



St Dunstans
Review

March 1991

S. P. R.

St Dunstons Review

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Free to St. Dunstaners

MARCH 1991

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Cover Picture: The late Ion Garnett-Orme, former Chairman of St Dunstan's, to whom tributes appear in this issue.

From the Chairman



It is with the deepest regret that I tell you of the death of Ion Garnett-Orme — Vice-President of St Dunstan's, immediate past Chairman for eight years and Council Member for 25 years, most of them as Treasurer and Vice-Chairman.

For much of the past two years he had been seriously and painfully ill but he bore his suffering with dignity and fortitude. He died peacefully at home in the early hours of 10th February with Katharine, his devoted wife who had done so much for him and for St Dunstan's, at his bedside. It was a moment of great sadness but it was a merciful release. For St Dunstan's an era had passed.

In the nine years that I have been privileged to know this wise and very human gentleman two attributes amongst his many others stand out: his personal knowledge of and affection for all St Dunstaners and the Staff who serve them; and his remarkable shrewdness and foresight in administering St Dunstan's financial resources resulting in the sound position we enjoy today. Had it not been for this it would not have been possible for me to implement the various improvements which have been achieved over recent years. His far-sighted wisdom made my job easy.

We have lost a great man and a dear friend, one whom all associated with St Dunstan's will always remember. We wish him well on the other side and offer our heartfelt sympathy to his widow.

* * *

FROM THE CHAIRMAN *continued*

The Gulf War is now upon us and it can only be a matter of time before Land Forces are engaged with consequent inevitable casualties. There will then be the increased risk of some of those casualties having been blinded, a risk likely to be enhanced if the enemy resorts to chemical warfare.

I think you will all wish to know that St Dunstan's is fully prepared for blinded casualties. Excellent contacts have been established with the hospitals of all three Services and, on an area basis, with overflow civilian health authorities. We remain poised to provide immediate and extensive help wherever and whenever it may be required.

Meantime, I should like to thank all those who have, typically, lost no time in volunteering their services to help blind casualties in any way they can. This response has been heartwarming and your Council is deeply grateful for it. Captain Ray Hazan at Headquarters is keeping an up-to-date list of volunteers and will be in touch as soon as the need arises. Please God, it won't but we need to be absolutely prepared — and we are.

Henry Leach



NOTICE BOARD



PAINTING'S ALIVE

Have you heard of the Living Painting Trust? Send away to them at Silchester House, Silchester, Nr. Reading, Berks. RG7 2LT, for their folder of tactile Old Masters and super tapes describing each one. By all accounts, they are absolutely marvellous. The phone number of the Trust is 0734 700321.

REGIMENTAL ARTWORK

Following on his historical work on the old Middlesex Regiment, Paul Francia has now commissioned an artist to paint the old Regimental colours photographed in St. Paul's Cathedral. Eventually he is hoping they will go on display in the Regimental Museum. Mrs. Francia has done a pastel of the finial retrieved from Hong Kong after the war.

Paul has also had a tableau made, with moveable parts, coloured lights and a soundtrack of an island in foreign parts being visited by the Royal Navy.

BLIND MAN'S VISION

St Dunstan's was founded in 1915 by Sir Arthur Pearson, a man of vision. He was himself a blind man, but the title of this book is more than a play on words.

Pearson expressed his philosophy in simple words: 'Lots of people see without perceiving; blind people learn to perceive without seeing'.

This is the story of the men and women of St Dunstan's and of their remarkable achievements. The book is profusely illustrated by photographs from St Dunstan's archives, most of which have never previously been published.

Readers are reminded that, although this publication is a limited edition intended as a presentation to St Dunstaners, copies are available from the Books Department, St Dunstan's Review, 12-14 Harcourt St., London W1A 4XB, at the reduced price of £10 (published price £14.95). Please send cheques only, made out in favour of St Dunstan's.



Ion and Katherine Garnett-Orme.

ION GARNETT-ORME

An Outstanding Record of Service

Everyone connected with St Dunstan's will have been grieved to read, in Sir Henry Leach's message in this issue, of the death of Mr. Ion Garnett-Orme on 10th February, at the age of 81.

Mr. Garnett-Orme's long and close association with St Dunstan's began in 1958, when he joined the Council. He was a Member for 25 years, the last eight as Chairman. He was an ex-serviceman himself, having served throughout the Second World War with the Welsh Guards — part of the time as a prisoner-of-war.

In 1945 he joined the merchant bankers, Brown, Shipley and Co. with which his family had long been connected. It was the beginning of a distinguished career in banking and commerce. He was Chairman of Brown, Shipley Holdings Limited for 12 years and held the Chair and direc-

torships in other leading companies.

He became Honorary Treasurer of St Dunstan's in 1962 and Vice-Chairman in 1967. Announcing the appointment of the new Treasurer in *St Dunstan's Review*, the late Lord Fraser of Lonsdale commended him to St Dunstaners with these words: 'He is a charming person who will, I am sure, make a growing circle of friends among St Dunstaners as the years go by.' Over the years Lord Fraser's prediction was amply fulfilled.

In 1975, following the unexpected death of Lord Fraser, Ion Garnett-Orme succeeded him as Chairman. He wrote in his first message in *St Dunstan's Review*: '... I am most conscious not only of the honour which this appointment has conferred, but also of the great responsibility which has been entrusted to me.'

'With the help of you all I shall do my best to serve St Dunstan's and to carry on the great tradition of unique individual and personal assistance to St Dunstaners which was initiated by our Founder and extended and altered to meet changing needs by Lord and Lady Fraser.'

He lived up to those words with the wholehearted support of his wife, Katharine Garnett-Orme. He it was who initiated the increase in help for widows. He encouraged help for St Dunstan's families in improving the standards in their homes. Most of all, with his great experience of the financial world, he steered St Dunstan's safely through a period of extremely high inflation.

It is no exaggeration to say that he and his wife, with their modesty about themselves and their great personal interest in all St Dunstaners and their families, became greatly loved. His appointment as Commander of the Order of the British Empire, announced in the 1983 New Year Honours List, was warmly greeted by all in St Dunstan's — many felt that it should have been a knighthood.

Before the end of that year Mr. Garnett-Orme made what must have been a reluctant decision to retire from the Chairmanship and he became a Vice-President. At a London Reunion in April

1984 presentations of gifts subscribed for by St Dunstaners were made to Ion and Katharine Garnett-Orme by a St Dunstaner, the late Ernie Russell. He said, 'The hallmark of Mr. and Mrs. Garnett-Orme's success is their modesty and their unfailing caring. They have adopted us as their family and they have extended the St Dunstan's spirit.'

Those words elegantly summed up the feelings of all connected with St Dunstan's then and even more so today.

THIRD CHAIRMAN OF ST DUNSTAN'S

Ion to follow Ian — a task so great
Only a humble man could tackle it,
His lady at his side.

St Dunstaners and widows came to
know his worth
And found, within their memories and
hearts, a place
For I.G.-O. to rest with C.A.P., I.F. and
Chips,
That ever-faithful group of friends
who strove
To make their darkness light.

P.B.

At a reunion with (left-right) George Allen, Bob Coupland, Eileen Williams, the late Ernie Russell and Bert Ward.



Small World

by Andrew O'Hagan

Malcolm Muggeridge, perhaps as a final prophecy, warned us that a time would come when we wouldn't be able to tell the difference between fact and fiction. The wall-to-wall coverage of the Gulf War in the globe's media, if anything, provides a running demonstration of how right he was. It shows how the production values of the movie industry can readily be spliced with the bellicose bravado of the boy's comic book in order to come up with a version of events closer to fiction than reality would ever dare to go.

The *Sun*, in its infinite ignorance, has outdone its own record of being able to reduce what is a deadly serious and tragic situation to the level of trite, irrelevant pap. They crib the language of the Video Arcade game, and the Hollywood blockbuster, for their daily headlines. Do headlines like "ZAPPED!", "GOTCHA" and "BASTARDS!" actually provide any insight into military manoeuvres and the underlying forces at war in this conflict? Or do they merely reveal an infantile delight in the inflammatory language of the strip-cartoon?

Whilst claiming their loyalty and allegiance to the Allied Forces in the Gulf, the tabloids are at the same time gravely insulting those servicemen and women by reducing their campaign to the level of trivia and entertainment. It is no soap-opera.

The failure of these British newspapers, and their American and European counterparts, to make the essential connection between the 80 point headline splashed on the front page at home, and the real suffering, pain and sacrifice being made and endured in the Arabian desert, is all too great. Those servicemen and women are not faceless tin soldiers nor dots on a video screen nor thoughtlessly expendable pieces on a chess board. They are all too real.

Satellite technology has changed the face and format of television reporting to the extent that reportage can, literally, be

'on the spot'. Television news stations require instant live images from the front line, from the command centre and from, if at all possible, the injury tent. The value in live broadcasting, and its chief selling point, is its immediacy, the way the viewer can watch action unfold as it happens.

This is, without a doubt, of great value during the Scottish Cup Final, or a WBC Championship fight — where we are eager to have the result *PRONTO*. But this demand for a result, for quick action, makes live reporting of war totally inappropriate. Wars are often long, are always unpredictable and are never entertaining. The networks using live broadcasting from the Gulf try to make it entertaining, and feed its audiences compulsive demand for live action, with immediate pictures which are both misleading and ridiculous.

Cable News Network, of America, have become well-known in this war for broadcasting live reports — most of which have proven to be speculative, inaccurate and farcical. The 90 minute live report broadcast from the Jerusalem bureau — during the first wave of Iraqi SCUD attacks — ran like a morbid pantomime.

The reporters struggled to put on gas masks and seal the room whilst the cameras rolled. They opened a window so that the camera might relay pictures of the Jerusalem streets. In short, they provided no concrete facts, no intelligible commentary and offered nothing more than cheap high-drama and shallow entertainment. As it turned out, there had been no gas attack on Jerusalem that night and the sensational panic shown by CNN had led to nothing but higher viewing figures.

War should never be brought to the level of the 3-minute advertising jingle. Ed Murrow, the American radio announcer, broadcast daily reports from Europe during World War II which, in the midst of carnage and confusion, spoke in tones of dignity, weighed down with knowledge, of the strategic military and political events which made up each day in the war. His voice, imbued with humanity, scepticism and rigour, communicated something which hi-tec media puppets — with all their communications gadgetry — fail to do day after day in this war.

Pandora's Box — A Short Story by Colin Fraser

'Penny for your thoughts Colin?' she said softly in a slow sensuous voice.

'I'm sorry!' I said, lost in the crowded lounge. 'Please, who am I talking to?'

It was the way she had said Colin. Slow with the emphasis on the L, pronouncing it as if it had two L's in it. It was exactly the same intonation as my girlfriend back home. But she had not even bothered to come and see me when I had arrived back home from hospital. My heart turned turtle as it plummeted down into the pit of my stomach. No, I sighed. Not even a letter.

'Oh did I startle you?' she asked apologetically, touching my arm.

'No, not really, I was just thinking about somebody who is not important. Well, not any more. Would you please direct me to my dormitory?'

I tapped the end of the first iron framed bed. It belonged to Jim the ex-policeman. I stopped dead in my tracks.

'Stop there!' screamed Francis the orderly. 'I'm coming to help you. Come on Ducky! This is number two bed, next is Paddy's bed, next to that is the Major's bed and next to his is Charlie's which is next to yours. Oh Gawd, just look at him lying flat out on his bed with his earphones on and his dirty shoes on my clean blankets. I give up Colin', he groaned.

I thanked him and as his footsteps faded away on the polished floor, I thought: What's good enough for Charlie is good enough for me. So with calculating accuracy I flopped flat out on my bed like a dead fish on a marble slab. Francis had said, there were eleven beds on this side with eleven opposite with the windows above.

'Dancing tonight, Sunshine!' Charlie quipped springing off his bed.

I shot up. The thought of going to a dance again had sent a strange exhilaration through me.

'Tell me Charlie, what's the chicks like?'

He laughed.

'You must be joking sunshine! Where the 'ell do you think you are?' 'ammersmith Palais! Most of these chicks are old

boilers mate. Has-beens! Sent up here by their bloody husbands 'cause they're sick of them! I know!'

At this point the dormitory went deadly quiet. Everybody was keen to hear Charlie's revelations.

'I know mate!' he repeated, 'I took one of them home to meet my old Pop and when he saw her, he started to laugh and when I asked him what the 'ell he was laughing at, he pulled me into the kitchen and asked me my intentions, and when I told him, he nearly went mad! He said I was a bloody fool!'

'How old are you?' he demanded.

'Twenty-four.'

'Hell's bells! You are just a boy. Now look here sunshine, I am going to give you the same advice your Mother gave to me when we got hitched. God rest her soul. She was an educated woman you know. She told me that there was more to marriage than four bare legs in a bed (so there!) and I have never forgotten it!'

The place erupted.

'The old bugger even said she was old enough to be my bloody grandmother!' Charlie added.

Ken shouted, 'Good on you Pom, but next time get your bloody eyes tested.'

'Watch it Aussie!' exploded Charlie.

'What do you mean watch it you little pommey bastard! I'll . . .!'

'Now, now boys, behave yourselves!' Francis yelled. 'Stoppit. For gawd's sake stoppit or I will get the Commandant on you both!'

Enough is enough, I thought. So, slipping off my shirt, I pulled down my locker door and removed a towel and shaving utensils. Now I was ready to go for a wash and a shave.

'Hey, wait for me Colin!' cried Francis hitching into step.

'I think that remark of Ken's was absolutely unnecessary, don't you?' I said.

'Oh, I wouldn't let it worry you Colin. Those two are not the kind to take umbrage for long. I bet before you get back from the washroom they will have forgotten all about it. You'll see!'

Through the first set of swing doors. Francis put me to a door on the right and I was in the washroom. My eyebrows shot up. He had not even attempted to follow me.

I lathered up. Then placing the left index finger in the crook of my ear, I pushed the razor against the finger and shaved down to the angle of the jaw. Then rinsing my razor, I smoothed my fingers over my face and shaved it again. Then moving the lobe of my ear aside, I shaved from the angle of the jaw to the point of the chin. I smiled and thought, not bad for a beginner. After repeating the performance on the other side of my face, I nipped my nose with finger and thumb and with closed lips shaved around the mouth.

I rinsed my razor again. Then, blowing soap everywhere, I finished off by shaving the underparts of my chin and throat. Except for a nick here and there I had done quite well. Otherwise: the operation was a success and the patient was still alive.

Swilling my face with fresh water, I dried off and collecting up my utensils, I retraced my steps back into the dormitory.

As I tapped my way along each bed, my thoughts turned to Sister Jones. That dulcet voice of her's. A penny for your thoughts, she had said. Who was she kidding? I had no job, no prospects of getting one. My girlfriend back home had deserted me, and she asks me a penny for my thoughts. I paused and thought. Maybe she had to show concern to keep up our morale. The only thought I had was of fear. The fear of being blind. The fear of being like that blind boy with his piano accordian busking in the centre of Newcastle. He looked so miserable and sad. So much so, it made me shudder down to the soles of my boots.

I put away my towel and shaving kit. Then walking around the bed, I opened my wardrobe door and took out my demob suit and, putting it on, I groaned. Ah well, beggars can't be choosers.

Rummaging back in my wardrobe I found a half bottle of whisky my father had left me. Good old Pop, I said to myself

as his words were still echoed in my mind.

'A wee drop will do you good when you are feeling down, son,' he had said. A wee drop will do me good now I thought.

Straightening my tie, I suddenly stopped dead in my tracks. There was not a sound in the dormitory. I listened. Where had everybody gone?

'Hello!' I shouted hopefully. 'Is there anybody there!'

From an almost uncanny silence, I jumped out of my skin.

'What the hell do you want, you twit!' Charlie bellowed, springing off his bed like a jack-in-the-box, 'they've gone down to the pub, mate.'

With all the composure I could muster, I said, 'I say, do you fancy a whisky Charlie?'

'Do I fancy a drop of the hard stuff, Sunshine!' he chuckled, getting closer. 'Just you try me.' Then, putting on his posh voice, 'A couple of sniffers before the dance is my idea of civilised behaviour, what, I say old boy, what!'

After a few drinks we were both on top form; he bumping into me while I was trying to get my arms around his shoulders. There was still an awful lot I wanted to know about this dance. After another snifter, he whispered in my ear, 'Have you got a handkerchief on you, Sunshine?'

'I have', I whispered back.

'Right! Now give it here. Put it in your top pocket like that. Just the tip showing, right? Now, if you want to get rid of a chick you don't want, just pull it right out, like that see. Feel it, go on! Now, when the V.A.D. on duty sees it, she will come and rescue you, get it Sunshine?'

Then, digging me in the ribs, he added, 'Now isn't that a good idea.'

'Yes Charlie, you are brilliant!' I said, raising my eyebrows.

'Now, there is another thing you ought to know. There's this 'ere woman called Gladys. She is fifty plus and six feet tall and three foot wide.' Laughing, he added, 'Watch her or she will have your for her supper, me-old-Cock! So be warned!'

'Cigarette Charlie?' I slurred nervously. 'Got one on, Sunshine!' he hiccupped.

'Well, is she a nymphomaniac?' I said easing myself away from him.

'Noow,' he choked draining his glass, 'there's nothing wrong with her brain!'

Am I hearing right, I thought, questioning myself.

By this time I was beginning to feel worse for the drink. So, putting my full weight on him, I wondered if Miss Jones would be at the dance tonight.

'Tell me Charlie, what's Miss Jones the V.A.D. like?'

He leaned closer and judging my ear perfectly he said, 'She's absolutely gorgeous Sunshine. Beautiful! Mind you, I would keep off her if I was you. She's a vicar's daughter and only interested in the officers.' He said this through a fit of hiccupping, adding with a loud laugh, 'Don't tell me you fancy her, do you?'

'Not really', I said, my face growing crimson.

'I tell you what Sunshine, if you give me another drink, I will tell you a secret, okay?'

'You tell me your secret first and I will give you another drink, right? Well, is it about Miss Jones?'

'No drink Sunshine, no secret?'

'Give me your glass then!' I said.

I plunged my finger inside his glass. Then slowly pouring the liquid until it

covered the first joint of my index finger, I put it in his hand.

'There you are', I said, 'That's a damn good measure. Now, come on, tell me this secret.'

'Cheers me old-Cock!' he said smacking his lips.

'Cheers', I said impatiently. 'Come on, tell me this secret!'

'Now wait! Just you wait Sunshine; let me have a few sips first!' he said tantalising me.

In the silence that followed, I mused. For the first time I realized that nobody ever spoke about their own blindness. It was always somebody else's. But maybe they all thought, as I did, that it was only temporary.

'Hey Sunshine!' he whispered. 'Your Miss Jones first name is Jenny. But don't tell her I told you will you?'

'Thanks Charlie!' I said feeling my watch. 'It's well past eight o'clock you know!'

'Stone-the-crows, come on mate! Put your hands on my shoulders and I will lead you to the dance.'

The second part of **Pandora's Box** will be published in the April Review.

SEPTUAGENARIAN & SHAKESPEARE

by Bob Fullard

"To be or not to be?" ... that WAS the question when a fellow St Dunstaner told me he was undertaking a course of studies for the Open University. At my age, could I cope with a 3 hour examination paper involving close study of at least seven of Shakespeare's major plays? It was made clear that the standard required was university degree level and as I had not done any serious studying since taking my Finals at university in 1946, I was not at all sure that I would be able to keep up with the 4 tutorial essays designed to assist students in assimilating the curriculum

material. On top of all that, I knew that my typing was certainly not RSA typing standard. However, unlike war-time conditions, when one had to rely on readers and the use of whatever limited Braille editions were available, I knew that the RNIB cassette library had quite a lot of material on tape. On enquiry, however, I discovered that the two principal tragedies were only available in braille in a 1916 edition whereas the set text demanded a much more up-to-date edition with introductions and notes.

Continued on page 12

A moment to spare with Syd Scroggie

SHAKESPEARE? OH YES, WE'VE HEARD OF HIM

The schoolboy Willy Madison in Henry Williamson's *The Flax of Dream* called the national bard of England 'Woggledagger', and in fact this is about as close to Shakespeare, as regards what he thought and wrote, as most Englishmen and Englishwomen ever get. The plays are written in antedeluvian English, not the language of the James Bond stories, and so are not read nowadays, never can be read, for there's no one going to take the trouble to learn a new language in order to read something good when rubbish is readily available in the language they know.

Shakespeare is as inaccessible to his 20th century English descendants as Homer, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes and Goethe, and though a translation of the plays is now available in modern English, this is no use, since Shakespeare's reputation for unreadability is now so fixed in the common mind as to admit of no reassessment in this respect. Like Diana of the Ephesians in the latter day Graeco-Roman Empire, he is ignorantly worshipped, and that is the end of that where present day England is concerned. 'And cursed be him who moves my bones' says Shakespeare's epitaph, but the general public is so little interested in him that there's little fear of this happening.

The common people have buried him more conclusively than any undertaker, his work meaning as little to them, less in fact, than any package-holiday brochure. It's not that in his time the great playwright's stuff was aimed at an intellectual elite. Certainly the educated gentry of the day sat on the Globe's stage with folios of *'Lear'* or *'Hamlet'* on their knee, but at the same time Will was the hero of the ignorant rabble, his pieces more popular with them by far and away than those of other contemporary dramatists. This is explicable not only because they knew what

Shakespeare was saying, but also because they were more childlike than their modern counterparts, their sense of values more exact, their perceptions less corrupted.

The average theatre audience today is neither childlike nor sophisticated, only a quasi-adolescent repository of ignorance and error. As much as anything else this is the result of silly attempts on the part of successive British governments to educate the uneducatable. 'If I can't talk to an educated man', David Ogg, of New College, Oxford, used to say, 'give me an uneducated one. He's got more of significance to say than any half-educated people'. While Shakespeare, therefore, languishes on the shelf, it is the same north of the border with Robert Burns, for he too wrote his stuff in a language no longer understood, or at best partly understood, by the Scots of this present generation. He too, therefore, languishes on the shelf, and if it is hard for Lowland Scots to understand him, it is impossible for Highlanders, for these never spoke the Scots' tongue, coming to a knowledge of English straight from their native gaelic. There's only ever been one England, but there have always been two Scotlands, Highland and Lowland, and of these Burns spoke for the latter alone.

He is as little read today in Scotland as Shakespeare in England, but the greater loss is undoubtedly Shakespeare, for Shakespeare is a world figure, expressing the mind and soul of mankind, whereas Burns provenance, however sharp his perception, eloquent his diction, is not the world, but a small Scottish cove.

Burns speaks for the Scotland he knew, Shakespeare for the planet Earth. Nothing more clearly shows our decline, both as English and Scots, than that we should have thrust both our national bards aside in favour of Ian Fleming, Alistair McLean, and perhaps the worst of them all, Barbara Cartland.



STAFF HYGIENE AWARDS

On July 4th 1990, all the staff named below passed the Examination of the Institute of Environmental Health Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

The examination culminated two three-hour courses with a hundred per cent pass rate.

Both Pearson House and Ian Fraser House were inspected on two occasions by the Environmental Health Officers and were found to be of a very high standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

The staff were formally presented with their certificates at a reception at the Brighton Dome. The Directors of P.B.K. were awarded the Clean Kitchen Award for both Pearson House and Ian Fraser House, which are now proudly displayed on the restaurant doors.

P.B.K.'s next project, which has already been applied for, is the Heart Beat Award for Healthy Eating.

Ian Fraser House (P.B.K. Staff)

Kozy Brawn
Sean Edlin
Andre Lavergne
Craig Wells
Alex Roddie
Val Sayers
Natasha Sayers
Donna Carter
Suzanne Rittman
Toni Payne

Pearson House (P.B.K. Staff)

Robert Disney
Lisa Dennis
Winnie Moore
Mark Moore
Mandy Rommaine

Pearson House (St Dunstan's Staff)

Ian Walker
Adrian Elliot
Jackie Gibson
Tony English



Visiting Mary and Russ Crombie.

“How Was It For You?”

A sequel to “The Start of a Love Affair” written 10 years ago.

By Vivien Jackson

Well? Was it good for you too? I’m talking about the last 10 years. We’ve been through so much together, you and I — births, deaths, happiness, sorrow, ill-health and celebrations.

It wasn’t always ME holding YOUR

hand, either, for support and guidance. You’ve held mine on many occasions and brought me home. No, I know you always didn’t realise it, but I’ve had MY problems too, and without your friendship I would have found it hard to overcome them. Like the time I had cancer . . . What? Did I forget to tell you about that? Well, it was 6 years ago and you have made me laugh so much since then that I have almost forgot-

SEPTUAGENARIAN & SHAKESPEARE *continued*

The only Shakespeare play that I remembered seeing pre-war was the witches scene from *Macbeth* performed at school by a small travelling company and, as part of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate, I vaguely remembered being thoroughly bored by *Henry IV Part I* and resenting having to learn by heart big chunks of *Julius Caesar* and, worse still, having to stand up in the form room and recite the extract.

Came the day of the examination with an invigilator provided by the Open University and the question papers in both print and braille, I was not at all happy about my own performance when later, I

thought over how I had answered the questions and decided that I had failed. No matter, I had enjoyed so much renewing contact with *Hamlet* and particularly with *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear* and all its pathos was a revelation to me. Not forgetting the bawdy wit of Sir John Falstaff in the historical plays and the poetry and imagery of Shakespeare’s Prospero and Miranda in *The Tempest*. And now, in the week just before Christmas, the letter has arrived informing me that I have passed — not with distinction — but with the satisfaction of knowing that what others have done, at whatever age, so have I.

“How Was It For You?” *continued*

ten about it!

Do you remember the dog you had who insisted on sharing your bath and then trying on your false teeth?!!

Did you know that you and your wheelchair nearly ended up in Poole Harbour?!!

What about the antics of your grandchildren who were not even thought of when we met?

And the time all your home-made beer exploded all over the hall and you were ankle deep in alcohol at 6 a.m.

I remember the time you got on a bus, talking to a stranger for so long that, not only did you find that it was the wrong bus, but that it was going in completely the wrong direction to your destination!

You tell marvellous jokes — can’t think where you hear them all. Masonic dinners? Buff nights? Reunions?

You sing to me on your answerphone, you take me out to lunch, you send me hundreds of Christmas cards. You bake me cakes (ruination to the figure), you give me cuttings from your herbaceous border and swap gardening tips. You even brought me some “duty-free” weeds back from your holiday! I’ve learned what an

Amateur Radio looks like and heard you send messages to far-flung places, I’ve watched you read braille and you’ve shown me your picture-framing and toy-making results. You’ve even shared your home-made wine with me!

I’ve seen photos of the family and heard wonderful stories of days (and nights) of Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays. Your classical music has calmed my “driver’s nerves” and your holidays have brought vivid pictures of foreign parts (a koala bear hangs on my driving mirror remembering Australia).

Intricacies of bridge, bowling, braille, archery and handicrafts have been shared. All those hobbies which are so much part of your life.

We’ve had sad times together too, you and I. Someone close to you died and so did your pet. You were ill in hospital and I came to see you, but you made a splendid recovery with your usual brave outlook and lust for life. You seem to manage with one leg (God-knows-how) but I suppose you must be used to it by now.

You lost the remaining tiny bit of sight you had left which depressed you at the

With Winnie Edwards.



time, but, as Noel Coward used to say "You Rose Above It". Your diabetes doesn't seem to bother you much and you have adapted to the use of a hearing aid with your usual aplomb. Hip replacements are marvellous these days, aren't they? (But, please, don't bend down to do the weeding!) And I'm amazed at the mobility you have regained following your stroke. I know that there were times when you felt really ill, but you were so brave and deter-

A Close Shave

M.T.G. Morrison

On the Western Desert during the battle of Sidi Rezegh, we were completely surrounded by heavy German armour. Their tanks, mainly the new Tiger tank, fired an 88 mm shell and our own tanks were completely undergunned. The result of this was rather alarming and even ludicrous since we could see the shells from our armoured fighting vehicles falling quite short, a little distance from the enemy. The enemy on the other hand, just stopped their tanks just beyond the range of our armour and poured a steady stream of fire at and beyond them.

Many of our thin skinned vehicles — this was the name of all trucks and transport vehicles to distinguish them from armoured fighting vehicles — were in the centre of the area and our own armour was trying to protect them by facing outwards and making as near as possible, a circle around the thin skins as well as trying to move forward to keep the enemy as far as possible from us.

Secret Documents

I was in charge of the battalion office vehicle and this carried the codes in use and the battle orders as well as other confidential and secret documents. It was important that these should most certainly not fall into enemy hands.

The overshoots from the enemy armour were falling past our armour and

mined to be well again. I suppose, if you were going to give up, you would have done so when you were first blinded. It seems unfair to me that you should have to contend with yet more aches and pains as well as your blindness. You make me feel very humble and I will never again whinge on about a self-inflicted headache.

I love being with you — listening to your stories of the past. I love sharing your life with all its ups and downs. I need your warm companionship, so don't go away. It has all been VERY good for me. What about you?

even reaching the thin skinned vehicles with the great risk that they would be put out of action. There was also a further risk to the vehicles from those shells which ricocheted off the armour and flew off in all directions.

Some of this shelling was actually now reaching our office truck and I felt it was time to arrange for the safe disposal of all secret documents. There was now a probability that that truck should be knocked out and that we would be captured. To this end I gathered all the sensitive documents and codes together and walked to the front of the truck by the side of the front seat on which my sergeant clerk was sitting. There I was telling him to get the incendiary bomb ready which I always carried on the front seat. I then handed him all the documents and told him to put them on the seat as this was immediately above the petrol tank, and to put the incendiary on top of the pile with the plunger upwards. Thus I would be able to destroy all the documents and vehicle if we were knocked out.

While I was telling him what to do, I stood as I normally did in those days with my feet together in a sort of easy attention. Standing thus, we finished our preparations and began to discuss the possibilities of our seemingly hopeless situation.

At this point I will leave you to tell about my early training. This took place in

A Close Shave *continued*

peacetime before the war, and as new recruits we were trained by two sergeants and two corporals. Between these four N.C.O.'s all recruits in the platoon became such well trained soldiers that we would answer any command instantly. This training to instant obedience stayed with us at all times, and the sound of a command from anyone of senior rank brought immediate compliance. This was typical of all the training throughout the British infantry, and the main reason for our successes later in the war.

At Ease

To return, now to the battle of Sidi Rezegh where I was standing at an easy attention while talking to my sergeant clerk. The armour piercing shells and overshoots were still flying around when I heard the voice of my former Drill Sergeant shout, "Morrison, stand at ease." I immediately parted my feet to the 'ease' position and at that moment a shell passed between them, ploughing a furrow straight as an arrow along the gravelly ground, under the office truck and into the distance.

Unseen Guardian

My reaction was to turn around to thank the owner of the voice that I had heard but there was nobody there. I pondered a moment and wondered why the voice's owner was about, because I remembered that he was in another company and that was in another area. Thinking back, I then remembered that not many months previously, I had typed a list of battle casualties and his name was among the list of those killed. I like to think that the command I heard had been put into my mind by one whose duty was to be my unseen guardian knowing that the ingrained training to instant obedience was that way to save me from horrible wounding and pain.

The question remains, "Was this my first intimation that such a guardian or guide was concerned with my well being?"

What happened to the trucks and what happened at the battle?

It was noticed by the C.O. that there was a gap growing in the enemy ranks, and that an enemy armoured car squadron was moving away to the westward. He gave orders that all thin skinned vehicles should be ready to drive out following the sergeant major when the signal to go came. That came soon afterwards and we all followed through the gap at top speed. Fortunately, the gravelly surface was pretty firm and we were able to get up a good speed. Then we saw we were pursued on a parallel course by the enemy squadron that had been seen leaving the battle. They used their machine guns but never seemed to gain on us, but managed to keep up still firing. As we went over a small rise we saw in the distance the 'B'echelon vehicles which were the goal we were making for. Our pursuers saw them too and probably thought we were leading them into an ambush so turned and went quickly out of sight.

That fortuitous gap in the battle line was our salvation, but for what reason had the gap occurred at a time when the enemy had virtually won.

It was from that time that I remained convinced that I would come safely out of that war to return to my home and enjoy the peace. I have had other experiences since then of things that cannot be explained but which all seem to point to the existence of someone or something that cares and guards us.

This is a true story and relates an experience that I had during the battle of Sidi Rezegh on the Western Desert.

TALKING BOOKS

'Balancing The Books', our review of talking books available from the R.N.I.B. Talking Book Service, will appear again in our April issue. Please note that you can add any of the talking books reviewed in Ted Bunting's column to your selection list by calling 081-903 6666, the Talking Book office at Wembley.

TALKING BOOKS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Don Roskilly – Executive Director, National Listening Library (previously Director of British Talking Book Service for the Blind 1969-81)

As early as 1919 Ian Fraser (Chairman, St Dunstan's, later Lord Fraser), had encouraged the Columbia and Pathephone companies to experiment with increasing the disc playing time to 10 minutes a side but it was not until 1934 that 25 minute sides were achieved, using 200 grooves per inch running at 24 rpm, at this point a committee chaired by Ian Fraser decided to launch the Talking Book Library with a studio in Regent's Park producing master recordings and discs pressed by EMI or Decca (10 at a time!); first players issued in October 1935.

By March 1939 there were 1100 members with a catalogue of 275 titles, despite war-time difficulties March 1945 saw 1600 members and 500 titles, by 1959 the membership stood at around 5,000 with 750 titles but Leslie Pinder (Chief Engineer St Dunstan's) began experimenting with magnetic tape in the early 50's which led to the Mk1 Tape Talking Book – 18 track half inch tape – introduced in 1960, together with a change in policy: players were to be provided on an annual subscription basis, previously they had been purchased by member or third party.

This brought significant growth, by March 1965 membership had reached 14,000 with a catalogue of 850 titles, the studios having moved first to Hinde Street, W1, under St Dunstan's banner, before arriving in RNIB's Great Portland Street complex in 1960. However all was not well, largely due to under funded production engineering, the Mk1 cassette proved to be a servicing problem and field trials of a half speed Philips Cassette (now Compact Cassette) system against the Clarke & Smith 'Tapette' were carried out during 1965/66.

Support from Philips was minimal, limited to the provision of standard bat-

tery powered cassette players modified for half speed but no duplicating equipment nor guidance on same, I can vouch for Philips inertia, at that time while working for St Dunstan's at the National Physical Laboratory, I had tried to convince Philips (UK) of the potential, all I achieved was permission to use half speed for 'in-house' use, 2 tracks only as available stereo heads were prone to crosstalk. The inevitable result was the adoption of the C&S Mk4 (Mk's 2 & 3 being variations of the Mk1) in 1967 and still in use today, Clarke & Smith scored by offering a complete package of cassette, player & duplicator also the then Talking Book users found the equipment easier to use.

In April 1967 the membership stood at 23,000, all needing transfer to the new equipment, this was achieved by March 1970 and by November 1971 a waiting list of 4,000 had also been absorbed giving a growth in that year of 7,280, after 50 years, in March 1985, membership stood at 60,000 with 5,400 titles.

The foregoing refers only to Talking Books for the Blind, it was not until the Americans moved to include the 'physically handicapped' in the mid 60's, that any attempt was made this side of the Atlantic when the RNIB's Director-General in 1968, their centenary year, drew to the attention of charities for other handicaps the need for Talking Books for those that could not read in the normal way but were not eligible for the British Talking Book Service for the Blind. This resulted in the setting up of the National Library of Talking Books for the Handicapped in 1972, which merged in 1974 with the Listening Library and adopted the National Listening Library title followed by the merger in 1988 with The British Library of Tape Recordings for Hospital Patients (BLOT).

RNIB, NLL and BLOT operate under the constraints recommended by the Publishers Association in that to protect copyright of the books recorded a 'closed'

system should be used; NLL adopted the British Talking Book equipment, BLOT having switched in 1981 from their 4 track 16mm tape to the American 4 track half speed cassette format introduced in the mid 70's. Listening Library being a less ambitious project had managed to work with standard open-reel tape. The 'closed' system requirement goes back to the original 24 rpm disc format, when it was accepted that should the records be played in a standard gramophone the result would be 'distasteful'.

Long-playing Capacity

On switching to tape an undertaking was given to copyright owners that a special multi-track system would be used, in return permission to produce up to 300 copies is usually obtained. The 'closed' format recordings call for special players and high costs, this is not offset by the saving afforded by the long playing capacity when purchase and maintenance of the equipment is taken in to account but the reduction in the number of cassettes in an average book makes life easier for the user, 12 hours requires one British or two American against *eight* standard cassettes.

Having adopted the British system, NLL are able to acquire titles from the RNIB, finance being the only limit to catalogue growth, whereas BLOT, in their own studio, have produced some 800 titles since changing format in 1981.

What tends to be overlooked is the unsung work of the Servicing Volunteers recruited initially from 'radio hams' through RSGB channels in 1947, without their efforts the RNIB and NLL services would be crippled by servicing costs, apart from the normal maintenance of players in members homes there was the modification in the field between 1967 and 1970, of some 18,000 Mk1 players to take the adaptor for the Mk4 cassette, thus completing the switch ahead of schedule.

Currently the RNIB is looking to compact disc technology for the next generation talking book but for organisations such as NLL with up to 10,000 potential members, the American format has many attractions, with ease of duplication in small quantities using 'off the shelf' equipment, coupled with low cassette cost

and players that, although special, share a commonality of components with standard equipment. NLL, having both systems in service, are keeping their options open and proposing to build on the ex-BLOT catalogue and making the format available to handicapped individuals at home.

Growth of Talking Books

The growth of talking books in the UK represents a 'voluntary' sector achievement despite the split between 'visually handicapped' and other 'print handicapped', unlike America's National Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, a division of the Library of Congress.

Although financial support from central government is lacking, over 70% of RNIB's members have their subscriptions paid by their local authority, the picture with NLL is not as good, it being difficult to convince the departments concerned that there are other than the blind requiring talking books and accept responsibility for the nominal £15 annual subscription; incidentally this does not even cover NLL's postal costs (no 'Articles for the Blind' concession), let alone the provision of the special tape-players required for the 'closed' format recordings.

This being presented at a seminar sponsored by the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, may I suggest that their Talking Book Service being in its early stages consideration should be given to the inclusion of all 'print handicapped' avoiding the duplication that exists in the UK.

PLAY ON

Bob Forshaw writes: I ask readers to disregard the item on music in the December Review. We would still like to keep up the playing side of our music group, despite a shortage of instrumentalists. There must be a number of St Dunstaners who can still play the instruments they may have learned in younger days. Please think about joining St Dunstan's Band and get in touch with me. My telephone number is 0243 863730.

A FURTHER TRIBUTE TO PETER MATTHEWS

The following words are a tribute to the late Peter Matthews given by the Rev. Peter Flynn, at St. Peter's, Mill End, Rickmansworth, on December 13th.

Compared to most of you I have only known Peter for a short space of time — just over 4 years. To be able to say that I knew him is an immense privilege and my encounter with him, particularly at our Tuesday morning eucharists, will be one of the high points of my ministry here. Love and warmth and sincerity exuded from every fibre of his being. To hold his hands in greeting at the Peace was to know that I had been accepted into the fellowship of a truly exceptional Christian brother. Through the touch of his hands I could read what in former years his eyes would surely have told, that here was a man with great strength of character suffused with immense compassion and gentleness of spirit. Our sense of loss is enormous and our parting with Peter causes us great pain but we are not consumed with sorrow because, as Marjorie so rightly put it to me, 'Peter was such a good man that I know he has gone to live for ever with the Saints in Heaven.'

The catalogue of Peter's achievements is amazing. He was born in Plymouth and educated at Cranleigh where he established his reputation as a distinguished rugby player. He became a Chartered Surveyor; establishing his own practice in Plymouth before the war. In 1936 he was married to Marjorie and began a life partnership which will stand for ever as one of the finest examples of the ideal Christian marriage. He joined the T.A. and was commissioned in the Royal Engineers before the war. As a bomb disposal officer he came unscathed through the events of Dunkirk, but while clearing mines from a



Peter Matthews with the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal he was awarded in 1977.

beach at Penzance he was blown up and suffered the loss of his sight.

The appalling tragedy brought Peter to Shropshire, to St Dunstan's, to begin the process of learning to cope and live with his blindness. He became a St Dunstaner, one of that body of distinguished men and women blinded on war service, but more than that he was invited by Lord Fraser to become St Dunstan's Estate Manager at their Marylebone Road Headquarters. He worked there for 30 years at the head of a department of sighted surveyors. The tributes Marjorie has received from those who worked for him reveal a resolute manager committed to his objectives, caring and considerate to his staff, always fair-minded, yet determined always to do the very best he could for his fellow St Dunstaners. It was an enormous tribute to Peter that he was invited to become a member of the Council of St Dunstons, bringing to their governing body wise counsel and a unique contribution from one who both served and was served by that organisation.

Commuting daily from Rickmansworth to London is a daunting task for those

who are physically fit, but for a blind man that is a remarkable achievement. That was Peter's life for 30 years. If that was all he had done it would be more than enough; but not for Peter. He took a very active part in the running of the Rickmansworth Branch of The Royal British Legion. He was a committee member and, in 1958, became their Vice-President. He also served on the Rickmansworth Toc-H Committee. He was, for many years, a governor of St Peter's School, not just in an honorary capacity, but getting involved with the children down at their level, talking to them about what it was like to be blind.

He was a member of the Rickmansworth History Society. He served on the PCC of this parish in 1950 and from 1956-70. His contribution to the work of the council and the life of the parish was outstanding. His strongly held views were both an encouragement and a restraint. He was modest in victory and gracious in defeat; never allowing differences of opinion to cloud his friendships. He was a keen supporter of the Symeons and a generous benefactor in many ways. Our sound system with its loop for the deaf owes much to Peter's generosity.

Above all this there was Peter the family man, loved, adored and respected. He delighted in all the family parties and gatherings. His sense of humour and infectious laughter were a joy to all. He made time for everyone, always ready with words of comfort and advice as appropriate. He believed passionately in the sanctity of marriage and family life. He leaves this present generation a shining example of all that is best in both. Peter belonged to a generation for whom these ideals were supremely important, as was their adherence to the Christian faith. Peter's faith was strong and resolute. He read the scriptures regularly in braille and generally received the sacrament twice a week. When he was working he would be at 6.30 a.m. Mass on weekdays before travelling up to town.

Many years ago I listened to a sermon preached by Father Edward of the Franciscan Order. I remember him saying that if you look hard and long enough you will always find something of Jesus in every-

one. It was not necessary to look very hard or for very long to see a lot of Jesus shining out of Peter. He loved his Lord and he will surely have inherited that place which God has prepared for him with all the Saints in the Kingdom of His Love, where St Paul reminds us, death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.

We give very special thanks to God today for Peter, for all that he has meant to each of us, for the privilege of being able to say we knew him. We all loved him and will miss him. Our hearts and our prayers are with Marjorie, Henry and Robert and all your family. In paying tribute to Peter, I cannot close without a word about Marjorie. You have been the mainstay of Peter's life. You have been his darling wife, his greatest friend, his eyes, his encouragement. We admire and love you for that. You too are an inspiration to all of us.

Peter has died in the faith of Christ. He may rest from his labours, for he takes with him the record of his deeds. May his soul with the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace and rise in glory.

TAPE WANTED

Mike Tetley is on the lookout for a Stellar 4-track reel-to-reel tape recorder. Anyone who has one for sale should contact the Public Relations Dept. at Headquarters.

* * *

ACCORDION OFFERED

Mrs. L. Filby, of Streatham, has a piano accordion which she wished to offer to any St Dunstaner who is interested. Described as "The Settimio Soprani Three" on the body work, it was apparently issued to her husband by St Dunstan's when he was training in about 1944/45. It has not been used for the last 20 years. Anyone interested in this offer may contact her on 081-764 1592.

D.F. Robinson's

GARDENING NOTES

Now is the time of the new season when one gets very busy both under cover and outdoors.

One can sow a bit of the vegetable garden but do ensure that some extra seeds are sown in case of failures.

Those of you with greenhouses can make a good start with the seeds of the half-hardy annuals since these items won't grow outside at this time of the year since the soil is cold and frosts will still be around.

Get all the empty beds dug over and add some fertiliser or compost as this will help the young get going properly when they are put in. Some of the beds which were dug over earlier may show some signs of weeds coming along so get the hoe going. Spread some extra lime where you are to grow the cabbage family.

Vegetables

Get all the beds ready for the seeds or young plants by digging over and hoe the beds that you dug over earlier on. Clean up the beds which had winter greens on them till just lately and dig over for future use especially broad beans and peas but do add some fertiliser or compost before sowing the seeds.

Runner bean beds need to be dug over thoroughly and down to a good depth and add fertiliser or compost at the bottom of the beds. The beds which were dug over for the potatoes can be used now. Do remember to label all the seed rows as it is easily forgotten where you have planted certain items.

Outdoor tomatoes can be started in small pots in the greenhouse or even on the windowsills in the kitchen. Put several seeds in each pot, leaving two seedlings which are growing strongly in each pot for transplanting later on.

A few lettuce and radish seeds can be sown in warm sunny spots at the end of the

month for those of you in the South but delay things till next month for those of you in the North unless you have frames.

The grass will be starting to grow now so it might be a good thing to put down some lawn fertiliser combined with weed killer to give the young grass a boost. Ensure that the mower is in a good, workable state or else get it down to the garden shop at once as most of these shops deal with mowing machines.

Fruit

Make sure that all the pruning has been done by the end of the month as some of the buds will be showing forth. Hoe the soil round all the soft fruit bushes when there is no frost about since this will keep the weeds at bay. Spread some fertiliser around the fruit trees either in a powder or pellet form since this will last a good deal longer than any added with a watering can.

New bushes of fruit can be planted when there is no frost about. Towards the end of the month give a good spray to all fruit trees with an insecticide when frost is not about as the pests will be starting their dastardly ways.

Flowers

Get all the empty spaces cleared and forked over ready for the hardy and half-hardy annuals to be planted.

Clear away all the weeds that you didn't get off earlier on. Put some extra soil round the roots of the perennials which are starting to grow, so that any late frosts won't get at them.

Work can be started on the Alpines and some of the large clumps can be divided and items with good root systems can be planted in spare places and firm down any plants that have been lifted by frosts.

Towards the end of the month plant some hardy bedding perennials such as carnations, chrysanthemums, late flowering gladioli, pansies and violas. Roses can be planted in the south towards the end of the month. These roses in their flowering places can be pruned but it might be better to leave them until next month. Many of the shrubs which are getting out of hand such as rhododendrons, hollies and laurels can be pruned.

Greenhouse

Most of the half-hardy seedlings should be growing well now and ought to be transplanted to other troughs to give more room to each seedling so that they can grow to a size for putting in their flowering quarters later on in the year such as

late April (in warm places) to May (in most areas).

Where you have had germination get some more seeds and start off again. They may be a bit later for putting outside but will save you buying plants. Begonia tubers and other items such as gloxinias, achimenes should be started now.

Get rid of all the pot plants that gave you a good show through the Autumn and Winter except for the cyclamen and azaleas which can be put out in a shaded part of the garden until Autumn to start them off again. Earlier cuttings that you took from geraniums, carnations, chrysanthemums and fuchsia will be growing very well so transplant to larger containers. Should you want some more cuttings take them now which will give you a later show either outside or indoors.

REFLECTIONS by the Reverend C. Le M. Scott

Sailing in and out of Hong Kong harbour is lovely. Hundreds of small craft: junks and sampans (in my day under rather crude sails); ferries crowded above and below decks; ocean-going vessels both modern and decrepit; and, over all, the multitude of buildings, noble hills and lines of busy roads. I was guest for a day in a frigate as she went to exercise at sea (my own ship was in dock).

As we passed out of the harbour between the steep cliffs and green tops of the headlands, in bright sunlight, the Captain said, rather sharply, to the Navigating Lieutenant, 'and at the subsequent?' and the lieutenant appeared to have been rebuked. The Captain used the same phrase later on, as we left the narrows. Returning to harbour in the evening, again he used the remark. On that occasion I realised that we were heading to pass a mark buoy on the wrong side, technically wrong but actually in perfect safety.

I was clearly being invited to comment. I asked, 'At the subsequent? What does that signify?' The Lieutenant had to do a sort of pantomime: he said 'At the subsequent Courtmartial the navigating officer

was condemned for careless pilotage. At the subsequent Courtmartial the Captain . . .' The Captain then cut in. 'It is a sort of joke between us. It serves to emphasise continually that some risks are not to be taken. As the reports on Court-martials show time and again, a minor carelessness, unnecessary haste or a bit of showing off does damage to ships and ruins careers.'

And what about you and me? Our forefathers spoke of the last judgement. Not very fashionable these days. But with Lent upon us perhaps we also should ignore "the subsequent".

* * *

BIBLE TAPES

Any St Dunstaners who wish to take advantage of the offer of free bible cassettes, printed in the December issue, should obtain a certificate proving their blindness from St Dunstan's and send it to: Bible Alliance, Inc., P.O. Box 621, Bradenton, Florida 34206, USA.

Welcome to St. Dunstan's

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

Mr. Desmond Bissenden, of Putney, entered full membership of St Dunstan's from January 24th.

Mr. Bissenden served with the Royal Marines from 1939 and was discharged in 1943, following an assault on the island of Brac, off Yugoslavia, when he received severe face and eye wounds. For the remainder of the war he was a Civil Defence worker, in Wandsworth, and continued to work for the Borough Council until his retirement in 1983. Mr. Bissenden was a keen footballer prior to the war and on two occasions played for Millwall Football Club 1st XI. He was also a member of the Mitcham Athletic Club, and is a qualified Life Saver.

Mr. Bissenden is married and has two daughters.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Richard Bingley, Newton Abbot

It is planned to have a garden for the visually handicapped and other handicapped people prepared in Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot, by September last year.

St Dunstan's Gardening Club hope to be present at the opening of this garden during their Devon visit. In the meantime, something positive is being done to render assistance to Teignbridge Council towards this project.

I plan to have a coffee morning at my flat at Newton Abbot on Saturday, 9th March. The raffle and items for sale on the bring and buy stall will have been made by St Dunstaners and the proceeds of the sale will be put towards the purchase of two garden benches, scented shrubs, plants and herbs for use in the garden site.

Tom Hart and other members of the Gardening Club will be present at the coffee morning on 9th March and would welcome any articles made by St Dunstan's Gardening Club members.

The following letter has been forwarded by Shirley Bartlett, of Pearson House. The message was sent to Harry Wheeler, via a third-party, Christine, from the commanding servicemen in the Gulf. The tape referred to is a tape of songs which Harry recorded and sent to the servicemen and women in the Gulf.

Dear Harry,
Brigadier White, in charge at H.Q. in the Gulf, has asked me to convey his personal thanks to you for your tape. He says "You are very kind and we are most grateful."

He says that we are to rest assured that all letters, and your tapes, are well received.

I am always grateful for the inspiration that you have given me Harry. Now, so much more importantly, all the lads are benefiting. Further gratitude from myself and from all the Forces (so dear to us) in the Gulf.

CLUB NEWS

BRIGHTON CLUB BRIDGE

Our second match in the West Sussex League was played on Sunday 20th January 1991, against West Sussex 'B'.

We had a very enjoyable afternoon and won the match by 16 victory points to nil. Our team was: Wally Lethbridge, Vi Delaney, Bob Evans, Bill Phillips, Bill Allen, Ron Freer, Reg Goding (Captain) and Alf Dodgson.

PAIRS MATCH PLAYED AT IAN FRASER HOUSE ON SUNDAY 6th JANUARY 1991

Results

1st	Mr. Goodlad & Wally Lethbridge	61.0
2nd	Reg Goding & Mrs. A. Clements	59.7
3rd	D. White & Mrs. McMillan	52.7
3rd	Alf Dodgson & Mrs. S. Holborow	52.7
5th	L. White & Mr. McMillan	48.6

6th	G. Hudson & Miss M. Stenning	45.8
7th	Dr. J. Goodlad & Bill Phillips	41.0
8th	J. Huk & Mrs. M. Combridge	38.0

INDIVIDUAL MATCH PLAYED ON SATURDAY 19th JANUARY

Results

1st	Alf Dodgson	63.6
2nd	Vi Delaney	61.4
3rd	Wally Lethbridge	56.8
4th	Jerry Lynch	53.4
5th	George Hudson	51.1
6th	Bob Evans	50.0
7th	Jo Huk	47.7
8th	Reg Goding	46.6
8th	Ron Freer	46.6
10th	Bill Allen	45.4
11th	Bill Phillips	44.3
12th	Mrs. Lynch	33.1

FAMILY NEWS

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

Patrick Murphy, of Morecambe, who passed his Morse test recently and is now waiting for a call sign.

Mrs. June Shepherd, of Pangbourne, wife of *George William Randall Shepherd*, has this year beaten her own sterling record in collecting for the Poppy Day Appeal. This year she raised £4,682 breaking her own record by £900. Mrs. Shepherd distributed 80 appeal boxes and trays herself and subsequently collected them.

DEATHS

We offer our condolences to:

The family and friends of the late Mrs. Ivy

Thomas, first wife of our St Dunstaner, *Wally Thomas*. She was the mother of Geoffrey, Marilyn and Barry (of Southampton, Herefordshire and South Africa respectively) and died peacefully and gently in Herefordshire on 14th December 1990.

The family and friends of Mrs. Netta Baker, of Rhuddlan, Clwyd, who passed away on January 10th 1991. She was the widow of our physiotherapist, *Don Baker*, who died in 1976.

Our sympathy goes to their children – Wendy, Robin, Peter and their families.

The family and friends of Mrs. M. Gadd, widow of the late *Mr. A.W. Gadd*, of Brede, who died on January 6th 1991.

The family and friends of Mrs. Violet Taylor, of Worthing, who died on January 6th 1991. She was the widow of *Mr. Henry Taylor*.

The family and friends of Mrs. E.M. Wheeler, of Gt. Torrington, widow of the late *Mr. E. Wheeler*, who died on 1st January 1991.

The family and friends of Mrs. Georgina Blatchford, of Sheeley, Huddersfield, who passed away on the 29th January at the great age of 98.

Mrs. Blatchford was the widow of our St Dunstaner *John Walter Blatchford* who died in 1984 shortly after they had moved from Essex to make their home in Shelley with their devoted daughter Edwina Amies. Prior to the funeral, Mrs. Amies asked that only family flowers be sent, otherwise donations to St Dunstan's, in view of the Gulf situation which may bring us casualties. We thank her most sincerely for this fine tribute to her parents and we send our deepest sympathy.

In Memory

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

John Michael Doughty, *East Anglian Regiment*
We are sad to record the death of Mr Doughty who died suddenly on January 19th, less than

one month after becoming a St Dunstaner. He was 49 years of age.

He joined the East Anglian Regiment in

February, 1963, after completing an apprenticeship as a printer. He rose rapidly to the rank of Lance Corporal and served with his Battalion in the Middle East (in Aden during the final emergency) and BAOR. He was invalided out because of the onset of diabetes and returned to his trade as a printer but, sadly, his illness took its toll and he suffered not only his loss of sight but other severe disabilities as well.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow, Ann, and their two sons Philip and Nicholas.

Michael Lawton, Irish Guards

Mr. Michael Lawton died suddenly on January 29th 1991, while staying at Ian Fraser House. He was aged 76 and had been a St Dunstaner since 1945. He enlisted in November 1934 and served as a guardsman with the 3rd Battalion Irish Guards until he was wounded in February 1945 and taken prisoner by the Germans for three and a half months until the end of the war. After his admission to St Dunstan's he received training at Church Stretton and worked in industry until 1958 when he retired early.

In 1986 he attended a ceremony at Chelsea Barracks where the Queen Mother presented Shamrock to his old regiment. She then spoke to him, the only one of the Battalion to have been awarded all the campaign stars for Europe, that is the WWII Star, the WWII Star for Italy and the WWII Star for France and Germany. At this reunion, he also had the good fortune to speak to the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, whom he had last met when the Grand Duke led his regiment over the Nijmegen Bridge when they captured it from the Germans.

He married Mary Bridget in November 1942 and we send our sincere sympathy to her, to their son and daughter, and to all other members of the family.

Cecil George Paddick, Rifle Brigade

Mr. Paddick died at Pearson House on January 7th. He was aged 76 and had been a St Dunstaner since 1944.

He enlisted in 1940 and served as sergeant with the 10th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade until his discharge in 1945, having lost his sight when injured in action in Italy. After his admission, he received training at Church Stretton and then worked in industry until his retirement, on health grounds, in 1955. His leisure interests were rug-making, reading braille, gardening and listening to the radio, including cricket commentaries.

He married in December 1949 but, sadly, his wife died in 1985. He then stayed with his sisters in turn and finally lived permanently with his sister June Gittings and her husband, whose company he greatly valued. We send our very sincere sympathy to them, and all other members of the family.

Lieut. Alan Gordon Noakes, Royal Navy

It is with sadness that we record the death of Lieutenant Alan Gordon Noakes, of Gosport, suddenly at Pearson House on January 6th. He was aged 61 and had been a St Dunstaner for 22 years. Alan enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1946 and was discharged in 1968 following a road accident in which he suffered severe head injuries. He was able to take some industrial training at Ovingdean and was employed by various firms before taking early retirement on health grounds. However, he was skilful with his hands and received many orders for his trays and chairs. More recently, he greatly enjoyed visiting Australia with his companion, Mrs. Stent, who looked after him devotedly for many years.

He is survived by his two sons and a daughter to whom we extend our sincere sympathy.

Leonard Wilkes, South Lancs/King's Own Royal Regiments

We are sad to record the death of this St Dunstaner who passed away at Pearson House on January 22nd.

Mr. Wilkes was 91 years of age. He served in the King's Own Royal and South Lancs. Regiments, enlisting in November 1914 by adding two years to his age. He was wounded on the Somme and then again in 1918 when he suffered damage to both eyes, his face and one hand. He came briefly to St Dunstan's in that same year but left us after regaining some vision in one eye and his discharge from the Army followed in March 1919.

It was not until September 1984, and at the age of 85, that Mr. Wilkes became a St Dunstaner again after the failure of his remaining sight. He had retired some years earlier from his work as a laboratory technician with the British Sugar Corporation.

Very sadly he had no family, having been widowed in the 1950s and his only son died in 1953 whilst serving in the RAF. However, Mr. Wilkes had a very good friend in Miss Jean Burnett who did much to help while he lived alone in Nottingham and it is to her that we send our sympathy.