

St Dunstons Review June 1990



JUNE 1990

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Cover Picture: *The London Marathon runners pour across Tower Bridge at the half-way mark. Are the St. Dunstan's runners in the picture? Our photographer could not say! See St. Dunstan's Marathon Runners on page 7.*



From the Chairman

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra and Sir Angus Ogilvy have accepted our invitation to attend the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 1st August celebrating St. Dunstan's 75th Anniversary. In a message through her Secretary, Princess Alexandra said how much she and her husband are looking forward to the occasion.

Our guest at Dinner in the evening will be Mr. Sandy Gall, the Foreign Correspondent and Newscaster of Independent Television News. He has reported for ITN from the Middle East, Africa, Vietnam, Far East, China and Afghanistan and is the author of several books.



NOTICE BOARD



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Plans for the garden party at Buckingham Palace and celebration dinner at the London Hilton Hotel are now well advanced. In 'From the Chairman' in this issue Sir Henry Leach has announced that Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra and her husband, Sir Angus Ogilvy, will attend the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. There will be more than 600 St. Dunstaners, wives, widows and escorts at the Palace and the dinner in the evening. The afternoon will begin at the Palace at 2.00 p.m. and, at the Hilton, dinner will be 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.

Dress for both events will be informal, that is, suits for the men while the ladies may wear hats if they wish at the Palace with afternoon dresses. In the evening long or short dresses may be worn by the ladies as they prefer. Decorations will not be worn.

With a relatively small number of exceptions we are planning to arrange door-to-door transport for everyone, with one or two nights accommodation as necessary. Before the end of June individual, detailed information packs with the full programme, travel arrangements and notes on accommodation, where appropriate, will be sent to everyone on the list. Those whose names are on the reserve list will be informed as soon as a vacancy occurs which enables an invitation to be extended to them.

CROSS-CHANNEL PARASCENT

Jimmy Wright plans to be the first blind-person to cross the Channel by parachute on June 6th. Under the guidance of the Sportlite Para Team he will cross from

Ramsgate to Dunkirk, a distance of some 38 nautical miles, on a parachute towed by the team's boat, 'Ocean Flyer'. He chose June 6th as the anniversary of the D-Day landings. His sponsored adventure is to raise money for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund's Reach for the Sky Appeal. To help the ever increasing number of Second World War veterans who are turning to it for help the Benevolent Fund is aiming to raise £2m. during the 40th anniversary year of the Battle of Britain. Contributions to Jimmy's effort can be sent to: Miss Jean Ashton, M.B.E., R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, 264, Fir Tree Road, Epsom Downs, Surrey, KY17 3NN.

TOY APPEAL

Tom Page is making a childrens' toy appeal on behalf of Dr. Barnardo's Home in Kendal, Nazareth House in Lancaster and two playgroups in Morecambe. Anyone who may wish to donate toys contact Tom by ringing 0524 410455.

EX-P.O.W.'s REUNION

All St. Dunstan's ex-Prisoners of War should note that the dates for the 1991 Reunion will be April 5th, 6th and 7th and not April 12th, 13th and 14th as previously announced. We apologise that this change has had to be made.

ADDITION TO CASSETTE LIBRARY

The following has been added to the cassette library:
G48 C90. **George keeps his work a secret.** An autobiography by George Hewett of his experiences during two World Wars.

Reunions

Ipswich

Once again the sun shone on East Anglian St. Dunstaners, their wives, widows and escorts as they gathered at the Ipswich Moat House for the first of this year's reunions. Altogether, the company numbered 70, including 18 St. Dunstaners and 14 widows.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, accompanied by Lady Leach, presided over the occasion. Both took the opportunity of chatting with St. Dunstaners during the afternoon. In his more formal words, speaking after lunch, the Chairman commented on the number of widows and made them welcome. He also mentioned especially three St. Dunstaners attending their first reunion: E.W. Finch, T.E. Johnson and D. Winson.

Sir Henry told his audience that he and Lady Leach had recently returned from New Zealand where they had attended a reunion of St. Dunstaners living there. 'It is a big country and St. Dunstaners are spread out. To get around you must fly, which is expensive, or drive and not all wives drive. Previous reunions had been held every three years and this was to have been a grand finale.'

However, the reunion went so well that, after all, the New Zealand St. Dunstaners decided to have a smaller occasion every two years. 'We enjoyed four days of highly organised eating, drinking and sight-seeing, went on the Chairman, 'They are a splendid group and their President, Bob Sadler and his wife, Thelma did a fine job. There was one St. Dunstaner, who is 91. He put his age up to get into World War One and his age down to take part in World War Two!'

Sir Henry concluded by saying how heartening it was to know that St. Dunstan's help and influence was still effective even thousands of miles overseas.

Wilf Saxby replied to the Chairman on behalf of St. Dunstaners. His theme was the way resourcefulness played such a big

part in service life. 'In the winter when coal was needed for the stove in the hut you always found the bucket full — how it was done, when it was done and who did it, you never knew.' St. Dunstaners' experience showed this resourcefulness still exists he went on: 'Man's greatest triumph is not in never falling but in rising up again. We in St. Dunstan's have been helped to stand up again.'

Wilf said that rising up again sometimes brings about frustrations, particularly when people want to help when it is not needed. 'I have heard people say, "I told them I didn't need any help." Thinking of others, our response ought to be to let people help even if we don't need it. We should receive and accept it in the way it is intended.'

'One of the great things about St. Dunstan's is that they don't insist on doing things for us. They let us do what we can and, when we can't, they do what they can to assist us.' He asked Sir Henry to take back St. Dunstaners' kindest greetings to all the staff and to the Members of the Council.

The formal events of the afternoon concluded with the presentation of a bouquet to Lady Leach by Mrs. E. Parish. Then it was conversation, interrupted by the usual prize draw before tea.

Brighton

This year the Brighton Reunion returned to a former venue, The Metropole Hotel. On 11th April a company worthy of the occasion converged at the hotel on Brighton's sea front including a party from Pearson House — all intent on enjoying their day. Appropriately their President for the day was St. Dunstan's President, Mr. Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, M.C., who was accompanied by his wife, Joyce.

Opening his remarks, Mr. Beaumont-



At Ipswich, Adam Bullimore of Radio Suffolk interviews Walter Durrant. Also in the picture is Brian Munday.

Edmonds said that this was the first time he and his wife had attended the Brighton Reunion. There was one other they had not yet visited and that was Sheffield where they were going this year. He brought the greetings of the Chairman, Sir Henry Leach and the Council and their good wishes for a pleasant afternoon.

He welcomed the Deputy Mayor of Brighton, Councillor Ms. Patricia Hawkes, and Mrs. D. Scott, Welfare Officer, War Pensioners' Welfare Service, 'And welcome to the two special friends to St. Dunstaners in Brighton, Mrs. Elizabeth Dacre and Miss Mary Stenning.'

'We have 56 St. Dunstaners here today with their wives and escorts and 40 widows. It might interest you to know how you all fit into the big family of St. Dunstan's. We still have 24 First War St. Dunstaners in this country and there are eight First War St. Dunstaners overseas. From the Second World War and since we now number here 673 and almost half as many overseas. This brings the family of

St. Dunstan's altogether to 1,047.

'These days we do like to welcome our widows who have taken so much care of our colleagues in previous years and it is very interesting to note that, as far as the United Kingdom is concerned, there are only nine more St. Dunstaners than there are widows. We have 664 widows in this country.'

Mr. Beaumont-Edmonds mentioned the presence of members of staff and drew attention to Mr. Michael Hordell, new Services Manager at Brighton who was attending his first reunion. There was warm applause from his audience when he listed retired members of staff who were present. 'I am sure,' he said, 'that the fact that they are here shows how much they enjoyed their time at St. Dunstan's and how much we are indebted to them for the service they gave. I know I, for one, can think back to when I had to move my job a few years before my retirement for family reasons. I am so indebted to Mrs. Brown for establishing me in Canterbury in my last job there.'

This year we have an excuse to look back and I happened to notice that 50 years ago this week Denmark was invaded, Norway was invaded and we had the battle of Narvik. As a young lad at the beginning of the war I thought I might miss it all and I can remember seeing at this particular stage the diagrams in the newspapers with the big arrows showing the troops coming round the side of the Maginot Line and then spreading out across France. Many will be taking part in the remembrance of Dunkirk in two months' time. What is certain is that at times like this we go back to the time when our Service life was cut short and we were discharged to wonder what was in store for us. We were certainly apprehensive for our whole future had changed, our world had tumbled around us.

'We were introduced to St. Dunstan's — an institute for the blind? Many of us were a little fearful of what was in store for us. But without them nothing could possibly have been achieved and how grateful we

are to Sir Arthur Pearson, our Founder, who showed determination and imagination and a sense of enjoyment. Our Chairman caught this in his note in the January *Review* when he talked about 1990 being a time we should be looking forward with expectation, with hope of achievement and fun.'

Concluding, Mr. Beaumont-Edmonds wished St. Dunstaners a pleasant afternoon and thanked the staff responsible for the reunion, Mr. Keith Martin, Miss Helen Stewart and Mrs. Vivien Jackson.

Mr. Martin called upon Mr. Gilbert Smith to respond for St. Dunstaners. He expressed his colleagues' thanks to the Chairman and Council, 'We are, indeed, proud to be able to join in this reunion. We pray God's blessings on all of us.'

There are always plenty of dancers at Brighton and this year was no exception as the band played through the afternoon. There was the usual prize draw just before tea, which brought the reunion to a successful close.

'Brighton Rock'. Dancers take to the floor at the Brighton Reunion.



Don Planner still going strong at the 24 mile mark on The Embankment. — photo: David Castleton.

ST. DUNSTAN'S MARATHON RUNNERS

Two St. Dunstaners and the blind daughter of a St. Dunstaner took part in the London Marathon. They were, lady first, Dawn Crombie, Gerry Jones and Don Planner. All were sponsored for a variety of charities and all finished. Congratulations to them on their success on a difficult day which started cold and in torrential rain and finished with the temperature rather warm for comfortable running. Their times were: Gerry Jones, 4 hrs 8 mins; Don Planner, 4 hrs 23 mins and Dawn Crombie a brave run in just under 6 hrs.

Almost more important are the funds they expect to raise. Dawn, who was running for The Rain Forests' Appeal and for the Guide Dogs, expects a total of around £5,000. Don is looking forward to £1,200 for the Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead, while Gerry, running for the Royal School and for the R.N.I.B. is promised around £1,000.

Welcome to St. Dunstan's

On behalf of St. Dunstan's we welcome St. Dunstaners recently admitted to membership and the Review hopes they will settle down happily as members of our family.

Mr Frederick Field, of Chapel St. Leonards, who joined on April 11th.

Mr Field served as a Chief Technician with the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1975. He was a very keen sportsman and represented the R.A.F. at shooting and swimming.

Mr Field lives with his wife, Brenda, and they have two adult daughters.

Mr. Norman Hewitson, of Darlington, who joined on April 3rd.

Mr. Hewitson served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He lives with his wife, Maud, and they have two adult sons.

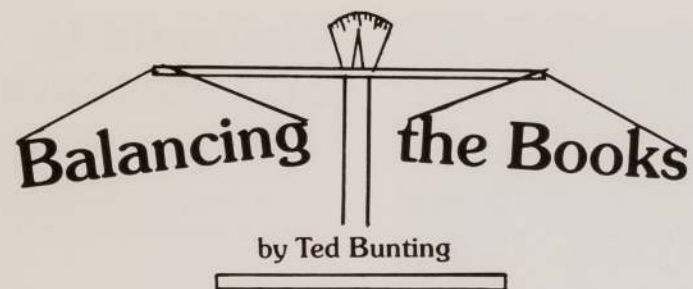
Mr. George Roberts, of Cardiff, who joined on April 3rd.

Mr. Roberts served as a Private with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps during the Second World War. He lives with this wife, Elsie, and they have one adult daughter.

Mr. Henry Peter Price, of Hythe, who joined on April 2nd.

Mr. Price served as a Private in the Royal Army Pay Corps from August, 1940 until April, 1944. His sight was seriously aggravated by the conditions under which he was working and deteriorated over subsequent years. After being invalided out of the Army he returned to his pre-war occupation eventually retiring as the Personnel Manager of an international company, which is a sub-division of Unilever.

With his wife, Ethel, he is now concerned with the welfare of older pensioners of his former employers and their main hobby is gardening. They have an adult son and daughter.



Balancing the Books

by Ted Bunting

The Messiah and the Mandarins

Author: Dennis Bloodworth
Reader: Garard Green
Duration: 14 hours
Catalogue number: 5322

Once upon a time there was a big fat Chinaman called Mao Tse-tung. He became the "Great Chairman Mao" of course, and, like all famous leaders before and since, he was more than ready to sacrifice his followers on the altar of his personal ambition.

As a matter of fact in Mao's case, as this hard-hitting book describes, the lives of millions were spent to buy him the mastery of the whole of China, with a third of the world's population thrown in.

Naturally, Chairman Mao was very famous by then. His picture was as ubiquitous as winkles on Southend pier, and that little red book of his 'thoughts' shot up the best-sellers' list faster than a terrified cat climbs a tree.

Sadly though, and particularly so for the Chinese people, poor old Mao had only the tiniest fragment of brain lodged in his skull, which meant that his mind was more or less empty. Even his famous 'thoughts' were not really his own, and his 'great leaps forward' were no more than ignorant jumps back into the dark ages. The appalling tragedy was that so many fools were persuaded to follow his lead, and, lacking courage to rebel, the intelligent remainder pretended to go along too. The result was utter chaos; even fictional characters have seldom been forced to live in the kind of nightmare conditions created by Mao and his disciples. And I use the word "disciples" advisedly, for as the author demonstrates in no uncertain

terms, Mao Tse-tung eventually achieved the status of a living god.

He achieved very little else . . . certainly nothing of value to China, and as you read this excellent book, as I hope you will, perhaps it might make you marvel, as I frequently do, how very often nations finish up with a moron as head of government.

* * * *

The Woman In White

Author: Wilkie Collins
Reader: Gabriel Woolf
Duration: 25 hours
Catalogue number: 1561

During his life-time, say literary historians, Wilkie Collins' readers couldn't get enough of him; which seems very odd to me, I must say, because I was getting fed-up of him after a couple of chapters. And 'The Woman in White' is supposed to be his 'masterpiece', no less; so what his 'lesser works' are like, The Lord only knows.

However, now that I've read it, I might as well tell you something about it; you might even want to read it, who knows?

Well it contains all you might expect from a second-rate Victorian melodrama: there is the wicked Sir Percy, the unspeakable cad, and his even nastier, sinister foreign crony, 'The Count'. As to the plot, Sir Percy, the bounder, marries a beautiful heiress, for no other reason than to settle his huge gambling debts, and then he has her locked up in a mad-house.

Now as it happens, it's not the first time he's had a female put away like that; the first time he played the dirty trick, was on

Observations

by Patrick Flanagan

One of the more unfortunate characteristics of the human species is our inability to value the things that are truly dear to us, at least not until they are gone. It is all the more tragic when that thing of value can never be replaced.

At some time in our lives, most of us have wished we could return to a point in the past and do things differently. Of course if we could return we'd probably do the same things all over again. Hindsight being the poor relation of wisdom.

These thoughts came to me as I rambled across the beautiful South Downs in Sussex a few weeks back. The beautiful rolling hills, the splendid views, the tingling fresh sea air and the abundant wildlife. All this watched over by the Long Man of Wilmington, an ancient pagan fertility

Balancing the Books *continued*

the mysterious woman in white, who bears an uncanny resemblance to the heiress herself, though nobody suspects for a minute that they might be half-sisters.

Anyway, 'a mystery', is how the novel is described, and I must admit that I failed to guess, until the last chapter or so, how on earth the evil count could be made to pay for his crimes. Mind you, this was mostly because a whole new set of 'facts' about him were only introduced at the very last moment, and that, as every reader of detective stories knows, is strictly against the rules of the game; I mean to say, Agatha Christie wouldn't suddenly announce on the last page that the vicar 'just happened to be an escapologist or something', would she? So it won't shock you to learn that I was less than 'chuffed' with 'The Woman in White'; though I'll not deny that some people are perfectly happy to listen to any sort of monotonous drivel; you only have to imagine how many people regularly follow 'The Archers'!

symbol carved into the chalk of the hillside. But all this beauty was tinged with a trace of sadness, for to think that this loveliness could soon be gone is enough to make the stones weep.

Already the signs are there. The tentacles of the land speculator are spreading out into the countryside. Ancient villages like Alfriston now have the 'ubiquitous housing development'.

The old cry that people need somewhere to live is offered as an excuse for the rape of the countryside. If that scenario is taken to its natural conclusion we will end up with housing estates from Land's End to John O'Groats. Those who wish to see the countryside destroyed assert that the landscape that we hold so dear was created by man in the first place. Of course everywhere you look in the landscape you see the hand of man (the more enlightened also see the hand of God).

But the landscape fed and clothed many generations of humans, it also afforded food and shelter for our fellow creatures (which we usually forget about). The hedgerows, copses, dykes and ditches were all made for practical and wholly material reasons. The hedgerows formed boundaries between farms and parishes, while the copse supplied timber for building and charcoal. But they also acted as a highway and a refuge for the displaced animal population after the great forests were cleared.

The new threat offers no such escape for the countryside and the creatures that inhabit it. Our countryside is in danger of becoming the housing estates of the major cities. Who needs farm land to grow food when you can import it cheaper? We are becoming victims of our own success, we have made plans for everything except our own population.

When the Long Man of Wilmington looks down over the South Downs in the future, will he see wise men or, men who wish they could change the past?

St. Dunstan's Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion 1990

by Alf Lockhart

St. Dunstan's ex-Prisoners of War held their Annual Reunion over the weekend of April 6th to 8th. These reunions are usually very well attended and this occasion was no exception. We were pleased to note that the builders had finished in the wings, and for the first time in several years all St. Dunstaners were able to be accommodated at Ian Fraser House. Most of us have been lodged in the south wing at some time or another, so when I tell you that the north wing is of the same high standard, you will know that the quarters are first rate. We met in the Annexe for a social evening, just to get to know one another or to renew old friendships. We had a very enjoyable couple of hours with a buffet/dance, the music being provided by the celebrated Ernie Took and his Band. The buffet, which I must say was excellent, was provided by the catering staff. It is surprising where all the food and drink goes, sometimes I think that some of us must have hollow legs. We finished off the evening about midnight to the strains of Auld Lang Syne with everybody in good voice.

Saturday morning was taken up by the A.G.M. We were first introduced to a most charming lady by Mrs. Dacre. The lady whose name is Beryl Gardiner, is the new assistant to the Hon. Secretary. After the exhortation, we stood in silence for a minute in memory of the friends lost during the past year. Sad memories — good memories. We always tend to remember them as they were when all was young. The business of the day was speedily run through and the election of officers returned the same people who had held office throughout the previous year.

Our Guest Speaker at the Reunion Dinner was Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson K.B.E., who was accompanied by Lady Bryson. Colonel J. Hughes C.B.E., a past National Chairman of The Royal British Legion, made the journey from Ulster,

and we feel honoured that he thought our reunion worthy of such a long journey. John Brunel Cohen and his wife also found the time to attend our Reunion. John Brunel Cohen as you well know, is the Chairman of The 'Not Forgotten' Association. We are indeed grateful that such busy men as these can spare some of their valuable time to be with us on these occasions.

Headquarters was represented by Mr. and Mrs. William Weisblatt, while Major Neve, Sue Reynolds and Mr. and Mrs. Hordell represented Ian Fraser House. We were pleased to meet Mr. Fred Waters B.E.M. and his wife Beatrice. Fred Waters is Vice-President of the National Association of Prisoners of War. Also present were Maurice and Christine Aldridge. Maurice as many of you will know is a St. Dunstaner who has reached the peak of his profession. He is, of course, Professor Aldridge, and holds a chair as Professor of Linguistics in South Africa. Maurice tells me he is on a sabbatical at present. It's always pleasant to meet a St. Dunstaner who has reached the top.

Our President, Mrs. Elizabeth Dacre M.B.E., welcomed the guests, and we then sat down to a tasty Reunion Dinner, for which our grateful thanks goes to the catering staff. After the speeches, which proved to be both interesting and amusing, we all found our way to the bar, which for this occasion was in the lounge. There, over drinks, we talked of times remembered and times best forgot. The wife and I left and went to bed at 0045 hours, but there were still many remaining in the lounge. They probably had a lot of memories.

The Sunday morning service in memory of our fallen comrades was conducted by Captain The Rev. Cuthbert Scott. His rather unusual title is due to the fact that before taking Holy Orders he was a Captain in the Royal Navy. Perhaps because of

his wartime service, or the memories of that time, he honoured our fallen comrades by wearing his medals throughout the service.

Richard Bingley read the lesson and did it remarkably well, an almost professional rendering of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Colonel Hughes gave the sermon. In it he explained why we have these memorial services. It is a pity that some of the weirdo bishops, who recoil from the word Christian, were not there to hear him, they may have learned from him.

Sir Laurens van der Post

Shortly after the service, Sir Laurens van der Post arrived. He was accompanied by Evelyn Monley, a long-standing friend of Sir Laurens who described herself as a 'picture maker'. I think she is in the film industry. Sir Laurens wandered about the lounge speaking to many St. Dunstaners and had some quite interesting conversations with them. When the bar opened at 1200 hrs he and Evelyn made their way up there too. There over a sherry or two he met very many more St. Dunstaners.

After lunch, Sir Laurens gave a talk in the Winter Garden. This talk was very well attended by St. Dunstaners and staff alike. Sir Laurens told us of some of his experiences in the jungles of Africa and Asia. These were most interesting and absorbing, and we were all sorry when the pressure of time made it necessary for him to leave. Before he left he was invited by our Chairman to be an Honorary Member of St. Dunstan's ex-Prisoners of War. He said he would be delighted to accept and was presented with a badge by our Hon. Secretary. He expressed a wish to visit us again, as there were so many shared experiences he would like to discuss. Shared experiences — experiences that are as vivid today as they were 45 years ago.

On Sunday evening we were entertained by the Brighton Welsh Male Voice Choir. This consisted of 36 men, all in fine voice. With them they had three delightful young women soloists, Fiona and Vivien on the flute and recorder, with Linda being the vocalist. The choir sung to a

packed audience in the lounge to loud applause from the audience. And when Linda sang to the accompaniment of Fiona and Vivien a song from Schubert we were all entranced.

Our Hon. Secretary gave a vote of thanks and then our Chairman brought the weekend to a close officially. We, together with most of the Choir, then made our way to the bar to finish off the evening.

As you can imagine, all this entailed a great deal of extra work for the staff at Ian Fraser House. We do appreciate all that is being done for us by the Care Assistants, the domestic staff and the catering staff. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and we extend our heartfelt thanks for the service with which they provide us. There is also the administrative staff, run by Major Neve, Sue Reynolds and Mr. Hordell.

These people are ever ready to be helpful to us in preparing for our Reunions and are most deserving of our thanks. Neither must we forget Headquarters. Mr. Weisblatt and his staff work jolly hard in order to make these occasions the success that they are.

So thanks to all our helpers and let's hope that next year will be as successful as this one.

Editor's Note:

The new date of the 1991 Reunion is on page three of this *Review*

RETIREMENTS AT IAN FRASER HOUSE

Mrs. Valerie Nichols left Ian Fraser House on 25th May after a total of 37 years in the Pensions Office, latterly as the Senior Pensions Clerk. Mrs. Margaret Rutherford also departed from the Pensions Office after more than 20 years on 27 April. Some St. Dunstaners have suggested presentation funds. Those who would like to contribute may send donations (by cheque or postal order made payable to 'St. Dunstan's' please) to Major Arthur Neve at Ian Fraser House, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton, BN2 7BS.



Pauline Haycock in *The Square, Church Stretton*. Behind her the building that once was *The Plough*, now a solicitors' office.

TIMES REMEMBERED



*Fifth in an anniversary year series
of interviews*

A TOWN LIKE HOME

*Pauline Haycock talking to
David Castleton*

Last month's 'Times Remembered' article ended with Tom Hart's account of the arrival of the returned prisoners-of-war in Church Stretton. Among the crowds who greeted them as their coach drove through the streets was a seven-year-old girl, Pauline Trebble.

'We were given a little flag and we marched down the road from school in twos and lined up there waiting for the coach. As it came we shouted and cheered and waved our little flags. The one that I remember most was Sid Doy. He was sat against the window with bandages round his face and a trilby hat on and he had obviously lost his nose. I felt very sad about that.'

Now Mrs. Pauline Haycock, she still lives in Church Stretton and she has vivid memories of the days when Bill and Mary, her father and mother, were licensees of *The Plough*, one of St. Dunstaners' favourite pubs. 'I was born at *The Plough*. I was five when the St. Dunstaners first came. We used to be packed out with them. We had a piano and they used to like to sing.'

Living at *The Plough*, Pauline and her brother, Glynn, saw more of St. Dunstaners than most children in Church Stretton, 'Glynn is seven years older than me and we

used to have them coming in. They would want, perhaps, something to eat and we used to have to buckle to and try and help, taking things to them — fetching and carrying. My brother also used to sit and read for Danny Pretorius because he was taking his exams for physiotherapy. Danny was from South Africa — we were told his great-grandfather had founded Pretoria. Glynn used to ask him exam questions and that was quite something that he was able to do.

'From the Longmynd a wire was put across the field so the boys could be independent and one of my jobs was showing them how to use it. I used to take them and put them on the wire and if they were new boys I would have to show them the way up the wire. Lunchtimes they used to wait until I had to go back to school and I would take them. They were going from their workshops which were in the town centre where the fire station is now. They would call in for their lunchtime drink and then when I was ready to go back after my lunch I would take two or three, put them on to the wire and they would find their own way back to the Longmynd from there or *Tiger Hall* whichever they were at.

'On Sunday mornings Glynn and I would take two boys each for walks. You had to be more careful because, having two or three, paths were narrow, roads weren't as they are now. A lot of the roads were very stony and rough. You couldn't take more than a couple or I couldn't, being a child, and you had to pick the ways that were the easiest walks.

'They used to love to go down through the woods to *Ashes Valley* and have a cup of tea at Mrs. Morris's. Also they liked to walk up *Carding Mill Valley*, or through the fields to *All Stretton*.

'One of their favourites was to the Miss Jones's *Chelmik Pooles* on an afternoon for tea. Everything was home made: cakes, scones, jam potato cakes, melting moments and, when strawberries and raspberries were ready, little dishes of these with cream — a real treat.

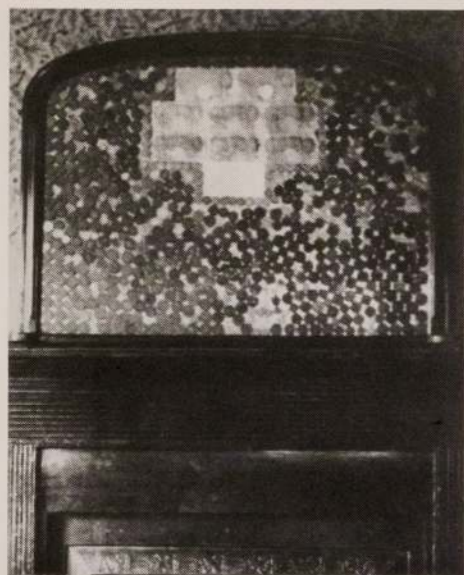
'It was the quaintest place. The dear old ladies would be rushing about with trays. They wore men's boots, thick ribbed stockings, long dresses with lacy blouses and pretty, frilly aprons. The teas were 2s/6d. The cottage was very small, thatched, with creepers all over. The tea room had a corrugated roof and timber walls which were covered with pictures of *Royalty* and



Two unidentified St. Dunstaners 'coming down the wire'. Perhaps some of our readers can name them. If anyone can please write to the Editor a letter for publication in a future issue.

The Plough as St. Dunstaners knew it — a photograph taken at the time.





The mirror in the bar plastered with notes and coins from the people of Church Stretton to help the 'boys' of St. Dunstan's whom they were helping in so many other ways.

places where they had worked in service. After tea it was another long walk back to Church Stretton through the woods and fields giving a description of the countryside as you walked.'

St. Dunstaners seemed to enjoy the company of their youthful guide just as their predecessors had welcomed another child called Ruby at Regent's Park, a generation before, 'I think in a lot of cases they'd left their children, some of them, and gone to war and they were quite happy to have a little girl that they could make a fuss of. Today I don't think it would be the thing to go and sit on somebody's knee but I did with Paddy Campbell and Peter — I can't remember his name, he was a Scottish lad — they were very early ones in Church Stretton, when I was very small. They used to talk to me and sing — the sort of things that you do with little girls.'

On her side, Pauline accepted her friends' blindness: 'I think it was more tragic to see them without a limb. To know that they couldn't see you was a bit worrying but they could talk to you and do things. When they hadn't an arm or leg it

was very hard to accept that. Once somebody came in from the station with one of the blind boys. He went to the toilet and left this blind boy and two halves of mild on the counter. My mother thought he would be surely dying of thirst so she got hold of his hand to put to the glass and discovered that he had no hands. She came in and was quite upset.'

St. Dunstaners helped their hosts to understand disability through their enthusiastic participation in the life of the town and the contributions they made themselves. 'My father had a special set of dominoes with braille so he could have the boys play in the Church Stretton League. Darts were played with a piece of string from the bullseye held in the left hand. Crib was another game my father would play with them.'

A sticky collection

'There was a big over-mantle mirror above the bar fireplace. A friend of ours from London was staying on holiday and he put a five pound note in the middle. That was a lot of money in those days. Then everybody who had change from their beer — a penny or a ha'penny — they would wet the penny with some beer and stick it on to the mirror. With that they collected quite a bit of money for St. Dunstan's for their funds. The beer in those days made it stick, I don't know if today's beer would!'

'We had double summer time in those days and it was no use going to bed too early because it was light too long so I was able to stay and see the boys come in during the early part of the evening. If there were two of our locals wanting a game of dominoes in a foursome they would get two of the blind boys to join them without any trouble. They were all friends together. Pubs were different in those days. Everybody was friendly and talked to one another, asked questions about different places and who they'd seen and the blind boys could tell who people were by their voice. They'd only got to hear you say "Hello" and they knew who it was.'

Sid Doy, whose injuries had caused young Pauline such sadness was among them. 'He used to come to The Plough a lot and I used to go and talk to him. We'd



A crowded scene at Church Stretton Station.

really get on quite well and I would take him for walks Sunday mornings. Jimmy Wright was another one we knew quite well. He was a customer at The Plough and he would ask to be put in the corner where no one could see him. Mother would make him mix. He had been badly burnt over the face and said he knew what he looked like. She was very fond of Jimmy and she would have been very proud to have seen him three years ago, when the St. Dunstaners came back to Church Stretton, sitting in the front of the Church no longer wanting to hide.

'They were all special — our home was given to them if they wanted a comfort, to talk about anything. They were all welcome. There were very few that were naughty boys. If they wanted any help at all my parents were always willing to do anything they could for them.'

'My mother was quite closely involved. She didn't intend to but she just couldn't help it. It was one of those things that just

sort of took over. She used to take them dancing and into the pictures in Shrewsbury, wherever they wanted to go she would try and find time to take them. If they wanted to go shopping, buying special presents, she'd take them and go with them.'

'My impression of it was that people just seemed to want to help. We were very lucky in this area that we didn't have any bombing but we knew what war was like through the boys coming back here to St. Dunstan's. Everybody was ready to take them out, to see them across the road, to take them dancing, dominoes, darts, take them to Shrewsbury and Ludlow rowing on the river, then to Morris's or Degray's at Ludlow for tea, perhaps to the pictures and they'd talk the picture through.'

Descriptions of films, and anything seen, became part of life for the people of Church Stretton. 'It was automatic as you walked along. You didn't know a lot about their life, their family lives. I used to find it



We know Claude Bampton worked them hard but this is ridiculous!

more interesting to tell them what was going on, where we were and all that: ploughing in the fields, new-born lambs or calves, what trees were in leaf also the wild flowers, snowdrops, bluebells or primroses.'

Every day St. Dunstaners would walk through the town to get to the workshops. They were like Army huts and there could have been a dozen. Each hut was a class room. Down there they had basket making, cobbling, they'd be taught braille and telephony. There was a big dance hall with a wonderful dance floor and there was a canteen as well. Afterwards I went to school there. In 1948 the Education Authority took it over and it was turned into the secondary school. Later they built a new school along the Shrewsbury Road and the workshops were all pulled down and they built a fire station.

They had some marvellous concerts down there on the stage at the Sandford Avenue workshop place. They used to get all the boys and girls playing musical instruments and doing comic sketches — all sorts of different things. Claude Bamp-

ton was Musical Director. He was quite a character. He was a worker. He knew what he wanted to get. He was very well liked. He taught them the saxophone, piano accordion, trombone, also the girls used to sing — Gwennie and Beryl and Vi with her piano accordion.

They had a lot of the different variety people, George Formby and different artists like that down. I used to go because Claude Bampton would see we had tickets. At The Plough, Claude Bampton used to say, "It's time we had a party again." So Mother would be on the cooking stakes. She used to do parties for Claude. He wanted one of his parties and he asked Mother. "I can't do a party because I've got to make Pauline an outfit to go to a fancy dress." "Oh, no, that's all right, you do me a party and I'll see that Joan Walch gives Pauline a dress out of the wardrobe." So I had instructions that I was to go down the next day and see Joan and get a Spanish outfit with the mantle and all the rest of it for my party. So he could get *his* party! It was beautiful, it was a gorgeous outfit. I didn't win a prize because it was a bit too

professional but I felt the bees' knees in it. The costumes were out of this world. They must have gone to an awful lot of trouble. Wigs as well. They were worn by the Steel family. The girls were about the same age as my brother and I.'

St. Dunstan's and the 'boys', as they were known, brought life to the town. 'I think Stretton wouldn't have been such a happy-place during the war if they had not been here. The shows would never have been brought into Church Stretton. We would have had to travel to see shows like that. They were so well done. I can remember the Cobbler, Sid Kidson, I used to like to hear him singing, "I cobble all day and I cobble all night" — "The Floral Dance" he used to sing as well. I remember Gwennie, she lost part of a hand, she had a lovely voice and so did Beryl.

"They were blind. It was a new life for them. Some of them were a bit obstreperous but they had gone through an awful

lot and they were forgiven if they did make mistakes. I think it taught us to be kind to one another and to be helpful. To just make life as easy as possible for them. To see the boys in blue, some of them looking pretty ghastly when they came, looking a lot better when they went from here was encouraging. It was nice to think that they certainly looked better and were starting to take more interest in life again. It wasn't the end of the world, which they thought it was going to be.'

There came a day when Pauline was asked to pose in a photograph: 'I'd come home from school for lunch and I was just about to go back when I was told I had to stay and have my photograph taken. I can remember Tom Hart and his wife, Mabs, and Danny Pretorius and Gwen and others.' It was a farewell picture of some of The Plough's regulars with their hosts, Mary and Bill. St. Dunstan's was returning to Brighton.

The boot repair shop in 1942. The St. Dunstaners are Norman Cook, and Robert Dow — the instructor, Sidney Kitson.



'I felt very, very sad they were going. We all did. I used to say to mother, "Isn't it quiet without the boys? There's nobody coming tapping on the door." Because we'd be sat having our meal and somebody would tap on the door, "Can I have a sandwich?" It was unbelievably quiet. I remember now how I felt then. You walked down the street and there were no boys to be seen. It took a long time to get adjusted again to the quiet life of Church Stretton.'

Pauline believes her wartime childhood has shaped her life: 'If I can help anybody, I will. If I can see that they are in trouble I will go in and do it. I think this is probably from being with the boys of St. D's, helping them, even if it was just to put a coat on. I think this has all stemmed from being there. I think it has made me a more thoughtful person.'

'They were happy childhood days. Not nasty ones that you want to forget. They were happy days and they made it happy. They'd lost so much that they wanted to make up for it. It was really very good. They made my days happy.'

Regulars pose for a farewell picture with Bill, Mary and Pauline Trebble.



A souvenir of 'showbiz' days at Church Stretton in later years.

ST. DUNSTAN'S COMPUTER USER GROUP

Mark Pilbeam reports on the Computer Weekend which took place at Ian Fraser House from March 30th to April 1st.

Before continuing any further I would like to express my thanks and I am sure the thanks of all St. Dunstaners to Phil Duffee, who to our great regret has announced his retirement.

Phil was instrumental in the introduction and consequent teaching of computers at Ian Fraser House. The task he set himself was an arduous one, having to cope not only with the responsibilities of teaching, but also having to keep abreast of new innovations and aids within the computer world. If that wasn't enough, he had constantly to find time, which he did, to answer the telephone and deal with enquiries ranging from problems with hardware, software, finger trouble, and whether or not the Green Party had a chance of winning the next election. The latter question he was, like most of us unable to answer, the former he dealt with, with consummate ease.

On behalf of all St. Dunstaners who have suffered under your tyrannical keyboard, Phil, I would like to say, thank you! And wish you all the best in your forthcoming retirement.

It was suggested at the Weekend that a computer user group might be formed to assist St. Dunstaners who are using, or thinking of making use of a computer, either as a hobby, or as a support vehicle to their business or profession.

The idea behind the group would be to provide the means by which the group members could assist each other in overcoming common difficulties experienced through the operation of a computer. I believe that this suggestion has born out the frustration felt by St. Dunstaners who believed, or were led to believe that the computer was the universal panacea to all their problems.

The computer is of course a solution, but it is not necessarily the answer. It is a

machine, and like all other machines it requires instruction, in its operation, correct administration, and maintenance when it breaks down. The group would be able to offer assistance to the St. Dunstaner in two respects.

Initially the user group would be able to provide advice, either through its members, or by pointing in the right direction the St. Dunstaner who is thinking of purchasing a computer and does not know how to go about it.

For the experienced computer operator it is hoped that the group might provide a forum for discussion, assisting in the expansion of skill and experience of its members.

It is hoped that a library system will be set up providing information to members on new products, and upgrades of old ones. Advice will be given on program specific problems and evaluations on well known packages. In addition an environment library will be made available to those using IBM, or IBM compatible machines.

I have volunteered to attempt to coordinate such a group and I would appreciate it if any St. Dunstaner who is interested in starting up such a project could write or telephone me at the following address. Mark Pilbeam, 5 Raison Avenue, St. Nicholas Park, Nuneaton CV11 6DR. Telephone 0203 370506.

CORRECTION

In the Welcome to St. Dunstan's column in the May *Review* we printed Admiral Sir Frank Twiss K.C.B. D.S.M.. This should have read Admiral Sir Frank Twiss K.C.B. D.S.C. We apologise for this mistake and any embarrassment it may have caused.



'Hardy hikers'. The walkers prepare to set out on the first day of the walk.

75th ANNIVERSARY WALK OR 'JIM'S JAUNT'

by Ray Hazan

Take a large measure of sunshine, add the sense of open spaces, fresh air and exercise, the ebullience of the skylark, subtract the sound and smell of the motor car, and you have some people's idea of paradise. These were just some of the ingredients of the 75th anniversary walk undertaken by some 15 St. Dunstaners during the last week in April.

Following a similarly successful walk last year, the outing has become an annual event by popular request. Learning from experience, and linking it to our anniversary celebrations, a two tier itinerary was organised — 75 miles, or 15 miles per day, for the hardier walkers, and 75 kms, or 10 miles a day for the others. The party was based at IFH and were bussed the short distances daily. Once again, Ray Sheriff and Jim Wild had reconnoitred the routes

and cleverly arranged for the parties to set off from virtually the same place, meet up for lunch, and end at the same spot, making the overall logistics a relatively simple task. Ted John provided four CB radio sets, thus the groups were able to contact each other and the 'head' to keep in touch with the 'tail'.

Escorting the walkers were family, friends, members of staff from the Brighton Homes and three recruits from the Depot of the Queen's Division, Fusiliers Colin Hogg, Mark Hall and Danny Hoggins. These last soon adapted to this no doubt unusual 'requirement of the Service' and were a great help. Both they and St. Dunstan's surely benefit from the experience.

There was chatter, laughter and 'right, let's get at it' atmosphere on Monday

morning as we gathered in the front hall at IFH. Seven guide dogs scampered round straining to get at all that greenery and open space. So, it was straight up the Downs behind the building, and the breeze, which at first had tended to raise the goose pimples was soon appreciated as the sun bore down. Leading the 10 milers, was Care Assistant Jonathan Ridge. He has an immense local knowledge and provided a constant commentary about our surroundings. Hardly had we set out when he told us, 'That's the spot of an unsolved murder', a good start!

Very soon we fell into a pattern of about two and a half hours walk in the morning, lunch in a pub garden, and another two and a half hours in the afternoon. Apart from one shower, and an afternoon of drizzle, the sun shone constantly, offset by a welcome breeze, especially on the hill tops. We climbed many hills and stiles, but generally speaking, the going was easy and road work kept to a minimum. But the sheer delight of striding out in an open space, the soft Down's turf under your feet, the smell of fresh grass and farms, the tranquility of Eastdean, the best kept village in Sussex, the companionship of one's friends, dogs cooling off in the horse troughs and, above all, the feeling of escape from the demands and rigours of daily, modern technological life was a most welcome tonic. Making it sound like a pub crawl, the lunch times stops were ticked off, The Swan, The Cricketers, The Jolly Sportsman, The Sussex Ox. The publicans very kindly let us eat our packed lunches at the tables in their gardens, again, thanks to the careful recce by Jim and Ray. Once again, we were lucky to have Michael, one of the Brighton drivers, and the dogs would pounce on him for water whenever they saw him.

Few of us will forget walking the Seven-Sisters, in true English logic, a series of eight cliffs to the East of Cuckmere Haven. On our descent into Milton Street, Jonathan pointing out orchids, Long Barrows (ancient burial plots) and flints dating back some 140 million years with the trails and shells of ancient sea anemone embedded in them.

It was over all too soon. An 'end of walk' dinner was held in the Winter Garden on



Daly climbs a stile on the last day of the walk. In the background is his escort, Colin Hogg.

Photo: Patrick Flanagan.

the Friday evening — a delicious meal prepared by PBK which did nothing to spare the calories so carefully shed during the day! George Male, Mike Tetley's escort, gave a rendering of an amusing walking and pub song as an expression of thanks on behalf of the escorts, Trevor Tatchell rounded the speeches off in his inimitable way, leaving a trail of bodies, helpless with laughter, and Fusilier Colin Hogg played and sang a Beatles number on the piano after giving a short thank you speech, which went down very well. That evening, the bar exuded good spirits of all kinds! Red faces, tanned from the sun, well, that's our excuse! At midnight, the dining room was packed with people. Had they really not had enough, or were they bedding in for next year's walk?

The walkers wish to express their very grateful thanks to Jim, Ray and Jonathan, as well as Major Neve and all the Brighton staff, who made it all possible, and so comfortable.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mrs. Mary Madden, of Kintbury, Berkshire

I would like to thank St. Dunstan's and staff for their sincere sympathy on the death of my dear husband, Tom. I will always remember the very happy times we spent at Ian Fraser House. May I also thank all our friends there for their cards, letters and phone calls. Also thank you for the lovely floral tributes from St. Dunstan's.

On behalf of myself and family, I thank you all at St. Dunstan's. God bless you all.

From Ted and Iris Miller, Leamington Spa

We would like to thank Miss Mosley and all the staff and helpers at St. Dunstan's for the flowers and good wishes on the occasion of our Golden Wedding Anniversary. This is perhaps the most appropriate time — in St. Dunstan's 75th Anniversary year, to say how much we appreciate what St. Dunstan's means to us all. Without their care and constant help (in Ted's case over 45 years) we would indeed have been much poorer in every way. St. Dunstan's is our family.

We would especially like to thank our handless friends for their lovely table decorations and for their cards and good wishes. It was lovely to have Miss Newbold with us on our special day. Thank you all once again.

From Mrs. Maureen White, Burton-on-Trent

I would like to thank all the friends of my late husband for the many cards and phone calls they sent during my recent bereavement. I have had so many it would be impossible to write to each one.

A special thank you to Matron and all the staff at Pearson House, especially the

nursing care floor for their nursing, care and kindness to my husband Jack. Also a special thank you to Miss Newbold for her kindness as his Welfare Officer during the years he was a St. Dunstaner.

I also thank Mr. Colin Bentley and his drivers for their kindness and care on our journeys to and from Pearson House. The children Kevin, Christine, Linda, Robert and Caroline join with me in thanking everyone for their kindness.

REFLECTIONS

By the Reverend C. Le M. Scott

The Prisoners of War Reunion had an inspiring affect on many of those who attended it: your Chaplain was, hospitably, also invited. I have often been at the margin of those who, as part of their experience of the history of our times, suffered during the various troubles of the last 80 years — at the margin because (by luck, by providence, who knows?) my own affliction has been light. But the suffering goes on. At the St. Dunstan's gatherings this April there was a curious generosity of spirit; an acceptance of the pressures on others with a disregard of selfish concern.

None of us seems able to say why the great values of the human spirit become obvious only when there is evil and pain. Nor, on the other hand why, in the presence of improvements in liberty and comfort . . . say in our fine National Health Service, our schools, our more convenient homes, even our greater spending power . . . there is so often back-biting and discontent.

One tries to find a stance, an attitude, a faith which puts these things in order. One longs to see a way in which, through the errors, the discomfort, even the stark evil of the world, some over-arching good is promised. I see this in religious, in Christian terms; there are other good points of view. With all men of goodwill we honour generosity, forgiveness, truth; something called nobility, I suppose. There is plenty of that at St. Dunstan's.

A Moment to Spare with Syd Scroggie

WHAUR'S INDIA?

Winston Churchill didn't think much of democratic forms of government, saying that all that could be said for them was that of all forms of government they were the least bad. The word democracy, of course, is Greek in origin, and when democratic institutions were first devised in ancient Athens, it was expected of the citizen body not only that every man jack of them should participate in the political process, but also that they should be prepared, if voted into office, to shoulder the responsibilities of one or other of the departments of state.

This system worked pretty well, but then the citizen body of the Athens of this era was probably the most intelligent, best educated and most highly cultured of any democracy there has ever been. Their literary diet was Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripedes; they were surrounded by such architectural masterpieces as the Parthenon: and it was their idea of relaxation to debate points of philosophy in the Agora with no less a brain than that of Socrates.

Compare this citizen body with our own as this can be daily assessed in the High Street, bus and supermarket. They have been brought up on a diet of comics, soap operas and pop music; they are for the most part uneducated; and their idea of relaxation is the disco, the bingo, and lying on the sand at Rimini, Miami or Benidorm. They know nothing of political affairs, whether foreign or domestic; they haven't read a book if it wasn't by Enid Blyton, Barbara Cartland or Ian Fleming; and football is the exclusive focus of male enthusiasm, fashion and make-up that of the women.

But they can put governments in and put governments out, and by what process of reasoning they do this, given their uni-

versal ignorance, must always be a puzzle to sociologists. It must also explain Winston Churchill's doubts regarding democratic institutions. I know a woman, enfranchised under this lunatic system of ours, who claims that you can see Holland from Aberdeen, another, similarly invested with the vote, who hearing India mentioned frowned in perplexity. 'Whaur's India,' then got on with the dusting in my old cousin's apartment.

The Greeks had a word for such people, and they compromise the majority of our citizen body, the word 'idiot'. It meant anyone who could not or would not take an intelligent interest in political affairs. In Scotland we call such people 'ba' heads', but the word idiot will do just as well.

WE WISH TO THANK YOU

by Ted Pepper

As this is the 75th Anniversary of St. Dunstan's I thought it would be most appropriate to thank those often forgotten — our wives.

There is without doubt no other person we St. Dunstaners should thank more than our wives. They have been for years our nurse, guide, taxi driver and all other things we need to get through life. I know that most of us are independent up to a point, but where would we be without our wives?

It would be nice to think that they will appear on some honours list somewhere showing how much we appreciate what they have done for us over the years. They have, I feel at times been the 'forgotten army', and where would we be without them?

Digital Daily Newspapers

This is an exciting development which gives blind people in the UK access to the full text of the day's newspaper. In the past, blind persons must either wait for weekly extracts on cassette tape, or ask friends to read the paper to them. The new system will allow blind people to skim through the paper and choose what they read in much the same way as a sighted person can read a printed version.

Most newspapers now use computers for composition; this process creates a graphical representation of the text. However, many newspapers convert the articles to a database format, and it is this format which is used in this system. In the pilot scheme, the text of *The Guardian* is broadcast nationally over the independent television network by AirCall Teletext Ltd. It is transmitted on the day of publication, and is received in the blind person's home using a Screen Electronics decoder card in a personal computer. A typical issue of *The Guardian* is 100,000 words which takes about an hour to broadcast.

Flexible read and search software, developed by the RNIB Technical Development Department, allows the user to read the paper using a speech synthesiser or a transient braille display. The latter option is particularly useful to deaf-blind persons whose access to any kind of information is very restricted. The software allows the user to skim through the headlines, select an article to read, and move easily between articles. As well as the reading facility, there is a comprehensive searching capability. It is possible to search the whole paper for up to ten key-

words in under 4 minutes — far less time than a sighted person could do it! The software is designed to be as simple to use as possible; a blind person with only limited experience of a keyboard or a typewriter could learn how to use the system in under two hours.

The Guardian's text is sorted into five sections — home news, foreign news, financial news, features and sport. The sorting process strips out the formatting and graphics characters, and indicators (eg. for headlines) are inserted. The files are sent to AirCall Teletext using the packet switchstream network; the data is then transmitted over the television network like teletext. The decoder card is connected to the TV aerial and, on receipt of a start signal, begins data capture and stores the text as separate files on the hard disk of the blind person's terminal.

The pilot scheme with *The Guardian* newspaper will run for six months; if successful, the project may be extended to three or four national newspapers.

There is considerable interest in other European countries in this project; a number of other countries are now working on similar lines. The first digital newspaper was in Sweden but they used very different technology from that being employed in the UK system. The EEC Concerted Action on Technology and Blindness has set up a project to co-ordinate these activities, and RNIB Technical Development Department has been given the responsibility of leading this project.

For further information: Ms C. Rundle, Technical Development Department, RNIB, Tel: 071-388 1266 ext. 2364.

We wish to thank you *continued*

There is no doubt our wives must be the most well adjusted of all. Over the years they have become interior decorators, carpenters, electricians and gardeners. Yes, I agree, we can have a go at all the above things, but what happens when we drop a screw or lay our screwdriver down and cannot find it. We suddenly find the garden line is not going straight, who do we call for? Our wives of course. And what

is she supposed to do, just drop everything, even if she is up to her elbows in pastry. If she does not we tend to fly off the handle.

There are so many things and so much that we have to thank them for that we should stop and think long and hard. I am sure that all St. Dunstaners will agree with me and give a hearty vote of thanks to their wives.



On a visit to Canada Jerry Lynch had a reunion with Joe and Eleanor Johnson. Eleanor — her maiden name was Shaw — was a V.A.D. in Hobbies at Church Stretton, in 1945.

STIMULATOR — SIMULATOR

by Ray Hazan

They say that one of the few professions not available to the visually handicapped, is that of an airline pilot. That may now be in doubt as three members of the Guide Dog Adventure Group, including Roberta and myself, reported to the British Airways Training Centre at Heathrow on 11th April. One can understand the look of consternation on the face of the security guard at the gate on being told that we were destined for the flight simulator. He peered into the back of the mini bus and saw five ladies, one guide dog and a one handed gent!

Peter Parker, an engineer in the simulator building, explained it as the most expensive video game in the world — in the millions. The flight simulator consists of a box mounted on hydraulic rams in an 80ft square room. Inside the box is an exact replica of, in our case, a Boeing 737. This is a 50 ton, twin engined jet, capable of carrying some 120 passengers. Computers control the reaction to the thousands of switches and instruments inside, whilst projectors display a moving picture of runways and towns at night outside the cockpit.

Peter briefly explained the main con-

trols, joystick, or semi circular steering wheel as it now is, rudder bars, foot brakes, flaps, throttles, reverse thrust and undercarriage lever with its wheel on the end — no mistaking that one! Then, as we pushed the throttle controls forward, we felt our backs press against the seat, engine and wind noise increased, the cockpit tilted up, and we were airborne. As we circled, so the lights of London passed beneath our window — all very realistic, down to the bump as we landed.

There are some 2900 pilots with British Airways. They receive 40-50 hours 'simulation', and are regularly checked out. We visited the control room where the 18ft long banks of mini computers which control the 15 simulators were housed. We had many questions, which Peter expertly answered.

This was a unique opportunity, which is denied to most people, so we felt very special and privileged. St. Dunstaner, Jimmy Wright, had a flight in the same simulator some time ago, which was recorded for his local talking newspaper. I have always wanted to know what happened 'up front'. This was the ideal opportunity without causing havoc and damage!

A Tribute to the Late H.K.A. Leslie

by An Old Friend

It is fitting that we should be saying our farewells to Hamish in the Garrison Church, for he was essentially a military man. He was a man of action rather than words and I have found it difficult to find the right kind of words fully to record his measure.

I knew him for over forty years, first in war and then in peace, and we enjoyed one of those rare relationships that defy time and distance. We first became friends because we were both Scots, born not very far from each other, but it was the war that brought us together. He had grown up on the east coast of Scotland, and he used to reminisce during our wartime conversations, when we were out of the line, about catching lobsters and fishing off the rocks near Monifieth.

But his was not an idyllic childhood. He ran away from home to join the army — the King's Own Scottish Borderers — and had to be 'a little economical with the truth', as the saying goes, in order to be accepted. But it was with a small intelligence unit that he found himself in France, in the very early days of the war. And it was here that his truly remarkable military career began. I think a few of the details deserve to be touched upon today in his memory.

As the German blitzkrieg swept towards the Channel ports in 1940, Hamish was captured not once but twice. He escaped the first time by making what I can only describe as a violent physical assault on his armed captor. He got clear away but was picked up again, this time wearing French civilian clothes, with his army pay-book stuffed down his sock. He was herded into a make-shift prisoner of war pen but broke out when an air-raid caused confusion among the German guards.

He reached the River Seine at Rouen, and actually swam across it — no mean feat — and found his old unit. He once told me that his only reception there was a laconic 'Well, where have you been, Leslie?'

Re-kitted, it was into action again, but he was badly wounded in the shoulder. He was evacuated to St. Nazaire and put aboard the hospital ship *Lancastria*.

He must have begun to think that he had become a very special target, because the Germans bombed the ship and one bomb actually fell right down the funnel. It exploded inside with devastating effect. Hundreds were killed in the disaster. The *Lancastria* began to capsize, sinking rapidly, and Hamish and a pal walked down the ever-sloping deck into the sea. After some time in the water, clinging to a stretcher, he was picked up by a small British coaling ship, the *Glenlea*, which managed to make its way back to England unscathed.

When fully recovered, he joined my battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders and served with great distinction in North Africa and North-West Europe. In Africa, he was badly wounded during a daring night raid on German positions in Tunisia. When the North African campaign was over, he rejoined the battalion and on D-Day was one of the first Seaforth officers ashore on the invasion beaches in Normandy. His job was to clear the road leading inland of mines, something I was personally grateful for when I arrived much later with the battalion transport.

We saw action together in all the later battles in which the Seaforths were engaged — around Caen and Falaise, at Le Havre, in Holland and in the Ardennes, when the Highland Division was sent to help stem the last German attempt at a breakthrough. The war was nearly over when one of the last shells the Germans fired at the Seaforths burst almost in his face, partially blinding him and leaving dozens of small pieces of shrapnel in his skull.

Nevertheless, sporting a monocle in his good eye, Hamish continued to serve the army all over the world — in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Middle East, Germany — as President of Courts-martial, having

Major H. K. A. Leslie *continued*

voluntarily made a special study of the Manual of Military Law. Even when he could no longer persuade the army to keep him on, his legal knowledge was put to good use by a firm of local solicitors.

About two years ago, he suffered a severe stroke, could hardly speak and was physically disabled. But he tackled these difficulties with the same indomitable courage that he tackled all his battles and was making progress through speech and physical therapy.

Hamish did not suffer fools gladly, but if he gave you his friendship it was forever and without restraint. When he arrived in London from some distant assignment, he would ring me out of the blue and say "Can you meet me in half an hour?" I always did. He was that kind of man.

Elizabeth is right to be proud of him.

EASTER PARADE AT IAN FRASER HOUSE

A fairly small but definitely select band of St. Dunstaners spent Easter at Ian Fraser House. There were nine entries for the Easter Bonnet competition and once again it was a hard task to choose the prize-winners from such a gorgeous array of hats. All the contestants were congratulated on their efforts. There were flowers, eggs, chicks and bunnies in abundance. The following prizes were awarded:—

- 1st Mrs. Olive Robinson in Eggs Galore, a creation with chicks and edible eggs very fetchingly tied under the chin.
- 2nd Miss Elsie Aldred in Birds Nesting. Elsie had clearly gone deep into the hedgerows for this one.
- 3rd Mrs. Iris Grimsey in Spotlight on the Easter Parade, sparkling spots and a walking cane.
- 4th Mrs. Ann Wallage in Birds of Paradise, a vision of lilac chiffon and lace with peacock and chicks.

Most Original: Mrs. Betty Stanley in Full Breakfast, clearly Betty is not content with boiled eggs at Easter.

D.F. Robinson's

GARDENING NOTES

Now is the time that the garden should be showing plenty of colour, it is also the time to plant the remainder of the half hardies to give colour for a longer period. Give some fertiliser in powder, pellet or liquid form to the soil of the flower and vegetable beds, this will give excellent results.

Spread the fertiliser when the soil is moist using the fork. Keep the weeds from growing by using the hoe regularly which will keep the soil open for any rain that may fall. Pests of all kinds will be endeavouring to get a real hold now so keep them down with sprays, powders and pellets.

Vegetables

All of the cabbage family will be growing well so give a little extra feed. Water and add a little extra lime to prevent club root. Lettuces don't take too long to mature so sow seeds regularly to give plenty of greens for salads. Pick all peas as they mature for if they are left too long they will be hard, even when cooked. It will also let the smaller ones grow better. One can also sow seeds of the later types of garden peas to see you through the summer and early autumn. Stake all runner beans and tie them in at first, as they will grow very rapidly.

Potatoes may still be earthed up to make the top ones increase in size. Plant out all outdoor tomatoes which may have been forgotten and any spare ones raised from seed remembering to put some stakes in as you plant. Give them regular food and water. Marrows recently planted out will have grown a good deal, so stop some of the shoots to make them bushy and reach their flowering stage more quickly.

Lawns

Cut the grass regularly with the blades at the lowest level. Remember to keep the grass box on the machine all the time. Set the sprinkler on the lawn ensuring that the lawn gets a good dose of water. Keep the edges trimmed.

Fruit

On all fruits, cut away some of the extra growths, particularly the longer ones to ensure a better crop. Pinch back all the young growths on the currants and raspberries for the same results. Give all the fruit manure and plenty of water, especially after dry spells.

Flowers

In places where you get a lot of sun it might be a good idea to sow some seeds of quick flowering annuals. Keep all the tuberous begonias going well and ensure plenty of water and fertiliser. The same applies to small flowering begonias which should be planted in groups to produce a good show of colour in the autumn.

Greenhouse

Tomatoes will be growing well so make certain they are tied securely to the stakes. Stop any side shoots in order to keep the tomatoes from falling. Give plenty of water and fertiliser and spray the leaves and feed well.

The windows should be kept open most of the time (day and night) except when there are strong winds and heavy rain, when only the windows on the lee side should be left open. Water can be sprayed on the floor of the greenhouse to provide extra moisture.

Quite a number of plants for next year such as primula, polyanthus and carnations should be sown now and cuttings from other plants like regal pelargoniums can be taken now.

CLUB NEWS

BRIGHTON CLUB BRIDGE RESULTS

Pairs Played on the 8th April 1990

1st	Alf Dodgson & Mrs. Andrews	69.0
2nd	Wally Lethbridge & Mr. Goodlad	51.2
3rd	Bob Evans & Mrs. Barker	50.0
4th	Jo Huk & Mrs. Tebbitt	48.8
5th	Bill Phillips & Dr. J. Goodlad	41.7
6th	Reg Goding & Mrs. McPherson	39.3

On Saturday 21st April we played a match against Southwater in the semi final round of The West Sussex Inter Club League Team of Eight Competition. It was a very pleasant occasion and for three of the four rounds scoring was level. In the fourth however, the 'roof fell in' and the visitors won the match by thirteen victory points to three.

The team was:-

Bill Phillips, Alf Dodgson, Bill Allen, J. Whitcombe, Vi Delaney, Wally Lethbridge, Reg Goding and Bob Fullard.

On Sunday 22nd April we went to Horsham for the annual Friendly Teams of Twelve Match. As usual this was a most pleasant occasion and we were entertained most hospitably giving us an opportunity to meet old friends. We were leading by eight points at half time which we extended to a margin of fifty by the end of play.

The team was:-

Bill Phillips, Alf Dodgson, Bill Allen, J. Whitcombe, Vi Delaney, Wally Lethbridge, Reg Goding, Bert Ward, J. Huk, Bob Evans, Mrs. McPhearson and Mrs. Clements.

BOWLS HANDICAP, MARCH 1990

by Percy Stubbs

It is now 45 years since the end of the Second World War and many of us who came

to St. Dunstan's at that time did not realise that we would enjoy playing bowls and have the company of friends so many years later.

This year over 30 bowlers took part in the March Handicap and though we have lost many of our keen bowlers, many more St. Dunstaners are joining and taking part in the competitions thus keeping up the numbers who belong to the Bowling Club. We all miss two of our members who were very active players, Walford Davies and Johnny Cope, who sadly passed away in recent months.

During the fortnight well over 100 games were played and thanks to Joan Osborne the tournament went smoothly, owing to her hard work in making out the programmes for each day. Thank you Joan for everything you do for us. It is surprising how age and additional handicaps do not seem to stop many of our players from taking part in competitions. This year the partially sighted winner was Jack Price who is in his 80's, while the runner up was G. Bunting who plays from a wheelchair.

We must thank Reg and Vi Bradford for their valuable help during the tournament and all the other wives and helpers (too many to name) but without them our bowling tournaments would not be the success that they are. Our Annual Dinner was held during the fortnight at which Mr. and Mrs. Weisblatt attended as our guests. After the dinner our thanks were extended to the catering staff for a superb meal.

The prize giving ceremony took place on the final Saturday of our visit with a buffet and dance in the Annexe, the tournament trophies and prizes were presented by Mrs. Edna Cope. Also on that day we entertained our good friends from Southampton.

May we take this opportunity to thank all the staff at Ian Fraser House for an enjoyable fortnight and we look forward to our Summer Tournament in July.

RESULTS

Totally Blind:

- T. Renshaw
- R. Osborne
- T. Mugan
- T. Simmon

Partially Sighted:

- J. Price
- G. Bunting
- H. Davies

Consolation Prizes:

- E. Hannant
- T. Morrison
- S. Jones

Fun Four:

- P. Surrige
- Mary Whitley
- A. Whittington
- T. Mugan

Annually we present a trophy to the bowler who takes keen interest and plays well throughout the tournament and this year Alan Mitchell was selected for his effort under severe disabilities. Well done Alan.

FAMILY NEWS

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Ron and Eileen Homewood, of Bury-St. Edmunds, Suffolk, on the birth of their first great-grandchild, Jade Fenice, born in March to their grandson, Michael Butler and his wife, Coleen.

GRANDCHILDREN

Congratulations to:

Max and Joan Ash, of Exeter, on the birth of a grandson, William Stuart, on January 21st to their son, Stephen and his wife, Joanne.

Mr. and Mrs. Reg Goding, of Rottingdean, on the birth of their grandson, Bradley, on April 11th.

Mrs. J. Jinks, of Hebden Bridge, West Yorks, widow of the late *Edward Jinks*, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Georgina, born on February 13th to her daughter, Julie, and her son-in-law, Peter.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Lynch, of Saltdean, on the birth of a grandson, Ralph, on November 18th last, to their son, Gary and his wife Sandra.

Charlie and Lottie McConaghy, of Belfast, on the birth of their first grandson, Scott, born on March 10th, to their daughter, Barbara, and her husband, Raymond McFarland

Jim and Doris Mead, of Kettering on the birth of their third grandchild, Laura Kate, born on December 13th last, to their son, Raymond, and his wife, Theresa.

Mrs. M. Petherick, of Keighley, widow of the late *Daniel Petherick*, on the birth of a great grand-daughter, born on March 5th to her grandson, Andrew, and his wife, Pauline.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Whitcombe, of Eastbourne, on the birth of a grand-daughter, Katie Joanne, born on April 9th to their son, Stephen, and his wife, Lesley.

MARRIAGES

Congratulations to:

Tom and Olive Simmon, of Harrogate, on the marriage of their daughter, Pat, to Dennis Wynne-Jones, on April 12th. The marriage took place in Castle Douglas, Scotland, but the couple will live in Harrogate.

Mr. and Mrs. Tybinski, of Ipswich, on the marriage of their daughter, Monica, to Mark Ripley, on November 17th last.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Congratulations to:

Tony and Betty Nash, of Cardiff, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on May 3rd.

Ted and Iris Miller, of Leamington Spa, Warwick, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on April 7th.

Robert and Gertrude Thorne, of Derby, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on April 13th.

DEATHS

We offer condolences to:

Mr. William Charity, of Ealing, London, on the death of his wife, Hilda, who passed away on April 28th.

The family and friends of Mrs. Violet Clee, of Lichfield, widow of the late *Leonard Clee*, who passed away on April 2nd.

Mr. Robert Osborne, of Saltdean, on the death of his father on April 12th.

Mr. H. Patience, of Pearson House, whose younger brother, Bob, died in March.

Mr. Ron Smith, of Seaford, on the death of his sister, Mrs. Olive Brogden, who passed away on Boxing Day.

The family and friends of Mrs. E.R. Stafford, of Kings Langley, widow of the late *Charles Stafford*, who passed away on April 26th.

Mr. John Taylor, of Whitton, on the death of his wife, Mabel, who passed away suddenly on Easter Monday.

Mrs. Julie Vowles, of Portsmouth, whose sister passed away in March.

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.

R. H. Brett, Royal Pioneer Corps

Richard Hulluck Brett, popularly known as 'Dick', of Saltdean, died suddenly at Ian Fraser House on 27th April, aged 73. He had been a St. Dunstaner for 46 years. Dick was wounded in action in Italy in 1943, serving with the 68th Company, Royal Pioneer Corps. He was totally blinded, his hearing damaged and both hands amputated.

Despite his injuries Dick trained as a joiner using devices to enable him to use woodwork-ing tools. Many of them he conceived himself and they were made up with the aid of the late Ernest George, then in charge of woodwork at Brighton. To see Dick using his stumps to find the appropriate tool on his bench and 'handle' it using ring attachments into which he pushed his stumps, was to marvel at his skill and his determination to overcome his double handicap. A sequence of the St. Dunstan's film, 'To Live Again', was shot in his workshop and later in the same film, with the assistance of his wife, Margaret — Peggie as she is known to her friends — calling the shots, he demonstrated his skill as a darts player. A research department device to hold and release the dart enabled him to play for St. Dunstan's touring demonstration darts team.

Later he took up bowling with equal success and in recent years he has operated his radio on the citizen's band. To whatever activity he took up, Dick brought his London sense of humour. His voice must have been unmistakable on the radio waves. He will be missed by friends among St. Dunstaners, particularly the handless group, staff at Ian Fraser House and Headquarters and others outside our organisation.

He married Peggie in 1959 but sadly in recent years she has been unwell and staying in a Nursing Home, where Dick visited her every day. We offer our sympathy to her and to their son, David, and to other members of the family.

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 his County Regiment, The Royal Warwickshires, (Monty's Regiment) on his 18th birthday, and was transferred to the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1944. He took part in the Normandy landings a few days after 'D-Day' at Sword Beach and served until April 1945, when he was wounded in Germany three weeks before the end of the war. On his admission to St. Dunstan's he trained first as a capstan lathe operator. Afterwards he took up shopkeeping and then 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. He was a member of the Guard of Honour when H.M. The Queen attended the fortieth anniversary of the Normandy landings. 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. Mr. Cowan also received one of five medals given to The Royal Norfolk 'D-Day' Veterans by the Dutch Army.

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.

W. Green, Royal Engineers

We are sad to record the death of William Green, of Solihull, on April 13th. He was 82 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 18 years.

Mr. Green was already a member of the Regular Army at the beginning of the Second World War, and served from 1939 as a Sapper

with the Royal Engineers. He was taken prisoner in 1940, and spent nearly five years in a prisoner of war camp in Poland. During this time he lost the sight in his right eye and the vision in his left eye was reduced.

Mr. Green joined St. Dunstan's in 1971 and had retired from his work in the building trade. His hobbies were making baskets and stools, which he did very skilfully at a local day centre.

When Mr. Green joined St. Dunstan's he went to Ian Fraser House to learn typing and also had some further training for the crafts he was interested in. He married in 1979, and he and his wife spent some very happy years together until, most unfortunately, in 1986 he became very ill and spent his remaining years in hospital. Mrs. Green visited her husband daily, he was also visited regularly by his sons and his Welfare Visitor, Miss Newbold.

We extend our sincere sympathy to his widow, Hilda, and all the family.

N. Maries, Royal Navy

It is with regret that we record the death of Norman Maries, of Redditch, on April 9th. He was 56 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for just under 18 years.

Mr. Maries joined the Royal Navy in 1949 and served as an Artificer Apprentice until 1953, when he was discharged after having developed diabetes and having some difficulties with his sight. He worked as an estimator for an hydraulics company until his eyesight deteriorated further. He then joined St. Dunstan's and took some training in braille, typing and telephony and for a short time worked as a telephonist with the Reddish Development Corporation.

In May, 1976, Mr. Maries took up a post with the St. Dunstan's Public Relations Department, as speaker in the Midlands. With his wife, Inge, he travelled throughout an area which stretched from coast to coast across the middle of the British Isles. He spoke at schools, hospitals and at meetings of many different organisations and continued this work despite the complications of his diabetes which brought about the loss of both legs.

Mr. Maries' hobbies were woodwork, DIY, amateur radio and boating, and although he had some very serious health problems in the last years of his life, he did make a marvellous

adjustment to his additional disabilities. His skill with computers enabled him to evaluate equipment and programmes for St. Dunstan's. He also kept up with his hobbies and his work for St. Dunstan's until very shortly before his death.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his wife, Inge, their son and two daughters and other members of the family.

R. A. Newton, Reconnaissance Corps

It is with regret that we report the death of Mr. Reginald Arthur Newton, of Smallfield, Surrey, who died in hospital on April 26th, after a short illness. He was 72 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner for 29 years.

Reg Newton served from the outbreak of war, first in the 131st Anti-Tank Brigade, and after Dunkirk in the 44th Reconnaissance Regiment. He arrived in Africa in time for the Battle of El Alamein; and went right through the desert and into Italy, where he was wounded in action between Salerno and Naples. He lost one eye and the other was damaged, but he had enough sight to remain outside St. Dunstan's until 1961. A series of corneal grafts improved his vision each time for a limited period, and the first operation in 1971 was filmed by the BBC and shown in the series, 'Window on the Brain'.

Having some experience in factory work, Reg was trained by St. Dunstan's for industry and worked with the same firm at Redhill until 1976, when he took early retirement on health grounds. He became proficient at various hobbies, including wrought ironwork, picture framing and toy making. However, gardening was his greatest interest and joy. Trained in horticulture from boyhood, he was head gardener at the home of the Chairman of Martin's Bank at the age of 21, and after the war he became horticulture instructor at the Philanthropic Society's school at Redhill. In time he became Chairman of St. Dunstan's Gardening Club and organised many interesting and enjoyable visits and excursions for the members. To the end of his life he loved it and all its activities.

We extend our sympathy to his widow, Betty, to whom he was happily married for 48 years, and to their son and daughters and all other members of the family.