



St Dunstan's Review

April 1995

No. 857



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BI-MONTHLY
Free to St Dunstaners

APRIL 1995

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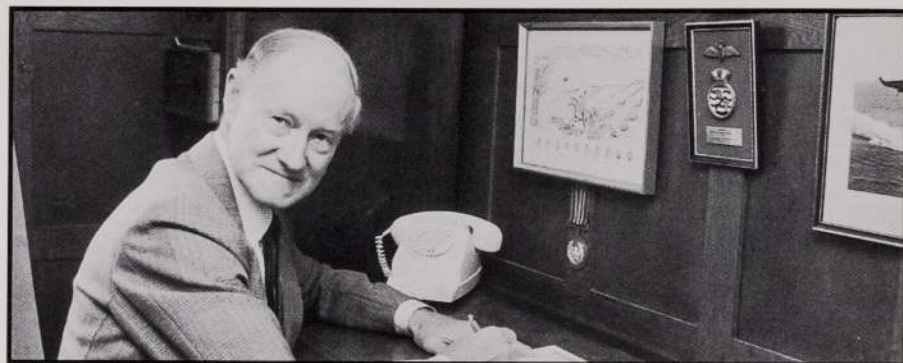
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Cover picture: Boot repairing was one of the original trades taught to St Dunstaners at Regent's Park in 1917. Our longest serving member, Henry Perrett, recalls those days on page eight.

From the Chairman



Mrs Elizabeth Dacre died peacefully in hospital on February 12th, aged 93. She had been failing for some time but her indomitable spirit kept her going to the end. I think perhaps the time had come and now she is at peace again and re-united with her late husband. She worked tirelessly for St Dunstan's and will be greatly missed by all.

* * *

Lieutenant Colonel David Bray (Manager IFH), Miss Christine King (Matron/Manager Pearson House), Mr Michael Rainbows (National Campaigns Officer) and the Rev. Brian Tyler (Chaplain) have left the service of St Dunstan's. We thank them for their work and wish them well.

* * *

Conversion work at IFH is well underway and is proceeding to time and cost.

Ansell House (opposite Headquarters) is on the market and no longer available. Overnight accommodation in London for those St Dunstaners needing it can usually be arranged at the Victory Services Club near Marble Arch.

The workshop in the basement at Headquarters has been dismantled and relevant machinery transferred to IFH. In due course it may be possible to reconstitute a limited toy-making facility there but for the moment this is in abeyance pending a further announcement. The basement at Headquarters will become the new Appeals Centre.

* * *

Rents and Service Charges are being re-assessed and brought up to date. This is a sensitive area in which it is all too easy to get hold of the wrong end of the stick, leading to unnecessary anxiety and concern. It is also complex. I do not, therefore, intend to make any attempt to explain it here.

All the Estates Staff and Welfare Visitors have recently attended a full briefing on the subject - which they will be personally explaining to St Dunstaners and Widows concerned in cases of any doubt. Boarding charges for those in Nursing and Residential care at Ian Fraser House (after Pearson House has closed) are also being reviewed.

Henry Leach



NOTICE BOARD



VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The Fundraising/PR Department would appreciate help from St Dunstaners, widows, families and staff with the following events:

Collection at Gatwick, May 27-29th

We have been given the opportunity to 'shake some collecting boxes' around Gatwick Airport over the Bank Holiday weekend. Please contact the PR Department at HQ for details as soon as possible.

Royal Tournament, July 18th-29th

St Dunstan's will again be mounting an exhibition stand throughout. Volunteer St Dunstaners to hold a collecting tin on the stand will be most welcome.

In addition, veteran organisations have been given the chance to parade in the arena during the finale. St Dunstan's has been allocated the afternoon performance on Friday July 28th. I am organising a contingent of 24 Second War St Dunstaners, with the Fleet Air Arm Gun Crew as escorts. I hope CSM Twomey, Irish Guards will keep the parade in order. We shall also need a Standard Bearer.

VJ Day Parade, August 19th

The parade will now take place along The Mall. Her Majesty The Queen will take the salute and there will be an open air Service on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace. Again, there will be the opportunity to parade a contingent and our Standard.

These are excellent opportunities to 'show the flag'. Volunteers should please contact the PR Department as soon as possible.

Ray Hazan

PROBLEMS WITH PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

A case has recently occurred where a St Dunstaner needing prompt medical attention was told this would be immediate under private health insurance, but delayed, in this instance, for 72 hours if carried out under the NHS. Knowing he had a policy with PPP (Private Patients Plan), the operation took place immediately.

It later transpired that his private cover was only applicable if there was more than a six week delay under the NHS. Please check your policy so that you know where you stand.

WIDOWS HOLIDAY

As you are all aware holidays at Ian Fraser House are no longer available. Some of the clubs and groups have got together with Colin Bentley from Careline and organised their own holidays and reunions this year. Colin has put together two holiday choices for any widows who may be interested. The options are:

June 23rd-30th

Seven nights at Warners Gunton Hall, Lowestoft, inclusive of dinner, bed and breakfast, transport from home and all coach excursions. £255 per person sharing a twin bedded en suite room.

July 31st-August 4th

Four nights at Warners Bode Castle, North Wales, inclusive of dinner, bed and breakfast, transport from home and all coach excursions. £225 per person sharing a twin bedded en suite room.

If any widows are interested, contact Colin direct on 0121 771 3558 during office hours.

CASUALTY ACTION

On February 20th, Channel 4 television launched a 60 second advertisement on behalf of Casualty Action. This is the name given to a three way co-operation between Combat Stress (with Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society), BLESMA (British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association) and St Dunstan's. Richard Baker gave his services free of charge to narrate the advertisement, which asks viewers to help the victims of war. He urges viewers to send a credit card donation by dialling 0800 39 45 95. The ad was shown 54 times over a three week period, in the South of England from Lands End to Lowestoft. Filming took place in Brighton just before Christmas and we are indebted to those St Dunstaners who took part.

The advertisement has been funded by the three ex-Service charities who will hopefully share in the profits!

PHONE DAY CHANGES

Since area telephone codes now start with 01, numbers for St Dunstan's are as follows:

Headquarters 0171 723 5021

Ovingdean 01273 307811

Old area codes cease to function altogether on April 16th.

STAFF DEPARTURES

David Bray

Lieutenant Colonel David Bray joined St Dunstan's in 1990 as Manager of Ian Fraser House. He had previously served for 31 years in the Royal Artillery and had also worked as a bursar.

He recently joined another charity and wrote this letter to St Dunstaners and colleagues before leaving:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thought it courteous to inform you of my departure from St Dunstan's. I left on February 17th to take up an appointment as the Chief Executive of the Searchlight Charity, based in Newhaven.

I believe the standard of care, overall staff performance and professionalism to have been quite outstanding at Ian Fraser House over the past four years.

To all those who have given me their loyal support during this period, I thank you most sincerely. I urge you to keep up your dedicated work during the period of perestroika and maintain the quality of life for beneficiaries residing in the House.

The traumatic events which have taken place, along with the unpleasant consequences for staff and beneficiaries alike, have been borne with courage and dignity. My fervent wish is that stability, coupled with glasnost within a friendly co-operative working environment, will return to this House at the earliest opportunity.

To the residents and out of house ex-Service beneficiaries, many of whom are my friends, I dedicate my Regiment's *Farewell To Old Comrades* march as a small token of my respect for them.

The music was played over the tannoy system at 1000hrs on February 16th. Although I received many requests to sing the words to this piece of music, I reluctantly decided not to do so on this occasion.

All that remains now is for me to say: Have fun, good luck, goodbye and I wish you well.

Matron King

Chris King joined St Dunstan's in July 1987. Previously, she had served for 18 years with the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

During her time at Pearson House, Chris oversaw the refurbishment of the Home and created a caring and warm atmosphere, which was the hallmark of Pearson House. The many letters from family and relatives were witness to that. We wish her the best of fortune in the future.

Father Brian Tyler

Brian Tyler became Chaplain to St Dunstan's in June 1993. He previously served with the Royal Air Force and the West Sussex Police. He was ordained as a Priest in 1965. As Chaplain he led worship in the Chapel at Ian Fraser House and was a full-time counsellor. He left St Dunstan's on January 31st.

BRaille EMBOSSEr FOR SALE

A Versapoint BPID braille embosser is currently available at the reduced price of £1,400. For further details contact Mrs Joan Follis on 01222 890247.

WARTIME HABITAT

Sir Terence Conran, Chairman of Habitat and BhS, has designed a Victory Garden for the Imperial War Museum. Based on a marrow-topped Anderson Shelter it will be on display at the Chelsea Flower Show from May 23rd-25th. For full details, call 0171 396 4707.

SALVATION AT SEA

A talk on saving life at sea, *For those in peril*, using ship models and lifesaving equipment will be given at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich on May 7th. Admission is £3.25, and further details can be gained on 0181 858 4422.

MUSICAL BARGAIN

Divas such as Maria Callas, Christa Ludwig and Elizabeth Schwarzkopf feature in 18 operatic performances on BBC *Music's A Night at the Opera II*. Priced £3.99 including postage, orders for the double CD set can be made by telephoning 01483 268888.

A celebration of British culture on Radio 3 has spawned another double CD. This set encapsulates nearly 800 years of music in 38 tracks. *Fairest Isle* starts with 13th Century devotional chants and ends with the likes of Holst, Tippett and Taverner. Priced £4.99 it can be ordered on 01483 268889.

MARBLE FEELINGS

Roman marble sculptures at the British Museum feature in a permanent touch tour for blind visitors. An audio guide and braille notices are available and assistance will be given if required.

WOODEN BOATS AND A TALKER

The Wooden Boat Show sets sail at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich on June 4th. It provides a chance to meet and talk to wooden boat experts. Admission is £3.25 and full details can be gained on 0181 858 4422.

FINAL CALL FOR STORY CONTEST 1995

There are less than four weeks left to enter the Story Writing Competition 1995. First prize is £60, second prize is £25 and there are three runners-up prizes of £5 each. The first and second prize winners will have their tales published in the *Review*. Entries should reach the Editor by the closing date, April 28th 1995. Full rules appeared in the October issue. Send your entry to Story Writing Competition 1995, St Dunstan's *Review*, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB.

TROOPING THE COLOUR

Some tickets have been issued for Trooping the Colour on Saturday June 17th, and we may be allocated some tickets for the Royal Tournament in July.

Any St Dunstaners who would like to apply should contact the Welfare Department at Headquarters by May 12th. Final allocations will be drawn from a hat.

St Dunstaners wishing to attend these events must pay their own travelling and accommodation expenses.

SWEEPSTAKE REMINDER

As we mentioned in February, the price of this year's *Review* Derby Sweepstake tickets has been raised to 30p each - the first rise in 20 years - but they will still be issued consecutively to a maximum of 25 (now costing £7.50). St Dunstaners and widows can now apply for tickets. The kitty currently exceeds £500. 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. Full details of how winnings will be divided appeared last issue.

VICTORY EXHIBITIONS

The anniversary of the end of the Second World War has inspired several exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum. *London at War* documents our capital during those pensive days while *The Channel Islands: Occupation and Liberation 1940-1945*, deals with the only part of Britain to be occupied by Nazi Forces. *D-Day to Victory* continues until August 31st, while *Victory in the Far East* starts on August 15th.

Admission to the museum is free on May 8th and August 15th. For further details call Sally Jones on 0171 416 5392.



'At the going down of the sun, And in the morning, We will remember them' is embroidered on this VE Day item.

CELEBRATION CROSS-STITCH

Simply Cross-Stitch have designed a special limited edition sampler to commemorate VE Day and £1 will be donated to St Dunstan's for every kit sold. The design features Britannia and the finished size, when framed, is 13" x 16". It is available in either 14ct ecru aida or 28ct natural quaker cloth. The kit includes a needle, pre-sorted threads and full instructions.

Also included is a free Commemorative Shield kit which will be quick to stitch and ideal for mounting in a coaster or trinket box.

The kit costs £25 and can be ordered from Simply Cross-Stitch, The Chapel, John Street, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6AU. (Please send payment with order).

Mrs Molly Summerson, widow of St Dunstan John Summerson, has been asked to stitch a sampler, which will be the first of the limited edition and will be presented to Her Majesty The Queen, our Patron.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON VE DAY?

BBC Radio 2 and many of the newspapers are interested in articles on VE Day. If you would like to write in and need any advice, please contact the PR Department.

NOSTALGIC CELEBRATION

Crooner Vince Hill and songstress Joan Regan join the New Squadronaires for a VE Celebration at the Congress Theatre, Eastbourne on May 8th. Tickets run from £7.50 to £9.50, though there are concessions for OAPs. For details call 01323 412000.



Crown House
 Author: Peter Ling
 Reader: Judy Franklin
 Duration: 14.5 hours
 Catalogue number: 7691

Just a few minutes listening was enough to tell me that this book was definitely not what I had expected, for it is not an historical novel but a work of pure fiction in which most of the characters are mere figments of the author's imagination. But it is a very fertile imagination and my initial feeling of disappointment was quickly dispelled as I was guided through a complicated network of scenes and episodes as the plot developed. In a book about a British noble house and our Royal family, tales of adultery, blackmail, lesbianism and the peddling of drugs would seem definitely out of place, but remarkably, the author includes all of these (and a Roman orgy too), and yet still retains that plausibility which is essential to every good story-teller. It is true that the reader will find little or nothing of historical importance in *Crown House*, but as simple entertainment it is first class. At the end of the final chapter I was still curious to know what would happen next... The old showmen always advised 'Leave 'em wanting more', didn't they?

Editor's note: Peter Ling spent 15 years keeping people wondering what would happen next, six months of which concerned when Benny would return with that cup of sugar. That's right, he was one of the minds behind ATV's infamous *Crossroads*.

Forty years late, Marcus gets his medal



A MEDAL HAS been presented to a St Dunstaner - nearly four decades late. Marcus Graham received the Volunteer Reserve Decoration from St Dunstan's Chairman, Sir Henry Leach.

Marcus should have received the medal in 1957 but hadn't realised that he had to make a formal application. The belated presentation was an informal affair but not without some poignancy.

Marcus served aboard three ships that were sunk, the last of which, HMS *Prince of Wales*, was commanded by

Captain J.C. Leach, MVO, RN, Sir Henry's father. Along with nearly 600 other men, Captain Leach perished that fateful day off the coast of Malaya in December 1941.

It was exposure to the elements and oil leaking from the sinking vessels which led to a loss of sight for Marcus.

He isn't alone in receiving a medal late, Les Davy of Romford recently got his GSM medal - 35 years after he served in Cyprus with the Royal Artillery. 'I was there in 1956-59 when they had the terrorist trouble.'

STREET TRIBUTE TO JIMMY WRIGHT

A NEW HOUSING development in Spelthorne is to have a road named in memory of a St Dunstaner.

Local councillors encouraged a developer to use the name 'Wright Gardens' in recognition of the contribution the late Jimmy Wright made to the community.

'It will be a lasting endorsement of the work Mr Wright put into many good causes within this Borough,' said a spokesman for the Technical Services Department at the

Borough of Spelthorne.

Jimmy, who died two years ago, was blinded in a plane crash at Taranto, Italy, in 1944. Severely burnt, he pursued a successful career as a film maker, producing two award-winning documentaries about St Dunstan's. He championed sporting activities for blind people and was heavily involved in fundraising for the Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead, the RAF Benevolent Fund and the Julie Andrews Fund.

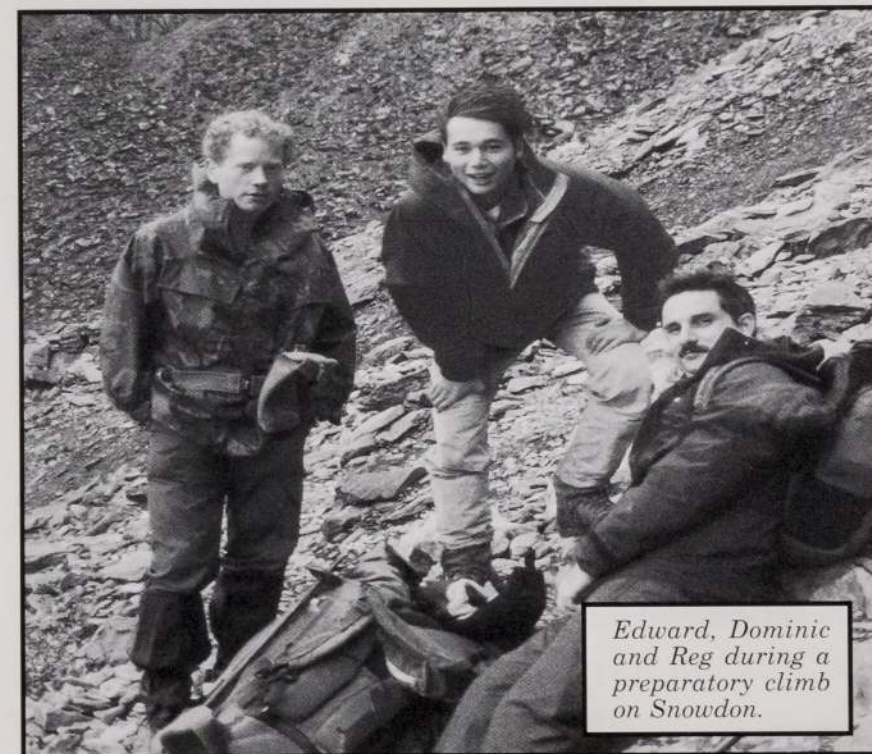
Reg Perrin is getting ready for a bold expedition

St Dunstaner plans arctic adventure

ALAN 'REG' PERRIN was 28 and a Sergeant in the Royal Marines, when a hand grenade exploded prematurely during a training exercise in 1992. Partially blinded and paralysed down his left side, he was told he would never walk again. 'The thought of staying in a wheelchair terrified me,' said Reg. With the help of others and his own determination, he was able to transfer from four wheels to one good and one indifferent leg! He became a St Dunstaner in 1994 and with the encouragement of fellow trainees went from strength to strength, including taking part in the annual walking holiday and more recently, the St Dunstan's skiing trip to Austria.

In June/July, he attempts to conquer Mount McKinley (20,320 ft) in Alaska. This is the highest peak in North America. Lying only 200 miles outside the Arctic Circle, Mount McKinley has an awesome reputation for being the coldest mountain in the world. The altitude effects are exaggerated because the air is thinner in the Polar regions. The Himalayan altitude equivalent is approximately 23,000 ft. Each fully-fit member of the six man team will carry and pull up to 130lbs of food and equipment. Stashes of food will be ferried to various 'camps' up the mountain and buried in the snow for recovery later. The climb is 17 miles long and involves a total ascent of 13,000 ft. It will take an estimated five weeks.

The team leaders and organ-



Edward, Dominic and Reg during a preparatory climb on Snowdon.

isers are Dominic Marshall and Edward de la Billiere, both of whom are post-graduate law students. The team members consist of Alan Perrin and John Barry, formerly Commander of the Royal Marines Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre (1974 - 1976), who has climbed for 30 years making many first ascents of new routes. He led the expedition that resulted in Britain's first woman (Rebecca Stephens) climbing Everest. Two doctors are currently being selected. It is thought that no one with injuries such as Reg's has attempted a climb of this nature before.

The findings of the doctors will consequently be unique and pioneering in this field of medical research. Success will

be a fitting tribute to the achievements of all St Dunstaners in this our 80th anniversary year.

Reg is to be congratulated on obtaining a 1995 Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship. Over 3000 applicants were interviewed and just the one Fellowship awarded.

The aim of the expedition called *Unseen Steps* is to support Reg to the top of Mount McKinley by the West Buttress route and to raise funds for St Dunstan's and BSAD (British Sports Association for the Disabled).

Anyone wishing to sponsor Reg and his colleagues are invited to send a cheque or postal order, payable to St Dunstan's, to the PR Department at HQ. Each donation will be acknowledged.



Memories...

In this 80th year of our foundation, Henry Perrett celebrates 78 years as a St Dunstaner and talks to Ray Hazan about those early days

HENRY PERRETT of Devizes was born in November 1897 and is the longest serving St Dunstaner. He remembers Regent's Park days and was one of the first to stay at West House after it was presented to St Dunstan's in 1918.

Henry Perrett left his job on the land to join the 8th Battalion, The Wiltshire Regiment on April 6th 1915. He was amongst one of the first units to use Bovington Camp, Dorset. On September 9th, he found himself on the way to France. 'We left Bovington at mid-day on the Wednesday, and we were in the front line on the Friday evening.' The Battle of Loos commenced on September 25th. 'You knew you were there when the bullets and shells started flying. But you just had to knuckle down.'

For two years, Henry Perrett went through the routine of time spent alternately in the front line, and then withdrawing back to the rest area. He arrived on the Somme on July 1st 1916. How can we imagine his feelings on Sunday July 2nd when the first line of troops 'went over the top' to be mown down, and knowing he was to follow in their footsteps the next day?

From the Somme, he went to the Ypres sector in 1917. 'We went forward just for two nights to get the lie of the land, but on the first night, I copped it. A German trench mortar pitched into our bay and all seven of us were knocked out. I was blinded and seriously injured by shrapnel.'

To this day, he carries a piece of shrapnel in his left arm. 'I did not have much idea

of what was happening. I was stretchered back to the Advance Dressing Station. I do remember hearing a lovely lady's voice - that was the nurse talking me round. I remember my first words: "Oh what have they done with my eyes?" "It's all right," she replied, "They've just taken the dirt out".'

A few days later, Henry Perrett was on his way back to England. He spent from April to October in the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, where he underwent 20 operations.

Henry Perrett arrived at his new home, the accommodation bungalow in the grounds of St Dunstan's, Regent's Park, without really knowing what the organisation was all about. There were seven wards of 40 beds. 'Sir Arthur was a wonderful man. Everyone liked him. We had a long interview, when he asked all sorts of questions. It was he who decided what would be the best job for us. He suggested I became a boot repairer. That was it - I was a boot repairer!'

Boot repairing was a pioneer profession for blind people in those days. 'I was amazed at what they could teach us to do. They gave us special tools, which I still have to this day. Training included braille, typing and occupational activities. There was no mobility training - St Dunstaners were issued with a strong walking stick; white canes did not exist then. There were indoor tournaments, we had theatre visits or concerts; some of the most famous stars came to entertain us. We were invited out to lots of parties. I rowed on the lake and took part in running and walking races later on in my training. I was also a member of the tug of war team and still have the gold cup we won.'

By December 1918 that training was complete. Henry

was one of the very first St Dunstaners to visit Pearson or West House, as it was known then. It had only just been presented to the organisation by the Federation of Grocers' Association. 'Someone came round to ask us if we wanted to go to Brighton for the weekend. About six of us West Country lads volunteered. I remember a Mrs George, an Italian lady, who was both a visitor and friend of St Dunstan's, came to see us. Once everything had settled down there, I went back again for a fortnight's holiday. It was a lovely place. We went walking, on trips to the theatre and to concerts. There were many sick men convalescing at West House.'

Back home in the market town of Devizes at Christmas, luck was on Henry Perrett's side, so to speak. The person charged with helping him find a business premises in Devizes happened to bump into the Chairman of the local Board of Guardians. As a

result, a job was found repairing boots at the local mental hospital.

'I earned 29 shillings a week over and above my war pension of about 40 shillings. I was lucky to be in work. There were some nasty feelings of jealousy around locally because they thought I had my bread buttered on both sides.'

But Henry Perrett more than amply repaid the civilian blind through his example. Until that time, local blind people had been considered as 'poor simple mortals'. When people saw just what Henry Perrett was achieving, local residents started treating the blind differently. Henry Perrett worked at the hospital for 20 years, and during the 1939-45 conflict carried out war work locally. Henry's war work consisted of making camouflage netting at home in his workshop. He married Edith in 1921 and subsequently had two children.

Nineteen-twenty-one was the year Sir Arthur died. 'We

couldn't believe it, it was so sad, it couldn't be true.' Henry Perrett is still very active. He has his gold watch chain, awarded for being the best brailist in his class in Regent's Park. He continues to read the braille *Review*. He attends two local clubs weekly, and has lived on his own since Edith died in 1986. He has the close support of his son and daughter, John and Joyce, who live nearby. His great pleasure has always been his garden. 'My wife and I felt particularly close in the garden.' On fine days, he delights in getting outside among the flowers. 'I was asked to speak at the Bristol reunion on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Chairmanship of Lord Fraser. Sir Neville Pearson was chairing the reunion. It was all a great moment for me.'

'Looking back, I feel I owe St Dunstan's a great debt. I shall never forget people like Sir Arthur and Lord Fraser. They are very fresh in my mind.'

Left: Henry holds up a framed portrait of himself as a young soldier. Below: The class of 1917! Henry and his contemporaries at St Dunstan's Regent's Park. Rowing was a popular sport amongst trainees at the time.

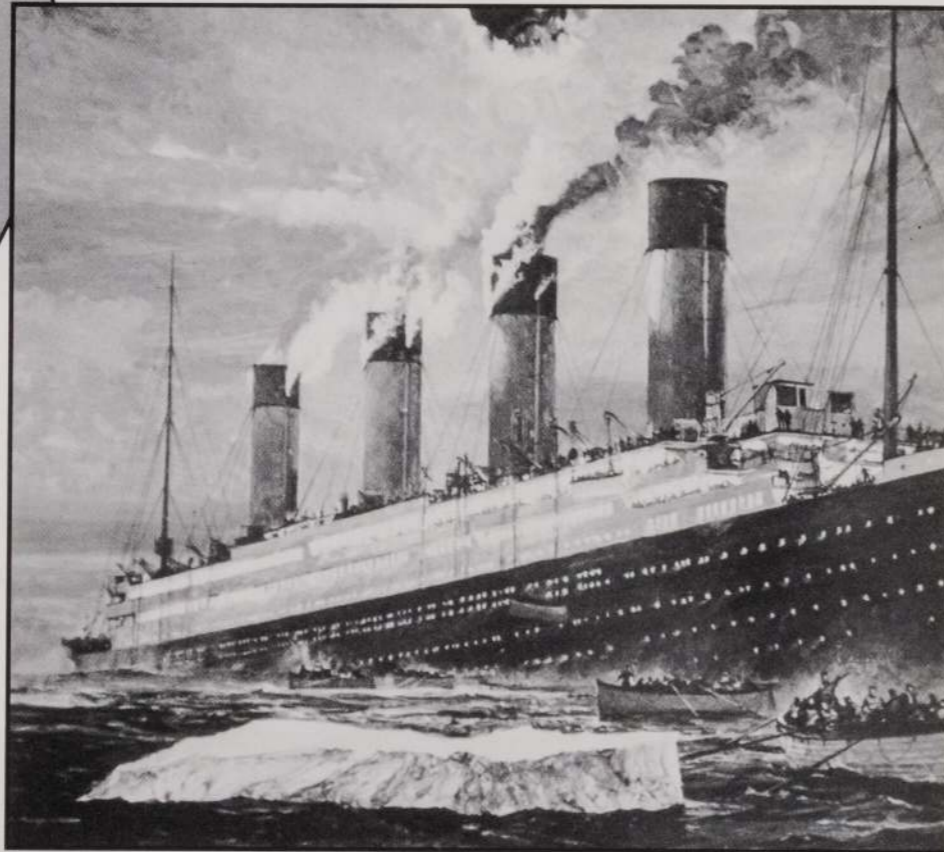


Beryl Sleigh tells Simon Rogers how her un



Second Officer Herbert Lightoller was praised for his actions on the night the Titanic went down.

WHEN A TITANIC STYGIAN DEF



Chris Mayger's famous painting Sinking of the Titanic portrays the tragic ship's final moments. Picture courtesy John P. Eaton & Charles A. Haas, National Maritime Museum

MESSAGE FROM THE KING.

SYMPATHY WITH THE BEREAVED.

TELEGRAM TO WHITE STAR LINE.

The White Star Line have received the following telegram from the King and Queen:-

Sandringham,
Tuesday, 6.30 p.m.
The Managing Director,
White Star Line,
Liverpool.

The Queen and I are horrified at the appalling disaster which has happened to the Titanic and at the terrible loss of life.

We deeply sympathise with the bereaved relatives, and feel for them in their great sorrow with all our hearts.

GEORGE R.I.

Queen Alexandra telegraphed to the White Star Line:

Sandringham, Tuesday.
It is with feelings of the deepest sorrow that I hear of the terrible disaster to the Titanic and of the awful loss of life. My heart is full of grief and sympathy for the bereaved families of those who have perished.
ALEXANDRA.

The reaction of a King! A message of sympathy was issued from Sandringham.

THE WORLD held its breath in April 1912 when the unthinkable happened, a vessel that had been compared to the Great Pyramids and hailed as an engineering feat like no other was dealt a mortal blow. The sinking of the *Titanic* shocked the globe but for St Dunstaner Beryl Sleigh and her family the disaster inflicted a special anguish.

'I was only seven, but remember my mother standing beneath a tree, waiting for a telegram to come,' says Beryl. This heart-stopping vigil

arose because Charles Herbert Lightoller, maternal uncle to Beryl, was serving as Second Officer on board the *Titanic* which after hitting an iceberg had gone down with an unparalleled loss of life. A staggering 1,347 men, 103 women and 53 children were left to a watery grave.

'She was so worried,' said Beryl of her mother. 'He was her only brother, the only boy with three sisters.'

A merchant seaman from the age of 13, Lightoller had a distinguished career at sea, spending several years as a Chief Officer alternating between the

A ST DUNSTAN'S REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

WE ARE DAYS BEHIND... DARK DAYS AHEAD... DARK DAYS AHEAD... 1945-1995

IN APRIL 1945, the writing was on the wall for Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich, concluding nearly six years of terror which had started with the invasion of Poland and carried on with the blitzkrieg through the rest of Europe. The tide had turned with D-Day and the Nazi forces were inexorably driven back towards Berlin.

However, there was a downside to the euphoria that surrounded the imminent home coming of the men and women who had defended Europe's freedom. It was an impending problem seen all too clearly by a blind man - Sir Ian Fraser.

Employment prospects for the returning troops were utmost in his mind. 'The signs are that the war with Germany will soon be over,' he said. 'We have got to beat thousands of swords into ploughshares and in the process we have got to absorb into our economic life five and a half million men and women who have been out of it for years. They have been wanted by the nation and praised by the people. We must make sure they are wanted when they come back.'

Commons debates on this matter were, in Fraser's opinion, 'timid and vague'. Perhaps it was personal experience that granted Fraser the insight to view the consequences of war. He had been blinded during the Battle of the Somme and knew all too well that the end of hostilities was just the beginning of a very personal battle for many people.

Apart from being a Member of Parliament, Fraser was also Chairman of St Dunstan's, an organisation set up to care for men and women who were blinded in the First World War - the so called war to end all wars. It's remit was simple: to offer medical care for eye casualties, to encourage blinded soldiers, sailors and airmen to live as fully as they were able.

Needless to say, the necessity of such an organisation didn't end after Armistice Day. Between 1939 and 1945 nearly 3,000 men and women were referred to St Dunstan's. In a time of extreme uncertainty, one thing was certain - their lives would never be the same again...



Battle for freedom: Soldiers under fire during the Normandy landings. Rejoice, rejoice: The Daily Mirror covered celebrations in Whitehall

Daily Mirror
No. 12,012
Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper

BRITAIN'S DAY OF REJOICING



Cheering their "Winnie"

Dense crowds in Whitehall, estimated by the police at 50,000 - all cheering like mad - mobbed the Prime Minister when he emerged from Downing-street after his broadcast speech. With the broad grin of victory on his face - and a new cigar clamped between his teeth - Winston Churchill gave his famous V-sign.

Minute past midnight



Sid steps on to British soil at Liverpool after being released from captivity

I'M JUST GLAD IT'S ALL OVER!

SID DOY DOESN'T recall much of VE Day back in 1945 in the way of events, but he's sure of his sentiments. 'I was in Stoke Mandeville undergoing plastic surgery when the radio gave out that the war was over. I wasn't sorry because we'd had it hard. We were glad to see the back of it.'

Finding someone who had it harder than Sid could be difficult. In 1937, before the outbreak of hostilities, he left his job as Head Horseman on a farm to pursue a career in the Army. Five years later, he was blinded by enemy fire and left for dead on the beaches of Dunkirk. 'I was too big to be moved, so they left me,' he said. 'I suppose I was lucky

because some of the Jerries were finishing off anyone who was heavily wounded.'

Sid was eventually moved to an ad hoc St Dunstan's within enemy lines. 'Lord Normanby convinced the Germans to let him start a blind school, they gathered all the blinded prisoners of war there and that's where I learnt braille. The Red Cross said they were going to get us out of there, but it fell through and we were sent back to Germany.'

It was in 1943 that Sid and other blinded PoWs were repatriated. Their initial stop was Church Stretton, Shropshire where St Dunstan's had moved training and rehabilitation operations for the duration of the war. Industrial training saw Sid

taking up employment as a capstan lathe operator with a railway company. 'I was a pioneer, they didn't think a blindman could do that sort of work, but I proved them wrong. On one occasion the lights went out and I was the only one who carried on working.'

ALFRED BRADLEY joined St Dunstan's on VE Day 1945, literally two years after he had been shot in Sicily. 'I was in hospital in North Africa for four months. We were given a choice, the "walking-wounded" could go on a troopship or wait six weeks for a hospital ship. I went on



the troopship so I didn't get to meet St Dunstan's at Southampton. I was displaced for a long time. It was a very unsettled time in London, partly because of the doodlebugs.

'We were evacuated to a backwater village in Cornwall and first heard about the end of the war on the radio. I remember leaning out of the window trying to nail some bunting up and my wife was calling me to come back in. We were grateful it was over, it was a great sense of relief for my wife because she had three brothers in the army.'

'I remember Mr Barrett, the shop owner playing his concertina and some of the villagers did a floral dance, just out of the sheer joy of the thing. My wife fried some rabbit meat that night. A month later I was up at Church Stretton.'

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

'HMM, NOT BAD for a meal!' That was the comment of Prime Minister Winston Churchill when he asked to see a week's food rations. With supplies restricted, food and its effects on the nation's health became of paramount importance.

People were actively encouraged to grow their own vegetables, keep poultry and be genuinely inventive in finding ways to make food last longer. Sugar rations were raised during jam-making seasons.

The Minister of Food, Lord Woolton gave his name to a vegetable pie. Conveniently, the ingredients were to be varied according to vegetables in season. Potato, swede, cauliflower and carrot were recommended as a good mix. One pound diced with some onion and a teaspoon of vegetable extract and a tablespoon of oatmeal. Cooked in water for

ten minutes the resulting mix was put in a pie dish, sprinkled with parsley and covered in potato or wheatmeal pastry and then baked until brown.

A spartan dish by modern standards but scrumptious when you consider that serious thought was given to imposing rations of 'twelve ounces of bread, a pound of potatoes, two ounces of oatmeal, an ounce of fat, six ounces of vegetables and three-fifths of a pint of milk a day, supplemented by small amounts of cheese, pulses, meat, fish, sugar, eggs and dried fruit.'

Cooking is just one of the basic survival skills taught at St Dunstan's. As important today as it was then for health and independence.

'You have got to think about what you are doing,' said St Dunstaner Elsie Aldred. 'I time things a lot and measuring, you

have to measure everything - you can't guess anything.'

'I have to think carefully before trying anything new because I have a hand injury. Some things are easier than others, I like fruit puddings and steak and kidney puddings, pies and pizza, but I make that with a scone base which is much more interesting.'

'I label things a lot, particularly tins and I have recipes in braille.'

Elsie was a 21 year old accountant when she was called up for munitions work. 'I expected to go into the office, since I was used to accounts work but they put me on the shop floor with the detonators. I was off over Christmas with dermatitis caused by the powder and I was only back a week before the accident occurred.'

The accident was an explosion which took Elsie's sight and injured her right hand. After some months in hospital, she went to St Dunstan's training centre at Church Stretton.

'I learnt braille reading and writing, shorthand and worked on rugs to try and get my hand moving.'

'There were eight ladies in training at the time and on the day the Princess Royal came to visit we were all given different jobs to do. Someone was reading braille, Gwen was making scones and I was making custard.'

'Tiger Hall were supposed to telephone us to say when she was on her way. We were all lounging around, taking it easy when the phone rang. We all flew to our posts - but it was a false alarm.'



Custard by Appointment: The Princess Royal sampled Elsie's cooking at St Dunstan's during the Second World War

Six steps to sustenance: How to ensure your rations

MF Your NEW RATION BOOKS



1 Look at your IDENTITY CARD. If you have made any alteration to it, or if it does not give your present address, the first thing you should do is to take it to the nearest National Registration Officer. (Usually his office is in the Council Offices.)

2 As soon as you have made sure about your Identity Card, turn to page 3 of your main FOOD RATION BOOK. This is the reference leaf. Do NOT take it out of the book. See that your name is clearly written in Part A (the top portion).

3 In Part B, the lower part of the reference leaf, you must fill in the details asked for - and one that isn't. The form says "If the holder is under 18 state date of birth." But this time everyone must give this information. It will be kept confidential.

4 Take your main FOOD RATION BOOK and your IDENTITY CARD (clipped in between page 2 and page 3) to any one of the special offices in your area at once. Most of them will be closing at the end of this week. Addresses are advertised locally in Post Offices, Cinemas, and elsewhere. Don't post the Books and Identity Cards - take them or send them by a neighbour or a member of the family.

5 You may take the Books of your family and friends - but see that all the reference leaves have been properly filled in and that you have the right Identity Cards in the right Books.

6 The office will hand over the counter the new Clothing Book (valid from June 1st), with a supplement for children, and also the Personal Food Ration Book. They will take out the reference leaf, and will send on the general Food Ration Book later.



WHIT-SALAD
Time: Preparation 30 minutes. Cooking 15 minutes.
Salad. Ingredients: 1 lb. cooked diced potato, 1 small shredded cabbage or 1 lb. spinach, 1 lb. shredded root vegetables, 1 bunch watercress.

Potato Eggs. Ingredients: 1 lb. cooked mashed potatoes, 2 ozs. grated cheese, 1 lb. shredded carrot, 1 teaspoonful salt, pinch of pepper.

Dressing. Ingredients: 1 teacupful milk, 1 tablespoonful vinegar, 1 teaspoonful mustard, 1 teaspoonful sugar, 1 teaspoonful parsley and 1 teaspoonful mint, chopped together.

Quantity: 4 helpings.
Method: To make Potato Eggs, mix the carrots and grated cheese together and form into balls with a little potato if necessary. Cover the balls with a thick layer of potato and cut in halves. Arrange round the dish to look like hard-boiled eggs. Place the cooked diced potato in the centre of the dish. Add the chopped cabbage or spinach and shredded root vegetables. Decorate with watercress. Make the dressing by mixing all its ingredients together. Serve with the salad.

APPLY AS SOON AS YOU CAN

THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, LONDON, W.1

STILL CARING!

IN THE PAST 50 years, St Dunstan's has continued to care for men and women blinded in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. It also cares for their families.

It offers medical care, training for employment, housing benefits and respite care where necessary.

St Dunstan's relies on donations and legacies to carry out this work.

It still treats those whose blindness has its origins in the Second World War, those who are finally succumbing to the damage of gunshot wounds, those who tried to diffuse bombs that posed a threat to civilian populations, those who suffered malnutrition in prisoner of war camps in Germany and the Far East.

However, the work of St Dunstan's does not stop there.

British Forces have been involved in other conflicts during this half century of 'peace'. Those conflicts also have their casualties which have their own now all too familiar consequences.

In 1948, a consultant predicted that the last St Dunstaner would die in 2005. That's just ten years away. The oldest St Dunstaner is 99 years old and the youngest, currently 25 years old. The latter plans on being around to celebrate the 100th anniversary of VE Day.

ST DUNSTAN'S Working for men and women blinded in the Services

PO Box 4XB,
12-14 Harcourt Street,
London W1A 4XB

Telephone: 0171 723 5021

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
President: Colin Beaumont-Edmonds, MC
Chairman: Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, GCB, DL
Charity Registration No. 216227

FACE TO FACE WITH THE FIRING SQUAD

NO ONE is more surprised that he lived to see the end of the war than Bill Slade himself. Not that he's complaining, but very few people can claim to have faced a firing squad and live to tell the tale.

There was no last minute reprieve, a Nazi officer gave the command and Bill was shot through the chest. As he fell to the ground, the officer stepped up, placed his revolver against Bill's temple and fired.

The circumstances came about because Bill refused to carry out war work while he was a prisoner of war. He was aware that such demands on PoWs contravened the Geneva Convention.

'I remember quite clearly, a thud to my chest and a tearing sensation in my back,' said Bill. 'I sank to the ground, still conscious of what was happening. It was then that the unexpected and merciless act took place, the German Officer, knowing I was still alive, took out his revolver, placed it against my head and pulled the trigger.'

There was a shattering blow to



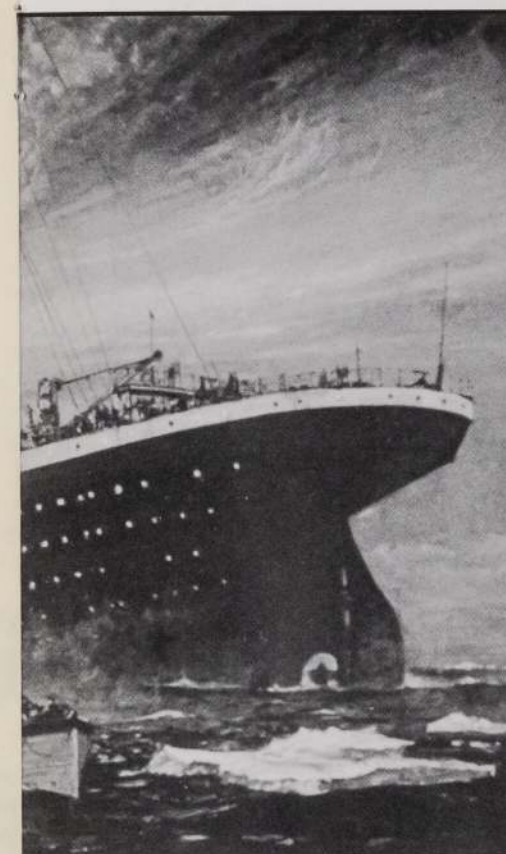
my head and the second bullet passed through my head tearing out my left eye and damaging the right. I was still conscious...'

This scene was witnessed by other PoWs who were then marched away. Bill was left for dead and it was only much later that a doctor, Captain Max Mayerhofer of the Australian Medical Corps, was able to tend his wounds.

Amazingly, he survived and after training at St Dunstan's became a micrometer inspector. His wounds were eventually accepted as being the result of a Nazi war crime.

uncle found himself in a most tragic maritime disaster

N FALLS IN PHTHS...



al hours at sea.

St Dunstaner Beryl Sleight recalls her uncle.



'It is difficult to convey any idea of the size of a ship like the *Titanic*,' said Lightoller. 'You could actually walk miles along the decks and passages, covering different ground all the time. I was thoroughly familiar with pretty well every type of ship afloat from a battleship and a barge, but it took me 14 days before I could with confidence find my way from one part of that ship to another by the shortest route.'

'As an instance of size, there was a huge gangway door through which you could drive a horse and cart on the starboard side aft. Three other officers, joining later, tried for a whole day to find it.'

'No doubt with the help of a plan it would have been fairly simple, but a sailor does not walk round with a plan in his pocket, he must carry his ship in his head, and in an emergency such as fire must be able to get where he wants by sheer instinct - certainly without a chance of getting lost on the way.'

Having joined the *Titanic* at the Belfast Shipyard, he travelled with it to Southampton where it was to pick up passengers for the maiden voyage to New York. Thus it was, that on April 10th 1912, Herbert Lightoller was sailing into

disaster, not that he would have believed it while standing on the deck of the ship that 'God himself couldn't sink.'

'Each day, as the voyage went on,' he said. 'Everybody's admiration of the ship increased; for the way she behaved, for the total absence of vibration, for her steadiness even with the ever-increasing speed, as she warmed up to her work.'

As the 46,328-ton vessel sailed through the South Atlantic, reports came in of iceberg sightings. None were significant or detailed - except one from a ship called the *Mesaba*. It indicated large icebergs ahead, but the wireless operator, busy, under pressure and unaware of the relative proximity of their location, put the message under a paperweight while he cleared work at hand.

Up on top, with a dark but cloudless sky, Lightoller was just standing down from his watch. He concluded business with fellow officers and was in bed at 0220hrs when the ship was shaken by a strange vibration.

'She had been steaming with such a pronounced lack of vibration that this sudden break in the steady running

HOW YOU CAN HELP

I enclose a cheque/postal order for

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£.....other

(Made payable to St Dunstan's)

Name.....

Address.....

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Please send me details on making a Deed of Covenant and other ways of helping.

For donations by Credit/Charity Aid Foundation card, please

telephone 0171 723 5021.

Please complete and return this slip to: St Dunstan's (Campaigns),
PO Box 4XB, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1A 4XB

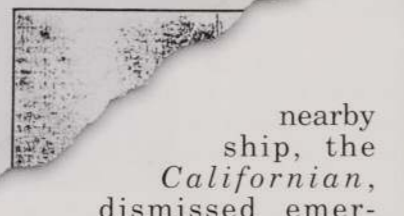
ALL SAVED FROM TITANIC AFTER COLLISION

RESCUE BY CARPATHIA AND PARISIAN;
LINER IS BEING TOWED TO HALIFAX
AFTER SMASHING INTO AN ICEBERG

Baltic, Virginian, Olympic and Other
Ships Summoned by Urgent
Wireless Calls.

BIGGEST OF LINERS IN CRASH

HEADS FOR HALIFAX
MARCONI'S COMMENT
MERKLE QUITS
GIANTS



Above: Headline of horror! The Evening Sun predicted salvation for sea lost souls. Right: Ticket of death.

nearby ship, the *Californian*, dismissed emergency flares as fire-works and Morse signals as the masthead lamp flickering.

was all the more noticeable, said Lightoller. 'Not that it was by any means a violent concussion, but just a distinct and unpleasant break in the monotony of her motion.'

Back on the *Titanic*, Lightoller ordered the Bosun's Mate to take six hands and open the port lower-deck gangway door - they never returned. The evacuation continued apace as the engineering crew emerged from the bowels of the ship having been 'rung off' or released from duty. In the end all 35 of them were to perish that night.

Leaping out of his bunk, he ran out on deck and peered over the port side, but seeing nothing returned to bed. Ten minutes later, the Fourth Officer informed him that they had hit an iceberg.

Lightoller was drawn into an argument over lifeboat spaces. A group of men had jumped ahead of the women and children. Brandishing a revolver, he convinced them to leave the boat. 'I had the satisfaction of seeing them tumbling head over heels on to the deck, preferring the uncertain safety of the deck, to the cold lead which I suppose they fully imagined would follow their disobedience - so much for imagination - the revolver was not even loaded!'

Dressing, he was back out on deck and supervising the lowering of lifeboats as it became obvious that the ship was tilting. It was also striking the iceberg again, breaking more of the hull and increasing the rate at which it was taking on water.

With all boats away, Lightoller had impulsively rejected the opportunity of leaving with one of them, there were still people on the deck and the tide was literally turning for the worst.

Although he didn't think the ship was in danger of sinking, Lightoller endeavoured to get women and children aboard the lifeboats as a safety precaution. However, some of the passengers saw this as unnecessary and rejected the opportunity of 'several hours in a cold boat' over the warmth of the *Titanic*.

As this happened the tragedy was being compounded. A

'The ship took a definite plunge and the sea came rolling up in a wave, over the steel-fronted bridge, along the deck below us, washing the people back in a dreadful huddled mass,' he said. 'Those that didn't disappear under the water right away, instinctively started to clamber up that part of the deck still out of water, and work their way towards the stern, which was rising steadily out of the water as the bow went down.'

'A few of the more agile leapt up on top of the officers' quarters where Hemming and I were at the moment. It was a sight that doesn't bear dwelling on - to stand there, above the wheelhouse, and on our quarters, watching the frantic struggles to climb up the sloping deck, utterly unable to even hold out a helping hand.'

This struggle, Lightoller realised, was only postponing the inevitable. 'There was only one thing to do, and I might as well do it and get it over, so, turning to the fore part of the bridge, I took a header.'

'Striking the water, was like a thousand knives being driven into one's body, and,

for a few moments, I completely lost grip of myself - and no wonder for I was perspiring freely, whilst the temperature of the water was below freezing.'

Swimming away from the wreck didn't work as the current washed Lightoller flat against some wire netting by one of the huge air shafts that rose from the top of the ship which continued to sink. He was literally drowning when a blast of hot air blew him upwards.

A lifeboat was floating upturned as he broke surface and he managed to grab hold of a rope dangling from the side. 'There were many around in the water by this time, some swimming, others definitely drowning - an utter nightmare of both sight and sound.'

The port funnel collapsed striking many of the people in the water, an event which later inspired the question 'Did it hurt anyone?' It narrowly missed the lifeboat, washing it clear of the *Titanic*.

When news of the disaster broke, all kinds of rumours were flying about. *The Times* reported that the *Titanic* had

The Daily Mirror



Fearful honeymoon! The first couple to have their wedding filmed were parted when the groom, Daniel Marvin, was lost aboard the Titanic.

sunk but White Star VP Philip A.S. Franklin continued to declare: 'We believe the boat is unsinkable.'

However, word was out and Beryl's family were faced with the anguish of not knowing if a relative had perished half a world away. 'It was terrible,' she said. 'It was quite a considerable time before we knew for sure that he had survived.'

As it happened, as the news broke in London, after nearly six hours in Arctic conditions, soaked to the skin and frozen

near to death, Lightoller had taken command of the lifeboat now filled with 75 other survivors. He navigated them towards the *Carpathia* which had come to the rescue.

Soon after the *Californian* arrived on the scene to lend assistance.

It is with pride that Beryl Sleigh recalls her uncle. In a situation where recriminations were abundant, Herbert Lightoller was highly commended for his actions, particularly for ensuring the safety of women and children first. 'He was a terribly bright spark,' she said. 'He could spot a problem immediately and provide a solution. They made a film about the *Titanic*, *A Night to Remember*, and he was played by Kenneth Moore. He served in a Destroyer during the First World War.'

'He wrote several books, one, *Titanic and Other Ships*, was about his experiences. He was too old for service in the Second World War, but he took a small boat over to Dunkirk. He only had room for six people but brought back 30.'

Those that survived the *Titanic* would agree that it is pride well placed.

REFLECTIONS

by the Reverend Cuthbert Scott who is now acting as Honorary Chaplain to St Dunstan's

When I am hurt, my hurt is the only thing in my mind: my ache is more vital than my brother's agony. So then it is surprising that memory of my hurt passes so quickly. Pain reviled slides away (all being well) into the past, as sunshine banishes foul weather.

On recovery, we rejoin the rest of humanity in giving some attention to others and behaving reasonably, and also in that dissatisfaction common to all people - (by that discontent, as well as neighbourliness, civilisation is driven forward). All in all, however, I suggest that we are constantly bothered by unrest. We long to be, for instance, more attractive to others; to be more important, more beautiful and - O YES! - to have the sort of good luck which other people seem to have. Why are our circumstances not better than

they are? Yet it seems that no one actually wishes to lose him or herself; to swap our memories, our condition, our identity is not what we want. A poet wrote:

'Whate're the passion, knowledge, fame or pelf,
Not one will change his neighbour for himself.'
We have to march towards and deal with the fate measured out to us, whether we are naturally happy or sad. I was curiously moved, thinking about the life of Elizabeth Dacre, by the words of Shakespeare:
'Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.'

Especially blessed are we who can accept, in faith, that (at last) our wages are likely to be more generous than we have earned.

Tribute to Elizabeth Dacre

Mrs Elizabeth Dacre (née Fraser) died on February 12th, aged 93. Her long association with St Dunstan's is legend. Her great nephew, Dr Neil McDonald, a Member of St Dunstan's Council, put her life into perspective during a Memorial Service at St Margaret's Church, Rottingdean on February 19th.



Elizabeth Dacre.

'Betty's life was truly memorable, not least where it started. Betty Fraser was born in March 1901 in a cattle truck on the South African veldt in the middle of the Boer War. Perhaps this explains her resilience and her indomitable spirit! She had a happy early childhood but then, in 1916, a setback struck. Her brother Ian, my grandfather, was blinded at the Somme. Betty was now set out on nearly 80 years of devotion to the well-being of others. She left school at 15, to look after Ian and they went to live with their Pass cousins.

I used the word setback. It was just that, but there were two silver linings to this cloud.

The first was the life of service from Ian Fraser that followed, and everybody here must be aware of that. But second was the friendship that grew between Douglas Pass and a certain George Dacre in a Turkish Prisoner of War camp. As a result, after the war, George was invited down to Dorset and, to cut a long story short, Betty and George were married and shared 40 wonderfully happy years together.

'Betty spent the next 16 years as a hard-working and

loyal support for George in his work as a serviceman and as a diplomat. This took them to Greece, Italy and North Africa. But, with war clouds threatening, it was inevitable that Betty would be one of the very first women to volunteer for service for her country. First the Emergency Service, then the ATS and finally the WAAF. It is in her anecdotes on her time in the WAAF that we start to see the characteristics we all know so well. Her determination to get her way, going to the top when necessary to sort out injustice, her persuasiveness, her refusal to give in. This was always for the benefit of others.

'Meanwhile, Betty and George were following the career of their beloved son, Kenneth. He suffered from TB when young but with typical determination, which he must have inherited from his parents, turned himself into a first class skier and later a first class pilot, in spite of the medics saying he was unfit to fly! He served with distinction in the war until, tragically, he was killed in action in late 1943. Betty was determined his memory would live on and the Dacre Trophy is presented annually to the top Fighter Squadron. It is a great personal sadness to me that I never had the privilege of meeting Kenneth.

'George retired from the RAF, after a very distinguished career, in 1948 and in becoming Commandant of St Dunstan's at Ovingdean, he brought Betty back to the family with which she had been briefly involved when caring for her brother, Ian. She devotedly served St Dunstan's for her remaining 45 or so years. When George died in 1962, St Dunstan's became even more the focus of her attention. All St Dunstaners

were of great importance to her, but the intrepid band of the handless men and women were her special people. Betty persuaded countless important persons into providing fun and interesting visits for her St Dunstaners. City Guilds, the Archbishop of Canterbury and even the Royal Household gave in to her charm. Her day out last September for the handless at Buckingham Palace is typical. She was tired and feeling her age by then, but there was no surprise that feeling a little faint in the Palace, she persuaded a royal servant to al-

low her to rest on a royal bed for an hour or so.

'As if work with St Dunstaners was not enough for Betty's boundless energy, she was a busy and long-serving magistrate on the Brighton bench and a prison visitor as well as being a stalwart supporter of The Royal British Legion, particularly the Brighton Borough Poppy Appeal, and, of course, the RAF Benevolent Fund.

'A couple of days ago, Pam Barnard, who was secretary to Ian Fraser and often worked with Betty, said to me "Betty will already be organising St

Peter and the angels and your grandfather will be saying 'Oh! Do shut up, Betty dear!'".

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A Memorial Service for Mrs Elizabeth Dacre is being organised by the RAF at the church of St Clement Danes in the Strand, London, WC2 on Tuesday June 6th at 2pm.

The RAF have kindly offered to provide transport from Brighton to London. Would anyone interested in availing themselves of the free travel please contact Edwina Peacock at Ovingdean.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

From: Mrs Jo Hamilton, Menai Bridge, Anglesey

Last year, my house needed painting outside, so my son, Damian, contacted all the family to suggest that they all meet there and paint it. I was to provide the paint and they would bring brushes and rollers.

My bungalow is rather large with a big open veranda, all of which needed painting. Deciding on a suitable date was rather difficult, but we eventually found a convenient time.

Some of the family came overnight: Mark and Denise with Rachel, aged 13; Dominic, aged 11; Benedict, aged nine; and wee Sarah, aged three. Then Anne, arrived, followed by Clare, with her three sons, all tall young men, Gareth, aged 21, Richard, aged 20, and Peter, aged 16, and one young lady friend, Jo. Early on Saturday, Joanne arrived with two of her sons, Andrew, aged 14, and John, aged nine. Then Damian arrived with his wife, Pat, and Andy, his wife, Jane, and wee son, Ben, aged six. Finally, Paul, and his wife, Katanya, came with their son, Paul T., aged 16, and daughter, Lisa, aged 14.

By 8.45am they had all started work on their allotted part of the walls. It was a glorious day, sunny, dry, and very warm for the time of year.

Everyone got 'stuck in' and worked really hard. A few objections were raised when Mark acted as 'overseer' to ensure everything was covered. There was much laughter and a great deal of chatter. Everyone caught up with everyone else's news as they had come from Man-

chester, Leeds, Scunthorpe, Bury and, of course, the Island.

I was supplier of drinks and clean cloths and an answerer to 'Where is this, Nana?' or 'have you got some of that, Nana?' By 11.45am, all was completed. I just could not believe my eyes. The whole bungalow was beautiful. At 11.50am, our parish priest arrived to say Mass in the house for us. He thought they would all still be in their painting things and was quite disappointed that they were not.

We had a wonderful weekend, only one thing marred it and that was a telephone call to say Clare's house had been burgled. However, that is all sorted now and everything is back to normal. I have a truly wonderful family.

From: Mrs Charlotte Howe, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Charlotte, wife of Frank Howe, would like to thank all our very dear friends and staff at Ian Fraser House for their beautiful cards and letters. They have been a great comfort to me in my very sad and painful loss of Frank. From my heart, thank you all.

From: Husband Tom, and all members of Pat Carlton's family

We would like to thank St Dunstaners, members of staff and friends for your tributes to Pat. We shall miss her, but take comfort from the fact that she was so appreciated.

We are grateful to all those who contributed towards the magnificent sum of £557, which was raised for cancer research.

St Dunstan's sweetheart

THERE ISN'T MUCH we can say about our dear beloved Mrs Dacre that my St Dunstan's friends don't already know.

Vera Lynn was the sweetheart of the Forces, Mrs Dacre was the sweetheart of St Dunstan's, but more than that, as she often said, we were her family.

Mrs Dacre was involved with many worthy causes, but at the top of her list was St Dunstan's, she loved being with us just as much as we loved being with her and would move mountains to make sure we were entertained by the famous both at our PoW and Handless Reunions.

There were very few who would say no to her requests. No one will ever take her place: no one ever could.

Her love, devotion and care for us all will certainly sustain us through the years to come.

I, and I'm sure I speak for all who knew Mrs Dacre, will be ever grateful for having known her and give thanks for her wonderful life and the glorious example she has left us.

Bill Griffiths

Accelerated adventure in Austria

ON A BLEAK, wet and windy morning the intrepid adventurers of St Dunstan's set forth on what was to be an escapade of uncompromising parallel. Starting from different spheres of the country, the aim was to synchronise our watches and all meet at the Burger Bar of Gatwick's south terminal, to depart England for the snow clad mountains of Austria.

All attendees managed to cope admirably with the early morning start, apart from Gary Lomas who having got himself into a different time warp, and dressed more

for a tour of the West Indies with the England Cricket team, was more concerned with having a dhobi than making our flight on time. Despite this, plus a last minute reshuffle of guides, as our dear and faithful friend Ollie Ollport was unable to attend due to a mishap with a shower cubicle and a scotch and soda, everyone arrived on time with full kit.

The group comprised the Ol' Faithful's and a few fresh faces, Gallant Gerry Jones, Cheerful Charlie Daly, Panatela Man Gary Lomas, T Bar Martin McCrorie, Steve 'Hide your talents under a bushel' Sparkes and last, but by no means least, Alan 'Reg' Perrin Esquire. In addition to this motley crew were the ever enduring and foolhardy guides Martin Blank, Mick Thorpe, Gary Glowa, Stuart Duncan, Peter Zamudio and Frin plus the Sherpa escorts April, Kozy, Cherrie, Lindie and Charlie's Angels Kelly and Jessie.

Having arrived in good time and checked in with superb efficiency, the unforeseen was just about to occur. 'All pas-

sengers departing Flight A273 to Austria, please go to gate 27 immediately as your flight is about to depart.' There we all were, 110 passengers boarded, barley sugars in our mouths, waiting for the engines to roar. All, that is, apart from three of our party, Kozy, Steve and Reg, who had managed to get himself

April Hadert and Kozy Brawn slide forth to report on the recent skiing trip

locked into one of the toilets in the departure lounge. Fifteen minutes late for take-off, we joined the queue on the runway and left the shores of England for the slopes of snow. The journey took an extra two and a half hours due to bad conditions, but at last we arrived at the Hotel Astoria, Igls, Austria, full of excitement and spirits obtained at the duty free.

Skis, boots and thermals on, we were set for the day and hit the slopes to the amazement of the locals who did not believe that a group of blind skiers were capable of staying upright on the slopes, let alone skiing down the hill with such confidence. The first day passed without incident, no wipe outs or broken bones, just warm weather and not much snow cover.

It was then decided to travel each day to Axams, the home of the Olympic Men and Women's downhill runs where there were more testing slopes for those wishing to improve their style and kinder conditions for those who were still learning and needed to build their confidence.

At first the only blots on the landscape were the local guides who considered the idea of teaching blind people to ski was foolhardy to the extreme and dangerous to everyone else on the slopes. They had obviously never encountered the spirit and determination of St Dunstaners or the superb guiding skills of Martin Blank and Peter Zamudio who not only treated their comments with the contempt they deserved but had such an influence that by the end of the week at least four of the ski-school teachers had adopted Peter and Martin's tech-

niques to assist students. Everyone at Axams had nothing but praise and admiration for these men who defied their critics and their disabilities to ski down the slopes as equals. Mind you, with the help of the local Gluwien fears were dismissed, no broken bones occurred and Franz Clamber didn't even come close.

Despite all this, it would be remiss not to mention that no journey of this proportion ever passes without incident, mishaps and laughter. Gerry Jones, with the help of his guide, Frin, managed to map parts of the slopes that never existed, snow drifts became no problem, only digging both members out of the snow became a slight drawback, trees were there to be embraced if encountered at the last moment and safety nets were there just to be tested. Somehow these trips would never be the same without Gerry even if he has the bad taste to wear flip-flops.

Gary Lomas, full of the impetuosity of youth and a face painted like a Cherokee Warrior, tackled the piste with such voracity that Gary

Austria

Glowa must have considered a tracer bleep just to keep up with him. Steve Sparkes, despite his tendency to embrace Linda Thorpe in a stand up rugby tackle, showed everyone that his Langlauf skills could easily be adapted to the downhill runs and made skiing look easy. Charlie was ever graceful and, under the supervision of Mick Thorpe, showed everyone just how it should be done and always let everyone know he was on his way by blowing his own horn.

Finally, we come to the terrible twins, Martin McCrorie and Reg Perrin, if ever anyone was to question the validity of these skiing trips, you would only have to cite the comradeship, mutual encouragement and courageousness of these two men on the 'Black' slopes. Overcoming fear (something neither would ever admit to) disorientation and achieving what they did in five days was no mean feat, and although the honoured Cow Bell could only go to one person, for achievement, it was not easy to choose between them. Martin won the award having improved tenfold. This he would not have achieved without the outstanding teaching from Martin Blank, or the abuse from Reg. However, the guides decided that all the group deserved a medal of sorts for their efforts and a miniature cow bell was presented.

It is never easy to commit to paper exactly what is felt by observers of these men, pride and admiration are words just not sufficient. It would be tragic if events such as skiing were to fall by the wayside. Hopefully next year will see achievements gained by a few more as the intrepid adventurers of St Dunstan's hit the slopes once more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St Dunstan's is grateful for gifts sent in memory of the following:

Bill Heffernan

Tom Higgins

Robert Booth

Dennis Freeman

Frank Howe

Howard Simcocks

Rosemary Gray, widow of St Dunstaner Kenneth Gray

Some other donations received include:

Wembley Preston Afternoon Townswomen's Guild raised funds following a coffee morning and garden party

The Daily Telegraph Charitable Fund

Mrs Anne Pallant-Cadman, widow of St Dunstaner Leslie Cadman, sent us proceeds from a Tombola/Buffer

The Nash Charity

The Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, resulting from the students' end of course revue

The Hospital Saturday Charitable Trust

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO OUR DUCK-HEELED-CHICKEN-FOOT?

IN THIS anniversary year, St Dunstaners who trained in the chicken coop will shed a tear for their class mascot, Cock-a-doodle-quack. This fine feathered friend was born in the grounds of St Dunstan's, Regent's Park in 1915 and was evidently still alive when poultry practice was moved to Kings Langley.

The offspring of our poultry farm cockerel and a local duck, Cock-a-doodle-quack had one web and one claw-foot. Reports differ on whether it is best to call him a chuck or a dicken, technically speaking the male of the species would be a drock or a cake. Trainers evidently chuckled as this friendly hybrid ran around the pond, web-foot in

the water, claw foot on the ground.

Distinguished visitors to the farm always received a detailed description of Cock-a-doodle-quack, but invariably found that he had taken to the air for his afternoon flight.

The poultry farm transferred to Kings Langley and Cock-a-doodle-quack disappeared from view. First War St Dunstaner, the late Thomas Milligan speculated that his contemporaries, Billy Hallam and Jerry Jerome may have had him stuffed - though he did not say if that was with sawdust or Paxo. If Cock-a-doodle-quack's ghost haunts Regent's Park, you can be sure that it's a poultry-geist.

There's Fire in the Mountain

'WHATEVER book in here,' said the Muslim conqueror 'disagrees with the *Koran* as blasphemous, whatever book agrees with it, superfluous.' So saying, he applied a torch to the Great Library of Alexandria and watched the entire knowledge of Greece and Rome go up in flames.

There is something in this prodigious act of arrogance, of religious bigotry, that almost makes you envious of the scimitar'd emir who so casually perpetrated it.

Perhaps he only did it so that the epigram which accompanied the act should perpetuate itself for ever to all posterity. Whether Christian or Mohammedan we would all like to have said it, and this goes for other dicta now gathered together for our delectation in dictionaries of quotations from that of Oxford to Penguin's neat paperback.

We owe to Charles II, his spaniels around him, his ribbon'd staff in hand, the observation that unctuous moralising is as easy as lying; to Thomas Hobbes, his conviction, expressed in *Leviathan*, that human life prior to civilisation was nasty, brutish and short; and to a certain Spanish ambassador to the court of Naples, a remark which sums up the elegant shrug of Castilian shoulders when placed in a perfectly impossible diplomatic situation. His master, Philip II, distrusting all, had taken the entire imperial administration into his own hands, with the result that delay multiplied upon delay to the point of inertia. 'If death came from Spain,' said the ambassador, 'we would all live to a very great age.'

However, it was with fire we

started, the appalling conflagration at Alexandria, and it's with fire that we mean to finish, moving from the ancient Nile to the slopes of the Ghlas Tulaichean, a 3,400ft Scottish hill, about 20 years past.

It was a fine March day, sunshine and blue sky, but a brown cloud of smoke rising from Glen Taitneach billowed around in the breeze to such an extent that visibility everywhere was dim and restricted. The three of us dropped down to Glen Lochsie, took off our packs, and had a chat with the local keeper, tweed hat and knickerbockers, engaged as he happened to be in burning the heather.

His operation was on a mod-

est scale, cautiously contrived to the dictates of wind and terrain and we congratulated him on his skill in keeping so delicately under control what had it in it to be a dangerous thing.

Our keeper jerked his thumb in the direction of Taitneach, spat, then said something I've always remembered for its pith and directness.

Perhaps it doesn't measure up to what the emir said in his day, Charles II, Thomas Hobbes and the Spanish ambassador; you will look for it in vain in books of quotations: but it well summed up the situation of that day.

'Yon bugger over there,' said the keeper; 'he's gone an' set the hale bliddy glen up.'

Welcome to St Dunstan's

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

Edwin Stratton-Christensen of Clare, Suffolk joined St Dunstan's on February 1st. Major Stratton-Christensen was called up in 1940 and commissioned into the Royal Indian Army Service Corps. Later in the same year he was posted to Singapore and given command of 13 Motor Ambulance Company.

During the battle for Malaya, he was cross-posted to the 13th Frontier Force Rifles and in the evacuation from Malaya became Commander of the 9th Indian Division Transport Company.

He was captured by the Japanese and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner. He now suffers from nutritional retinal deterioration. On discharge from the Indian Army in March 1946, he returned to his civilian occupation as an advertising executive and spent his entire working life in India and the Far East.

Major Stratton-Christensen is married and has a daughter.

Mr Norman Binning of Exmouth joined on March 3rd. He served with the Royal Air Force after leaving school in 1936 and spent the first three years training in the North of England.

He was then posted to Hong Kong where he was captured by the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941, remaining in captivity until the end of the war. Mr Binning was invalided out of the RAF in 1947.

Mr Binning and his wife, Jean, have one son.

CLUB NEWS

BRIDGE

Annual General Meeting

Our Christmas bridge drive was held in the lounge at IFH on December 11th. We were more than sorry that many of our members could not be present this year because of current circumstances but naturally they were in our thoughts, especially after missing our Congress. We hope for better things during 1995.

The afternoon proved to be a great success. As usual, there were plenty of good prizes for the winners and competition was keen. At the end of the

drive final scores were rather low. The winners were:

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|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1st | John Whitcombe & Shirley Holborough |
| 2nd | Pat Padley & Carol Berry |
| 3rd | Julian Stevens & P. Norris |

There were four tables and a good time was had by all. A very nice tea was provided by our three ladies, Vi McPherson, Joyce Dodgson and Margaret Stevens. Thank you ladies!

After the presentation of prizes, we retired to the Blue Room for our AGM. Our captain, Bill Phillips, opened the meeting, minutes were read and approved by members present. The financial report was read by the Treasurer, stating that a financial remuneration had been sent to all existing members, leaving a small sum to carry the club over to 1995.

Various items and suggestions were made regarding the future of our club. It was agreed that the club should carry on in its present form. This means that, as before, each member pays an annual subscription of £5. It was also agreed, in order to keep our club in existence, it would be necessary to include sighted people from nearby clubs as future members with the same rights as present members.

For instance, if a person did not wish to join our club with the annual subscription, then extra table money would be required on the day. This practice is common in other clubs.

Any one wishing to rejoin our club should write to our secretary, Mrs Vi McPherson at 3 Welomire Road, Rottingdean, East Sussex, or phone her on 01273 303404.

I am sure that you will have heard about Bill Phillips' ill-health. He has been told by his doctor that he must stay clear of any stress or strain and, unfortunately, this means he cannot act as our captain in the future.

I want to pay tribute to Bill for holding this position for the past 16 years, he has been dedicated to the club, an inspiration, a tonic, and an example to everyone. Like any blind person, you need someone to guide you and where Bill is concerned, Nancy has been his guiding light. To you both, we all wish you the best of health in the future. I should add that Bill intends to carry on playing bridge. The new committee is as follows:

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|------------------|-----------|
| Alf Dodgson | Captain |
| Vi McPherson | Secretary |
| Julian Stevens | Treasurer |
| Wally Lethbridge | Member |

At the time of writing, the Bridge Committee are in discussion with Headquarters regarding any possible assistance that can be given to members in the future.

Another great loss to our club is the

retirement of Maurice Douce as our Bridge Tournament Director. He has been dedicated in this task for many years and we have all appreciated his talents as a bridge player. With his organising abilities and wife, Jean, at his side, we have definitely been on to a good thing. From all of St Dunstan's bridge players past and present, we can only show our gratitude with a big thank you and wish you both the best of health.

**Alf Dodgson
Bridge Club Captain**

FAMILY NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations on the birth of: Conner Patrick on November 12th. He is the grandson of *Frank and Doris Madgwick* of Crawley, West Sussex.

Joshua Paul on November 28th. He is the first great grandson of *Peter and Margaret Logan* of Midsomer Norton, Avon.

Charlotte Loraine on December 2nd. She is the great grand-daughter of Mrs Winifred Earwaker of Wickham, nr Fareham, Hampshire, widow of *Alfred Earwaker*.

Harriet Clark on December 8th. She is the first grandchild of *David and Anne Clark* of Sevenoaks, Kent.

Felicity Hope on February 13th. She is the fifth great grandchild of *Harry and Sylvia Meleson* of Wembley, Middlesex.

WEDDING

Congratulations to: *Bill Brenchley* of Hailsham, East Sussex on his marriage to Pat Lane on January 21st. The ceremony was held in the chapel at Ovingdean.

RUBY ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: *Stanley and Muriel Edgar* of Welling, Kent on February 2nd.

Peter and Margaret Logan of Midsomer Norton, Avon on February 5th.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: *Herman and Betsy Wessel* of Edgbaston on January 21st.

Fred and Betty Bentley of Saltdean on January 27th.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to: *Joe and Nellie Bane* of Morden, Surrey on February 5th.

William and Edith Freeman of Winnersh, Wokingham who celebrated 61 happy years on March 12th.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to: *Horace Underwood* of Thornton Cleveleys, Blackpool on obtaining the call-sign GØVMH.

Major Ron Moody on receiving a bar to his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. It was presented by Major General I.C. Mackay-Dick, MBE, and marks a second term of 15 years. Major Moody, who is the son of *Doug Moody* of Goring-by-Sea, has served 33 years with the Royal Engineers.

DEATHS

We regret to announce the death of: The sister of *Bert Wallage* of Rottingdean on Christmas Eve. Mr Wallage's sister-in-law subsequently died on Boxing Day.

Mrs Constance Scoffield of Market Weighton, Humberside on December 27th. She was the widow of *Wallace Scoffield*.

Mrs Rose Hatherley on January 14th. She was the widow of *Albert Hatherley* of Kingsbridge, Devon.

Mrs Constance Belton of Teignmouth, Devon on January 18th. She was the widow of *John Belton*.

Barry Woofenden on January 23rd. He was the son of Mrs Doris Woofenden of Leicester and the late *Ernest Woofenden*.

Mrs Mary Caple of Penarth, South Glamorgan on February 16th, aged 99. She was the widow of *Arthur Caple*.

Mrs Betty Donald on February 20th. She was the wife of *Roman Donald* of Hove.

Mrs Mary Critchlow of Leicester on February 22nd. She was the widow of *Robert Critchlow*.

Mrs Doris Hazelgrove of Blean, nr Canterbury, Kent on February 22nd. She was the wife of *Ron Hazelgrove*.

Mrs Frances Pennells of Brighton on March 1st. She was the widow of *Cyril Pennells*.

Mrs Lilian Miller of East Ham, London on March 5th. She was the widow of *Aaron (Harry) Miller*.

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.

Percival Icton, Royal Engineers
Percival Gott Icton of Whickham, Tyne and Wear died on January 8th, aged 71. He served in the Royal Engineers from July 1942 and was discharged in December 1944 after an injury caused some failure of sight. In civilian life he worked as a crane driver and joiner. With further failure of his vision, he became a St Dunstaner in 1985 and was a keen gardener. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Elmyra, daughter and two sons and all members of the family.

Francis Howe, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers

Francis David Howe of Newcastle upon Tyne died on January 9th, aged 79. He served with the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers from July 1934 to November 1941. His sight began to fail while he was serving in Egypt but after his discharge, he was able to work in industry for a while. He became a St Dunstaner in June 1945 and, following training, embarked on a career as a shop-keeper. He opened his first business in Heaton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1948 and then moved to Taunton in 1959 where he traded until 1978. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Charlotte, and all the family.

William Heffernan, Royal Marines
William John Heffernan of Chigwell, Essex died on January 11th, aged 75. Enlisting with the Royal Marines, he served as a sergeant from 1938 until his discharge in 1944. He took part in the Dieppe raid in 1942 and became a prisoner of war with Lord Normanby. In civilian life, he worked as a maintenance engineer, retiring in 1977. He enjoyed cookery, handicrafts, picture framing, carpentry and typing. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Margaret, sons, Bill, Terry and John, and all members of the family.

John Donbavand, Manchester Regiment

John Donbavand of Hove died on January 14th, aged 75. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1951. While serving as a private with the 1st Battalion, Manchester Regiment, he was made a prisoner of war and moved around camps in Formosa, Singapore, and Thailand. He suffered severe eye injuries when he was struck with a rifle butt. Returning to civilian life, he worked for Plessey and then as a

telephonist, retiring early on health grounds. He was a keen gardener. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Elsie, and all members of the family.

Robert Booth, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Robert Kershaw Booth of Middleton, Manchester died on January 17th, aged 78. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from September 1939 to July 1944. He was wounded in the Middle East in 1943 when a mine he was disarming exploded. This caused blindness in one eye and with the failure of sight in his remaining eye, he became a St Dunstaner in 1987. By then he had retired from his profession as a consultant in Occupational Pension Schemes. His great interests were Freemasonry, opera, reading and crossword puzzles. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Mary, their son, Peter, and all members of the family.

Robert Fearnley, South Wales Borderers

Robert Ellis Fearnley of Brighton died on January 20th, aged 82. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1937. Originally a billiard maker by trade, he enlisted in 1931, serving as private with the South Wales Borderers. He was blinded in a sporting accident while representing his regiment and discharged in 1936. Mr Fearnley trained as a telephonist and worked until retirement in 1959. His wife, Lilian, died in 1982. Our sympathy goes to his sisters, Anne, Doris and Gemma, and all the family.

Ferdinand Bennett, RECCE Corps

Ferdinand Arthur Bennett of Forest Gate, London died on January 24th, aged 75. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1945. A shoemaker and repairer by trade, Mr Bennett enlisted in December 1939 and served as a Lance Corporal in the RECCE Corps until he was injured in action in Normandy. He sustained gunshot wounds to the head and right leg. Returning to civilian life, he worked as a press operator for Woodrange Metal Stamping and later knurled steel spindles. He retired in 1982. His interests included typing, handicrafts, listening to tapes and racing. He loved singing. Our sympathy goes to his sister, Maud, close friends including Mrs Carol Fraser who cared for him for 20 years, and all the family.

Henry Benton, Royal Army Service Corps

Henry Frederick Benton of Ramsgate, Kent died on January 29th, aged 94. He was conscripted into the Bedfordshire Regiment in 1917, but as he had been a van boy trained in the use of

horses, he was immediately cross-posted to the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver (horses) and sent to France and later Germany. He received injuries from what was believed to be mustard gas poisoning and was cassevacated to the military hospital in Ripon. Mr Benton was then discharged from the army and managed to obtain work as a dock labourer and he carried on with this occupation during the Second World War, while being an active fire watcher at night. He retired at the age of 65. His main interest in youth was sport, particularly football and cricket. Our sympathy goes to his daughter, Maureen, sons, Denis and Roy, and all the family.

James Brown, 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment

James Edmund Brown of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire died on February 21st, aged 75. Known as Ted, Mr Brown served as a sergeant in the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment. He joined up in 1939 and was taken prisoner in 1942. Discharged in 1946, the effects of the privation suffered in camps in Thailand and Burma brought him to St Dunstan's in our borderline category in 1948. He trained as a telephonist and took his first post with the Eastern Electricity Board in Cambridge in 1950. With the failure of his remaining sight, Mr Brown became a full St Dunstaner in 1973. After retiring, he pursued woodwork, wrought-iron work and picture framing. In 1985, he had the honour of showing HM The Queen an example of his picture framing skill when she visited Ovingdean. However, his great interest was bowling and he established himself as a world class player. He represented England in the World Bowling Championships in Australia and was in the English team in the World Blind Bowls in Zimbabwe. He travelled widely with the English National and St Dunstan's Bowls teams. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Rae, son, Christopher, daughter, Cheryl, and all the family.

Clifford Blackwell, Royal Army Service Corps

Clifford Graham Blackwell of Brighton died on February 25th, aged 97. He had been a St Dunstaner since 1937. A baker, with special expertise as a bread moulder, he enlisted as a private with the Royal Army Service Corps but deafness and loss of sight resulted in his discharge in January 1920. In his younger days he was interested in politics, early Saxon history and the Druids. He never married and lived mostly in the West Country, which he loved. Our sympathy goes to his niece, Mrs Irene Stillwell, and all members of the family.