



St Dunstan's Review

February 1995

No. 856



The Art of Phil Duffee

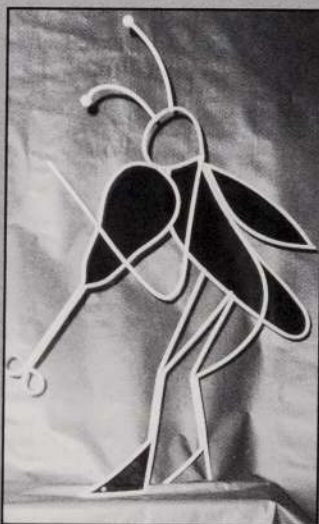
12-14 Harcourt Street,
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BI-MONTHLY
Free to St Dunstaners

FEBRUARY 1995

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Cover picture: Jiminy Cricket! This striking cane grasshopper, playing a violin, is just one window display item made by Phil Duffee. He discusses his work on page eight.

From the President

Last night Joyce and I spent a little time looking back over 1994, and we recalled many happy events, both personal and connected with St Dunstan's, as well as difficulties and problems, which have to be solved.

Today we are looking forward, and as is so often the case at the start of a New Year, we are full of hopes for harmony, happiness and achievements, although aware at the same time that there may be differences, which will be a challenge to us all.

The Council took some very difficult decisions at the end of last year, and it falls to our Chairman, Sir Henry Leach, and our officials to see them carried out satisfactorily.

We all have a part to play in supporting our Chairman, the officials and staff, so Joyce and I send them, as well as to all St Dunstaners, their wives, husbands and widows, our very best wishes for a happy, peaceful and successful New Year, and we look forward to meeting many of you before the year is ended.

From the Chairman

A member of staff, who deserves our gratitude and respect, sadly died on January 5th.

Pat Carlton was a mainstay at Headquarters for almost 30 years. During that time she was an invaluable member of the Welfare Department. For the past nine months she had suffered from cancer. Loyal she worked on to the very end. St Dunstan's owes her a lot.

* * *

This year is St Dunstan's 80th, another milestone and one when, with your help, we shall set the pattern for the future - into the next century. It is a challenging task and I am deeply grateful for the overwhelming support I have received in recent letters and Christmas cards.

Contracts for the sale of Pearson House to the Brighton Health Care National Health Trust were exchanged on January 5th and completion was achieved on January 17th. The final move across to Ian Fraser House is likely to be in June. Competitive tendering for the necessary reconstruction work is well advanced and running to programme.

In the next issue I hope to be able to report on how the various Club activities are being re-organised together with certain 'functional' reunions.

Meantime, I wish you all a very Happy New Year.



NOTICE BOARD



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The past 80 years have seen some vast changes in the production of the *Review*. It has progressed from the 'hot lead' process to 'in house' setting by computer. Nowadays, a few key strokes suffice to change type styles, the size and layout of headings and photographs. The end product is now available in print (2,500 copies), on recorded cassette (400 copies), in braille (130 copies) and is proving popular on computer disk. This last allows the blind user to search for specific items and read them via their computer's voice synthesiser.

The aim of the *St Dunstan's Review* has not changed and remains twofold. Firstly, it is a means of keeping St Dunstaners informed with items of interest and benefit, which they may not obtain from other sources. This includes keeping the members of our family in touch with news of each other and perhaps deriving inspiration from the example and achievements of their colleagues.

Secondly, it is an all important record of St Dunstan's events and is constantly used as a reference in many different aspects of our history.

Above all, it is your magazine. You have the right to be proud of your achievements or perhaps to share failures as a help or warning to others! We trust 1995 will be a full and satisfying year for all our readers. May we be deluged with articles! Preferably, they should be typed in double spacing, but any format will be welcome.

Ray Hazan

GUARDING YOUR HOLIDAY MAIL

Cancelling the milk and stopping the papers is easy when going away for a while, but what happens to the post? Rather than come back to a pile of letters on the porch, which might attract unwanted attention, it is now possible to ask the Royal Mail to hold post for up to two months.

The new service, Keepsafe, requires one week's notice and operates on a sliding scale of £5.00 for up to two weeks to £15.00 for two months. At the end of the allotted period, post will be forwarded as normal.

Details of local Keepsafe addresses can be obtained at your nearby Post Office.

THANK YOU FOR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Members of staff at HQ, Ian Fraser House and Pearson House, visiting staff and those who have retired, thank the many St Dunstaners and other friends, including widows, at home and overseas, who have sent Christmas greetings, and regret they are unable to respond individually.

To all of you, however, we send the warmest greetings and good wishes for your happiness and health in 1995.

01 FOR PHONE DAY

Area telephone codes undergo a nationwide transformation in April with the addition of an extra digit. The 0 becomes 01 to help meet increased demand for telephone numbers.

For example, the telephone number for St Dunstan's HQ becomes 0171 723 5021, while Ovingdean becomes 01273 307811. These numbers can be used now and become permanent fixtures on April 16th which BT have dubbed Phone Day. After that day a recorded message will ask you to re-dial if you forget the extra one.

There are more involved changes taking place in five cities, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester and Bristol, where the code will change entirely and a nine or two will be added to existing local numbers.

- 0532 xxxxxx becomes 0113 2xx xxxx - Leeds
- 0742 xxxxxx becomes 0114 2xx xxxx - Sheffield
- 0602 xxxxxx becomes 0115 9xx xxxx - Nottingham
- 0533 xxxxxx becomes 0116 2xx xxxx - Leicester
- 0272 xxxxxx becomes 0117 9xx xxxx - Bristol

The other change taking place is the international dialling code for Europe which becomes 00 instead of 01. Further information on all the changes being made can be obtained on Freefone 0800 01 01 01.

BAMBOO SALE

The privations of life in a Japanese prisoner of war camp are documented in *Bamboo Doctor* by St Dunstaner Dr Stanley S. Pavillard, MBE. A limited supply of the book is now available priced £3.00, plus 50p p&p. To order a copy send a cheque or postal order, made payable to St Dunstan's, to The Public Relations Department at Headquarters.

ST DUNSTAN'S AREA REUNIONS 1995

We have now arranged venues for the 1995 reunions and they are listed below and a pro forma will shortly be sent out to all St Dunstaners and their widows for completion and return to Peter J. Marshall at Headquarters as soon as possible. The programme is:

Wednesday April 19th	Liverpool	The Gladstone Hotel
Tuesday May 2nd	Sherborne	The Sherborne (Post House Sherbourne)
Friday May 5th	Exeter	Forte Crest Exeter
Thursday May 11th	Cardiff	Forte Post House Cardiff
Thursday May 18th	Norwich	Forte Post House Norwich
Tuesday May 23rd	Southampton	Forte Post House Southampton
Thursday May 25th	Birmingham	Forte Post House Birmingham Great Barr
Thursday June 1st	Cambridge	Forte Post House Cambridge
Saturday June 3rd	London(1)	Forte Crest Regents Park
Wednesday June 14th	Leeds	Forte Crest Leeds Bramhope
Thursday June 15th	Newcastle	Forte Crest Newcastle upon Tyne
Wednesday June 21st	Nottingham	Forte Crest Nottingham
Saturday June 24th	London(2)	Forte Crest Regents Park
Tuesday September 5th	Belfast	Forte Crest Belfast
Wednesday September 20th	Edinburgh	Forte Post House Edinburgh
April 11th & May 9th	Brighton(1) & (2)	St Dunstan's Ovingdean

DERBY SWEEPSTAKE 1995

St Dunstaners and widows can now apply for tickets in this year's Review Derby Sweepstake. Last year's winners shared prize money worth £795.20 - the biggest stake for at least 20 years.

This year the race has moved from the traditional first Wednesday to a Saturday and we have raised the price of tickets to 30p each - the first increase in 20 years - but they will still be issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (now costing £7.50). Applications should be made as soon as possible. Closing date is Thursday, June 1st.

Each applicant should send their name and address, the number of tickets required, and an SAE, to The Editor, DSS Department, St Dunstan's Review, PO Box 4XB, 12/14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB.

Cheques should be made payable to St Dunstan's and crossed. Loose money should not be sent unless it is registered. Every application made in the British Isles must be ac-

companied by a stamped addressed envelope.

The money subscribed will be distributed as follows:

50 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the winning horse.

20 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the second horse.

10 per cent to the holder of the ticket drawing the third horse.

20 per cent to be divided equally among those drawing a horse which actually starts the race.

No prize won in the sweepstake will be paid to anyone other than the person to whom the winning ticket was sold. The draw takes place in London on June 2nd, and the race will be held on Saturday June 10th.

ACTORS WANTED

Blind actors are wanted for a production of *A Soldier's Tale* in the autumn. Budding thespians should contact John Wilson Goddard at 137 Montgomery Street, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5FP.

HONOUR FOR DAEDALUS MAN

If it's a dog's life then some pats on the back have to be better than others. CPO PTI Martyn Webb - one of the 'dogs' at HMS *Daedalus* - was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours List. Martyn will be well known to St Dunstaners who attend the Lee-on-Solent camp as he has organised the sporting activities for many years.

This year's camp, the last at HMS *Daedalus*, takes place from August 4th to 12th. St Dunstaners who wish to apply for places should contact Elspeth Grant on 01799 522874 as soon as possible. Elspeth has also requested that St Dunstaners who received a questionnaire should return it if they have not already done so.

WALKING HOLIDAY - April 21st-27th

A walking holiday, based at the Longmynd Hotel, has been organised in the Church Stretton area. Members of the local Ramblers Association have kindly agreed to plan the daily walks covering an average of ten miles on each of the five days. If there are enough people interested, they can also organise alternative, more demanding itineraries. Those wishing to enjoy a half day walk only can also be accommodated.

The cost of six nights, half board will be £192 per person, excluding pub lunches. Participants will be expected to arrange their own escorts and travel to and from Church Stretton. Anyone interested, who has not already responded, should contact Ray Hazan at HQ immediately.

TERM TIMES

Terms at Ovingdean are as follows:

Spring Term January 3rd-April 7th

Closed May 8th, May 29th

Summer Term April 18th-August 4th

Autumn Term August 29th-December 21st

TICKETS FOR THE CUP

The big match of the year will take place at Wembley in May. It is possible that St Dunstan's will be allocated tickets for the FA Cup Final. Any St Dunstaners wishing to go should send their name and address to the Welfare Department at HQ. A draw will be held if we receive tickets.

ADO AT THE ENO

English National Opera will audio describe a couple of shows at the London Coliseum, Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* on March 8th and Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* on March 28th. For details, call 0171 836 7666.



Dr Franz Sonntag, President of the Federation of German War Blind, pays tribute to Ray Hazan.

NINTH INTERNATIONAL WAR BLINDED CONGRESS

The conference was attended by 12 nations including Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, the Philippines, Portugal, Rumania, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The aim was to compare provisions amongst the member countries and urge Governments to preserve pension rights for war blinded victims. This year, in particular, the gathering discussed ways of helping the newly emerging Eastern European countries in developing their organisations.

Dr Franz Sonntag, President of the Federation of German War Blind, relinquished the Chairmanship of the Congress after many years of devoted service to international war blinded matters. He is succeeded by Xavier Camillerapp of France. Ray Hazan was elected first Vice-President. At the closing ceremony, Ray was awarded the German Federation's gold medal, in recognition of his work for the war blind.

FESTIVE NOTES

The Royal Festival Hall, on London's South Bank, has introduced a permanent Talking Notes service. Presented live, ten minutes before a performance and in pauses and intervals, it will give information on the work and its performers. The service is transmitted over a headphone set which can be hired on the day for £1.

Forthcoming concerts include Zubin Mehta, conducting the London Philharmonic, Yehudi Menuhin and Loreena McKennitt. For details call 0171 928 3002.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

A series of Continuing Education courses for blind adults has been announced by two Universities.

The University of Bristol offers six courses, which have degree level credits attached.

• *Exploring the Past: A Hands-On Guide to Archaeology* July 1st-7th

• *How Beautiful They Stand...: English Country Houses: Part One* July 1st-7th

• *Famous Gardeners: Their Lives, Gardens and Plant Legacies* July 8th-14th

• *Images of India: Tales of the British Raj* July 8th-14th

• *Creatures Great and Small: The Ecology of Animals in Today's World* July 15th-21st

• *Geology: The Foundation of Bristol's Scenery* July 15th-21st

Fees are £264 per course (£48 for guides) secured by a deposit of £50. For full details contact Jo Emslie on 0117 9287176.

At the University of York there are three courses:

• *Photography for the Visually Impaired* August 7th-12th

• *In Touch with God, The Religious History of York* August 7th-12th

• *Victorian York* August 14th-19th.

The Photography course costs £170, while the other two are £240 each, again reserved by a £50 deposit. Contact Mrs Kathy Christopherson on 01904 433907 for details.

MOBILE PHONE ADVICE

Mobile telephones are explained on a new tape, *Your Guide to Owning a Mobile Phone*. It offers advice on choosing between cellular and digital technologies and the steps to connection and the cost of ownership.

Copies are available from the Public Relations Department at Headquarters.

STAR SHOWS IN YORKSHIRE

West Yorkshire Playhouse have announced a season of audio described plays featuring a star-studded cast of actors and directors.

The Winter Guest (February 15th & 18th) is directed by Alan (*Robin Hood*) Rickman and stars Emma Thompson's mum, Phyllida Law. Husband and wife, Prunella Scales and Timothy West unite on stage for Alan Bennett's *Getting On* (March 8th & 11th).

The Cracked Pot (March 29th & April 1st) is a new comedy by Blake Morrison as is John Godber's *Passion Killers* (April 15th). Nubile Emily Woof hits the balcony in *Romeo and Juliet* (April 26th & 29th) while Jude Kelly directs *Call in the Night* (May 24th & 27th) The season concludes with Steven Berkoff's *Coriolanus* (June 10th).

CHUNNEL INS AND OUTS EXPLAINED

A tape explaining the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is now available. It features details of the routes and argues the need for the link. To obtain a copy, just send a C60 cassette to the Public Relations Department at HQ.

OBITUARIES:

Pat Carlton

Pat Carlton of the HQ Welfare Department died on January 5th, just a few days after her 52nd birthday.

Pat joined St Dunstan's on June 28th 1965 as a clerk/typist under Phyllis Rogers in the Southern Area Welfare office, later working for Penny Lord in the same capacity. With the passing of the years she became an acknowledged expert in every aspect of the Welfare Department and took on the responsibility of much of the general administration there. In over 29 years as a devoted member of St Dunstan's staff, Pat worked tirelessly, nothing was ever too much trouble and she was someone we all turned to in time of need. Pat, and her wonderful sense of humour, will be sorely missed but always remembered with much affection by her colleagues and the many St Dunstaners, whom she assisted for so long.

We extend our deepest sympathy to her husband Tom, sisters, Maureen, Kay and Tina and all members of the family.

If anyone would like to contribute a donation towards cancer research would they please send a cheque, made payable to St Dunstan's, to Cynthia Mosley.

Maurice Mustchin

Maurice Mustchin died on November 30th, aged 84. He joined St Dunstan's in October 1932 as a member of what was then the Trading Department. Eventually, he succeeded his father as Manager of the Packing Department, despatching kits for home hobbies. He retired in May 1975 after 43 years of service to the organisation.

Ian Dickson

Ian Dickson, former Manager of Ansell House, died on December 30th, aged 66. Ian joined St Dunstan's on November 8th 1975 after 30 years service with the RAF. Ian and his wife, Nancy, moved into the flat in 191 Old Marylebone Road, the former Headquarters site, where he took up the post of Manager of the London Club. He became very much involved with the Bridge Club, accompanying them on their trips to Harrogate.

In 1983, Ian and Nancy took over the

management of Broadhurst Gardens, St Dunstan's London hostel and subsequently moved to Ansell House in Harcourt Street after the former was sold. Ian retired to Shropshire in December 1993. Many St Dunstaners will have been on the receiving end of his ministrations and join with members of staff in expressing their condolences to Nancy and all of the family.

Major Frederick Forrester, MBE, MA

We are sad to report the death of Major Frederick Kemp Forrester, MBE, MA, on January 9th.

In the early Seventies, he was a senior civil servant in charge of War Pensions, and he was always extremely helpful and supportive at a time when War Pensions were not automatically increased as they subsequently were. He was a very good friend to St Dunstan's and was made a Governor in 1978.

To the end of his life, Major Forrester remained involved in ex-Service welfare organisations, serving on the Council of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations

(COBSEO), the Roehampton Trust and other bodies. He died after a long illness, bravely borne, and we extend our sympathy to his wife, Doreen, and all members of the family.

Captain Richard Firth

We regret to announce the death of Captain Richard (Dickie) Firth on January 4th. Many St Dunstaners will know him from his regular appearances at HMS *Daedalus*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to those who have made donations to St Dunstan's in memory of the following people. Thank you.

Albert Boorman, brother of St Dunstaner Jack Boorman.

St Dunstaner Emrys Tucker.

Pauline Moody, wife of St Dunstaner Douglas Moody.

St Dunstaner Lt. Col. Edward Middleton Harper.

LEARNING FROM PAST MISTAKES

Rolf Blach, MD, FRCS, FRCOphth, senior consultant ophthalmologist surgeon of St Dunstan's, puts on Hegel's hat and Ted Bunting's shoes to review this recent publication. It is not available on tape, though this may be considered if there is sufficient interest.

The First World War

Author: Martin Gilbert

Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicholson

Present events do not allow us to foretell the future with any certainty. No such inhibitions need deter the historian who, by recording the past with objectivity, may help us understand today's world. The relevance of history therefore, depends upon the quality of the historian, the intellectual rigour with which he marshals his facts and the discretion with which he selects the material to weave his story.

By these criteria, Martin Gilbert is, to my mind, a great historian. His account of the First World War is not only based on vast research, but is told with great humanity. For me, it has opened a new window of history that is not only

important in its own right but provides an explanation for many events today. These include the war in Bosnia (the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the position of the Kurds and Armenians and, indeed, of Iraq (the Ottoman Empire) and the troubles in Eastern Europe.

The book is a strictly chronological account of the war on its many fronts which, by the skilful juxtaposition of events but without the intrusion of personal interpretations, helps the reader to understand why the war started and how 'providence' often took charge. Internal revolution, encouraged by Germany, led to the Russian collapse in 1917. In 1918, Germany itself was fatally weakened by internal dissent. The untidy peace almost makes the Second World War appear as an aftermath to the First.

The descriptions of battles are interspersed by stories of individual courage and suffering. Particularly moving are the quotations from the many talented young poets born of this generation, such as Wilfred Owen and Isaac Rosenberg, as they add a human dimension to the cold description of a thoughtless war.

The First World War was noted for the introduction of modern technology on a large scale for the purpose of human slaughter - the use of machine guns, gas, submarines, tanks and aeroplanes. But defensive technologies had hardly evolved. The medical, let alone the psychological, services were overwhelmed and scientific advances still seemed to favour the aggressor. Possibly modern knowledge allows us to cope with the consequences of war more effectively, but we still need greater understanding of how human societies behave so as to avoid the destructive aspects of human conflict.

A BASKET FULL OF LIFE *Phil Duffee talks to Ray Hazan*

THERE are times when it is a privilege to meet someone who is having a fulfilling life, who has coped with its inevitable ups and downs and has passed on the benefits of knowledge and experience to others. This last, to be 'a teacher of others' was an ambition of Phil Duffee from the earliest of days.

Phil was born in Stepney, within the sound of Bow Bells in 1928. The outbreak of the Second World War hastened the end of his schooling at the age of 14 and caused his family to move to Stone, near Stoke on Trent, when their home was bombed out. One vivid memory before the move was of hop picking in Kent in 1940, diving into ditches as the Battle of Britain raged overhead.

On leaving school Phil worked in a factory making transformers for the Royal Navy, followed by a period on

the railway as a signal box lad. He subsequently volunteered for the army but was not called up until April, 1946.

After basic training at Palace Barracks, Belfast, Phil joined the North Staffordshire Regiment stationed in the Canal Zone in Egypt, overseeing the evacuation of Palestine. 'It felt odd. Nothing in my life so far had prepared me for this!'

In 1947, half the Battalion was sent off to deal with a revolt in Aden. By this time, Phil was the Regimental Signals Sergeant.

'We came straight off exercise, picked up our gear and were flown the 2000 miles to Chormaksa. I never slept, it being the first flight of my life. Within hours of landing, I found myself wearing a red sash, bearing the Union Jack and marching into the Cra-

ter, bayonets fixed, no ammunition, and with rocks and shots being fired at us. But they were not very good marksmen!'

Phil spent six months in Aden, and it was there that the cause of his blindness was probably initiated. 'We were using heliograph mirrors. These reflect the sun's rays and can be flashed on and off like morse code. As an instructor, I was having to sight them causing infra red burns to the retina. In 1949, back in Egypt, I went to the Mess for a drink, and all I could see was a black and red blob everywhere. I reported sick and was medically

discharged later that year.' Phil's vision now is 'like an out of focus photograph with no middle.'

Phil reported to the Disabled Resettlement Officer in Stone, the name of St Dunstan's being unknown to either. 'He looked through his papers and told me the only job he could recommend for someone of my capabilities was hedging and ditching!'

Phil, in fact, completed a bakery and confectionery course at Birmingham Technical College and spent the next three years plying his trade. His subsequent job as an insurance collector, cycling up to 60 miles a day, was brought to a sudden stop one sunny August afternoon in 1954 when he ran into a fallen tree branch and nearly ended up under the wheels of a lorry. The fortunate side of this event was Phil's referral to St Dunstan's.

In January 1955, Phil commenced training at Ian Fraser House. Those were the days of shared rooms, centralised toilets and wash rooms and the orderly living on the wing. There were 75 trainees at that time. 'By tradition, we all sat on the window ledge in the lounge at coffee and tea time - just like starlings!

Nobody could afford to go home at weekends, so it was a lively place.' Phil sailed through the braille course in 6 weeks. It was there that he received his introduction to weaving and basket work as part of handicraft training, intended as a respite from other subjects.

Phil wanted to study physiotherapy, but the lack of schooling and the need to support a wife and two young daughters, Phil having married Sybil in 1950, meant getting work was a priority. He decided upon blind welfare. As a result, he received intensive training from Ted Asprey in cane, willow work and rug making in order to pass these skills on to civilian blind people in their own homes. Phil vividly remembers having a month's holiday with his family before leaving IFH in the

home of Miss McAndrew, a volunteer helper at IFH. 'Our stay was free, the only stipulation being that we had to pay her cleaner, a St Dunstan's widow, because they received no allowances in those days. It was a wonderful month in Rottingdean.'

Phil spent a year on the Home Teacher's course, which included instruction in legislation, psychology and case work. He continued the handicraft skills initiated at St Dunstan's. But after two years in the field, the system was changed and he was expected to become a generic social worker, requiring extensive travelling. This made the job difficult for blind people. At St Dunstan's suggestion, Phil returned to Brighton to retrain as a telephonist.

But after two years working in the London area he found the

stress of travelling took its toll and Phil was advised by his doctor to stop. For the next few years, he set up a business from his home in Kingston designing and making shop window display items in cane work. Model dummies, flowers, animals, giant bird cages, lobster pots and musical instruments, all in cane, put into practice his skills learnt from Ted Asprey. An addition to the family necessitated a move to a larger house in Hampshire, from where Phil continued this work for another 10 years. In 1975, he was invited to take over braille teaching from Mark Kingsnorth on the latter's retirement. This suited Phil as the nature of window displays were changing and trends were moving away from cane work.

Whilst still teaching braille, Phil went on in 1984 to instruct in computer handling as well. It was a time of constant learning for Phil as machines developed larger capacity and programmes changed constantly. On medical advice, Phil retired from teaching in 1990.

Phil attempted to set up a training consultancy, but was foiled almost immediately as firms cut their training budgets due to the recession. He reverted and continues successfully with his handicraft work supplying items on demand. He regularly attends the Basket Maker's Association summer schools to keep up with new trends and developments. Baskets vary from country to country and region to region depending on materials avail-



Phil at work during the Open Day.

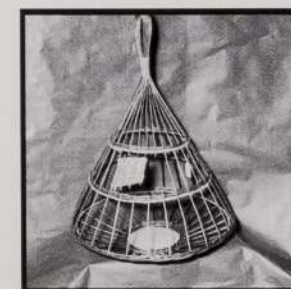
able, local requirements and even the size and build of the local population. 'There is a vast array of baskets I have yet to make.'

In 1955, Phil became a Jehovah's Witness. This involved much work helping out in his various congregations, attending conferences and door to door witnessing.

'There is a right and a wrong time to talk to people. During my time at Ovingdean, I would only respond if asked. It would be wrong for me to impose my views on others here - a blind person can't just get up and walk away.'

Phil enjoys walking holidays, gardening and archery, having been a founder member of the St Dunstan's Archery Club and much involved in developing the aiming apparatus

and special adaptations for Tommy Gaygan. It has and continues to be a busy and colourful life. 'Having left school at 14, I thought my only destiny would have been factory life and the Army. But life has woven a somewhat different pattern.'



Phil demonstrates his skills to the Surgeon General. Examples of Phil's past willow work, cat, cage and pants, are shown above, centre and right.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are always welcome. Drop us a line, tape or disk at 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB

From: Jack Fulling, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

I had the bad luck, misfortune, call it what you will, to be blinded on active service in Malaya in March 1951.

Luckily, I was only 17 years old when I volunteered for the Parachute Regiment, eight days after the Arnhem drop in 1944. This fact possibly saved me from making a fool of myself in Europe. By the time the Army took up my generous offer and completed my 'young soldiers' training I was at pre-OCTU on VE Day awaiting my despatch to India to step onto the military stage in the re-conquest of the Far East. Obviously the news of my arrival had leaked out, and very soon after, the Japanese capitulated. Some say the atomic bomb also had an effect!

Remaining in India's sunny clime until partition - the division of India and Pakistan in 1947 - I returned home armed with a short service commission and ideas above my station.

Securing a regular commission in 1948 I returned to the Far East to Singapore and Malaya.

Many vicissitudes later found me back in the UK anticipating the surgical cure at Millbank Military Hospital and certain return to active service.

The left eye had been removed in Singapore, the right eye scarred and I fully expected its recovery. There were many examples of tough looking serving soldiers with one good eye and a black patch!

On the positive side I was entitled to a wound stripe. I was 23 and still very much alive and exceedingly fit - having carried a pack across rivers, climbed hills through miles of Turkish-bath-like steamy jungle - all of which would have cost an arm and a leg - metaphorically speaking - if meeting the cost personally on a Cook's tour!

The surgical miracle did not happen but St Dunstan's did. Retraining, rehabilitation, pension rights, housing benefits, allowances, holidays, reunions, welfare support, my qualification as a physiotherapist, professional support conferences, helpful advice and other benefits too numerous to list in detail. And now, through computer training, I have access to information beyond my wildest dreams.

The Grolier Encyclopaedia alone comprises

26 volumes of facts on one CD disc, all accessible at the touch of a key. It tells me that there are about 28 million blind people in the world with a vision defect like mine. Many are without support benefits whatsoever or access to treatment... I am one of St Dunstan's very fortunate and very grateful beneficiaries.

From: Bert Wood, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex

I would like to thank the Archery Club members, friends, and St Dunstan's for the wreaths and cards of sympathy sent on the sad loss of my wife, Emily.

From: Mrs Phyllis Whittaker, Partis College, Newbridge Hill, Bath

I am now 88½ years old and cannot believe that it all happened to me, but it did. A lady came to our school to talk to us about men who were being blinded in the war. She told us that funds were urgently needed to help these men.

I wondered what I could do, so I came up with the idea that I would write a magazine and let my classmates read it for ½d each. This I did for several months, but the net results were not very encouraging. So I put my thinking cap on and thought of a better idea - dressing the doll competition - and quite a number of my classmates had a go.

When the time came to choose the winner I was stuck again, but I took a chance and wrote to the Royal School of Needlework and asked them if it would be possible for someone to come and judge the dolls. Mother said 'You're wasting your time, they won't let anyone come for an ordinary girl like you.'

But mother was wrong - a lady came and she took some time in judging and then, horror of horrors, my sister's doll had won first prize - but it didn't really matter as the dolls were to be sold and the money sent to St Dunstan's.

The dolls sold so well that it put the idea into my head to have a bazaar with a stall for every county in England and one stall for Scotland. I wrote many letters that year and Holborn Council were very kind they lent me a nice hall in which to hold the bazaar.

That was my last effort as by that time I

was registered as partially-sighted, which to me means partially blind.

St Dunstan's are very kind to me and still send me a tape so that I can hear their news.

PS Partis College is not a college in the accepted sense of the word. It is a residential home for women who are no longer able to care for themselves and as I suffer from epilepsy, Meniere's Disease and diverticulitis, I do qualify!!!

From: W.J.G. Trebble, Hon. Treasurer, Parish of St Michael the Archangel, Aldershot, Hampshire

It is with great pleasure that I am able to send you this cheque for £50 from our Church. This is partly in memory of the father of one of our Churchwardens (Mr Lucas from Fleet) and partly from my own recollections of helping St Dunstaners in Church Stretton during the war. Many a time I took them to the wire so that they could find their way back to the Longmynd Hotel. It was fascinating to see how well trained they were in the workshops. I particularly remember reading to and then testing a South African (Danny Pretorius) who was training to be a physiotherapist.

HALF A CENTURY IN BRAILLE

'It will rather surprise the layman to learn that the *St Dunstan's Review* has been printed for over 29 years but has not been put into braille,' wrote Lord Fraser in his January 1945 column. *Nuggets* had been around since the First World War, but the *Review* remained print-based for many years as braille readers were a relative minority.

That was not a situation that could last and Lord Fraser lead the way by 're-learning braille' and praising the second generation of St Dunstaners for their aptitude in adopting the tactile language. An anonymous donation encouraged readers with a braille proficiency contest. So it was, that the January 1945 *Review* became the first to be issued in braille, ten days after the print edition, courtesy of the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.

Fifty years later, the *Braille Review* has become a staple part of St Dunstan's with Scottish Braille Press printing it for 130 St Dunstaners.

A moment to spare...



with Syd Scroggie

A Pagan Pilgrimage

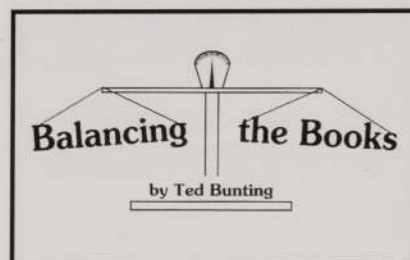
For 25 years now, certainly not less, Roseangle has climbed its local hill, the 1,492ft Craigowl, on Christmas Day, whins at the bottom of it, heather and bracken further up, and at the top a barren conglomeration of turf and stones. You get white hares up there, the occasional fox, and as often as not, hovering in the sky, a kestrel looks down on you with what has the appearance of a detached curiosity.

We certainly don't go up there each 25th of December for Christian reasons, for these would be better served in the kirk at Downfield, but as a result of some urge going back to times when not religion but superstition was the ruling element in human life. How else can we explain an annual ritual, the execution of which has more power to involve us than we have power to resist.

There's an element of worship in this somewhere, but it's worship of the old gods, I think, rather than any new-fangled Christian divinity.

A spirit lurks on Craigowl, preserving its sanctity, and it behoves Roseangle each Yuletide to accord it the reverence it deserves. The first red streaks of dawn were in the eastern sky when Margaret and I took off from Roseangle, these developed into a positively Apocalyptic fire, and the sun, when it came up, was the colour of blood on the south east horizon. By this time we were halfway up the hill, showers of sleet, a blustery wind blowing, and we already had the feeling that whatever happened the thing between Craigowl and ourselves had been regulated and put in order for the next 12 months.

Yet another pagan pilgrimage had been successfully accomplished.



It's me again Doctor

Author: Andrew Hamilton
Reader: Joe Dunlop
Duration: 5.75 hours
Catalogue number: 5048

Whilst it is more than probable that every other GP in the country could claim with great confidence, 'I could write a better book than that', it is Dr Andrew Hamilton, and not they who has actually committed his experiences to print, and for that, at least, we should admire him. Sadly and unfortunately there is very little more on the credit side. As he reminisces, it becomes painfully obvious that his ideas on humour are more appropriate to the quiet cloister than they are to the big wide world; what he clearly sees as an amusing episode, hilarious even, is unlikely to bring so much as a smile to the face of a modern person, not to mention that of an ex-serviceman.

From the frequent references in the book to 'my time in Africa', I get the impression that the good doctor may have done some missionary work there; if so it might explain the unmistakable whiff of 'holier than thou' which would be detectable in every chapter without him relating how he dispensed religious tracts in the hospital ward. Having listened to his words, I call him the 'good' doctor, I confess, not on account of his great literary talent or his ability to entertain, but because he so manifestly sees himself in that role. I shall not recommend him to my friends.

The first of a series of handy hints to help around the home

SAVING ENERGY IS COMMON SENSE

SAVING ENERGY can save money and there are a number of common sense practices that can help one do the other - without any further investment.

If you have central heating think about turning your thermostat down by 1°C, if you are too warm. In some instances this can cut up to ten per cent off your fuel bills. Equally, do not leave it on if you do not need it.

So while you are burning power to heat your room, there is an easy way to keep heat from being lost through the windows - close your curtains at dusk! It helps to tuck curtains behind radiators to keep heat in the room.

On a sunny day you can take advantage of a natural and ready supply of heat. Open doors in sunny rooms and let the warm air travel through your home.

Do not leave the fridge door open for longer than necessary as cold air escapes during these moments and the appliance burns more power to compensate. Defrosting regularly will help efficient running and reduce costs. If possible, do not site the fridge next to your cooker or boiler. If you have to, leave a good gap between them.

Always remember to put the plug in a basin or sink. Otherwise, leaving hot water taps running is both wasteful and expensive. Do not heat your water to a scalding temperature. For most people the thermostat setting of 60°C/140°F is quite adequate.

Do choose the right size pan for cooking food and keep lids



Using a basin to measure out hot water saves waste when washing up pots and pans after meals.

on while cooking. As a rule, the base should just cover an electric cooker ring. With gas, adjust the flame to suit the size of the pan. Do not use more water than you need - or over cook your food. This wastes energy to say nothing of spoiling food. The same is true of boiling a kettle.

Always wait until you have a full load before using the washing machine. If this is not possible use the half-load or economy programme if your machine has one. Afterwards, plan ironing so that clothes that require a lower temperature come first. This saves heating and re-heating your iron.

Finally, turn off lights when you leave a room. But beware of leaving dark areas which might be dangerous for children or the elderly. In daytime, use the minimum number of lights necessary. Adjust curtains to let in as much light as possible.

VICTORY EVENTS

Government sponsored events to mark the 50th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day

A provisional programme of Government sponsored events has been announced to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of VE and VJ Day this year. A mix of commemoration and celebration they intend to recognise and honour those who achieved the peace and to highlight the benefits gained for succeeding generations from the sacrifices of the war years.

VE DAY

Public Event in Hyde Park - May 6th-8th

VE Day activities start with a public event in Hyde Park which will be staged over a three-day weekend. Providing a focus for celebrations, it will have an international flavour and emphasis on the wartime generation. There will be an official opening around 12noon on May 6th and on May 7th, the Heads of State will attend an International Youth Ceremony at 1500hrs. Events in Hyde Park conclude with an evening party.

The Guildhall Reception and Dinner - May 6th

A banquet for Heads of State at the Guildhall will be hosted by the City of London.

The Service of Celebration - May 7th

There will be an Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving, Reconciliation and Hope in St Paul's Cathedral, starting at 1100hrs. Approximately 2,500 people are expected to congregate in the Cathedral. Afterwards, Heads of State will join Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace and other receptions will be held around London.

The Service will be mirrored by similar events in Cardiff and Belfast. In Edinburgh, it will be held on May 8th.

The International Youth Parade - May 7th

A Youth Parade with bands and representatives from participating nations will march through Central London during the afternoon. The parade will be essentially civilian in nature and will disperse in Hyde Park. Special viewing areas will be made available along the route.

The VE Night Party - May 8th

Starting at 2000hrs, it is hoped the evening will reflect the community atmosphere of the day.

The Royal British Legion are planning the lighting of a nationwide chain of beacons, which they hope will also link to other European capitals. Finally, there will be a Military and Air display with fireworks in front of Buckingham Palace.

VJ DAY

The Tribute and Promise Parade - August 19th

A parade and march past of veterans' organisations is planned to take place in London, during which a flypast will be mounted by the Royal Air Force.

The Drumhead Service - August 19th

A Drumhead Service will be held in Central London after

the Tribute and Promise parade, but prior to the march past.

Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family have been asked to attend the Ecumenical Service. Veterans' associations will receive priority, but the service will be open to all.

The Culminating Event - August 19th

The final part of the London commemorations will include a fireworks display along the Thames which will act as the signal to spread the message throughout the nation.

A Tribute throughout the Nation - August 20th

A peal of bells will herald The Nation's Tribute in the morning. Church services will be held nationwide and during the day there will be parades in the three regional capitals. Local authorities are being encouraged to stage events in their local communities.

The day will end with the Sunset Ceremony which will vary in size and scale from the full Beating Retreat in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, to, perhaps, a single bugler in villages and towns.

Seating at official events will be at a premium and access will be controlled by tickets. Applications should be addressed to Colonel P. Henderson, RBL HQ, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY. The deadline for VE Day events is February 15th, while for VJ Day it is June 1st.

Christmas at Pearson House



TAKE a highly musical pianist like Tony Ross, an assortment of costumes, plenty of imagination, add several soloists, and you have the ingredients for a successful concert.

It was generally agreed that the Pearson House Christmas show 'was the best ever'. Frank Starling, the impresario, was congratulated by everyone. Solos were performed by St Dunstaners, Margaret Bingham, Les Copeland and Jim O'Donnell. Amongst the staff performers were star turns from Shirley Pounds and Carol Chapman, to name but a few. A skit by two 'night sisters' had the audience in stitches, though not too literally. Thank you all for a most entertaining afternoon.

During the week preceding Christmas, members of the Southover School Choir sang at their customary carol concert. In addition, residents enjoyed a Christmas lunch and New Year's Eve dance. Though tinged with a little sadness, 1994 came to an end with a good helping of seasonal cheer.



Show stoppers all, from the top: Marlene off the wall! How to put a little ritz into the blitz.

Left: As ever, Jim O'Donnell has a song in his heart.

Above: Frank Starling hopes Les Copeland's Amazing Grace will rub off on him.

Below: The ragamuffin ragsters of Pearson House hit the right note.



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 Albert Phillips of Southampton joined St Dunstan's on November 16th. He served as a regular soldier in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, joining the Army in March 1924. After basic training, he was posted to the Gunner Brigade and by 1928 had been promoted to the rank of Artificer Sergeant, a rank no longer in existence in the Royal Artillery. He took a keen interest in football and played in goal for his regiment. Later, he was posted to the Far East and was due to move again, when the Japanese invaded Hong Kong. He was captured and spent the rest of the war in a prisoner of war camp.

Due to the deprivation suffered, Mr Phillips, who received the Meritorious Service Medal, was discharged in 1946 and spent the remainder of his working life as a groundsman for Southampton Council.

Now aged 93, Mr Phillips has been married to his wife, Anne, for 66 years. They have a son.

On the same day, we welcomed Mr James Plater of Hull who joined the Army in 1940, serving with the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (now the Royal Pioneer Corps). Whilst in training, he suffered from detached retinas and was discharged in March 1941. Although blind, Mr Plater learnt shorthand and typing and returned to

work in local government, eventually retiring from a senior position. Mr Plater and his wife, Emily, have a son and daughter.

A trio of new St Dunstaners joined on November 30th. First, Mr Joseph Dwyer of Halewood, Liverpool received serious eye injuries whilst on anti-terrorist patrol in Malaya in 1952. He was serving with the King's Regiment (Liverpool) and made the rank of sergeant.

He boxed for his regiment on several occasions and after receiving his injuries continued with the sport in a training capacity, giving much of his spare time to local youth clubs. After leaving the army, he worked in upholstery, retiring in 1982. Mr Dwyer is a widower with four sons.

Secondly, Mr Roland Painter of Birdham, West Sussex served in the Royal Artillery throughout the Second World War. He received severe eye injuries in Italy in November 1944 but regained sufficient sight to qualify as a solicitor following his discharge in 1946. In due course, he joined the family firm of solicitors, but became blind towards the end of his working life. His son has now taken over as senior partner.

He and his wife, Mary, have two other sons and a married daughter who lives in New Zealand.

Finally, Mr George Pickard of Birmingham served in the Royal Engineers from January 1940 to May 1946. He was evacuated from Dunkirk on the fall of France and then posted to North Africa, Sicily and Italy. He was

captured in Italy and it was while attempting an escape that he received his eye injuries. As a young man, he was keen on boxing, contending in Birmingham amateur championships as a heavyweight. He also boxed in the Army. In civilian life, he worked as a general labourer, retiring at 61. Mr Pickard is a widower and has two daughters.

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of: Danielle Taylor on August 6th. She is the great grand-daughter of Ted and Gladys Stebbing of Long Melford, Suffolk.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: Bill and Nancy Phillips of Saltdean on November 25th.

Ted and Mona Finch of Thetford, Norfolk on December 13th.

Gerry and Kay Brereton of East Molesey, Surrey on December 16th.

Doug and Connie Faulkner of Warmley, Sutton Coldfield on December 16th.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: Ted and Gladys Stebbing of Long Melford, Suffolk on December 1st.

Harry and Sylvia Meleson of Wembley, Middlesex who celebrated 61 years of marriage on Christmas Day.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to: Stephen Blake of Chertsey, Surrey on receiving another Award Certificate for his work on behalf of disabled and elderly people in Runnymede, Surrey.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of:

Mrs Moira Burke in October. She was the wife of Major Patrick Burke of Cumwhinton, Carlisle.

Mrs Esther Furniss of Telscombe Cliffs on November 26th, shortly before her 101st birthday. She was the widow of George Furniss.

Mrs Violet Moseley of Halesowen, West Midlands on November 27th, aged 93. She was the widow of Sydney Moseley.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

IN St Dunstan's *Review* of January 1945, Lord Fraser explained the advances in technology that had created a new Talking Book Machine that would set the standard for many years to come.

However, the most shocking news concerned St Dunstan's Stores at Raglan Street, Kentish Town which were gutted by fire on Boxing Day 1944.

In the February edition, we reported that Lord Normanby had received the MBE in recognition of his work with blinded prisoners of war and

that St Dunstaners had donated £60 to the Fresh Air Fund which had been launched by our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson, during his *Daily Express* days.

A correspondent wrote in with the hi-tech suggestion of placing a wheel on the end of a stick, particularly for deaf-blind St Dunstaners, to provide 'a mental picture of the ground ahead'.

Meanwhile, trainees at Church Stretton spread a little cheer by holding a party for children evacuated from Croydon.

Mrs Marion Roberts of Leeds on November 29th. She was the widow of *Jack Roberts*.

The mother of Mrs Vera Mason in December. Vera is the wife of *Bernard Mason* of Romsey, Hampshire.

Noel Finch on December 3rd. He was the son of *Ted and Mona Finch* of Thetford, Norfolk.

Mrs Winifred Kirkpatrick of Broadway, Worcestershire on December 6th. She was the widow of *William Kirkpatrick*.

Daniel Hamilton on December 9th. He was the son of Mrs Doris Hamilton and the late *Hugh Hamilton* of Plumstead, London.

Mrs Emily Wood on December 9th. She was the wife of *Herbert Wood* of Brentwood, Essex.

Mrs Margaret Davies of Purley, Surrey on December 13th. She was the widow of *Llewelyn Davies*.

Mrs Joyce Jensen of Ruislip, Middlesex on December 20th. She was the widow of *Ernest Jensen*.

Mrs Jessie Vernon of Reading, Berkshire on December 23rd. She was the widow of *Albert Vernon*.

Mrs Kathleen Rosemary Gray of Bowden, Cheshire on December 27th. She was the widow of *Captain Kenneth R. Gray*.

Mrs Betty Salt of Morecombe on December 29th. She was the widow of *Jesse Salt*.

Mrs Lily Acton of Ovenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire on December 30th. She was the widow of *Percy Acton*.

Mrs Clara Nolan of Acton, London on January 11th. She was the widow of *John Nolan*.

Our sympathy goes to their families and friends.

IN MEMORY

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

John Davies, Royal Air Force
Squadron Leader John Elias Vincent Davies of Brampton, Cambridge-

shire died on November 7th, aged 75. He had been a St Dunstaner for ten years. Sqd. Ldr. Davies joined the Royal Air Force in March 1940 and served during the Second World War as a Flight Engineer.

After a short break in his service, he re-joined the RAF in the Secretarial Branch and served until April 1974. He was then employed in a 'Retired Officer' post with the Cambridge University Air Squadron and in June 1981, whilst on duty, was involved in a serious car accident in which he received head injuries. He had many hobbies, including ten-pin bowling, toymaking, pottery and keep-fit.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Betty, son, four daughters and all members of the family.

Thomas Higgins, Royal Marines

Thomas Anthony Higgins of Plymouth died on December 3rd, aged 40. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1992. He joined the Royal Marines at the age of 21, when he completed a period of training and posted into a Commando Unit with which he did three operational tours of Northern Ireland. He later became part of the Marine detachment on board HMS *Minerva* which took part in the Falklands conflict. In 1985, Mr Higgins was diagnosed as suffering from multiple sclerosis, but he continued serving until his discharge on health grounds, three years later.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Catherine, and daughter, Sharon, and all members of the family.

Thomas Collison, Royal Air Force

Thomas Herbert Collison of Weybridge, Surrey died on December 6th, aged 79. He joined the RAF in March 1940 and served as a Sergeant. His sight was impaired after an air crash in 1944 and he was discharged in 1946, but he was able to work as an optician in a private practise in Surrey. His main interests were running and gardening. He became a St Dunstaner in 1992.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Eileen, son, Brian, daughter, Janet, and all members of the family.

Lt Col Edward Harper, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Middleton Harper of East Grinstead, West Sussex died on Christmas Day, aged 89. He was commissioned into the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment (16th Foot) in September 1925 after taking the full two-year course at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. He was seconded to the 3rd Battalion

Royal West African Frontier Force and fought in the Abyssinian campaign where he was wounded.

Colonel Harper became Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, Sierra Leone, until 1944, when he was posted back to the UK. From 1945 until 1948, he served with the Military Government in Germany and in 1953 was posted back to the Western Command in the UK. During this time, he played cricket and polo at Regimental level and boxed at Regimental and Army levels.

On retiring from the Army, he and his wife became owners of a public house in Sussex.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Margaret, and all members of the family.

Howard Simcocks, MBE, Royal Artillery

Alfred Howard Simcocks, MBE, of Winchester, Hampshire died on January 3rd, aged 80. He had been a St Dunstaner for over 50 years.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Mr Simcocks, who was studying to be a chartered accountant, enlisted in the Royal Artillery and served as a Lieutenant in the 99th Light Ack Ack Regiment. He saw action in Egypt, the Western Desert and Palestine.

It was in Italy, at the battle of Monte Casino, that he received serious head injuries and was totally blinded. Discharged from the Army, he gave up accountancy for Law and in 1948 was called to the Manx Bar. He retired in 1982, but continued to act as a consultant. He had a consuming interest in the political affairs of the Isle of Man and in 1955 was elected to the local parish council. A year later, he was elected to the House of Keys, part of Tynwald, the Isle of Man parliament. After 18 years, he was elevated to the Legislative Council. In the 1972 Honours List, he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his public services and his services to The Royal British Legion.

Mr Simcocks later became Chairman of the local Water Authority and Gas Company. In 1982, he was appointed Captain of the parish of Malew by the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man. This honour was similar to the position of Lord Lieutenant of an English county and marked the end of 26 years service in the Tynwald. He and his wife moved to Winchester four years ago.

Our sympathy goes to his wife, Sally, daughters, Anne and Caroline, and all members of the family.