blank cassettes to the PR Department.

G46. C90. Sandbags and Tilly Lamps. A collection of old soldiers' tales!

G47. 3 x C90's. The Night of the Full Moon, by Laurens van der Post.

### NEW LONDON PHONE CODES

From May 6th this year if you want to call central London from somewhere in the U.K., instead of dialling 01 as you do now, you will need to dial 071 before an inner London number, and 081 before an outer London number. For calls within London, you will only need to put 071/081 before the number if you are dialling from one area to another across the 071/081 boundary.

The new number for St. Dunstan's from outside will be 071 723 5021 from outside London, or the outer London area. For anyone living within these areas it is important to inform relations and friends of the new numbers, along with changing letterheads or stationery on which your old number is printed.

For further information about the London code change you can call 0800 800 873 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., 7 days a week.



## TIMES REMEMBERED

*Third in an anniversary year series of interviews.*

## TEMBANI

*Max and Joan Ash talking with David Castleton*

During the Second World War it was much too dangerous to return wounded servicemen to this country through the Mediterranean. Their route home was via Cape Town and so St. Dunstan's established a preliminary training centre there at Wynberg in 1942. Mr. Norman Kennedy loaned his house, Tembani, with its three acres of grounds and Mrs. Chadwick Bates set up the centre with Miss Hester Pease as Matron.

The first two St. Dunstaners to enter Tembani were Max Ash and the late Jack Vincent. Max's journey to Tembani began in 1940, when he joined the Royal Marines. 'I actually registered under the militia in June 1939 but I wasn't called up until November 1940. I went to the Marine barracks in Eastney on my 22nd birthday, the 14th November. I did my square training there. I went in as an electro-technician and after training I was transferred to a unit that was called the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation. On February 4th we left the Clyde for the Middle East, via Freetown, Cape Town eventually arriving at Suez in the middle of April, '41.'

Max was blinded by an accidental explosion while checking a fault on a telephone exchange. A detonator had accidentally been left in the spares box: 'The Commanding Officer asked me if I would

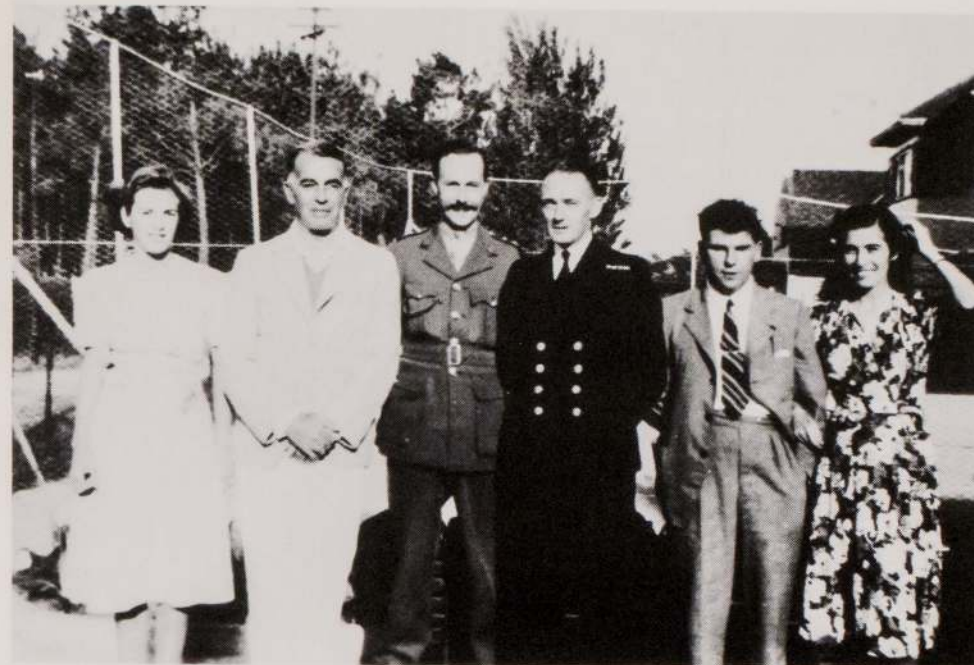
have a look at the telephone connections for the Commander's office because they were having faults on it. He was unable to get through and the bell didn't ring. I didn't have any tools but I took off the front glass of the exchange, where the lights show up and I put my hand into the spares box and took out what I thought was a condenser. I thought I would use one end to poke in the hole to see if the connection was bad at the back. I pushed it in and found that was what it was, the bell rang, and I thought I'll just make sure again. When I put it in again the other end touched on the frame of the exchange and it was an earth return system and, of course, instead of a condenser it was a detonator. There was one big flash, I couldn't see and I wondered what was what. The fellow that was on duty let out a shout and it was panic stations. I didn't lose consciousness, funnily enough. They got a towel and wrapped it round me and I was rushed off to the hospital.

'I caught the full force of the explosion in the face because of looking to see where I was poking the wire. They operated and removed the remains of my eyes and I was in hospital there for about four or five weeks.' After that Max was sent by hospital ship to Durban and from there by train to Cape Town.

### Cape Town

'I was told I was being sent to Cape Town where St. Dunstan's was going to open this temporary transit camp, Tembani. I had a military medical orderly who travelled with me. We were on the train for two nights. We eventually arrived in Cape Town. It was the middle of December and Tembani hadn't been opened then so I went into Wynberg Military Hospital. When I was out at the hospital who should I meet but a blinded South African, Jack Vincent.

That evening Mrs. Chadwick Bates, the Secretary of St. Dunstan's in South Africa, came up to see me and tell me all about St. Dunstan's and she gave me a braille watch, which was a marvellous thing really, because I could tell the time without having to call out to somebody.'



*(From left to right) Joan's sister, Mary Clement, her father, Uncle Redvers, Commander Bennett, a friend of the family, Max and Joan at the Clements' home at Rondebosch only about 4 miles from Tembani. Mziti, the name of the house is a Zulu name meaning Chief.*

One of the first things Max discovered was the warm hospitality extended by South Africans. 'When I travelled out to the Middle East, we stopped at Cape Town and while we were ashore I met a couple of South Africans in an hotel. They took us up the side of the mountain to a place called Kloof Nek where we could have a view of Cape Town at night when all the lights were lit up. All I knew was that his name was Pearce and he had a garage in Cape Town.

'While I was in hospital there I made enquiries and they were able to trace him and he had a married sister living in one of the Cape Town suburbs. They came to visit me and I spent my first Christmas in South Africa in their house. They were very kind to me and it was amazing to me at Christmas to be sat out on a lawn in the sun. They were a very nice family, there was man and wife and three daughters.

In January 1942, Tembani opened with its first two St. Dunstaners, Jack Vincent and Max Ash. At first Max was anxious to

be on his way home to Burnham-on-Sea, 'I did feel that I would like to be home as soon as possible but everything depended on the availability of hospital ships. Every so often a hospital ship did come into Cape Town and then you could be sent home but they were very infrequent. So I was waiting for transport home.

'After being there for a few weeks I changed my mind and felt it would be better if I gained a certain amount of independence before going home. We'd started to learn braille and typing. They started training quite quickly in the building that they had. They didn't have many facilities there. It had a big lounge and dining room and then they just had one room between the dining room and the Matron's office and that's all they had at the beginning. Jack and I started to learn braille being taught by a South African blind person by the name of Helm, Wilfred Helm. He was a real South African and he also started a course on basket work. He actually was a basket maker and



The front of Tembani.

worked from home. We used to do braille in the morning and basket work in the afternoon.

'The real training didn't get under way for a couple of months and then it was limited to braille, this bit of basket work and typing. Gradually more came in. We'd been there about five weeks when Harry Petty was the next to arrive. After a while, as more began to come in, they must have realised that the building was not going to be big enough for the numbers that were going to pass through. They built an annexe on the tennis court to provide dormitory accommodation and training facilities. These facilities became quite good because there were nice big rooms for basketry, they had a small telephone exchange so that those interested in that could get a little bit of early training. There was a room for the teaching of typing and the typing teacher was a Mrs. Spender, of course she got nick-named 'Sus', and then some more joined the staff,

a Mrs. Lancaster, who taught braille and Latin — that was for the physiotherapists.

'Roughly, by the middle of '42 there must have been around ten St. Dunstaners and gradually the numbers crept up until, when we moved into the new annexe, there must have been about 16 and some had come and gone by then. Some came and were lucky and only stayed a matter of weeks and some, months. I was probably there the longest, because I stayed 20 months. I suppose it would have been about the middle of 1942 that we received the first doubly handicapped ones, like Jimmy Ellis and David Bell and Ronnie Vincent. There was a very happy atmosphere there. Everybody got on well with one another.'

#### A strange thing

Tembani was in the suburb of Wynberg, 'It was on the side of the mountain about seven or eight miles out of Cape Town in a

beautiful area. There was one very strange thing. When it was taken over by St. Dunstan's, they removed a lot of ivy that was growing all across the entrance and they found a flaming torch like St. Dunstan's badge. The name Tembani is an African word meaning hope.'

By another coincidence the building was shaped like an aeroplane fuselage as is Ian Fraser House but there the resemblance ended: 'The body of the building which was the lounge and the dining room and office and one wing at one end was the kitchen and the housekeeper's quarters and the other end was another wing, a larger wing, which, in the beginning was the Matron's room and two bedrooms that were used as dormitories. We could sleep about six or eight in the main house and that is really why we had to expand. It was two storey at either end, single in the middle in its own lovely grounds.'

Joan Ash took up the description here: 'It had a lovely long drive going up to what we call in South Africa not a balcony but a stoop, like a long verandah. If anybody was going on duty there you had to walk up this long drive which wound through beautiful gardens. It was lovely.' Joan became a V.A.D. at Tembani, she also became the reason why Max did not want to hurry home.

She came to Tembani through her friendship with a V.A.D. who was already there, Laura Mullins, who married the late Jimmy Ellis, 'I was about 21 and South African born. My parents came from Bristol, they went out in 1921 and I was born soon after they arrived. I wanted to be a nurse but you see, my father had a business, a Bristol based paper manufacturing company, and he was sent out to Cape Town to get the firm going.

'When the war broke out and I was only about 19, I suppose, all his men were leaving and going up to North Africa and he wanted me to go in on the clerical side because I was good at figures. I didn't want to because you don't like working for your own father. He put it to me that I was helping the war effort by taking the place of the men who were going away so I was only doing the Red Cross work voluntarily in the evenings and at weekends.

'Laura said to me, "Why don't you come up to St. Dunstan's and have an interview with Matron Pease?" So I did and that's how it happened. I was still working during the day. I used to go two or three evenings a week and sometimes weekends and the first people I saw, the first night I was there, were Norman Perry and Ronnie Vincent and Max was sort of in the doorway of the lounge, I don't think I spoke to Max that first night.

'I was nervous on my first night because I didn't know what Hester Pease was like, matrons are usually very stern people, but she wasn't at all, not when you knew her — she was like a mother. Our uniform was royal blue with a starched white apron with a red cross on and a starched veil. I was dressed up with my shoes polished as if I was going on parade and Ronnie Vincent caught hold of me from the back — his arms clasped round me, Norman Perry took my veil and my belt and my shoes while Ronnie held me and then hid them. I was really frightened to death. I thought well, my first night and now I am going to have the sack. It was a start but that's how it happened.'

'When Joan started', Max said, 'I took a liking to her straight away and I used to make a bee-line when she came on duty to make sure that I nabbed her. I used to get her to read the Life of Sir Arthur Pearson which really, I suppose, was an excuse in a way and it gradually went on from there.

'Once a month on a Wednesday night we used to have what we called a guest night when there was entertainment arranged and somebody would come and play the piano or sing some songs or tell some stories. You could invite a guest and sometimes it finished up with a bit of a dance if you could make room in the lounge.'

'I don't suppose the staff had any experience with blind people but they never fussed us. They never pestered to want to take us or worry whether we could find our way around the building and the grounds.' Joan commented, 'It didn't worry any of us, yet none of us had ever met blind people before. It didn't bother us a bit but we were a bit sort of naive, I think, some of us V.A.D.s.'

St. Dunstaners helped one another said

Max, 'When someone new came one of the old boys used to show them around. It was amazing how quickly they all adapted to it. I can't really remember anybody who was really down in the dumps there, not miserable.

'A little bit later on the numbers got so big that a Mr. Cohen, who lived in the next house to St. Dunstan's, allowed us to use one wing of his house as an overflow. To start with he and his wife were kind enough to let us use their swimming pool and we used to be able to go over there and have a swim whenever we wanted to. Then they offered us part of their house. There were three bedrooms, two bathrooms and I was one of the St. Dunstaners who moved in.

'There was an old chap, he was an ex-Captain in the Pioneers, a real Army type, Captain Blagden. He used to take us rowing on a lake near Simonstown, the naval base and on rambles across country. He was a very active, fit man and when we had this facility at Mr. Cohen's house he slept over there in one of the bedrooms so that they had a sighted person there in case there was any problem. They were very good to us, the Cohens, very generous people.'

Max went through his training courses: 'I did braille, I did my typing to the pass level, I think it was 45 words per minute, and I did a full course of basketwork — right through shopping baskets, waste-paper baskets, soiled linen baskets, trays and picnic baskets — I went through about 23 different kinds and I thought that that was what I might be doing when I came home but things altered ...'

#### Change of plans

Max's plans for his future life were altered with the arrival of that new V.A.D., Joan Clement, for that was her name before her marriage to Max, and an account of the events that led up to that reads like the plot of a novel.

Let Joan take up the story as their attachment to each other became closer: 'My father was a very generous person. Whenever convoys came in to Cape Town he used to go down in the car and wait at

the dock gates to invite some of the chaps coming ashore to our home. He was very careful, having three daughters, but he was very good at sizing up people. Very many Army and Navy and Air Force people used to come and some of them were there for some time. He used to kit them out with flannels and white shirts so they could get out of their uniforms and my mother used to correspond with their families and send them food parcels. Anyway at the beginning with St. Dunstaners my father thought that they were marvellous, how they coped and he invited Max among them.

Mr. Clement was not so sure when it came to talk of an engagement and not exactly in favour, to put it mildly: 'He tried to point out all the difficulties. He said to Max, "You haven't got a job." Which was true. And he said, "My daughter has lived in South Africa all her life with servants". He did everything to put Max off: "She's never had to do any housework, any cooking. She can't sew." But Max said, very romantically, "I'll take a chance."'

Those words: 'You've got no job' spurred Max on: 'I wanted to get back to England, sort out what I was going to do and then send for Joan so that we would get married. This was in June and I let Mrs. Bates know that I would like to get back as soon as I could when there was a ship available. Because I was a Marine, she asked the Naval authorities if at any time they would have a ship for me to travel back. She did arrange it but I would have to wait and I would have to be prepared to go at a day's notice.'

At the beginning of August the message came from the Navy to say there was a berth for Max on *H.M.S. Resolution*. Overnight there was hasty packing to do and a farewell from Joan, 'I didn't know in 1943 when I'd ever get over, being war-time.'

Max had planned to take more training at Church Stretton but he was only there a few days: 'I got back to Rosyth, in Scotland. I was in hospital there about ten days waiting to go before a medical board. Eventually I was discharged from the Navy and I came down to St. Dunstan's, Church Stretton in the September of '43. I was only there a weekend and then they sent me home with an escort.



Max and Joan in their garden in Exeter.

Back at home for the first time since he was called up in 1940, Max visited his former employers, Wilts. United Dairies, with his father: 'I was an electrician assistant and I'd been working there for about six and a half years. My father was the foreman engineer at the factory and I went up with him to see the manager and have a chat with him. I told him that I thought I was capable of doing a certain amount of the work I was doing before in the workshop but I wouldn't be able to move about the factory as I had done previously.'

'He agreed to take me back on a month's trial and if I was able to cope with the work in the shop which meant stripping down and assembling electric motors and starters and that sort of work, then they would keep me on. I went up to St. Dunstan's with my parents in the October just for a weekend so actually I did no training in England. I started back at the factory on the 1st November.'

Off went a cable to Joan to show to father. She had to decide what she was

going to do. 'There were still problems with my parents about me coming to a war zone and travelling. My father said, "You won't get a passage anyway because civilians are washed out as far as shipping is concerned." But, of course, he didn't bargain for St. Dunstan's. Mrs. Chadwick Bates said she could get me a passage even if I had to wait. She did and then when my father realised that I wasn't going to change my mind he said he wasn't going to have anybody else paying my passage, definitely not, and he paid for me.'

#### An eventful voyage

After a period of waiting the call came to join a ship in Durban, a rail journey of two nights from Cape Town. On November 17th Joan began an eventful voyage which took two months, 'It was really hot and I was lying down in the afternoon in the cabin when an air raid alarm went.' Before she could decide whether it was a real attack or a practice she was flung from one end of the cabin to the other as a bomb

broke the back of the ship. 'I was in what they called a siren suit and I picked up my bag automatically and slung it across my shoulders so I was able to get in and out of the lifeboat easily enough without losing anything. I had my money all right and my passport.'

But that was all — Joan lost all her other belongings and all her wedding presents. 'It was just accidental, we were the only ship that was bombed and that was that. We had to take to the lifeboats and we were picked up by a corvette. I slept that night on an ammunition hatch because there was no room down below. They transferred us to *H.M.S. Stork* the next day.

She arrived in Glasgow with just the clothes she stood up in: trousers and Naval jersey. 'I had my Red Cross bag with my passport and my travellers' cheques. We'd bought a wedding ring in Cape Town and I had that strung round my neck.' Arrangements had been made for Joan to stay temporarily with her grandparents in Bristol, 'I didn't get there until about midnight in the black-out. I found a military policeman and explained the situation. He managed to get me a taxi that took me to my grandparents and that gave them a right shock!'

So the wedding ring moved from Joan's neck to her finger and Max's job at the dairy, that had brought about their marriage, lasted nearly 40 years until his early retirement for reasons of health. 'I often look back and think, well, what way would my life have gone if I hadn't lost my sight. It couldn't have been happier.'

Some of the happy memories are of the times at Tembani they both share. Joan recalls the members of the Greek Royal family who stayed not far from Tembani: King Constantine was only a little boy then with Frederika and Katrina and Princess Radzivill. She used to come on duty as a V.A.D., so called, but she wasn't a trained V.A.D. I used to know when she was on duty because I'd be at the bottom of the drive, coming up and you could hear her laugh. She had a very loud laugh. She was a very good hearted person.'

With Jimmy Ellis, Max was invited to their house: 'The older members of the Royal Family were Prince George and Princess Marie, I think, and we had a nice

dinner there and then we went to a symphony concert at the City Hall. They were quite informal, you know.'

Just as at Church Stretton and Regent's Park music played a part in rehabilitation at Tembani. It was Jimmy Ellis who started the band: 'He was a marvel really because he lost the one hand and so much of the other yet he could play the trumpet well. He could also play the piano. He was a musician and his idea was that we form this band. I played the saxophone, but I could only play bits of Whispering and a bit of Annie Rooney. We had a musician from the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra to teach us. We went to entertain the civilian blind and we played for people who came to Tembani, for guest nights.

Tembani was really home from home. There weren't any real restrictions put on you and if anybody came up and invited you out anywhere you only had to let the Matron know that you had been invited out. What I do remember is the amazing hospitality of the people in Cape Town.'

### Capt. Kenneth Gray

Mrs. Rosemary Gray, of Bowdon, Cheshire sends us this poem written by her late husband, Captain Kenneth Gray. She feels many St. Dunstaners may empathise with the sentiments expressed in the poem.

*The days will pass and you will come again  
And I shall see you still. The torment's gone  
when courage, crumbled by the riddling worms  
of fear, trickled away. Though the full terms  
of sights' surrender are not yet revealed,  
I hope to sign with honour, and not yield  
Again to lack of faith in our joint strength.  
Meanwhile, how can I shorten the weary length  
of this between-time? Hooves of common places  
Trample all day the scented meadow grasses  
of thought, and night is gloom. I struggle between  
this humdrum beat of time and the dancing tune  
which plays you in, not long in step with either;  
But soon the drum will stop and we two move  
together  
Till then, be it enough that fear is gone,  
The days will pass and we again be one.'*



*Capt. Richard Bingley is presented with a certificate by the Mayor of Newton Abbott, Councillor Babs Mayhew, after he came 3rd in the Senior Citizens section of the 'Britain in Bloom' Competition. Capt. Bingley who has recently joined St. Dunstan's Gardening Club achieved his success despite intense competition.*

*Photo kindly supplied by Herald Express, Torquay.*

### HARRIET IS 100

Centenarian Harriet Short celebrated her 100th birthday on February 7th, surrounded with cards and flowers and received the traditional 100th birthday message from The Queen.

Mrs. Short was born at Standford, Norfolk, and has spent most of her life in the county. She is the widow of the late William Short, of Sculthorpe, Norfolk, who died 11 years ago.

Mr. Short who was wounded in the First World War worked as a gamekeeper for 40 years at the Cranmer Hall Estate, and the couple lived at Sculthorpe until Mr. Short died. Among the many flower arrangements was one from the daughters of her late husband's first employer.

Mrs. Short now lives with her daughter, Mrs. Vera Usher. She also has a son, a grand-daughter and two great grand-children.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### From Mrs. Eve Cowan, of Rottingdean

May I express my thanks to everyone for their sincere sympathy on the loss of my dear John. I will always remember the kindness and care we received from Dr. Janvrin, Miss Lord, Mr. and Mrs. Dickson and all the staff at Headquarters, during the 8 months of John's illness.

I also send my thanks to Matron King and her staff at Pearson House and Major Neve and all John's friends in Handicrafts at Ian Fraser House, where he spent so many happy times.

On behalf of myself, my son, daughter and family I wish to thank you all at St. Dunstan's.

### From L. W. Cook, of Swindon, Wilts

My wife and I would like to express our sincere thanks for the wonderful bouquet of flowers and for the good wishes of Miss Lord, staff and friends at Headquarters, and to other friends at St. Dunstan's on the occasion of our Golden Wedding Anniversary on February 10th.

### From Alf Bradley, Northwood, Middlesex

I must say how surprised I was to read in the Jan/Feb *Review* an article under the heading 'Braille Reform'.

Earlier last year I recall quite a lot of correspondence giving some detailed reasons against any alterations to the present system. This being followed by a questionnaire and voting.

To find out the result of these deliberations and voting, I telephoned Braille House. I was relieved to have the reply. 'The proposal for any braille reform is dead and buried'. In fact I conveyed my feeling of relief in a letter to the *Review*.

Now I am very willing to be told that I misunderstood the whole affair, and I bow to much wiser heads and more sensitive fingers than mine, but I confess to raising an eyebrow in surprise at the proposed reforms which seem to be very much alive and progressing.

# Positive Thoughts

by Paul Walker

*Paul Walker served with the Parachute Regiment during the Second World War. As a regular soldier he continued to serve in peace-time in Palestine and in Germany. In September 1950, as he puts it: 'I hit the lorry'. He was riding a motor cycle when he was in collision with a lorry, head injuries cost him his sight. He joined St. Dunstan's in September 1951. 'I had no idea what I would do. It was due to the help I received from the people at Ovingdean that I took telephony.' At the end of 1989 he retired and this is his account of 35 years with the South Eastern Electricity Board.*

At 9 a.m. on Monday, 31st January 1955 I started work as a telephonist on a 10 × 50 PBX (Private Exchange Board) with the South Eastern Electricity Board, Lewes, the county town of Sussex, and situated seven miles from Ovingdean, where I received my training. Mrs. L. E. Brown, St. Dunstan's Placement Officer, came with me for the first week. She will be remembered as a very good friend to other St. Dunstaners in a similar situation to mine.

Switchboard operating can be very routine. In this case it wasn't like that. The usual calls of office life were often interrupted with reports of electricity failures by natural causes such as wind and rain but very often by man himself: Cars, lorries, JCBs, farmers ploughing — the calls came thick and fast. Even fields on fire caused some distress to poles full of creosote.

Finding my way around the town of Lewes was not easy. However, at the time I arrived direct current cables were being replaced by alternating current cables and this went on for several years. Dealing with road traffic diversions and blocked-up pavements all helped me to become familiar with street names. This together with first class friends at the office made life so much better.

1960 came and in late October the floods of Lewes. The river Ouse overflowed its banks and several roads were under two feet of water. Shops and houses suffered as did our own generating station on the river bank itself. My switchboard was kept busy from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with calls from the public complaining of meters under water, electricity and cables still working under water and, curiously, one asking if there was any danger of fire.

On February 22nd, 1961 a telephonist's nightmare occurred. On that day the old Lewes manual exchange was going automatic — a great event. At five to one I broadcast round the building asking people not to use the telephones. I closed the switchboard and all was well. When I reopened the switchboard just after two — trouble! About two hundred people in the middle of Lewes, all around where I was working, had just gone off supply and my exchange was not functioning. I couldn't make a call outgoing on the new automatic system. As I put a key forward to make a call I had the dialling tone all the time. I had a faulty dial, a manufacturing fault — one in a million. Talk about being embarrassed!

I couldn't get out to contact the G.P.O. When I realised what had happened I asked the first caller that came in if he would ask the telephone people to ring me on an ex-directory number which I gave him. Within five minutes the Post Office had contacted me. By a quarter to three there were three telephone engineers plus myself crowded in my little five feet by seven feet telephone room. They found the faulty dial and by three o'clock things were back to normal.

June 1961 and my work pattern changed dramatically. A radio transmitter and receiver were installed alongside my switchboard for operation by me. This extra duty was to pass messages from mains engineers, jointers, linesmen, fit-

ters, lorry drivers, foremen and electricity meter readers. Many new voices came to my ear and message taking and passing became routine. Call signs had to be memorised and the phonetic alphabet was used as and when necessary.

Our District had grown and by 1967 my switchboard was full. We moved lock, stock and barrel from our High Street premises to a new purpose built depot on the outskirts of Lewes. There I had a 10 × 60 PBX, all full, plus 17 manual telephones. Tactiles were used instead of the old fashioned dolls eyes and this made communication so much better. Seeboard re-organised itself in 1969 and the old districts merged with the Brighton one. Staff were moved to and from Brighton and we became an engineering section on our own looking after 142,000 customers. It was during that year that I left telephony and moved into control to deal with the RT and mains calls only. By now 70 radio equipped vehicles were ringing my call sign — Dyke Control; this I am sure was a reference to Devil's Dyke at Brighton. Radio and telephone calls doubled as did damage to street signs, road signs and bollards. This was an interesting time for me as I was not only dealing with industrial consumers but also with their bigger use of electricity. About this time also I made contact with the control rooms of the fire, police and ambulance services, the water and gasboards and the area local authorities. I became firm friends with their controllers and they were most helpful in passing emergency messages in both directions. How proud I was when passing messages to Ian Fraser House and Pearson House advising them of interruption of supply. Their electrical engineer, Mr. Bob Field is a great character.

February 1972 came and with it a difficult time for me. Loadshedding took place owing to the coalminers dispute. Callers from all quarters gave me some stick — factory managers, the butcher, the baker and particularly worried mothers with young children to keep warm. My wife threatened me with sandwiches unless I did something. Of course I could not. 1972 was also notable for five or six meteorological balloons coming down on our high voltage lines in the Plumpton

area. Two of these landed on the same line within half a mile of each other after coming down from 100,000 feet or more. One man rang to ask if he could recover one of those balloons using a ladder! The Control Engineer said, 'not likely' — or something to that effect.

Life and time went on at a fast pace and in 1981 we again re-organised. Brighton merged with the Worthing District which meant another 78,000 customers and 40 more radios as well as additional call signs to learn and more voices to recognise. Our section moved to Portland Road, Hove. This made a big difference to me in as much as I had to change from walking to work to travelling on two trains in each direction. The days seemed long. However my duties kept me busy and any visitor looking at my desk would be impressed. On it were a tannoy system for around the building and depot, BT transmitter and receiver, four telephones, shorthand braille machine, typewriter, large braille telephone directory, facsimile machine and one large fan. The temperature in the room was fine but the calls from the public often generated great heat.

Settling down took some time but eventually I got into my stride. Then in October 1987 the hurricane hit us. The following day was the only one on which I failed to get to work owing to road and rail links being cut. On arrival the next day all I did was take messages about storm damage to our overhead network. This went on for nearly ten action packed days. Message taking was routine — name, address, telephone number followed by a short description of the damage reported by the customer — e.g. tree has hit pole, chimney and overhead line both down, insulators arcing, cracked, broken or not there, pole or pole type transformer on it both down, sub-station fence flat, our lines and BT lines tangled, roads, paths, access to buildings, factories and yards blocked with wires and scores of similar calls. Some of the most important were from kidney patients on dialysis machines. To put all this damage right miles of wires were brought in and lorries laden with poles were seen coming in all directions. Engineers and linesmen from

other parts of the country came to help us restore supply — even a contingent of those fine soldiers, the Ghurkas, in their colourful uniform. What a friendly, lively lot of soldiers these men are. The spirit of the staff during this most difficult time was magnificent. The damage can still be seen. As I write these lines during the afternoon of February 1st 1990, I am in the middle of another storm. A similar hurricane, but not quite so bad, is raging and my neighbours' fence has blown down.

At the end of 1989 I retired from Seaboard and on looking back I enjoyed all aspects of my work. To the teachers at Ovingdean, who made it possible, my thanks. My thanks also to all at Seaboard who helped me for 35 years — and they were great in this — and last but by no means least my job was made easier by the BT Directory Enquiries Staff. If there was a number to be found they found it. Well done girls. I was given a marvellous retirement presentation at the office and three weeks later all the liaison engineers came to a local pub and presented me with a Chad cartoon entitled "What, no liaison engineer?" and a radio telephone handset. The boys and girls did me proud.

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## Welcome to St. Dunstan's

*On behalf of St. Dunstan's, we welcome a St. Dunstaner recently admitted to membership and the Review hopes she will settle down happily as a member of our family.*

**Mrs. Alys Briggs**, of Huddersfield, who joined on January 30th.

Mrs. Briggs served as a Lance Corporal in the ATS from 1941 to 1942. Completing her service with the 210(M) HAA Regiment, which is part of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Mrs. Briggs lives with her husband, Walter, and they have a grown up family.

## GARDENING NOTES

We certainly have been having very bad weather in the early part of the year and only hope that you in the Midlands and South have not been washed out. I don't think that anyone in the country has been able to start off as the soil has been too muddy. Perhaps those with greenhouses may have got some seeds in, though even here water will have got in. I hope that you have got going well by now which means that everything will be very late. Put down a fair amount of fertiliser as most of it will have been washed out earlier on.

### Vegetables

Get the ground ready to receive seeds and well grown plants. Add some compost or fertiliser as you dig over and add lime, with a heavier dose where you are to grow the cabbage family. Many of the items which you grew from seed in the greenhouse will be hardened off in the frames and ready to be put in the beds. These items could be sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce etc. Don't plant these too close and if you have too many for the first setting keep the rest in their boxes in case you lose them in the beds.

Most vegetables can be set in the beds as seeds now if you have no greenhouse or frame. Give them some cover in the shape of plastic sheets to give extra warmth and protect them against the birds. Don't forget to peg them down as winds will take them away. Some plants which were sown earlier in the year such as radish, onions and parsnips will have come up well so thin them out. Early potatoes may be showing some green shoots above the ground, cover these with extra soil.

Get in some canes or other sticks along the broad bean and pea rows so that you can tie them in as they grow and stop the wind from making a mess. Keep the hoe going regularly in order that the weeds are kept down. Put some slug pellets down amongst the plants as slugs can be a problem from now on.

### Fruit

The buds will be showing now and the insects will be getting at them so give a dose of derris, either in liquid or powder form as a deterrent. All the currants which are liable to big bud should be sprayed with lime and sulphur. This is an old and very good idea indeed. Use for a period of a couple of months at the rate of every other week. Put in some Growmore or liquid fertiliser at root level for all fruit trees and bushes.

### Lawns

A good start can be made by cutting the grass to make the place look tidier. Put the blades of the mower down at a fairly low level and cut the grass about twice in the month with the box in place. Some fertiliser/weedkiller should be spread over the grass after it has been cut. See that you have tidied up the edges after you have cut the main lawn. Clean the mower especially the blades and put some oil on the working parts so that everything will be in good condition when you next bring it out.

### Flowers

Some of the perennials plus a few of the hardy annuals like primula and polyanthus will be giving a good show now. Ensure that you have broken up those large clumps of perennials which you left over from last year. Throw away the centre

pieces and then replant the outside pieces with plenty of roots. Dig over the soil around the shrubs and it might be a good idea to add some fertiliser in the form of Growmore which will last a long time. Peonies will be showing all their new shoots so fork around them.

Put in some canes around the taller items and then you can tie them in as they grow to stop the wind breaking them down. Keep the hydrangeas tied in well and the old flowers should be cut away provided there is no frost about. Get all the soil in the places where the half-hardy annuals are to be planted forked over and get the rake on the top of the soil to make it nice and fine.

Roses should be pruned to low level now so as to get new growth for the season. Fork around at root level and add some fertiliser. Keep the centre of the bushes open with all new growth shooting outwards. Spray the whole of the bush with an insecticide plus black spot deterrent. Put down slug pellets in all parts of the garden especially where you are planting the annuals.

### Greenhouse

Keep the temperature under the glass at a minimum of 45F, but it would be better at about 55F with all the plants either in pots or at seed level. Put all the bedding plants in boxes a good distance apart to give good growth so that they can go straight into their places in the beds after having been acclimatized in frames. These as a rule can go out by the end of the month in the South but keep them back a bit later in the North.

If you have been a bit late with the sowing of seeds there is still time, since they will grow very quickly if started in frames or in sunny places with some plastic over the boxes of seeds. Remember to get all those plants that are now in small pots into their flowering containers at once. Many of the tuberous items such as begonia, achimenes, gloxinia and cyclamen are best planted in 5 inch pots. The



## Gardening Notes *continued*

other items such as cineraria and geraniums may do better in slightly smaller pots. Remember to give them a good watering when you place them in new containers. Paint the outside of the greenhouse with a special white paint to protect the plants from the full effects of strong sunlight.

Tomatoes will be growing very well now so make certain that you have them in their fruiting pots which should measure 10 inches, or you may have special bags which will hold four plants. I have found that a few extra holes in the bottom of the bags will make for better drainage. Take all the side shoots off as the tomatoes grow, retaining only the flowers which will give the fruit. When the plants grow and are just about touching the glass, nip the tops off. Don't forget to put in some tall canes to keep the plants nice and straight. Spray the plants every so often with water to make the fruit set and give liquid fertiliser about once every 14 days.

## CLUB NEWS

### NATIONAL BRIDGE CLUB REMINDER

Anyone wishing to take part in the 3-Way Competition which will take place on 5th-6th May (Bridge Weekend) should book with Frances Casey at Headquarters.

### BRIGHTON CLUB BRIDGE

#### The February Pairs Match Played on 4th February

1st	Mrs. Holborow & M. Douse	60.4
2nd	Bill Allen & Mrs. A. Clements	56.9
3rd	Bill Phillips & Dr. J. Goodlad	54.2
4th	Reg Goding & D. White	52.1

5th	M. Clements & Mrs. Douse	47.9
6th	Alf Dodgson & Mrs. White	43.1
—	J. Huk & Miss Stenning	43.1
8th	Wally Lethbridge & Mr. Goodlad	42.3

#### Individual results Played on 17th February

1st	J. Huk	69.1
2nd	Bill Phillips	54.7
—	Wally Lethbridge	54.7
—	Mrs. L. White	54.7
5th	Mrs. A. Clements	50.0
6th	Alf Dodgson	45.2
7th	Reg Goding	40.5
8th	Bob Evans	31.1

### INTER CLUB LEAGUE

We played the 3rd round in the West Sussex Inter Club League on Sunday, 25th February against West Sussex A.

The visitors established a good lead of 18 points by half time and eventually won by 23 points which translates into 12 victory points for West Sussex and 4 victory points for St. Dunstan's.

#### Our team was:

Bill Phillips	J. Huk
Vi Delaney	Reg Goding
Wally Lethbridge	Bill Allen
Alf Dodgson	Johnny Whitcombe

#### Individuals played 24th February 1990

#### Replacing round lost 20th January 1990

#### Results

1st	Dr. J. Goodlad	63.5
2nd	Bob Evans	56.8
—	Bill Allen	56.8
4th	Wally Lethbridge	53.4
5th	Mrs. A. Clements	52.3
6th	J. Huk	51.1
—	Mrs. R. Bushell	51.1
8th	Vi Delaney	45.5
—	Bill Phillips	45.5
10th	Mrs. S. Holborow	42.0
—	Miss Stenning	42.0
12th	Alf Dodgson	40.0

## FAMILY NEWS

### PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Congratulations to:

Caroline Attfield, daughter of *Joe and Stella Attfield*, of Paignton, Devon, who passed the Association of Accounting Technicians examinations at intermediate level for Accounting, Elements of Information Systems, Business Law and Economic Statistics.

Constable Graham Flynn, grandson of *Mrs. M. Flynn*, of Horley, who won a commendation for bravery for disarming and arresting a dangerous drunk without regard for his own safety.

### BIRTHDAYS

#### Congratulations to:

*Mrs. Harriet Angelina Short*, of Fakenham, Norfolk, who celebrated her 100th birthday on February 7th.

### GRANDCHILDREN

#### Congratulations to:

*Paul and Cynthia Baker*, of Sidmouth, Devon, on the birth of a grandson, Ben, on January 27th, in Wellington, New Zealand, to their son, John and his wife.

*Mrs. Brenda Green*, of Epsom, Surrey, on the birth of her first grandchild, Sophie Elizabeth, born on September 29th last, to Lynne and Stephen Green.

*Mr. and Mrs. Albert Steer*, of Billingham, Cleveland, on the birth of a grandson, Robert John, on August 8th last, to their son, Ray and his wife.

### GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

#### Congratulations to:

*Wilf and May Evans*, of Gloucester, on the birth of a great-grandchild, Natalie Kimberley, who was born January 24th, to their grandson, John and his wife, Tracey.

*Mrs. E. M. Latham*, of Thorpe-on-the-Hill, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, Emma Latham, who was born in January.

### MARRIAGES

#### Congratulations to:

*Philip and Edith Day*, of Walsall, on the marriage of their grandson, Staff Sergeant Philip John Day, to Miss Michelle McGilvray, on December 23rd, at the United Reform Church, Weymouth.

### GOLDEN WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*Tommy and Louisa Bice*, of West Moors, Dorset, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on March 2nd.

*Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Cook*, of Purton, Wiltshire, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on February 10th.

*Kenneth and Edna Maple*, of Rushden, Northants, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on February 17th.

*Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Mills*, of Tavistock, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on February 24th.

*Arthur and Eva Terry*, of Kettering, Northants, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on February 17th.

### DEATHS

#### We offer condolences to:

The family and friends of *Mrs. Rebecca Dale*, of Middlesbrough, widow of the late *John Dale*, who passed away on February 6th.

The family and friends of *Mrs. Priscilla Dunwoodie*, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, widow of the late *George Dunwoodie*, who passed away on February 11th.

The family and friends of *Mrs. Hilda Fanny (Pat) Voyce*, of Gloucester, widow of the late *Thomas Voyce*, who passed away on February 6th.

*Mrs. D. Burden*, of Saltdean, on the death of her son-in-law, *Mr. Lionel Woods*, who died suddenly in Spain shortly before Christmas.

# 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.

## **J. C. Cowan, Royal Norfolk Regiment**

We are very sorry to report the death of John Cowan, of Rottingdean, at Pearson House on February 16th. He was 66 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 44 years.

John Cowan enlisted in the 1st Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1942. He took part in the Normandy landings at Sword Beach and served until April 1944, when he was injured in Germany three weeks before the end of the war. On his admission to St. Dunstan's he trained first in shopkeeping and then in telephony. In 1955 he settled in Borehamwood where he became a very active member of The Royal British Legion.

As Chairman of the Entertainment Committee for ten years it fell to him to organise the celebration of the Legion's golden jubilee, which he did in style. He participated in his regimental reunion at the Bocage and Pavee, in Normandy, in 1986, and regularly attended the Armistice Day parades in Belgium. Enghien was the adopted town of his battalion and their branch of the Legion presented him with a medal. In 1982, with 35 Belgian ex-Servicemen he was one of the guests of the British Army in Cologne. On one of these occasions he succinctly summed up his philosophy: remember the dead but remember the future also.

Following his retirement after a long and busy career he moved to Rottingdean in 1984 and became a regular visitor to Ian Fraser House. He and his wife for many years enjoyed exchange visits with their Belgian friends.

We extend our sympathy to his wife, Evelyn, his devoted companion for 43 years, their son and daughter, and all members of the family.

## **D. W. Davies, Royal Engineers**

We are very sad to record the death of David Walford Davies on February 13th. He was 58 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 14 years.

Mr. Davies was a steel worker until he joined the Army in 1949, serving with the Royal Engineers. Unfortunately after two years he was involved in an accident and lost the sight in his right eye. He was then discharged from the Army and entered the nursing profession, working for nearly 20 years as a psychiatric

nurse. He also gave a certain amount of help to Mrs. Davies who was warden of a children's home. He was also a member of a lifeboat crew, as well as being on the roll of Coast Guards.

Later in life the sight in Mr. Davies' left eye deteriorated and in 1975 he joined St. Dunstan's. At that time he was still on the roll of Coast Guards, and although he did not take an active part in their work, he attended meetings and helped in other ways.

Mr. Davies had retired from work by the time he came to St. Dunstan's. On joining he took use of tools and woodwork courses at Headquarters and also studied typing and handicrafts at Ian Fraser House. Later he went to stay permanently at Ian Fraser House, and was happy there for over 10 years. Mr. Davies was an extremely skilled picture-framer and framed some of the pictures which now hang in Ian Fraser House. He was also responsible for framing the bedroom mirrors in the new wing at Ian Fraser House which is now under construction.

We send our sincere condolences to his son, Gareth Davies, and all members of the family.

## **D. Jennings, Royal Navy**

We are sad to record the death of Mr. David Jennings, of Petworth, on February 17th. He was 67 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since December 1944.

Mr. Jennings enlisted in January 1942 and served in the Royal Navy as stoker until he was discharged in January 1945. He was blinded when a flying bomb fell in the front garden of his home, killing his mother and two sisters.

Following his admission to St. Dunstan's he trained as a telephonist and worked in this capacity until he retired on health grounds in 1974. In his spare time he was a keen angler, a Mason and was also interested in handicrafts, cricket, woodwork and the theatre. He and his wife, Eleanor, enjoyed many visits to Ian Fraser House where he took part in many activities. In 1987, they celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary.

We send our sincere sympathy to his widow, their daughters, Sally and Susan, grandchildren and all other members of the family.

## IN MEMORY *continued*

## **J. Legge, Seaforth Highlanders**

Mr. James Legge, M.C.S.P. of Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, affectionately known as Jimmy, passed away at his home on February 21st, following a serious illness. He was 74 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1943.

As a Territorial Army reservist, he was automatically embodied into the Seaforth Highlanders at the outset of the Second World War. In May 1940, Mr. Legge suffered bullet wounds to his face while serving in Belgium and was blinded. He was subsequently captured and became a prisoner of war in Germany where he became a member of the Marquis of Normanby's School for Blinded Prisoners. He was repatriated to the U.K. in 1943.

Mr. Legge went directly to Church Stretton where he was trained for Physiotherapy. At first, he successfully combined his work as a Physiotherapist for the employees of an aircraft company with his own practice at home in the evening. However, from 1979 he was in private practice exclusively and regularly attended our Physiotherapy Conferences as well as some held in Canada and Australia. Many St. Dunstaners may remember his interesting article 'St. Dunstan's Physiotherapists Down Under' which appeared in the August 1987 edition of the *Review*. Mr. Legge was also a prolific correspondent with his friends at home and abroad, mostly in braille, and regularly attended the Cenotaph parades and our reunions. In January 1988, Mr. Legge and his wife, Doris, celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary.

We send our sincere sympathy to his widow and their two sons, Ian and Alistair, and all members of the family.

## **H. A. Leslie, Seaforth Highlanders**

We are sad to record the death of Major Hamish Angus Leslie, of Frinton-on-Sea, on January 25th. He was 75 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner only a few weeks.

Major Leslie served with the Seaforth Highlanders from 1931 to 1970. He was wounded three times, in France, North Africa and Germany, losing the sight in his left eye and also suffering several other severe injuries. In 1970, Major Leslie took up a retired officers' post and held an administrative position for 10 years until retirement age.

We very much regret that we did not have the opportunity to get to know Major Leslie better and we send our sincere sympathy to his widow, Elizabeth.

## **N. Lucas-Calcraft, Royal Artillery**

Mr. Neville Lucas-Calcraft, of Peterborough, passed away on February 21st. He was 70 years of age, and had only joined St. Dunstan's at the beginning of this year.

Mr. Lucas-Calcraft served with the Royal Artillery as a Bombardier from 1936 to 1945. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds and as a result lost the sight of his left eye. Following his discharge from the Army, Mr. Lucas-Calcraft worked until his retirement as a Research Engineer at Perkins Diesel Manufacturers. By the time he joined St. Dunstan's he was unfortunately in very poor health.

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

## **G. Nolan, Royal Artillery**

We are sad to report the death of George Nolan, of Great Sutton, on February 10th. He was 78 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 13 years.

Mr. Nolan served as a Gunner with a light anti-aircraft unit of the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1944. During his military service he developed an illness which affected his eyesight. Following his discharge from the Army, Mr. Nolan worked at the Manchester Canal Company and later worked as a pallet maker at a paper mill.

When Mr. Nolan joined St. Dunstan's he had retired from full time employment and was further disabled by illness, but enjoyed making baskets and trays at home. Mr. Nolan became interested in woodwork and took a picture framing course at Ian Fraser House and later he and Mrs. Nolan enjoyed many holidays there.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his widow, Bridget, and their family.

## **S. A. Slater, Suffolk Regiment**

Stanley Alfred Slater, of Canvey Island, passed away at home on March 2nd. He was 72 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1972.

Mr. Slater enlisted in the Suffolk Regiment in 1940, and was sent to the Far East. He was wounded in the foot and taken prisoner by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore in February 1942, spending the remainder of the war as a prisoner of war. His loss of sight was due to privation and malnutrition. After the war he continued to run his own building business for many years until forced to retire on health grounds.

In his earlier life he was a clarinetist and

when he had to give up this instrument due to a throat condition he learnt to play the organ. He was a keen gardener and later became a fine picture framer. Mr. Slater was a regular visitor to the Brighton Homes and enjoyed attending the Lee-on-Solent Camp each year as well as the F.E.P.O.W. Reunions.

We extend our sympathy to his widow, Eileen, to whom he was happily married for 37 years, and to their son and daughter.

**L.A. Webber, Auxiliary Fire Service**

We are sad to report the death of Mr. Leslie Webber, who passed away at Pearson House on March 2nd. He was 70 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1941.

Leslie Arthur Webber enlisted in the Auxiliary Fire Service in 1939, and suffered injuries from a high explosive bomb, while on fire guard duty. Before the war Mr. Webber was employed as a clerk. On admission to St. Dunstan's he trained as a physiotherapist, and went on to practice both privately and at Holme Hospital where he worked until 1979, when he retired due to ill-health. This has now been converted to the Community Centre, surrounded by accommodation for the elderly and bears his name. He was very much involved in local government and was elected Mayor of Tewkesbury in 1970, and again in 1971. During his time in office he had the honour of greeting her Majesty The Queen on an official visit to the town.

In 1944, he married Dorothy Hallam, daughter of First World War St. Dunstaner, the late W.J. Hallam, and in 1984 they celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary.

We send our condolences to his widow, his son, Peter, grandchildren and all other members of the family.

**J. D. White, Royal Army Medical Corps**

It is with sorrow that we record the death of James Douglas White, of Chilwell, Notts., on February 11th. He was 70 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 45 years.

Mr. White served as a Sergeant with the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Second World War, working with the 185th Field

Ambulance as a stretcher bearer. He was injured while serving at Cassino in 1944, and suffered damage to both his eyes, although he did retain limited vision in his right eye.

Following his discharge from the Army he went to St. Dunstan's in Church Stretton, and having decided to take up upholstery as a career took a training course in this field. He also studied braille, typing, woodwork and rug-making. In 1945, he started work with an upholstery firm in Cardiff, transferring after two years to a firm in the North Midlands. In 1960, Mr. White decided to have a change of occupation and spent a few years working with an office maintenance team. He later worked as a machine operator in industry until his retirement.

Sadly, Mrs. White died in 1985, after having been ill for some time. Mr. White managed on his own for three years with help from his children, but with the deterioration of his health it became necessary for him to give up his home in Chilwell in August, 1988 and he moved permanently to Pearson House.

We extend our sincere sympathy to his daughter, Paula, his son, Terry, and all other members of the family.

**J. F. White, Royal Corps of Signals**

We are sad to report the death of John Freeman White, of Burton-on-Trent, who died at Pearson House on February 20th. He was 70 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 8 years.

Mr. White was a member of the Territorial Army before 1939, and then served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Corps of Signals during the Second World War. He was wounded in Sicily in 1942, and lost the sight in his left eye as well as suffering head injuries.

Following his discharge from the Army he worked as a plant operator with Bovril until retiring in 1979. Shortly after retiring he lost most of the sight in his right eye and also had some serious health problems. By the time he joined St. Dunstan's in 1981, he was in poor health and confined to a wheelchair most of the time. However, he enjoyed some holidays with Mrs. White at Ian Fraser House, and came regularly to our reunions in Birmingham.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his widow, Maureen, and their children and grandchildren.