

# St Dunstons Review November 1990



NOVEMBER 1990

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Cover Picture: Jimmy Wright  
parasailing over the English  
Channel.

# From the Chairman

Revolution: 'the overthrow or repudiation of a regime by the governed.' 73 years ago the 17th of this month saw the culmination of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rapid and insidious spread of communism as we have come to know it. Half a century later we all remember the spread of Rent-an-Eastern Mob under the veneer of Islamic Fundamentalism. It now affects about one fifth of the world and is equally insidious. Over the past year or so we have witnessed a second Russian Revolution, led by the Head of State; if not exactly aimed in the opposite direction from that of 1917 it is at least seeking to put things on to a more normal and economic footing. Twelve months ago who could have predicted that changes would occur so extensively and so rapidly in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself. Yet they *have* occurred and are proceeding in directions which must be for the better.

Only just in time. Had recent events happened much later the remarkable degree of unanimity by the United Nations in dealing with the current fanatical extravagancies in the Middle East would not have been achieved. Let us hope that the sanctions now being tightened will bring about another revolution-for-the-better in Iraq. To do so they will need to be very tight indeed.

*Henry Leach*



## NOTICE BOARD



### DAVID DOES IT AGAIN

David Greaves, of Exmouth, who is a member of the Royal Artillery Association, Exeter Branch, recently did a charity walk from Exmouth to Torquay by following the coastal road, raising £620 in the process. The money has enabled David to purchase three invalid chairs which went to St. Dunstan's.

Brigadier Anthony Young, R.A. presented the chairs to Richard Bingley, of Newton Abbot, who accepted them on behalf of St. Dunstan's. During the past 18 months David has raised over £1300 for charity and he thanks all those who gave so generously while on his walk.

### A DROP IN THE EYE

Eye drop misses should become a thing of the past with a new device now available from chemist shops. Autodrop, a simple, easy to use and no-mess way to put in eye drops, has been developed by Owen Mumford Ltd. in collaboration with the Technical Development Department of the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Anyone who has to use or administer eye drops knows that this can often be a difficult procedure. Autodrop is a simple, cost-effective device aimed at easing the problems. RNIB conducted extensive clinical trials to develop the prototype.

The Autodrop clips onto the neck of most eye drop containers. It fits perfectly over the eye, holding the bottle at the correct angle — eye drops fall into the right spot for effective treatment.

Autodrop has a unique feature, a pin-hole which directs the eyesight upwards to avert a patient's gaze from the descending drops. The Autodrop costs £1.75 and will be available from chemist shops, or direct from Owen Mumford Ltd. sales department (0993 812021).

### BRIGHTON SOCIAL CLUB

The date of the Brighton Social Club Annual Dinner and Dance will be November 2nd. Club members wishing to attend should contact Bob or Joan Osborne.

### LOST PROPERTY AUGUST 75th ANNIVERSARY

Here is a list of lost property found after the 75th Anniversary on August 1st. If you feel the property belongs to you, call Roberta Johnston, at Headquarters, giving a description of the items.

1. A bunch of keys
2. A gold clutch bag
3. A pair of glasses
4. A pair of ladies blue short gloves
5. A rosary with crucifix (with a tag marked Lourdes).

### RETIREMENTS

Mr. Bob Field left Ian Fraser House on August 31st, 1990 after a total of over 36 years service to St. Dunstan's, firstly as an assistant in the machine shop and latterly as head of the maintenance staff at Ian Fraser House.

Mr. Phil Duffee left Ian Fraser House on 30th September, 1990 after 14 years as braille instructor. In recent years he has also taken on and built up the computer instruction to the benefit of many St. Dunstaners.

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, East Sussex, BN2 7BS.



Charlie Haig tandem-riding with the First Trainer, Joe Gough.

## H.M.S. DAEDALUS

The London coach made very good time and coincidentally just before we got to Fareham, the Brighton coach met us on a roundabout and preceded us into Lee-on-Solent and into *H.M.S. Daedalus*, where we were greeted by lots of old friends and some new ones. After tea and a briefing in the P.O.'s Mess, there was an invitation to spend the evening in the W.O. and C.P.O.'s Mess where we met W.O. Day (The Mess President) and finished up having a very convivial evening.

During Saturday forenoon there was a great effort on behalf of those taking part in the walking race on the airfield. I must mention at this stage that Bill Shea and Ted John had a new dog to train, as for myself I had a very old dog who needed no training, one John Arcscott. Ike Sherriff who had been Ted and Bill's usual dog had gone to Romania with a truck full of medical supplies but he was able to come for a couple of days with his family to see us. They all looked very weary after their trip but after a shower and change of clothes and a rest were their old selves.

We were very glad to meet Commander Alan Welton who joined us for the briefing given by Lt. Cdr. Jim Broadley, the P.R.O., and to see again that great campers' friend Don Minter, the Second Trainer. At the meeting the Commander offered to take anyone who wished to ride with him on the pillion of his motorbike which he subsequently did and what a thrill, we touched 118-120 m.p.h.

The results of the Saturday morning walking race were:—

The Denny Deacon Veterans' Cup to Stan Tutton.

The Handicap:

Gold Medal to John Gilbert in 22 mins. 58 secs.;

Silver Medal to Norman Hopkins in 25 mins. 47 secs.;

Bronze Medal to Stan Tutton in 26 mins. 50 secs.

The vast swimming pool at *H.M.S. Collingwood* was open every day, morning and afternoon and was extremely well patronised. Peter Westbrook invited a small party to join him on board *H.M.S.*

*Exeter* on which he is serving and when those who went returned saying what a wonderful time they had had, others of us were envious. But, of course, with so many things going on it was only possible to do one thing at a time. Another party went to the Mayfield Park Bowling Club, in Southampton, for a friendly bowling match, whilst the archers went to *H.M.S. Vincent* where they were guests of the Gosport Bowmen who gave them a wonderful afternoon.

### A Delightful Evening

A social in the W.O. and C.P.O. Mess completed a very full day and we danced to an excellent disco. We were delighted that the Commander and his wife, Joanna, were able to join us amongst many old friends for a chat and gossip. An extra half hour in bed on Sunday morning was very welcome after our late night but we were all smartly dressed and ready for the ecumenical service taken this year by the new Padre, The Rev. Ian Naylor, R.N. The singing nearly raised the roof (could the number of Welshmen there have helped?) The lessons were read by Valerie and Elspeth and prayers were said for the nine campers who had died during the last year, including our old doctor, Percy Parkes, who died in May. He had retired eight years ago but is remembered with great affection. Following the service a leisurely stroll to the Ward Room lawn where we all assembled for a group photograph which was quickly and expertly taken while we all shouted 'cheese' or other unprintable expressions. Following which the Captain, Commander and their officers entertained us to coffee and drinks in the welcome shade of a large tree on the lawn. A leisurely day with the brave taking to the skies in the gliders over the Solent where the thermals took us up, up and away; the archers enjoyed arching, some of the bowlers went bowling and the swimmers swam to their hearts content, so the rest of us forced ourselves to laze about in the sun.

The evening found us in the P.O.'s Mess for an excellent social arrangement by the President, Andy Salter, and his Committee. This evening is always a most



Josh Callum throws the discus.

enjoyable affair, dancing to extremely pleasant music non stop, fed with delicious food in a thoroughly convivial atmosphere. Added to which every St. Dunstaner received a generous raffle prize. The hospitality and kindness of the President and his Committee was most heart warming and we all enjoyed a delightful evening. 'Thank you Andy'.

Monday is always an exciting day at *Daedalus* as it is the day we take to the sea and sail away to Cowes on the *Solent Enterprise*. This year we were joined, to our pleasure, by Diana Hoare and Maisie Streets our lately retired helpers and also Major Arthur Neve and Miss Chris King from Brighton, I suspect they came to see what we get up to! We are sure they enjoyed themselves. Harry Wheeler, who is 93 years of age, came from Brighton, his dog, Alan Price, having gone to fetch him for the day. It was a beautiful day, sunny skies, a very calm sea and a warm breeze. Joe Humphrey accompanied Harry in a sing-song and we spliced the mainbrace in ancient custom; there was tea and coffee for those who preferred it.

On our arrival at Cowes we were warmly welcomed at The Royal British Legion and greeted very profusely by the Chairman and his wife Jimmy and Bonny Higgins. After refreshments we wandered round Cowes. In the harbour there were plenty of yachts of all shapes and sizes following 'Cowes Week', they looked so colourful with their many coloured spinners blowing in the gentle breeze. We took in the sounds and sights around the harbour and the beautiful gardens filled with Mediterranean shrubs; a most pleasant afternoon with a very nice trip back along the Solent arriving home to partake of a very relaxing evening in the W.O. and C.P.O. Mess.

### Sporting Greats

Tuesday morning and three teams of athletes — Gilbert's Gofers, Tutton's Tornados and Tatchell's Triers, arrayed themselves in sporting attire and took themselves to the sports ground on the airfield to show off their prowess in the art of throwing the discus, javelin, medicine ball kicking and putting the shot. To our pleasant surprise we were joined by an extremely vociferous team of ladies — The Hopeless Helpers — whose cheerleading was in the style of American football cheer leaders minus the paper balls and flags. Nevertheless, they were very effective and added quite an atmosphere to the overall effort. The sports were very professionally organised by C.P.O./P.I. Martyn Webb ably assisted by the 'dogs', and cheered on by a motley collection of friends and helpers and even the press came to see what we could do. We got a mention in the *Gosport News* so we felt that we were really on the map. After a nice refreshing cuppa those of us who still had the energy went gliding and those brave enough queued for a pillion ride on the Commander's mighty motorbike reaching 120 m.p.h. along the runway. He was kept very busy and I think that later in the week even Elspeth and some of the helpers did a 'ton-up' — g'd on ya!

Meanwhile a party prepared to go to *H.M.S. Invincible* which was a great success.

John Arscott escorted us all over the ship and we were entertained in the C.P.O. Mess where the chef put up some very delicious sandwiches; another party went to *H.M.S. Collingwood* for lunch whilst the bowlers later in the afternoon started their doubles matches. In the evening we visited *H.M.S. Sultan* for a social evening with the Sultan ladies (dare one call them the 'harem') being so friendly that we were all able to take part in the dancing to the music of Martin Reed — son of Bill and Bridget. His music was very entertaining and he played all the tunes that we knew and we had a great singalong. A raffle was organised by Tomo and raised the large sum of £153 for camp funds.

### Heavy Showers

On Wednesday the weather did not look too hopeful and for the first time for 37 days we had some very heavy showers though even these were hardly enough to lay the dust. However, the wind put a damper on the gliding and sadly also the singles bowls matches had to be abandoned. However, there was still plenty to do and the Captain's wife had invited a party to tea and croquet at Ross House. We battled our way there and were almost bent double playing on the lawn but were rewarded with a delicious home made tea of hot scones, bowls of thick whipped cream and thick homemade black currant jam — a very pleasant interlude.

### Disco at Dolphin

In the evening we took part in the mystery car drive and a right mystery it turned out to be! The first clue had a major error so that the participants were literally going round in circles! However most of the competitors made it back to the Mess in time to get changed and be ready to go to *H.M.S. Dolphin* the submarine base for another social evening. The Mess was crowded and we were entertained by a disco and later in the evening by a comedian with a fund of jokes. Again we had a raffle which raised a further £137 to boost the camp funds.

Thursday turned out to be still fairly windy so that it was not possible for the fishermen to go out, there were blustery



Tony Boardman receives his special award.

showers but nothing to incommode us and there was gliding once more and swimming and more motorbike rides and the tandem was kept in good use round the airfield — not always with a sighted person up front!

A large party went to the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar, where we were right royally entertained to lunch in the Senior Ratings Mess.

Thursday evening as always is a great time to which to look forward with anticipation as it is Prize Giving time. A wonderful array of cups and medals were laid out awaiting presentation by the Captain to the unknown winners. Captain and Mrs. Langton, Commander and Mrs. Welton, Lt. Commander Jim Broadley and the acting Mess President C.P.O. and Mrs. John Heminsley all came to take part, the men all very smart in their uniforms. C.P.O. R.T.I. Martyn Webb, acted as compere and announced the winners. A charming speech to the Mess Presidents, Trainers, Field Gun Crew and the 'dogs'

was made by a newcomer to camp, Norman Hopkins whilst Bill Shea made a graceful speech on our behalf thanking the Captain, Commander and Ships Company of *H.M.S. Daedalus* with a special congratulations to the victorious Field Gun Crew on their 'Clean Sweep' of all the trophies at the Royal Tournament — a magnificent effort. Elspeth thanked the Commander on behalf of the pillion riders for so generously giving us so many thrills on his motorbike even though it had made her wobbly at the knees (so what's new!) and finally the Captain made a short speech saying how glad he was to see us and hoped that we would return next year — he can bet on it!

The prizes were awarded as follows:—

### Archery:

Shields presented by the Gosport Bowmen.

For the totally blind with a score of 110 points with one gold John Gilbert

For the semi-sighted with a score of 101 points Arthur Carter

For the Novices with a score of 56 points Norman Hopkins

### Bowls:

The Ben Mills Pairs Cups

Jesse Mills and Josh Callum.

### The Kath Riley Trophy for the Mystery Car Drive:

Braille Reader

John Gilbert

Driver

Chris Stilton

Writer/Navigator

Sue Stilton

### Sports:

Goal Kicking, For the totally blind with 5 goals in 8.37 mins John Gilbert

For the semi-sighted with 5 goals in 6.65 mins Arthur Carter

The Sheila McLeod Cup for Best Beginner Norman Hopkins

The Winning Team with 130 points 'Gilbert's Gofers', John Gilbert (Capt.), Charlie Hague, Tom Whitley and Alan Duffy.

The Ladies Team got a prize for effort; 'The Hopeless Helpers', Pam Wybrant, Liz Walker, Yvonne Rixon, Bridget Reed and non playing Capt. Eirlys Brittain otherwise known as 'Snowdrop'.

The Victor Ludorum for the semi-sighted  
Brian Lang

The Victor Ludorum for the totally blind  
Tom Whitley

Finally there was a special award to Tony Boardman who at 66, and having recently had a leg amputated, had learnt to swim and managed to complete 50 metres distance in the Collingwood pool.

Friday came and with it our last day with all our friends old and new, shopping to be done and goodbyes to be said then a trip to Wickham to play Bar Skittles against a team representing the King's Head where we were wonderfully entertained. Incidentally I for one would like to see this game introduced into St. Dunstan's activities. The day ended with a grand farewell dance in the W.O. and C.P.O. Mess where Tomo's monster raffle with a most splendid array of prizes to be won and donated by our friends as well as St. Dunstaners was laid out to entice us. It was a great evening and it took us a long time to say goodnight to our friends. We think the

chef must have turned in late as breakfast was a bit of a laugh but the staff rallied round and got us some tea and toast and cornflakes which was as much as most of us wanted.

#### Goodbye, Cheers!

We sadly made our way to the coaches having said our final goodbyes to be cheered off with loud cries of 'Let's get rid of them', 'Be sure not to come back' and I even heard 'See you next year' to my surprise! Off we went to all points of the compass to dream of all the great memories of a very memorable 45th camp and looking forward to 1991; leaving our bleary eyed and loyal dogs to slumber in their baskets.

As a personal observation I would recommend any St. Dunstaner who has not had the pleasure of going to camp before to give it some thought next year, it is never too late and anyway it gives the ladies a rest!

BILL HEFFERNAN

NOTE: The date of next year's camp is August 9th, 1991.

## REFLECTIONS

by the Reverend C. Le M. Scott

Remembrance Sunday means more to some of us each year; and there is an added weight this year with (as we might well think) the extraordinary threats of major war in the Near East. One brings to mind the triumph of conflicts we have known; and also the cost borne by young men who would never grow old and so many who, growing older, have known grievous disabilities.

But most of us go on living; our memories become less painful; our appetites and energies return, we have hopes and plans: we realise that this is what the dead themselves would wish for us. So, death is accepted; and life, at first limited by our bereavement, is also accepted. Something rises in the full human being to say that although death changes everything it does not end everything.

That feeling is a true human instinct. Almost everywhere, to be human is to believe in some sort of survival after death. And of course if you believe in a religion which teaches faith in a God who lives and loves, this belief in survival is greatly strengthened. God is the One who cannot die and who can make the dead live. For the dead, that means happiness and even glory, after any necessary cleansing. So thank God — he, she, will not come back to me, but is better off in God's eternity. And thank God — where he, she is, I shall be myself. For ever, I shall be with God and with those who now seem dead.

Every day I live in this life is a day nearer that end, the true life, to which I now actually look forward. Death is no longer a prison. Death is the curtain which keeps out the light.

## 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. David Brown**, of Norwich, who joined on September 13th.

Mr. Brown served as a Rifleman in the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) from 1937 to 1946. He was stationed in India and Burma and was a FEPOW. While in the Army he played hockey and football at company level and boxed at regimental level.

Mr. Brown is married and has one daughter.

**Mr. Thomas K. Foot**, of Torquay, who joined on September 13th.

Mr. Foot who is 76 years of age, enlisted initially in the R.A.O.C. at the outbreak of the Second World War. His trade was that of Recovery Driver and he was then transferred to the R.E.M.E. on its foundation in 1941.

He first served with the British Expeditionary Force in France, being evacuated from Dunkirk by *H.M.S. Wakeful* on her last voyage from the beach-head. He was then posted to the Recovery Section of 131 Armoured Brigade, 7th Armoured Division (Desert Rats) where he eventually became 2nd in charge Recovery Section with the rank of Staff Sergeant. He fought through North Africa and Sicily, landing at Normandy on Day three and was involved in the fighting at Caen. He was also involved in the Rhine crossing and received gunshot wounds to his eyes and face during the last days of the war in Germany.

In civilian life, Mr. Foot had a successful career as a carpet fitter and, with his remaining vision became a keen bird-

watcher. He has been married to his wife, Violet, since 1939, just before he went to France. They have three married children.

**Lt. Col. Edward Middleton Harper**, of East Grinstead, who joined on September 13th.

Colonel Harper, who is 85 years of age, was commissioned into the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment (16th Foot) in September 1925. He had a full and interesting career in the Army, during which time he played cricket and polo at regimental level and boxed at both regimental and Army level.

He was seconded to the 3rd Battalion Royal West African Frontier Force just before the start of the Second World War and fought in the Abyssinian campaign in 1940, where he was wounded. He then became Deputy Assistant Adjutant General Sierra Leone until 1944, when he was posted back to the U.K. From 1945 until 1948 Colonel Harper served with the Military Government in Germany, and was posted back to Western Command in the U.K. during 1953.

Colonel Harper has been married to his wife, Margaret, for 42 years.

**Mr. John Kenneth Trent**, of London, NWS, who joined on September 13th.

Mr. Trent is 77 years of age, and was born in Austria and was fortunate to come to this country four months before the Anschluss. War broke out before he was able to obtain his visa to the U.S.A., and he remained in this country and was finally accepted for the Royal Pioneer Corps in November 1939, where he became a Lance Corporal. Following an unsuccessful operation on his right eye he was invalided out of the Army in May, 1943.

In civilian life he became a salesman with Phillips, eventually leaving them to start his own business mainly concerned with exporting Phillips products, a business he still carries on today.

Sadly, Mr. Trent's wife died in October, 1988, but he has two married daughters.

## TIMES REMEMBERED

In our *Times Remembered* article this month we hear the story of Private David Melling, a blinded soldier of the First World War. The story which is told in his own words appeared in a book by Walter Wood entitled 'In the Line of Battle'. The book and the other archive material was kindly made available to us by Private Melling's step-daughter, Betty Goodman.

### A BLINDED PRISONER OF THE TURKS

(This is a simple unaffected story of the doings of a young British soldier in Gallipoli and his subsequent experiences as a prisoner of war with the Turks. It is told by Private David Melling, 1/8th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers. He was a lad when he enlisted, his eyesight was destroyed by a bullet, he was captured on the battlefield by the Turks, and was the first British prisoner of war to be released from Constantinople. The narrator, when seen, was an inmate of the Blinded Soldiers', and Sailors' Hostel, Regent's Park, N.W., the wonderful institution which Mr. C. Arthur Pearson founded and controls with so much success in the interests of those whose affliction he understands so well.)

I enlisted in the Lancashire Fusiliers in November 1914, when I was only seventeen years old, and in June 1915 I went to Gallipoli, where we landed in the night-time. A big ship had been run aground there—the *River Clyde*—and pontoon bridges had been made at the side of her, connected with the shore. We left our transport and got into little steam trawlers, which were out at the Dardanelles as mine-sweepers and so on, and these took us to the pontoon bridges. We hurried over them, under fire, and having got ashore we went straight into a bivouac rest-camp. We spent five days in the camp, then we went into the support line of trenches, which is the second line, and after a week or two we went on fatigue.



David Melling.

We were in a Turkish communication-trench, digging it wider, and we came across all sorts of queer things. We dug a dead Turk up, a chap without a head, and near him we dug up one of our short Lee-Enfield rifles. He had equipment on, and when we looked into his pouches we found that he had some of our ammunition, besides his own. We supposed from the look of things that he had been knocked over by a shell and buried in the rubbish. We were throwing the earth out and making the trench deeper when we came across the Turk's head. One chap got it on a shovel and fired it over the top of the parapet. You got used to digging bodies up—it was nothing to strike one with your pick or shovel.

All this experience was good for us, and got us used to fighting before we were actually in it, because there was firing going on all the time, and preparations were being made for charging the Turks with the bayonet.

Things began to get very warm early in August. At about five o'clock on the afternoon of the 6th, which was a Friday, there

was a heavy bombardment and a big advance on the left of the Peninsula—that was Suvla Bay. According to the arrangements we were to charge on the Saturday morning, two hours after the bombardment began. The bombardment was to have started at five o'clock; but somehow the Turks got to know about it, and our attack was postponed till ten o'clock. At that hour we were ready for our job.

I shall never forget that Saturday morning at Achi Baba. I had my sight then, and could watch all that was going on. We were on the ledge of our trench, waiting to spring over and rush at the Turks.

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#### *Helter-Skelter with the Bayonet*

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Our officer was standing by us, looking at the watch on his wrist—and a terrible strain it must have been.

"Two minutes to go!" he said, And we waited.

"One minute to go!" said the officer next time he spoke.

Then at ten o'clock, "Over!" he shouted. That's all I remember of what he said. He may have said more, but I can't tell. "Over!" was the order, and over we went.

We all cheered, and then we went helter-skelter for the Turks with the bayonet.

They were said to be two hundred and fifty yards away, but it was a lot more than that—at any rate it seemed so. And the ground we had to rush over was terrible—rough and with a lot of vines about that twined round your feet and tripped you up. Some of our chaps were knocked flat in this way, some fell of exhaustion, and lots were killed or wounded. The best part of our lot were knocked out before we ever got near the Turks.

But when we reached the trench that we were going for we found that there were not many of the Turks left. Our gunners had settled them, so that the trench was full of dead Turks, some of them with their heads blown completely off.

Our task was simple enough. We had to go for one particular trench that was straight in front of us.

I can't give any special particulars about what happened, because it was all a sort of

blur, but I remember a few things clearly, and it's these that I am telling of.

The trench was up a hillside, and when I got to it I saw that part of it had been blown up. I rushed at the opening, and fell into the trench. I was alone, I don't know whether I was the first man in the trench or not; but I do know that there were none of our chaps there—only myself and dead bodies.

I scrambled to my feet, and the first thing I noticed near me was a Turkish officer, wounded and unarmed.

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#### *British Soldiers don't touch unarmed men*

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There we were, the two of us, the Turk looking at me and me looking at him. I had my bayonet, and I could have settled him or taken him prisoner; but British soldiers don't touch unarmed men, and I was too busy to take him—and a man who is by himself doesn't as a rule take prisoners.

I was looking to see which way to go to get to our other chaps, and the Turkish officer, noticing this, motioned down the trench to the left to show me where they had gone.

I began to clear off to them, but in my eagerness and excitement I did not notice a wire which ran across the top of the parapet. Before I knew what was happening my rifle got fast in the wire at the bayonet standard—that is, where the bayonet fixes on to the muzzle.

Then an extraordinary thing took place. My rifle was tilted over and the bayonet stuck in the back of a Turk who was huddled up in the bottom of the trench. The first I saw of him was when my bayonet struck him. I looked to see if he was dead, but he never moved. I don't know whether I killed him or not, but if he wasn't dead he was a good actor.

I had been about two minutes—it may have been longer—in getting my rifle clear of the wire, and all that time, for it seemed long, I was alone. When I pulled myself together and went on again in the trench I came face to face with a Turk who was coming from the opposite direction. He seemed to be mad, and made a lunge at me with his bayonet; but it was broken and

**Times Remembered** *continued*

no good to him. He saw that and turned to run away. As he did so I could have shot him but my magazine was empty, for I had been firing a lot.

I passed the Turk and then I found our chaps. It seemed a good distance from where I got into the trench to where I found them—I know I had to go round one or two bends.

When we got together again—and it was a joy to be back with my chums—we were ordered to line the trench. I don't know who gave the order, but it wasn't an officer.

I was the end man of the line, and we were firing hard when a bullet came, and all I knew was that I could not see and that I was lying on the floor of the trench, with one of our chaps bandaging me—I don't know who it was.

I was left there while they went on firing.

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*I knew then that I had lost  
my eyes*

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I don't know how long I was lying there; but I was terribly thirsty, and drank two bottles of water—my own and one I took from a dead man near me. I could not see him, but I felt by groping about his equipment that he was a British chap.

There were not enough of our men to hold the trench, and they were forced to retire and leave me.

The Turks came up the trench, and I heard them shouting something like 'Garrah! Garrah!' though it may have been 'Allah! Allah!'

They were fearfully excited, and I thought it was all up with me then. I never gave myself any hope.

The Turks were running about the trench, looking for our chaps. They ran over me, no doubt thinking I was dead. I was lying on my side, with my hands covering my head, holding the bandages to stop the blood from coming out. I had to do that, because it was only a field dressing.

I knew then that I had lost my eyes.

I felt as if all the bones in my body were broken with the Turks running over me and stepping on me.

After some time had passed the Turks settled down a bit, not being so excited, and then they began to search the trench and examine the bodies and men in it. Seeing that I was not dead, they propped me up and began searching my pockets. They were talking away, but, of course, I could not understand them. They were not rough just then, but they were afterwards, when I was being led out. They took my pay-book and photographs and everything I had.

I stood up, and then the Turks took me to a communication-trench about ten yards away.

As I was passing them in the firing-line they hit out at me with their hands, trying boxing competitions on me. They dared not have done this if a Turkish officer had been about.

Two more Fusiliers were being led away along with me. They had both been bayoneted, they told me, after they were captured.

I was taken to a place where there were Turkish doctors. One of them gave me a cup of tea. He could speak English, and he asked be how I was. I told him I was pretty bad. I was given a piece of dry bread, but I could not eat it, because my teeth were closed.

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*They must have thought  
we were horses*

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It was here that I met a New Zealander or an Australian, a gunner, who had been in the charge. He had no right to be in it, but you could not keep the Anzacs out of the scraps. He said that he and a pal were passing through the place when they saw what was going on. Each of them got hold of a rifle and bayonet and rushed into the charge. The pal was killed and the other man was taken prisoner.

From the doctors' place I was taken to a sort of dug-out, which had some kind of grass in it that felt like heather. The two bayoneted chaps had been taken there as well, and I was very glad to have their company.

I was left in the dug-out all night, with the other two Fusiliers alongside of me. In

the morning we were put into oxen carts, four wounded men in each. They were rough things without springs, and were slowly dragged over rough tracks—you could not call them roads—so that it was fair torture to us, bumping all the while.

At last we were stopped at a place and changed into another oxen cart, and taken farther on. We stopped again, and were given a drink out of a bucket—they must have thought we were horses. I suppose they must have given a mule a drink, and then it struck them that they might give us a turn. But bucket or no bucket it was a fine drink.

After that I went into a field hospital, and for the first time since I had been wounded I had my eyes properly attended to.

A Turkish doctor who could speak a little English said 'Eyes!' then a word that sounded like 'yolk.' I suppose he meant that my eyes were gone; but I knew that before he did.

After I had been attended to I was put into a field hospital and fed three times a day. First of all we had a ration of bread, which had to last all day, and a drink of tea; about the middle of the day we were given some soup, which the chaps called 'bill-posters paste.' It was awful stuff, and the chaps who were badly wounded in the body could not do with it, so they used to tinkle their lot into my basin and I would get through it, as well as through my own. I could not eat bread or anything else, because my jaws were affected and my face was badly swollen—it is partly swollen still, but I could just manage to suck the 'bill-posters paste' through my teeth.

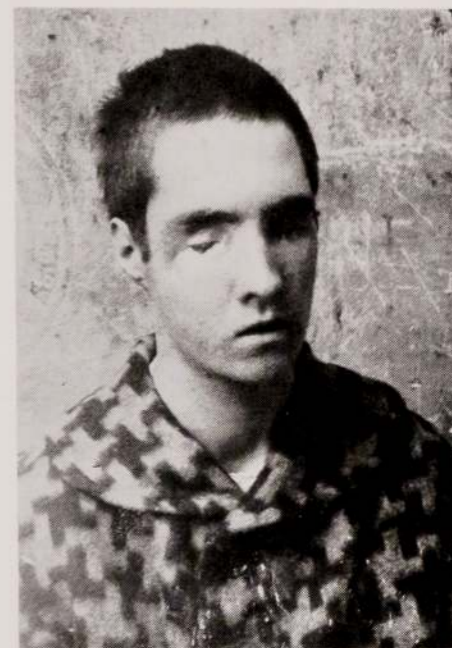
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*A wonderful escape from  
instant death*

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It was not until now that I really understood what had happened to me. A bullet had struck me on the left side of the forehead and gone clean through both eyes, just missing the brain, and out at the right side—a wonderful escape from instant death, as our doctors told me afterwards.

We were given cigarettes in the field hospital—a packet of twenty on every one



*David Melling as a prisoner of war.*

of the five days we were there; and those cigarettes were a real treat.

At the end of the five days we had another dose of oxen carts, and were jolted in them to the seashore, where we were put into a steamer. They told us in the hospital that we were bound for Constantinople, and I was rather glad I was going there. I did not want to stop any longer under the everlasting shell fire.

When we went on board we got a loaf of bread and a drink of tea and a drink of water, and that was all we had for the three days we were in the ship. She was full, the place where I was put being crowded with Englishmen, though there was a Turk on a seat above me. I was lying on the floor under it.

It was a great relief to get to the end of the voyage and go ashore. I was taken off the boat, and as we went down the gangway chaps were handing out nice new pieces of bread and cups of tea. I was lucky, because I had my cup filled twice.

I was taken into a big hall—it seemed to be a sort of drill-hall—and was given another drink of tea and a piece of bread.

Times Remembered *continued*

Then we were taken in open carriages, drawn by two horses, to different hospitals. I well remember that my carriage had rubber tyres—and that was very nice indeed after travelling in the oxen carts.

I was carried on a stretcher into a hospital near the quayside, and here I was turned into a sort of Turk, for I was served with a pair of Turkish trousers big enough to fit six of us. They tied round the waist and ankles. I had a shirt also given to me, a sort of big gown which was tied round the waist. We looked like Julius Caesar in them.

The Turks dressed my eyes and put me into a bed, and I was glad to get in, because I had been thrown about for ten days since I was wounded.

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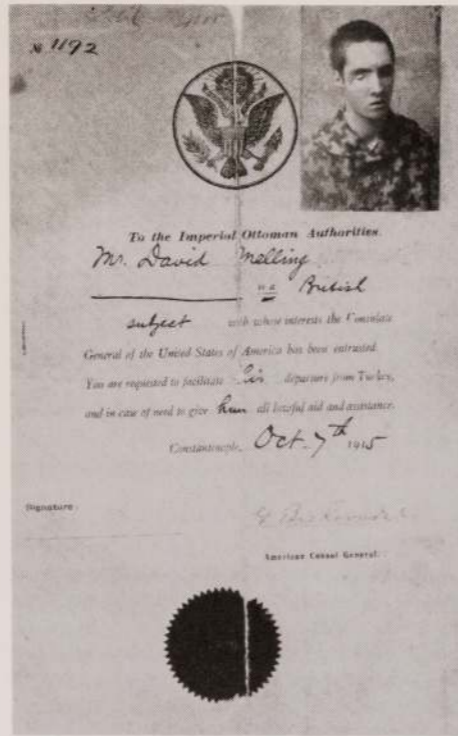
*Not fit for Englishmen*

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I was in hospital for about three weeks, treated by Turkish ladies who were acting as nurses. A lady who was there was said to be an Egyptian princess, the late Khedive of Egypt's sister, and she could speak English. She asked me my age, parents' names, occupation and address at home, and said that next day she would write to my mother, to tell her how I was getting on; but when next day came I told her that a chap in my regiment had written home for me. She then told me a bit of joyful news, and that was that I was going to be sent home.

There was a German Bible-reader in the hospital. We called him Charlie, and I will say for him that he was like a brother to us. There are good and bad in every race, and this was one of the good Germans. He brought two Bibles in for chaps to read who could see.

At the end of the three weeks an order came for all prisoners to go into barracks, and I was taken off in a carriage. This time I suppose I looked a real Turk, for I had a fez, though I had my baggy trousers hidden by my khaki trousers, which I had put



David Melling's temporary American passport.

over them, the Turkish doctor having told me to do this to keep me warm. I scored there, because I don't think that the Turks meant me to walk off with the baggy breeches. But I kept them on all right, and I have them at home now, as a memento.

In these barracks we slept on a long platform, on a sort of thick matting, which was very verminous. At first we were fed pretty well, and then not so well, because the Turkish food is not fit for Englishmen, and they have only two meals a day. They gave us rice and meat, but only a very little piece of meat. The rice was cooked in olive oil, and it seemed good when we were hungry, though we did not care for it. We used to get a ration of bread every afternoon about four o'clock. When that time came our chaps, who were in good spirits, singing and whistling, used to kick up a row and shout 'Hich, Hich!' which was supposed to be Turkish and meant hurry up with the bread.

Times Remembered *continued*

It was the Sultan's birthday while we were in barracks, but they did not give us anything extra on that account. The Turkish Christmas was celebrated in August, too, but we never heard anything about it.

The American Ambassador came and visited us and gave us forty piastres each, equal to six and eightpence. The Ambassador used to come round to see that we were well treated, and we were always glad to see him. Through his efforts I got released, and was then sent into the American Hospital in Constantinople. I was there about a week, after which I was put in charge of two American sailors and sent to Dedeagatch, in Bulgaria, the place that has been bombarded lately. We stayed in a place called the Hôtel London, supposed to be the best hotel in the town; but the sailors said it was nothing but an old shack. We were paying for our food and so on, as the Ambassador had supplied us with money for our fares and keep, and the two sailors looked after me all the time.

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## DOUGLAS PATTERSON, a Tribute

by William Weisblatt

Many readers of the *Review* will be saddened by the news of Douglas Patterson's sudden death on September 17th, at the age of 71.

'Pat' Patterson joined the staff of St. Dunstan's in January, 1961, to take charge of the joinery section of the Homecrafts Department. As well as technical skills of a high order, he brought an infectious enthusiasm to his work and it is a measure of his success that, over the years, he encouraged hundreds of St. Dunstaners, and a good many wives, to become keen woodworkers. In doing this, he carried on the tradition of St. Dunstan's whereby blindness — or even lack of fingers or a hand — is just another handicap to be overcome and certainly not something that should get in the way of enjoyment or achievement.

After two or three days' rest a train journey of a day took us to another town called Drama, which is in Greece; from there we went to Salonica, where I was handed over first to the American Consul and then to the British Consul, who passed me on to the military authorities. The British commander-in-chief asked me some questions about officers who were prisoners of war, and so on, and I told him what I could.

For a fortnight after that I was in a hospital ship in the bay, the *Grantully Castle*, happy and well looked after; then we went to Lemnos and on to Alexandria, where I had another spell in hospital—four days. Then it was really a case of homeward bound, for I was put on board the *Ghurka* on November 7th, and we sailed for Southampton. On board the *Ghurka* we had concerts and a good time until the 19th, when we reached Southampton. I went to St. Mark's Military Hospital, Chelsea, then came to this wonderful place, St. Dunstan's Hostel, which Mr. C. Arthur Pearson founded, and where I am very happy and learning poultry farming.

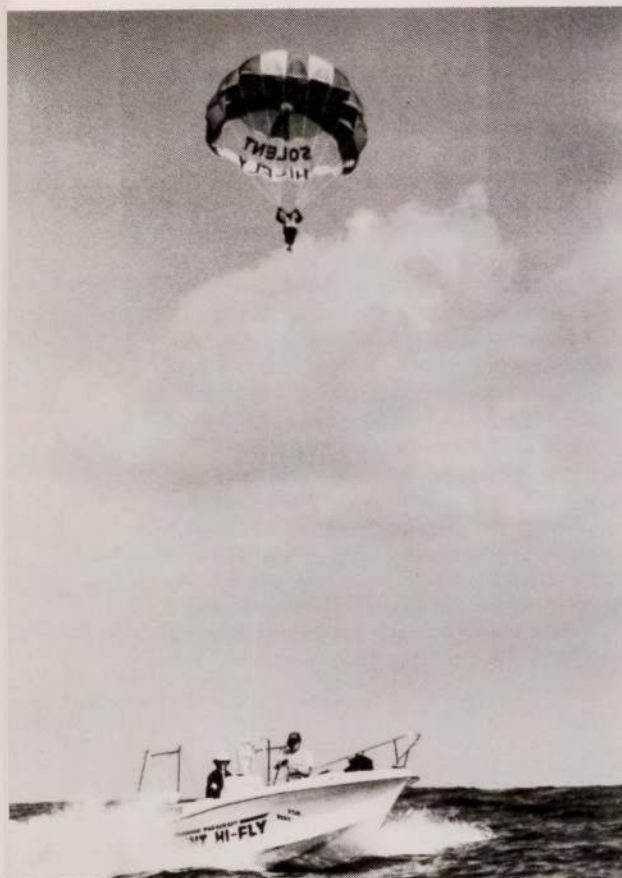
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Pat supervised the change-over from quota work to the production of attractive wooden toys and took his department into the new premises in Harcourt Street, before formally retiring in February, 1985, and handing over a thriving concern to his colleague, John Newman. He continued to take an interest in the hobby work and for the next few years regularly visited his many friends all over the country, both to help them with technical problems and to enjoy a gossip — and an occasional dram.

In recent years, Pat suffered some ill-health, but he seemed to have overcome these problems and until the end of his life he remained a keen swimmer, an accomplished dancer and an enthusiastic fisherman. He had an enormous zest for living which he readily shared with others.

He was a proud and affectionate family man and he is survived by two sons and a daughter to whom we send our deepest sympathy.





## REACH FOR THE SKY — Jimmy Wright's Channel Parascent

On Thursday, September 27th, Jimmy Wright parascented across the Channel from Ramsgate to Dunkirk with the help of the Solent Hi-Fly team, Andy Leber and Dave Morton of Gosport, Hampshire. He was accompanied by two fellow members of The Guinea Pig Club, Les Wilkins of Tetbury, Glos., who lost both hands and suffered facial burns in a 'Halifax' crash in 1944 and Des O'Connell of Sunbury-on-Thames, who also received severe burns to his hands and face when his 'Whitley' bomber crashed in 1941.

The support boat was provided by Ascent International Ltd., and skippered by Dominic Fernandez and Barry Clark, who were accompanied by David Castleton, P.R.O. for St. Dunstan's, who photographed the event.

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The Royal Temple Yacht Club at Ramsgate, generously provided accommodation for the party on the night prior to the crossing as their contribution to the successful sponsorship of the event. The departure from the outer harbour at 10am was filmed for television and photographed for the press. Jimmy Wright sent the *Review* this account.

As soon as Dave had inflated the parachute and clipped it on to my harness, he winched me up from the platform at the rear of the specially designed paracraft, which has a winch amidships. I wore a track suit, with a dry suit over this and a life-jacket. Goggles protected my glass eyes and much of my face from the wind and a helmet with two-way radio communication with the crew of our boat and the

accompanying craft, completed the ensemble.

The sea was pretty calm and there was little wind, however, with the craft travelling at about 20 knots, I was bobbing about quite a bit at the end of the 'chute as we sped over the waves and the wakes of passing ships in mid Channel. After the first hour, my arms began to ache from keeping a hold on the parachute straps, so it was necessary to bring them down, one at a time, to help the blood circulation. By this time, the harness straps under the thighs were beginning to bite and became rather uncomfortable, so I had to move my legs up and down and from side to side — I was glad when I received word that the factory chimneys of Dunkirk were sighted and we would be arriving in about

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The team at Dunkirk (Left to Right: Andy Leber, Guinea Pig – Patrick O'Connell, Jimmy Wright, Dave Morton, Barry Clarke, Guinea Pig – Les Wilkins and Dominic Fernandez.

another fifty minutes. We covered a distance of about forty miles by the time we reached the entrance to the main port of Dunkirk and Dave winched me down on to the platform of the boat. I had achieved my aim to parascend across the Channel! At the same time of course, I hope to have raised much needed sponsorship cash for the RAF Benevolent Fund. I parascended across at a height of about 120ft, for two hours and 22 minutes.

After we had gone ashore, we lunched in the yacht marina restaurant and then set off for the return journey to Ramsgate, but by this time the wind had changed to a westerly direction and strengthened, making the sea very choppy for our 25ft craft designed for parascending in winds of no more than 15mph and we were shipping too much spray to be either comfortable or safe. Andy decided that we should turn around and go back to Dunkirk, a distance of about ten miles. As there was a French Dock Strike at Dun-

kirk, the Ramsgate Ferry could not operate, so we were marooned. There was no alternative, but for half of our party to take a taxi to Calais and cross to Dover, where my wife, Jan, met them and drove them back to Ramsgate at midnight, so that the two cars with boat trailers, could be picked up and driven to Dover, then to Calais, reaching the four of us who had remained in Dunkirk at the Ferry Terminal building – Dave, Les, Des and myself at 4.00am on Friday. It was then a question of sitting it out for another four hours, until 8.00am, when the dock gates would be opened and we could gain access to our boats and bring them to the slipway, so that the boats could be dragged out of the water and on to the trailers. By this time, the tide was running out fast, and the chaps were very worried that the 3ft depth of water needed to float the two and a half ton paracraft on to the trailer would have become too shallow, thus making it impossible to haul it out of the water. With

the help of one of the cars and several chaps pulling on a rope 'Solent Hi-Fly' was finally settled on to the trailer. With the smaller boat already out of the water and on its trailer, we were ready to depart for Calais.

The next half hour, however, proved to be the most harrowing of the expedition, as we were confronted by three customs officers and a couple of harbour police demanding proof of ownership of the boats; none spoke any English and we could only produce a smattering of rather poor French and it proved impossible to convince them that we were not stealing the boats and were only taking them away by road to the Calais-Dover ferry, as the weather conditions the previous afternoon prevented us from sailing the boats back to Ramsgate. After demanding a 1,000 franc (£100) fine, which we hastened to explain we could not pay, they finally allowed us to leave the dock area. When

we finally reached Dover at noon on Friday, Jan had been waiting with the car for eight hours, not knowing which ferry we might be on, ready to take Les, Des and me, back to Ramsgate to pack our bags for home, with the hope that our Guinea Pig Club effort will raise some sponsorship cash for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

It is important to mention that Andy Leber, Dave Morton, Barry Clarke and Dominic Fernandez, are Members of the British Association of Parascending Clubs and all generously gave their time and the use of their boat 'Solent Hi-Fly' and the support craft provided by Ascent International Ltd., together with gear and equipment, completely free of charge.

"Reach for the Sky" 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain in Aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund. Miss Jean Ashton M.B.E., 264 Fir Tree Road, Epsom Downs, Surrey KT17 4NN.

## A Dream Come True

by Ann Taylor

In 1976 when I first saw Concorde fly, it gave me such a feeling of excitement. It was like a beautiful bird in flight. I have seen it many times since and each time it thrilled me more and more and I dreamed that one day I would fly in Concorde. On Sunday, September 9th, 1990, my dream came true – my dear husband arranged the trip to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary.

We took off from Heathrow Airport at 8am, there was a short pause at the end of the runway and then the sweet thunder of those four huge Rolls-Royce Olympus engines as we were airborne in 18 seconds – it created a surge of adrenalin.

There are indicators at the front of each cabin to keep us informed of our speed. The Captain then re-started the afterburners to provide the extra thrust to power you to the magic 'twice the speed of sound' – 1,340 miles per hour. I was sitting next to a window which became very warm to the touch and the sky outside was deepest blue – we were on the edge of

outer space! The wonder of it brought tears to my eyes.

We then landed at Bordeaux Airport and spent a wonderful day sightseeing and rounded it off with a six-course lunch at the Chateau de Vayres. Then back to board Concorde for our flight back to London. On the return flight I was invited to meet the Captain at the controls of Concorde and as I stood in the cockpit we were travelling at twice the speed of sound once more and the sight from the cockpit window was a mixture of purple and gold amidst all the controls and light switches, it was a sight that took your breath away.

I returned to my seat to enjoy the wonderful meal served to us by the hand-picked crew. There was an aura of 'first class' as the champagne flowed and kept on flowing until we arrived back at Heathrow Airport. It was really the ultimate experience in travel, in my opinion there is nothing to match it in all the world!



*St. Dunstaners and their guests take tea on the lawn at Pearson House.*

## RESTORED MEMORIAL TABLET UNVEILED AT PEARSON HOUSE

1990 — The 75th year of St. Dunstan's is also the 100th year of the British Independent Grocers' Association, in former times the Federation of Grocers' Associations of the United Kingdom. On August 29th an event appropriate to the anniversaries of both organisations took place at Pearson House. It was the unveiling of a Memorial Tablet — damaged, lost, painstakingly restored and now permanently positioned in the garden.

Some 150 people including 38 St Dunstaners residents and their guests and staff were there to be part of an occasion reaching back to 1918 when Pearson House, then known as West House, was presented to St. Dunstan's by the Federation of Grocers' Associations. A Tablet commemorating this was unveiled on May 15th, 1924 by the, then, Member of Parliament for Brighton, The Hon. Major G.C. Tryon.

The Tablet was erected in the western entrance hall which was eliminated in the rebuilding and expansion of Pearson House completed in 1972. Lost in the demolition of the old building, the Tablet

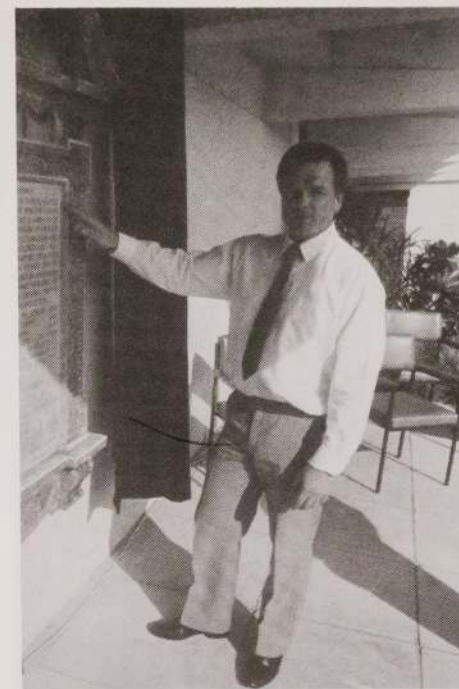
was re-discovered, severely damaged, in a loft in the new building. Matron Chris King decided it was too important a piece of history to be left there. Chandos Marble, a firm of masons at Worthing, generously undertook, without charge, its restoration and re-erection under the canopy on the rear wall of the garden.

Mr. Andrew Bowden, M.B.E., who is now the Member of Parliament, accompanied by his wife, was invited to unveil the Tablet in the presence of Mr. Iver McKee, National Secretary of the British Independent Grocers' Association; Mr. H. Williams, Managing Director of Chandos Marble and Mr. Colin Hallam, the marble mason who worked on the Tablet.

Mr. Hallam explained how he set about restoring the Tablet. Fortunately the actual inscribed slab of Derbyshire Alabaster has survived intact but the decorative surround had to be pieced together using epoxy-resin adhesive. The alabaster was cleaned with acetone and waxed and the decorative ceramics were lacquered. The result was a colourful and



*Sir Henry presents the shield to Mr. Iver McKee.*



*Mr. Colin Hallam, marble mason.*

beautiful example of the work of the stone masons of the period.

Welcoming everyone, St. Dunstan's Chairman, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach said: '72 years ago, West House, later to be renamed Pearson House, was presented to St. Dunstan's by the Federation of Grocers' Associations of the United Kingdom. Six years later a Tablet commemorating the handing over of what was then West House was unveiled here by The Honourable Major Tryon, Member of Parliament for Brighton and I am particularly glad to welcome his successor but several, Mr. Andrew Bowden, Member of Parliament for Brighton Kemp Town.'

The Chairman explained the circumstances behind the second unveiling of the Tablet and then introduced Mr. Bowden, who said he was honoured to receive the invitation to re-unveil the Tablet, 'Pearson House being virtually in the centre of my constituency and having had the opportunity of visiting it many times over the last 20 years.



*Mr. Andrew Bowden, M.P.*



*There was dancing on the footpath at Pearson House.*

'To see these new facilities, the accommodation and the care which the residents of this house receive is magnificent. But I firmly believe that nothing could be too good for the residents of Pearson House. We live in a dangerous and uncertain world and too many people have forgotten that our freedoms and our way of life have been defended and protected and great sacrifices made by people like the residents of Pearson House. A debt that can never be fully repaid.

'You, Admiral, have mentioned Major the Honourable George Tryon. I looked up his record, a remarkable one of public service. He served as the Member of Parliament for Brighton for 30 years before being elevated to the House of Lords. We have one or two similarities, one or two differences. The good Major had a majority of 40,000! Which I have to admit is a bit bigger than mine! Among the posts that he held was the Minister for Pensions and this, as I am sure many of you will know, has been one of my very great interests in the House of Commons and I serve as the joint Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Pensioners. So I feel I have a lot in common with the Major.'

Referring to the presence of the National Secretary of the British Independent Grocers' Association and representatives of Chandos Marble, Mr.

Bowden expressed thanks for the generosity shown by these organisations. He continued, 'Today, during the ceremony of unveiling this Tablet, we remember the past residents of Pearson House. All of us, who are not residents of this house, express our gratitude and our respect for all those who are here at Pearson House. So it is with great humility but great pride that I re-unveil this plaque today.'

After the ceremony Matron Chris King presented a bouquet to Mrs. Bowden and Mr. Ivor McKee spoke on behalf of the Grocers' Association. 'Thank you for the privilege which I am experiencing today of being with you, as my predecessors were with your predecessors when this magnificent building was first handed over. From the British Independent Grocers' Association we bring you our warmest wishes and we salute you all.'

Sir Henry Leach then presented a St. Dunstan's shield mounted on an inscribed stand. Expressing thanks, Mr. McKee said, 'This will be much treasured by my Executive Committee and members.' Another shield was presented to Mr. Howard Williams, of Chandos Marble.

Champagne and strawberries were then served while the Barbara White Group played the kind of music most of the gathering remembered from the days of the Second World War. There was dancing on the garden path!

## Ray Sheriff's Free Fall—

### *Sponsored for Airborne Forces Charity*

I remember it was a glorious sunny day forty six years ago on Sunday, September 17th. I was serving with the 3rd Parachute Battalion, of which I was a founder member. I was twenty three years young, a fit eleven stone and good looking. It proved my twenty third jump the object of this op. was the 'Arnhem Bridge' over the Rhine, Holland, which unfortunately proved the bridge too far. It was here that I was blinded and subsequently taken P.O.W.

Since then strangely enough I have always had the urge to make a twenty fourth para jump. I have therefore, from time to time, enquired from numerous para venus both military and civil as to satisfying this wish. However, for one reason or another it has never materialised.

This year 1990 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the formation of British Airborne Forces, thus termed Para 90. I thought this might prove an appropriate time to make a final bid to satisfy my urge once and for all. The opportunity presented itself when I had a meet-up with Col. David Mallam, Controller P.R.A. (Para. Regt. Assoc.) Aldershot. I suggested that the venture might be by way of a sponsorship ie. Airborne Forces Charity Development Trust. It was then suggested that I contact the 'All Services Parachuting Centre' Netheravon, Salisbury, Wilts.

Fortunately, an old friend, Ted Stephenson, ex-sergeant S.A.S., and at one time chief instructor at the parachute centre airfield, Netheravon spoke with the necessary authority on my behalf. After due consideration my application was accepted by the Commandant. He has been helpful in a liaison between myself and the chief instructor, R.M. Sergeant-Major Pete Lambton, who detailed one of



*Ray Sheriff's 24th para-jump.*

*Ray and Martin outside the plane.*





*Martin makes the final strap-adjustment.*

*Ray and Martin check the equipment.*



his instructors, Corporal Martin Ramsey, to volunteer the task of dealing with me, which, of course, he did doing a splendid job. The drop was to be scheduled, at my request, for the September 17th, to tie in with my Arnhem landing. Alas! On this occasion an old sixty-nine, thirteen stone, not so fit, white-haired and quite ugly.

On the day in question Betty, plus a few friends, halted at the guard-room of the airfield to obtain entry passes. Martin greeted me with the sad news that there would be very little likelihood of doing the tandem drop that day due to thick layers of low cloud. However, this gave ample time to go through the drill for tandem parachuting. The intention was to go to the maximum altitude of twelve thousand feet (two and a quarter miles). The free-falling would be down to six thousand feet. With lots of time to spare Martin gave me the gen on the equipment we would be using, namely, chute and harness etc. The weight of the parachute pack was 50 pounds which represents three chutes.

Namely, 1. Drogue chute; 2. Main chute; 3. Reserve chute, handy in case of a malfunction. The drogue is a small chute which is brought into use within a few seconds of leaving the aircraft and its function is to stabilize the bodies to a horizontal position and to bring the free-fall speed down to approximately 125 mph. The large main oblong chute is 360 square feet in size.

Martin then took me to the aircraft to practise procedure for leaving the plane. The aircraft from which one jumps is an Islander of the piston variety. Not too comfortable or roomy. The exit drill is fairly obvious. After you are firmly strapped tightly together as one the tandem master manoeuvres just a foot or two to the port side where the exit door is situated. When lined up the order — head back and arch is given. Your hands are holding straps just below the shoulders, feet and legs slightly apart. One then rolls forward into open space, and so down to earth twelve thousand feet below.

As predicted we were unable to make the jump on the 17th. We stayed locally overnight ready to standby for the next day, but again adverse weather. So it was suggested that we give up the idea as gale



*Ray and Martin land safely after a drop of 12,000 feet.*

force winds were on the cards for the remainder of that week. However, we were finally given the okay on the following Tuesday, 25th which proved the day before my 70th birthday. It therefore proved a glorious sunny day with a gentle breeze: quite ideal parachuting conditions.

We duly arrived at the airfield around midday. I was soon toggled-up in the necessary garb i.e. Zip jump suit, para harness, leather helmet and goggles and a pair of gloves. Unfortunately, the flight up to twelve thousand feet takes 30 minutes. Martin was describing landmarks as we went up and up. Strangely enough I was not particularly interested, I just wanted to bale out. At eleven thousand feet final strap adjustments were made assuring that we should not part company in mid air. Suddenly the door to my left opened; we were greeted with a gust of wind.

I was skilfully and quickly edged forward to exit point legs through the door space curled up beneath the plane then a roll forward and away. Very fast at first until the drogue chute was activated. I could recognize a very slight movement away from Martin, whose head is just over my right shoulder busy watching his altimeter and making body adjustments to my position if necessary. My position in flight is as doing a swallow dive but with feet lying back on the bottom. I understand that we were dropping in free-fall at a speed of 120 mph. Thus taking approxi-

mately 45 seconds to drop six thousand feet. One gets a pretty abrupt jolt when the main chute is opened, probably get a bigger jolt if it didn't! The last six thousand is really very enjoyable, just a very gentle coming down, quite slow. The actual contact with the ground is made by your tandem master, my knees are drawn up chestward. So endeth a very exciting, frightening, exhilarating experience.

At least I am gratified by the news that as a result of this effort which of course was only made possible by the joint efforts of so many others, especially, my dear wife, Betty — she has really been a great backup — my sponsorship results stand at well over three thousand pounds, and still coming in.

Afterwards Martin Ramsey said that Ray was the first blind person he had jumped in tandem with, 'I was wondering how he would react when we left the aircraft but he was excellent. He was really good. It was an interesting experience briefing him. It took a lot of thinking about, when you would normally show a sighted person, to explain those things to Ray.

'There were no problems in the jump although the landing wasn't quite as smooth as I would have liked. Compared with other people Ray was excellent. He kept still; he did everything as he was briefed. He must have an incredible memory. If I am that fit when I am his age I'll be chuffed. I have every admiration for him.'

## Gardeners' Week at Church Stretton, 1990

by Margaret Bingham

On Friday, September 7th, some 23 St. Dunstaners, with their wives and escorts assembled at the Longmynd Hotel, Church Stretton, in happy expectation of the excellent programme ahead. For many of us Church Stretton is full of old memories and there was many a reminiscence on our return to the old haunts and the unfailing kindness of the people of the town. Throughout the week the weather was also kind, with early autumn sunshine for most of the time.

On the Saturday the A.G.M. was held, and with business over the afternoon was free for a trip to Ludlow where we could wander in the open market, or stroll round the town and castle. In the evening we were pleased to welcome several guests to dinner, including Councillor McClean, chairman of the Parish Council, with his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Marsden, who were with us at St. Dunstan's in 1941, Mr. and Mrs. Haycock, Pauline is the lady whose story of her wartime childhood was recently told in the *Review*, also Bob and Rodina Price, who were good friends at that time and are still invaluable to us on our expeditions from Church Stretton.

Mrs. Treasure, who as Miss Veal was a V.A.D. with us all those years ago, and Mrs. Davies, a local St. Dunstan's widow, were there. Also Mr. and Mrs. Weisblatt and Mr. and Mrs. David Castleton joined us; altogether it was quite a party. Mr. Keith Jones from the Golden Field Nurseries came too, bringing us a privileged view of the new beautiful St. Dunstan's rose and it is a real winner. A rich golden bud, it opens to white with a strong, sweet scent that can be picked up three feet away. Don't rush to order; the nursery, in Cheshire, expect possibly five hundred plants next year but cannot take orders at this stage, and Tom will send details to the *Review* when it is available to buy.

On Sunday morning some of us went down the wire, (or where it used to be), to



*Sid Doy presented Pauline Haycock with a St. Dunstan's brooch.*

join others in the church square, from whence we were shepherded by David for our photo call in the newly named St. Dunstan's Close, which is just off Sandford Avenue near the Station.

After lunch our coaches took us southwards through the beautiful sunny countryside to Berrington Hall on the Ludlow-Leominster road. The Hall was built to take maximum advantage of the site with its sweeping views to the Welsh Border across lawns and parkland landscaped by Capability Brown. The Hall itself (now unoccupied) has many interesting features inside, also outside in the courtyard behind which there is the old laundry complete with hefty flat irons, presses and mangles, the old dairy and the servants' hall where you can now get a nice cream tea.

Monday found us travelling through Shrewsbury then north eastwards past R.A.F. Shawbury to the famous Bridgmore Garden World, near Nantwich, on the



*Keith Jones shows Vi Delaney and Robert Alty the St. Dunstan's rose.*

Shropshire - Cheshire - Staffordshire borders. A day was scarcely enough here as there was so much to see, not least the winner of the Supreme Gold Medal at Chelsea last year, the Country Women's Institute garden which is reproduced here. This year they again won a Gold Medal for their wild garden with a folly. That is the sort of standard that last year 1,500,000 visitors flocked there to see.

Mr. Ravenscroft started from scratch in the early sixties with one man and three acres, which has now grown to a 200+ workforce and 250 acres, making it Europe's largest collection of plants on sale to the public. There is about an acre of house plants under glass and a large shopping area of books, food, gifts and everything for the garden. We had an excellent lunch there.

Another sunny afternoon on Tuesday, and we were off to Dinmore Manor which is perched 550 feet above sea level in a unique situation in the Hereford hills with panoramic views. There is a lot of his-

tory here. At the entrance to the 14th century chapel is a certificate which testifies that one of the yew trees, with a girth of 21 feet, is 1200 years old. Following an early Saxon occupation the order of the Knights Templars was established here to protect pilgrims on their hazardous journey to Jerusalem. These were followed by the military and monastic order of the Knights Hospitaller, also a commandery which would have been a training place for the Crusaders as well as a place of rest for the returning injured.

Below the memorial tablet to the known early commanders and priests reads this haunting epitaph:

*The Knights are dust  
Their swords are rust  
Their souls are with the saints we trust.*

The arcaded cloisters with their striking colourful stained glass pictures were built in the present century after the style of the 14th century.

On Wednesday morning we explored the little market town of Tenbury Wells. On for a picnic lunch and another glorious afternoon wandering through four acres of first class garden at nearby Burford House. Mr. John Treasure bought the house and site, all in a derelict state in 1954, and designed, landscaped and constructed the gardens largely all by himself.

That evening there was a dance held at one of our old billets, Denehurst, put on by the R.A.F. Benevolent Society to commemorate the Battle of Britain 50th Anniversary.

On Thursday we had an afternoon in Shrewsbury. There is plenty to see at the old castle and the local societies have been busy restoring the old steps and alleyways.

The week was over all too soon, and laden with plants it was time to go home. We missed some old friends and send our good wishes to those who were not able to come because of illness. Once again we thank our Chairman, Tom Hart, John and Elizabeth Walbrugh, Bob and Rodina, The Longmynd Hotel and all who helped to make it happen. Finally a Reminder to all members who have not yet paid their subscription, £7 is now due, please send it to John Walbrugh, The Loft, Boxgrove, Chichester, PO18 0DX.

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## D.F. Robinson's GARDENING NOTES

Get all the vacant ground dug over fairly deeply and add manure or compost but keep it off the light soil until spring.

It is a good time to re-design gardens. Get all rubbish collected and burnt or put on the compost heap.

Ensure that you get the mowers cleaned up and put some oil on the moving parts. It might be a good idea to get the machines to the mowing machine specialists to have any repairs done and the blades sharpened. Then it will be ready for the early cutting of the grass.

Get in fertiliser for the new season plus compost for the greenhouse as prices will certainly go up in the New Year.

### Vegetables

See that all the empty spaces are dug over deeply and add some extra lime on the areas you are to grow the cabbage family which should be grown in new areas.

Take out all the old refuse and either burn it and keep the ashes or put the refuse on the compost heap.

Keep the hoe going between the growing crops.

All beetroots and carrots which are still growing in the soil should be lifted and put in dry soil for the rest of the year so that you can pick out any that you want to use in the house.

Broccoli can be heeled over and leaves of the cauliflower tied over the crown to keep them nice and clean.

Seeds of broad beans and peas can be sown outside and well grown cabbage and Savoy seedlings can be planted in their permanent growing places.

### Fruit

Best time to plant new fruit trees, and dig up those fruit trees that you have and want

to plant in new spots. Remember to dig the planting fairly deep so that the roots settle to the bottom so that soil can cover the whole lot. It is quite a good thing to shake the trees so that the soil covers the roots as they go down. When you have the soil right up to the top tighten up the soil by treading down. Water them in thoroughly.

All varieties of currants and gooseberries can be planted and those bushes which are already in place can be pruned, as and when the weather is favourable.

Some manure should be spread between the plants in your strawberry plantation.

### Flowers

Tidy up all the beds and cut down the perennials which have finished flowering for the season. One can divide all these plants by digging out and pulling apart leaving plenty of roots on each piece. Where you have taken out rather old plants throw away the centre pieces. Re-plant in fresh places where you have not had these perennials before. Do remember to water in thoroughly.

Anemone beds can be prepared this month provided there has been no frost about and it is often a good thing to prepare them in shaded positions.

The main planting of tulips can be made now and other spring bulbs not already planted should be done to give a spring show in the garden.

All dahlia tubers not already lifted should be done now and stored in boxes of dry sand or peat and then placed in sheds or other places which will be free from frost. The same can be done with gladioli corms so that you have plenty of corms for planting next season and also saves one money as it will be very expensive to buy all garden items next year.

See to the roses by clearing them up and cutting away any rather long shoots plus any that are coming out from the roots which will be of the wild species. Some bushes may need a bit of tying up as a protection against the winter winds. It might be a good idea to give a combined spray against insects, black spot and fungus. These sprays can be obtained from most garden shops. Don't do the main pruning until spring.

Remember that it is a good time to plant any new shrubs plus the roses. When planting dig a hole large enough to take the roots both in depth and width. Spread the roots out well and sprinkle the soil and shake the bushes as you plant and as you get to the top press down with your feet and then water in well. Should the shrubs be rather tall put in some canes and tie up.

### Greenhouse

Wash off all the glass both inside and out and ensure that the windows open well and if a bit stiff add a little oil to the hinges.

Keep the temperature between 45°F and 50°F when you are still growing plants. Keep the ventilators shut at night but open during the day if you have lots of sun about but be careful if the winds are high.

Water the plants when they are fairly dry and don't forget to give some feed every so often.

Remove dead leaves regularly especially on calceolarias and cinerarias. Move these plants to larger pots when necessary and these will be for their final growth.

Don't forget to prick out later seedlings and then get them potted up. Be careful of the camelias which you have in their flowering pots as the buds will be swelling. Place pansies in the warmest part of the greenhouse and where they can have plenty of light.

Geranium cuttings which are growing well can be put into larger pots and this means that you may have some flowers by Christmas. Keep them watered fairly well and also give feeds.

Bulbs can still be potted up for flowering in late spring. Those Christmas bulbs which you placed outside, especially the hyacinths, will be showing buds so can be

brought into the greenhouse so that the flowers can be made to show by Christmas.

Keep the whole of the greenhouse clean and tidy and if there is a sign of any pests deal with them at once.

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## DOWNING STREET VISIT

by Fred Hobbs

It was a great privilege to be chosen to represent the First World War St. Dunstaners on our visit to Number 10 Downing Street. We arrived at the appointed time of 6.30pm and myself and Jack Lowe, who represented the Second World War men, were taken to an upstairs reception room to be greeted by Mrs. Thatcher who kindly welcomed everybody personally.

The total attendance was somewhere in excess of 150, and was rather a strain on the available floor space. Everybody wore civilian clothes so it was not possible to distinguish the 'top brass' from the other ranks. A number of us wore our war decorations and medals so that it was possible for those with vision to pick out former comrades.

A buffet meal was provided with ample liquid refreshment and I personally confined myself to the sherry which I must confess was rather thin! Everybody appeared to circulate and it was difficult for us to ascertain to whom we were talking. During the reception I talked to one comrade who had been on the 'Mons Retreat'. He was wearing the rosette on his ribbon which distinguishes those people from the others wearing decorations from the First World War.

I was particularly glad to attend this reception in order to 'see' the famous staircase displaying the photographs of all the Prime Ministers. I remarked to the guide who kindly took me down the staircase that the photographs could not have been taken at the time of the first parliament. He quietly told me that in fact the first three photos were steel engravings.

It was certainly a happy and enjoyable experience and I feel honoured to have been asked to attend.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Ernest Ford, Middlesbrough

May I, on behalf of my wife and myself, express our thanks to everyone who put in such a tremendous amount of effort to make St. Dunstan's 75th Anniversary such a lovely occasion. Despite the fact that my wife hurt her leg so badly in the afternoon, we managed to enjoy that most splendid dinner too. Thank you so very much, I am sure every St. Dunstaner would echo my words.

## CLUB NEWS

### BRIGHTON

#### Bridge

#### RESULTS

1st	Bob Evans & Mrs. Barker	60.1
2nd	Bill Allen & Mrs. A. Clements	59.4
3rd	Wally Letherbridge & Mr. Goodlad	55.8
4th	Alf Dodgson & Mrs. Holbrow	53.6
5th	Reg Goding & Mrs. McPherson	49.3
5th	Bill Phillips & Dr. J. Goodlad	49.3
7th	Mrs. Andrews & Miss Sturdy	37.7
8th	Mrs. Evans & Miss Stenning	34.8

#### September Individuals Bridge Played on Saturday, September 15th, 1990

#### RESULTS

1st	Reg Goding	64.3
2nd	Bill Allen	60.7
3rd	George Hudson	59.5
4th	Bob Evans	57.1
5th	Jo Huk	53.6
5th	Mrs. Douse	53.6
7th	Alf Dodgson	47.6
7th	Dr. J. Goodlad	47.6
9th	Wally Lethbridge	45.2
10th	Bill Phillips	42.9
11th	Mr. Goodlad	36.9
12th	Harry Meleson	31.0

## FAMILY NEWS

### PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Congratulations to:

Dr. Alan Ross Ford M.D., son of *Ernest Ford*, of Middlesbrough, who has been in a group practice in Witney, Oxfordshire, for the past twelve years has now moved to Nottingham, where he has bought a practice and is setting up in partnership with his wife, Shelagh, who had set aside her career while bringing up the children. She has now finished her general practice training and is starting to practice again.

Staying with the Ford family, Dr. Alan's son (Fred's grandson) Richard, is a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where he also attends school, while granddaughter, Elizabeth, who is eleven, won a scholarship to Cheltenham Ladies College. Both children are very musical as are their parents.

To Sarah, daughter of *Norman Walton*, of Southfields, on obtaining an Honours Degree in Mathematics at London University. She is now taking a Ph.D., in astronomy at the same university.

### CHRISTENING

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. David Bell*, of Haywards Heath on the christening of their twin granddaughters, Evi and Constanze, at the Chapel of the Order of the British Empire, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on September 29th. Evi and Constanze are the daughters of David Scott Bell and his wife, Demeter.

### BIRTHS

#### Congratulations to:

*Harry and Margaret Davies*, of Llanelli, Dyfed, on the birth of their latest grandchild, Nicola Helen, born on April 27th, to their son Richard and his wife, Pamela.

### FAMILY NEWS *continued*

### MARRIAGES

#### Congratulations to:

Mrs. Ruby Andrew, of Corringham, Nr. Gainsborough, widow of the late *Geoffrey Charles Andrew*, on the marriage of granddaughter, Michell, to Mr. James Keene, on April 20th.

*Mr. and Mrs. D.C. Clarke*, of Sevenoaks, on the marriage of their son, Hedley, who was married to Elizabeth in July.

*Peter and Eileen Jones* on the marriage of their daughter, Rosalind, to Julian Booth, on September 29th. The wedding took place in the Chapel of Magdalen College, Oxford, which is where Rosalind studied for the M.A. degree she obtained in 1987. The couple hope to make their home in St. Albans.

Mrs. Ivy Kelk, of Rottingdean, widow of the late *Charles Kelk*, on the marriage of her daughter, Susan, to Timothy Shave at Westgate Chapel, Lewes, on September 15th.

*Edward Paris* on the marriage of his son, David William, on July 14th, to Barbara Carmen Salisbury-Wood, at St. John the Baptist Church, Worcester Park.

*Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hunter Simmon*, of Harrogate, on the marriage of their grand-daughter, Samantha Preece, to Mr. Dean Jepson, at Otley Parish Church, on June 16th.

*Mrs. Hilda Wilkinson*, of Hull, widow of the late Christopher Wilkinson, on the marriage of her niece, Jill Wilkinson, on June 30th, to Mr. Alan McQuinn.

### GOLDEN WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Carmichael*, of Wallingford, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on October 5th.

### RUBY WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*Mr. and Mrs. F.A. V. Day*, of Salisbury, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on September 30th.

*Reginald and Joyce Palmer*, of Southery, Norfolk, on the occasion of their Ruby Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on September 23rd.

### SILVER WEDDINGS

#### Congratulations to:

*William and Mary Lloyd*, of Dyfed, on the occasion of their Silver Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on October 2nd.

*Mr. and Mrs. D. Morris*, of Newquay, on the occasion of their Silver Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on October 2nd.

### DEATHS

#### We offer our condolences to:

*Fred and Elsie Galway*, of Sandbach, on the death of her sister, Brenda Mitchell, who passed away suddenly on September 18th.

*Mr. Albert Serdet*, of Staines, on the loss of his wife, Elizabeth Emily, who passed away on August 5th. They had been married for almost 47 years. Our condolences are also extended to their two daughters and their families.



# 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, family and friends.

## **J. Foster, Northumberland Fusiliers**

We are sad to record the death of John Foster, formerly of Redhill, at Pearson House on September 16th. We was 84 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1977.

Mr. Foster enlisted in 1922 and served as a Sergeant with the Northumberland Fusiliers until his discharge in 1945, due to detached retinas in both eyes. His childhood was spent in Sheffield, and at an early age he joined the Army as a Boy Bandsman. He played under Sir Henry Wood and Sir Malcolm Sargent whilst stationed in Northern Ireland.

Following his discharge, he joined an engineering firm and played in their brass band. In seven competitions they won six 1st prizes and one 2nd prize. In 1958, he moved to another firm where he worked as an engineering inspector until his early retirement on health grounds. He continued his musical interest by coaching boys for the Crawley Band. Another of his leisure activities was gardening and he became particularly keen on growing dahlias.

He married in 1927, but unfortunately his wife, Mable, developed multiple sclerosis and John cared for her devotedly until her death in 1980. In the summer of last year he returned to Sheffield for a visit and met up with friends and relations he had not seen for 75 years. Even after this long absence they still recognised him.

We extend our sincere sympathy to his son, Peter, his daughter-in-law and grand-daughter, and all other members of the family.

## **D. Parmenter, 8th Royal West Kent Regiment**

Mr. Douglas Parmenter, of Heathfield, passed away peacefully in his sleep at Pearson House, on September 12th. He was 73 years of age, and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1943.

Doggie, as he was affectionately known enlisted in early 1940 and served as a Private in the 8th Royal West Kent Regiment. In June of the same year he was wounded in action in France and totally blinded. He was then taken prisoner by the Germans and remained a prisoner of war until he was repatriated in 1944. (Readers will recall the excellent photograph of his arrival at Liverpool published in the May 1990 issue, in the series 'Times Remembered'.)

After a period of training in braille and typewriting, both in English and French as well

as hobby-work, he opened his own bookshop in Fleet, in early 1946, having worked as a publisher before the war. Unfortunately, after four years he had to dispose of the business on health grounds. His garden and greenhouse then became his consuming interest. In earlier years, Mr. Parmenter, who was a darts expert, played exhibition matches with his friend, the late 'Dickie' Brett, and the St. Dunstan's Team, playing against sighted teams. He was also one of the first St. Dunstaners to undertake long-cane training with Stan Suterko of the University of West Michigan in the United States.

We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Catherine, his two daughters, Lynn and Susanne, and all other members of the family.

## **B. Tomporowski, Polish Army**

We are sorry to record the death of Bronislaw (Bruno) Tomporowski, of Wolverhampton, who passed away on September 25th. He was 70 years of age and had been a St. Dunstaner since 1946.

Mr. Tomporowski served with the Polish Army in the 10th Dragoons and was wounded in Holland by a mortar shell. He came into the care of St. Dunstan's in 1946, and after taking industrial training commenced employment at the Hercules Cycle Works in Birmingham, where he proved himself a good worker. Four years later he unfortunately contracted an illness which kept him in hospital for many months, but he made a full recovery and went on to work as a capstan lathe operator.

Mr. Tomporowski bought his own home in Wolverhampton and in 1960 he married Elizabeth, who also came from Poland. They made several trips back to their home country over the years, taking their daughter, Anna with them.

Mr. Tomporowski was always a keen gardener and although his declining health meant that he became less active in retirement, he enjoyed pottering in his greenhouse for as long as he was able. Sadly his wife died in 1982, but even though she was still a student at the time, Anna assumed care of her father. Bruno always enjoyed the times he spent with us at Brighton and regularly attended our Reunions in Birmingham for as long as he could.

We extend our sincere sympathy to his daughter, her husband and their young family.