

THE LAMSDORF CLARION

THE LAMSDORF CLARION

**The magazine produced by
Prisoners of War at
Stalag VIIIB (344) Lamsdorf
during the Second World War**

Book 4 in the Lamsdorf Series

**Compiled by
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The Online Memorial and Museum of Prisoners of War

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The Online Memorial and Museum of Prisoners of War

To the memory of
all the prisoners of war of the camps at Lamsdorf.

Introduction

The bulk of the text in this introduction comes from the excellent thesis about newspapers and magazines produced by prisoners of war, by Chris Basiurski: *'The Clarion Calls: Bringing Home into the Prisoner of War Camps'* written in September 2013, and many thanks indeed to him for permission to use this material.

The Clarion was first published in January 1943 under the editorship of James W. Wood and was aimed at English speaking POWs in Stalag VIIIB (344) Lamsdorf. After the 7th edition, Wood was repatriated to the UK and the editorship passed to Percy. R. Parramore. Wood had attempted to get permission for the publication for over a year and in his first editorial, he explained to the readers that the objective of the magazine is "yours to write and to read. It's up to you to make it bright and keep it informative". He said that news from home, the working parties and the camp would be first thing that the readers would want to see but in addition, short stories, cartoons, jokes and poetry would be welcome to "fill an hour". As well as such hour fillers, it contained many public service notices, sports results, theatre reviews, religious columns and educational material. Filling those hours would be an important role for *The Clarion*, not only for its producers and contributors, but also for its readers.

The Clarion had a print run of seventeen editions, the last being a souvenir edition for Christmas 1944 before the camp was evacuated in January 1945. *The Clarion* emerged in the second half of the war when the camp at Lamsdorf was well established and when some of its prisoners would have been in camp for over three years. *The Clarion* emerged at a time when the POWs no longer expected defeat and thoughts on post war matters were evident. *The Clarion* carried articles discussing life after the war (including a discussion on how London would look after being redesigned and rebuilt after the war) and post war careers. The biggest staple of almost every edition was news from home. From the start the producers requested the POWs share news that they had received in their letters from home. This was not personal or war news, but general news, often sporting or military. It created a link to the outside world that ensured that POWs did not have to wait to receive a sporadic letter to hear news from home. *The Clarion* portrayed no black humour or satire and, under Wood's editorship, it contained no comic strips or doubtful jokes as he wished to "maintain a dignified tone" (although cartoons appeared under Parramore's editorship) and on several occasions the censors insisted on making cuts.

The Clarion was an 'official' publication, compiled by the prisoners, translated into German for the censors, printed by a local German newspaper and circulated widely throughout the Camp and the Working Parties, and paid for through the camp Welfare Fund.

The Clarion gives useful insights into the POWs' own views of their captivity at the time. A snapshot of the POWs' impressions on the conditions of their captivity is found in the article in issue number 11 about a 'psychological experiment' by Private H. Danvers who sampled fifty prisoners at random and asked them to write an essay entitled 'What is unpleasant about captivity'. Amongst the answers were: lack of privacy, uncertainty about conditions back home, next food parcel, end of the war etc, monotony (especially speech and habits of fellow POWs), peculiar uniforms and their wearers; lack of feminine company.

The topic of food is not widely covered in *The Clarion*. This is perhaps not surprising in that the German censors may not have wanted to draw attention to any violation of the Geneva Convention, and the editors may have wished to focus on more positive items. Outside the Red Cross notices, only two articles hint at food shortages, both of which are cookery tips and refer to the camp gardens which supplemented the rations provided by the Germans. Aside from food, *The Clarion* provides an insight into other items which the Lamsdorf prisoners lacked, including clothing, paper, books and games (after the library was burnt down), tea, spectacles and dentures. Health problems and the lack of medical supplies were also major issues facing POWs. Lamsdorf had one of the biggest and best POW hospitals, but still experienced repeated outbreaks of typhus, dysentery, diphtheria and tapeworm. *The Clarion* contained a number of articles giving medical advice on a range of conditions including fractures, sprains, eye conditions and skin diseases and it encouraged the POWs to keep fit through physical exercise. It also promoted the YMCA Sports Medal which was designed to stimulate healthy care of the bodies in the POW camps and was awarded to those who had encouraged physical culture, given exceptional sporting performances or exercised regularly over a long period of time.

Cigarettes were the main unit of currency within the camp and are frequently mentioned in *The Clarion*. For example, it was reported that the Whitsun festivities raised "92,000 cigarettes" and that cigarettes were regularly supplied by the Red Cross.

The Clarion had only one piece that gave a glimpse into anything that hinted at the morale of the prisoners. At its outset, Wood cited the need to "steer clear of matters political or slanderous" as well as things that were blasphemous or obscene. There is some evidence of satire, but these examples are generally witty attempts to make light of difficult situations. One clear example attempted to deal with a traumatic aspect of some prisoners' lives, the "jilted, thrown-over, cast-off or otherwise given the go-by by the girl friend". The article proposed the formation of a 'Lost Souls Club' to lessen the shock to those who have received "Dear John" letter from wives or girlfriends breaking off relationships, to comfort them and to prevent them from doing something rash (like committing suicide). Such break ups would be difficult in most circumstances, but in captivity many prisoners held on the hopes of the

eventual reunion. The article suggested that they seek out other members who will give them words of encouragement before being introduced to a 'hen-pecked husband' who will explain the many disadvantages of married life and congratulate the new member on his lucky escape.

In a number of issues, *The Clarion* referred to the anxieties of the Channel Island prisoners who did not know the fate of their loved ones back home and assured them that efforts were being made to locate the civilian relatives of the POWs who had been interned in Germany and provide means of communication via the Red Cross. One issue attempted to give further comfort, poignantly explaining how a "number of good toys", made in the camp workshop by prisoners, had been provided "for your children" and distributed by the YMCA in the sincere hope they will "provide some happy hours for the children in their strange surroundings". This article was deemed important enough by the editor to be the first item on page 1. Prisoners who would have been fully aware of the horrors facing civilian internees, might have received some small comfort from this gesture, while the prisoners making the toys in the workshop would have been extra motivated at the knowledge of what they were working for.

Many POWs expressed undying gratitude for the help the relief agencies - principally the Red Cross and the YMCA - provided, and despite evidence of large scale griping about the services provided, the prisoners of Lamsdorf had every reason to share this gratitude. *The Clarion* twice listed the equipment they had received from the Red Cross, including in December 7,506 food parcels and 5,797 parcels of medical equipment; in January 1943 4,796 food parcels and 7,026 medical parcels and in February 1943, 84,192 food parcels and 5,555 medical parcels, but the practice of listing the figures was discontinued due to the unrealistic expectations this gave the POWs and complaints which followed when they did not receive what they considered was due. Prisoners were told that the relief agencies' parcels would be distributed to where the greatest good was possible.

The Clarion also gives an insight into the work of the YMCA in the camp. In an article featuring Gunnar Janssen, the YMCA secretary in Berlin, the editor described his work and the work of the YMCA as "a symbol, a living example of the finest work of Man" showing that the work of the relief agencies did not just help the POWs physically, but also helped them maintain some faith in humanity, even in such trying times. According to Janssen, the work of the YMCA helped the camp develop from its "primitive level" to a "high standard of education, entertainment and religious activity". *The Clarion* explained to the POWs that the aim of the YMCA was to help every POW live as humanely as possible, while warning them that living humanely did not amount to living in luxury. In 1942, it delivered to POW camps across Europe consignments of 25,413 parcels weighing over 135,000 kg including 637,743

books, 4,124 musical instruments, 26,835 items of sporting equipment and 65,058 indoor games.

The Red Cross notices were discontinued after the 7th issue, possibly due to editorial reasons (Parramore had replaced Wood as editor by then) or perhaps due to the rather negative tone they had taken. The Red Cross notices often resorted to chastising the POWs for taking the work of the relief agencies for granted. Attention was brought to the negative letters sent home by POWs in which they complained about matters such as ill-health or lack of Red Cross parcels, many of which contributed towards a rather negative impression of the Red Cross back home. *The Clarion* stated that when confronted, half of the writers denied sending such letters, while a quarter apologised saying that they had been feeling out of sorts. The rest gave no reason. The edition described the sending of these letters an “unworthy practice” and calls on the Red Cross Trustees in the Working Parties to give the POWs sympathy and considered advice, but also warned that such letters add to the misery of those at home and that it was unfair to criticise the Red Cross who were doing a good job in extremely difficult circumstances to ease the POWs’ hardships. It concluded by stating that “It is something to be alive and safe. They’re not so safe back home, but they do not complain to us”. Another issue further explained that the Red Cross parcels are gifts of the British public and where items are missing, there are probably very good reasons for it.

The contact with home through letters was also important. Initial lack of communication caused them great anxieties as they could not even let their loved ones know that they were alive. Even when letters were permitted from June 1942, many took months or years to arrive or failed to get through at all, resulting in some families not knowing that their POW had survived until they turned up back home after liberation.

Links to home were also established by the Lamsdorf POWs in the creation of the various clubs and associations within the camp, often linked to shared interest or a region. They were ways of encouraging the POWs to take responsibility for improving their own conditions and to build relations outside their immediate accommodation blocks or groups of friends but also helped recreate their comforting pre-war civilian worlds. Clubs were formed for groups such as accountants, farmers and motor cyclist enthusiasts. The geographically based POW associations relied on *The Clarion* to spread the word and attract members. The first such group mentioned, the Northumberland & Durham POW Association, stated that its aims were to “give assistance to those in need; financial, legal and employment aid and the establishment of social contact after the war”. By June 1944, it had grown to over 900 members and had seen the first meeting in the UK of the repatriated POWs. Its featuring in *The Clarion* not only helped it grow, but also encouraged the formations of similar groups, with associations forming for POWs for a further 21 regions by June 1944. The groups gave a sense of community within the camp based upon their connections with their home lives and

provided a link to the community and their families back home. James Deans (quoted in 'The Barbed Wire University' by Midge Gillies, p.41) a member of the Caledonian Society in Stalag Luft VI explained the appeal of such societies: "the meeting together, the talks of home, the sound of the familiar dialect, and the uniting of common memories, all help to strengthen ties with home, and bring a soothing influence. Home does not seem so far away, when men of one place get together and talk about it". Patrons based in the UK were sought and activities arranged. One example mentioned in *The Clarion* showed that the UK patrons of an association had taken all the prisoners' children to the pantomime and tea at Christmas time, further demonstrating the physiological boost that such connections to home provided.

The other prominent group in Lamsdorf was the Talbot House organisation (Toc-H). *The Clarion* described Toc-H as a "non-political, inter-racial and inter-denominational organisation" which sets out to "win men's friendship and service of others" based upon a "practical Christian outlook on life" and which had been started in the UK after the First World War. Toc-H's main activity in Lamsdorf was the collection and distribution of supplementary clothing and necessities which was especially valuable for new POWs and ensured that maximum use was made out of the equipment within the camp. The role of Toc-H not only gave practical benefits to the POWs, but gave a sense of community and purpose within the camp which was linked to the POWs' activities back home to the extent they were, or would become, members of Toc-H in the UK. Details of the Welfare Fund or the work of the Camp Comforts Committee feature in most editions of *The Clarion*, and show how the funds raised through POW subscriptions, theatre collections or through special events such as the Whitsun Carnival allowed the POWs to purchase items such as theatre equipment, musical instruments, medical equipment, goods for the canteen and the production of *The Clarion* itself. On top of this, there was an anonymous philanthropic society called Simple Simon & Sons which funded entertainment and sporting events for the good of the camp.

One factor almost entirely missing from the POW publications is the matter of escape. The only reference is a cartoon of a POW crawling under the wire to be faced with the large black boots of an angry guard. This was as much a warning as an attempt at humour and any other reference would have been impossible in a censored organ.

Monotony and boredom were major problems facing the POWs. It was therefore imperative that they find a means of occupying their time. The Lamsdorf POWs benefited from the steady supply of books, educational material, sporting equipment, musical equipment and other items from the relief agencies and as a result, were able to undertake a wide variety of activities. Those who found hobbies and other activities within the camps were less likely to suffer a psychological breakdown. The camp populations contained a large number of specialists in a wide field of activities who often sought to continue their trades, crafts or hobbies within the camps, not only to earn but also to keep boredom and depression

at bay. Similarly, many sought the opportunity to try new hobbies and develop new skills. Embroidery, wood carving, metal sculpting, letter writing, poetry and drawing were among those activities undertaken, all of which helped the POWs to escape their current situation – to go on fighting and hoping. *The Clarion* contained examples of such activities, including a review of the annual Whitsun Carnival and funfair which raised funds for the Red Cross (complete with photographs). Prizes were awarded to the Chinese Street scene, a large and detailed model of Glasgow and a H.G. Wells inspired scene of the future. Arts and crafts exhibited in the Lamsdorf Arts Exhibitions included tinwork, needlework, carvings, paintings, etchings and woodwork.

Contributing to or producing *The Clarion* were ways of expressing these skills and the magazine contained cartoons, artwork, poetry and short stories.

Sport was also a means of passing the time and was encouraged as an effective way of relieving tension and frustration. It had numerous benefits; providing a means of a sense of nationality amongst prisoners at a time when that nationality had been soundly defeated; providing a sense of passing of time with the sporting seasons creating a sense of routine, and importantly, providing a psychological escape and demonstrating a determination to recreate a sense of normality. The Germans were generally happy to permit sport as it not only made for a more relaxed camp environment but also helped alleviate the boredom of the guards and prisoners alike and, in addition, provided the guards with a form of leverage to ensure good behaviour. Sporting equipment was supplied by the Red Cross or the YMCA or made by the prisoners themselves. Internal sports news did not appear in *The Clarion* until issue Number 3 and, while it rarely dominated the pages, it featured in most subsequent editions, demonstrating the extent to which sport was an important part of camp life. A variety of sports were played, including football, cricket, rugby, athletics, boxing and cross country. Football seems to have been one of the more organised events with the camp hosting a number of league competitions, one comprised of 27 teams and 3 divisions. Matches were initially limited to eight players on each side due to the size of the pitch but by May 1943, the pitch had been expanded to full size and had seating for 4,000 spectators. One issue gave a match report on a game played against another camp, Stalag VIIA, who fielded four professional players, demonstrating that even at the heart of the conflict, the Germans were content to allow a team of prisoners to go on “tour”. In cricket test matches were organised, England, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The South African wicketkeeper, Billy Wade, was a real-life test cricketer and there were other first-class players in the camp. The cricket used to go on all day from about 9am to 6pm or 7pm.

Education provided a means for many POWs to alleviate this stagnation. Initially, educational activities were designed as a means of keeping the POWs mentally and physically alert, but over time these activities became important in their own right as the POWs used

their time in the camps to develop themselves, learn new subjects, gain qualifications and set themselves up for post-war careers. The relief agencies facilitated study through locating and supplying specialist books and teaching material and assisting the UK authorities and the academic institutions in arranging for prisoners to sit examination papers which would be of “real value” to POWs in gaining post-war employment. By 1946, over 17,000 applications had been received by the Red Cross to sit exams and almost 79% achieved a pass mark, (including Parramore, the second editor of *The Clarion*, who achieved an electrical engineering practice qualification from the City and Guilds of London Institute in 1944) providing further strong evidence that the POWs often succeeded in living beyond the vacuum of their captivity. From 1943 the Stalag School taught 63 subjects by 41 qualified tutors and were attended by almost a thousand students. Its principal was Company Quartermaster Sergeant Lawrie who used *The Clarion* to inform the POWs of the school and its functions, to advertise special courses (for example, a six week course to allow those on Working Parties to catch up) and to run a monthly English lesson within the pages of the early editions. *The Clarion* also promoted the essay competitions held for prisoners by the Council of the Royal Society of Arts and the British Legion.

The Lamsdorf library was large and well stocked, at least until it accidentally burned down, yet in spite of this, books do not have a large presence in *The Clarion*. It references the library and the availability of books, but otherwise there is little to indicate their importance to the prisoners.

Of more prominence in *The Clarion* is the area of entertainment, especially the theatre which became an important tool for raising morale and for providing activities not just for the audience, but for the producers, writers, actors and designers. Acting, directing and costume and set designing were effective means of channelling energy and provided an outlet for artistic expression (while the costume and set designers were also able to use their skills in creating disguises and props for would-be escapees). Its importance is demonstrated in one edition of *The Clarion* which stated that “we are entirely at the mood of the entertainers. They can either allow us to drop into a mood of apathy and ennui and succumb to the paralytic coolth, or stir us to vigorous enthusiasm and applause”. With a theatre that could host 600, Lamsdorf had “the grandest theatrical and musical ambitions of any stalag” according to Midge Gillies in 'The Barbed Wire University', an ambition borne out in the pages of *The Clarion*. Most editions carried a review of at least one performance showcasing a range of plays, including Shakespeare, musicals, film adaptations, comedy and pantomimes. Shows would generally last for two weeks, but, as in the case of Lambeth Walk, an original play written by a POW, runs could be extended due to popular demand. Shows were ticketed to ensure fair distribution. As with the football 'tour matches', the Germans also allowed productions to tour the camps, with the visiting production of *Ghost Train* being described as

one of the best performances staged in the Lamsdorf theatre, while their own production of *Twelfth Night* starring Denholm Elliot went on to tour other camps.

While the reviewers recognised that they “needed to make allowances for the circumstance in which any show is put on and to applaud or condemn the extent to which difficulties are overcome”, generally all the reviews were positive and shows were frequently described as the best the camp had ever put on. Similarly, individual performances, costumes and sets attracted lavish praise completely lacking in criticism. Only the performance of R.C. Sherriff’s *Journey’s End* brought an introspective moment from the reviewer. The play written in 1928 depicts life in the trenches of the First World War with themes of camaraderie, hardships and the futility of war, themes which might have been expected to resonate with the POWs for whom “blood, death, filth and disease is – or has been – for us, a common spectacle”. The reviewer, however, felt that the play had more significance on the outside of camp than within it and that compared to the POW’s “vivid personal experiences” was somewhat “artificial”. If the productions were designed to produce a sense of escapism for the prisoners, *Journey’s End* had the opposite effect in forcing the audience to confront the conditions of their captivities and giving “food for thought for many” (although the review still acknowledged that the play provided two hours of good entertainment). The most successful productions were the musicals, which *The Clarion* put down to the favourable acoustics of the theatre. Musicals arguably provided a greater possibility for the prisoners to be entertained without being overly taxing, complicated or emotional, characteristics which would be attractive to those experiencing mental stagnation in the camp.

Together with the theatrical performances, music recitals, band concerts and gramophone records playing were a regular feature of camp life in the camp and featured in *The Clarion*. Lamsdorf had a dance band, a choir, a string band, a military band and a symphony orchestra, amongst others. Instruments were provided by the YMCA or purchased through the Welfare Fund and were in decent supply (one issue of *The Clarion* expressed regret that at present there were only ten sets of bagpipes in the camp and these were needed by the Stalag Pipe Band).

The speed in which these entertainments were established and their huge popularity demonstrated their importance to the prisoners, both as an opportunity to occupy time and, in many cases, as a chance “to be linked with one’s sweet home”. In recreating the hobbies and passions of their lives outside the camp, by transporting their minds to a land and time beyond the wire or by simply giving themselves a few hours where they can forget their surroundings and the difficulties of their conditions, the POWs were able to mentally escape and exist beyond the confines of their captivities.

The pages of *The Clarion* do not tell the whole truth of captivity, but they do help to put it into context and give us an insight into the conditions of POW life, and how the POWs regarded their conditions. Alan Mackay in his book '313 Days to Christmas: A Human Record of War and Imprisonment' suggests that POW publications deserve a place in the annals of the Second World War, and this is certainly true - how much better we understand the lives of the Lamsdorf prisoners-of-war by reading the editions of *The Lamsdorf Clarion*.

The *Clarion* began its life when the population of Stalag VIIIB (344) Lamsdorf was at its highest. An International Committee of the Red Cross report in October 1943 put the number of POWs in the camp as 31,052., not including the thousands who were on working parties away from the main camp. In December 1943 more than 10,000 of the POWs were transferred to a new Stalag VIIIB at Teschen in Czechoslovakia, and the Lamsdorf camp was renumbered as Stalag 344. At the time the last edition of *The Clarion* appeared there were approximately 22,000 men in the camp.

The copies of the magazine that appear in this book are not pristine. They had survived nearly 80 years at the time of this publication. Who knows through what conditions they travelled from Lamsdorf to the United Kingdom. Perhaps they were amongst the survivors of the Long March of January to April 1945. There is some discolouration of pages, particularly at the edges, and there are a number of marks and stains here and there. The quality of pages varies. It has been impossible to improve the quality of the photographs in the magazines. However, the pages are legible and bear witness to a remarkable corner of the history of the Second World War, inadequately recorded in the past. Alongside other first-hand accounts of life as a prisoner of war in books such as *Lamsdorf in their Own Words*, *The Long March in their Own Words* and others (see the bibliography at the end of this book) the copies of the *Clarion* provide a superb, primary historical record and a tribute to the men who endured those long years as prisoners of war.

The original magazines were 13 x 19 centimetres in size
so the reproductions in this book are larger than the originals.

NUMBER ONE

JANUARY 1943

THE CLARION

STALAG VIII B

GERMANY

Send-off . . .

And so to press. At last a cherished hope has been realised, and *The Clarion* becomes a periodical in being; a magazine that will bring you, as important factors in one large community, closer to each other. News of your friends, perhaps widely separated from you somewhere in the huge area covered by the Stalag. News from Home. Items of interest from all parts of the Empire will come to you through the medium of your magazine.

You will realise that such an undertaking will need support particularly with regard to contributed items and articles. Send them to the Editor. He will guarantee, as far as he is able, to include them in a regular monthly publication.

The paper problem has always to be considered, hence the impracticability of issuing the magazine on a grander scale than one copy to ten; but all will be served down to the smallest Working Party.

What of the cost of production? For the time being, paper having been very kindly provided by the Y.M.C.A., costs will be borne by the Camp Welfare Fund and, with your approval, for you have in the past ensured the stability of that Fund through your generous donations, will continue to be defrayed in the same way. If you would prefer a small charge to be made for each copy of the magazine, please say so.

Now the Editor is demanding this article, and so it must be closed. In any case it is your magazine. May its life be a complete success but not a long one.

With very best wishes to all,

S. SHERRIFF, R. S. M.

Chief Trustee.

All correspondence and contributions from working parties should be sent with the weekly mail to the Stalag addressed to: "The Editor, The Clarion, Stalag VIII B." N.C.O's i/c are requested to collect and forward under single cover.

Editorial

IN the usual manner of large communities we come at last to a magazine of our own. There was no debate, "Shall we, shan't we", to herald its birth. The only effort required at all was made in deciding who would supply the paper, write in it, print it and who would read it. Who would be rude about it, as a question, was temporarily shelved.

Now these little things having been masterfully breasted, we arrive at the Editorial. Sad to relate, no cigar-puffing, be-telephoned, ultra Rolls-Royced expirience of titanic dailies can be found, so the only thing to be used for reference is the non-working end of a pencil.

One would imagine that Policy, Objects and Scope play as large a part in a magazine as in a newspaper. Having reached which decisive point we may now hack the meat a little.

The Policy of *The Clarion* must obviously be to steer clear of matters political or slanderous. Likewise, blasphemy and obscenity, being two very rocky points, we can steer the boat round them as well.

The Objects are easily defined. In the first place, *The Clarion* is yours to write and to read. It's up to you to make it bright and keep it informative. To this end, instead of hoarding your bits of sporting or social news from home, the odds and ends of general interest you pick up — send them to us. Twenty-five thousand readers should find a stack of news between them and this is the best place to tell it to each other.

Our Scope is governed by the policy and objects. News is the first thing you want to see here. News of home, of working parties and of the Camp. To fill an hour short stories, an occasional bit of verse — how occasional depends upon you — and, to help it down, cartoons and a few choice cracks. Send it all to us and, in case of doubt, don't worry about the censor — let the Editor look after that.

And now, although we're a bit late, we would like to wish you all a happier, more fruitful New Year. Don't forget, whatever it is, if it's good — *The Clarion* calls!

P. O. W. ADDRESSES

The following information is extracted from a G.P.O. notification regarding P.O.W. Mail:—

"After Jan. 31, 1943, letters received for P's O.W. which incorrectly bear the place name instead of or in addition to the number of the Camp, will be confiscated and parcels so addressed will be returned to senders.

"The latest form of address given should be used. This is generally a camp number only; but, exceptionally in the case of prisoners in hospitals, may sometimes include a place name. Unless a place name is included by the prisoner in his address the location of the camp should not be shown on correspondence sent to him.

"In the case of a prisoner in Stalag VIII B, Germany, the correct address will be as in the following example:—

Pte. T. Atkins,

British Prisoner of War No. 3306,
Stalag VIII B,
Germany.

GIFT BOOKS

"Their Majesties the King and Queen have graciously expressed a wish once again to send a Christmas gift of books to each Prisoner of War Camp. The number of books in each consignment will vary according to the size of the camps."

The above is from a letter received by the Trustee, R.S.M. Sherriff, from the Chairman of the P.O.W. Dept. of the B.R.C.S. It will be realised that the number of books in the consignments is not large, and that, whatever the quantity, proportionate allotment will be made on Camp and Party strengths.

It is hoped that the foregoing information will adequately dispose of any doubts when distribution of this Camp's share of Their Majesties second gift of books is made.

The Camp Trustees wish all ranks in Stalag VIII B a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Greetings

Her Majesty the Queen

desires the following Christmas message conveyed to "all Sick and Wounded Imperial Prisoners of War and those of the United Nations" of Stalag VIII B.:

"I am very glad indeed to send a Christmas greeting to each one of you. At no time are you far from our thoughts and prayers, and to us at home, your patience and resolution in the face of adversity are a continual example, and a source of great pride. But, at this season of the year, we think of you very specially.

When Christmas Day comes, remember we are wishing with all our hearts that it may bring you happiness and a renewed courage, and that when you come back to us again, you may once more enjoy many, many Christmases with those who are near and dear to you. God bless you all.—Elizabeth R."

Australia

"The Australian Red Cross send you cordial Christmas greetings on behalf of its members, its supporters, and your own home folk."

Canada

"The Prime Minister of Canada requests the International Red Cross Committee to convey to all Canadians in Prisoner of War or Internment Camps, on behalf of their relatives and friends in Canada and also on behalf of the Canadian Government and the Canadian people, heartfelt Christmas greetings and best of wishes for the New Year.

"The Prime Minister desires to assure them, one and all, that the thoughts of the Canadian people were never more of them and with them than they are in greetings they send this Christmas Season and in the wishes they send for the New Year."

South Africa

"South Africa remembers you this Christmastide and prays for your health and well-being. With the restoration of Peace, we also await your safe return."

Y. M. C. A.

"As Christmas approaches, we desire to send our heartiest greetings. As He Whose birth we are about to celebrate has taught us, we think of each one of you as a brother and, at this season of

the year, we are remembering you in a quite special way. We ask God to send the marvellous light of Christmas into your hearts and into the hearts of your beloved ones far away, as a spiritual link which no physical separation can destroy.

"We are happy to be able to send you this message across the frontier and over the battlefields. It expresses our sincere friendship."

British P's. O. W. Funds

"Christmas 1942. Once again your thoughts will be flying homewards, and necessarily you'll be going over in your mind former Christmases and reviewing the past year. We have learnt more of your life and of your feelings through the medium of your letters and post-cards, and we are inspired afresh by the high courage, quiet patience, and ingenuity you have shown under great difficulties. You have learnt tolerance and practised brotherliness in a fashion which has been an inspiration to all at home.

"I speak with your nearest and dearest, and the vast number of your countrymen. We, or rather our shadowy presences, are more often in the prisoner of war camps than you know. We have a password that guards can't refuse—our 'loving hopes and wishes.' So until we meet again we wish you 'A Happy Christmas and brighter hopes for 1943'."

British Red Cross

The members of the Educational Books Section, P's. O. W. Department, send their best wishes for Christmas 1942.

Madame Paravicini, Berne, Switzerland

"Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all."

Mrs. Luise Campbell, Lisbon

"Best Wishes for a Happy New Year to all."

The Senior British Officer

and all the Medical Officers join in wishing all ranks of the Stalag a very Happy Christmas. They know that even in these circumstances, the spirit of Christmas, of good comradeship and fellowship will be recaptured, and they feel sure the optimism, cheerfulness and determination which has always characterised the men of this Stalag will be continued throughout the coming year.

Post-War London?

PLANS and planners. There must be hundreds of them at home. No editions of "The Camp" appear without reference to some plan or other, and, to judge from letters we receive, we are supposed to spend our waking hours discussing them.

One man in the Stalag has had a letter calculated to arouse keen arguments among Londoners, and so, safe in the knowledge that Londoners form no inconsiderable portion of our readers, we give a general outline of it.

The letter deals with the Royal Academy Planning Committee's plan for the rebuilding of parts of London, whose report was prepared before the War by Sir Edward Lutyens and Sir Charles Brassey, and its subsequent elaboration by a committee of architects and others.

You may remember two pictures printed in "The Camp" of November 8, 1942, of how Central London is now, and how it would look if the Academy's scheme were carried out. The main difference is that the suggested reconstruction would mean wider but fewer streets, a grander setting for St. Paul's, and the continuation of the Embankment past Blackfriars Bridge. But that picture showed only a minor part of the general alterations.

Imagine a ring road and a new circular electric Underground embracing the main line termini — Victoria, Paddington and Marylebone remaining where they are and the others being moved away from the focus of the circle, which is in the region of Trafalgar Square. Imagine all the railway lines within the circle to be electrified and underground; the canals to be treated as amenities as well as means of transport; embankments and gardens from Putney to Tower Bridge.

When you've taken that in, think of parks and open spaces for the east and south sides of London on the same scale as those in the west; of new residential squares closed to wheeled traffic; of new roads to relieve traffic on the main routes; of Covent Garden without the market, which would, like other central markets, be moved to the circumference of the circle.

If you know London well, you may by now have some idea of the plan, which

aims also at better building sites on important road frontages and the opening of street vistas, but provincials whose acquaintance is restricted to the knowledge of the relative situations of the main line stations may be interested to learn where the new stations might be. Kings Cross and St. Pancras would be merged with Euston (all to be moved and rebuilt); Charing Cross would be merged with Waterloo and taken to Nine Elms; London Bridge would be moved to the Bricklayers' Arms, Fenchurch Street to its own goods station, and Liverpool Street to Bishopsgate.

It is certainly no plan for the sentimentalist, and most of us are sentimental about old streets and buildings. Many good structures would have to go, Waterloo for example. Some present tubes would be in the wrong places. Congestion at the new Euston and Waterloo would be considerable, even presuming electric railways would be attached to them. Workers in the centre of the ring would find themselves paying more or walking farther to their trains.

All for what? For the elimination of smoke and noise from Central London; possibly for an improvement in traffic conditions. Other advantages may occur to you, but the very size of the plan makes it doubtful whether it will come off in its entirety. If only Wren and Nash had had their way!

Bringing up Baby

The good lady of a bloke we know sent him a photograph of his offspring. Producing it for our polite observations he remarked, somewhat aggressively, "If you think you know of any better looking kids, keep your mouth shut!"

Although *The Clarion* is our baby we don't have the same attitude. We shall be glad of any practical suggestions for the improvement of the magazine or for features you would like in future issues.

Of course, we would like best to have a contribution from you — anything from a joke to an essay — but your remarks and observations will be welcomed too.

Tent-ative Proposals

By SCRIBBLER

"NOT bloody likely!" With these words George Bernard Shaw startled the London theatre world nearly thirty years ago. In all innocence I created similar consternation last night in our barrack. But not by using language like that. That wouldn't startle our barrack. They always employ even more emphatic adjectives with which you are, no doubt, familiar.

I merely mentioned that I was looking forward to a camping holiday after the War. Whereupon my immediate neighbours smote their breasts and turned out language that would perhaps make even G.B.S. blush. At least, it should have made him blush thirty years ago.

Apparently, most gefangeners will refuse to look at a tent when they get back. Show them a rucksack and they will spurn it. Memories of route marches, heavy packs and sore feet will crowd back into their minds and they will despondently limp away.

And yet, often, in the evening, I stretch out luxuriously and light a contemplative "Players". Having despatched the remaining half meat-roll, potato issue, bread ration, and scraped the jam tin, I naturally feel somewhat contented. Then I proceed to revel in the memories of past camping and hiking holidays.

I remember a hectic trip three of us made to climb Ben Nevis. We travelled almost a thousand miles in five days and an Austin Seven. We pitched our tiny hike tent on the Banks of Nevis Water, and Ben's summit watched us from about 4,400 feet higher up.

The following day we set out blithely, wearing nothing but a pair of shorts, boots, and stockings. We arrived at the top some three hours later, clad in vest, shirt, pullover, scarf, and macintosh, and even then our teeth chattered. Bingo, who in some respects resembles the Wise Virgins, caused much envy by producing an extra sweater from his pack.

Having gazed our fill at the view, which consisted solely of banks of mist, we descended by a process known as "shooting the scree". This is rather more pleasant than the shooting with which we are now so familiar, and offers the attractive uncertainty of not knowing whether the scree on which one is per-

forming ends in a precipice or just a gentle slope.

The gods were kind, and we had successfully negotiated about two thousand feet when Bill, who is a keen swimmer, spied a "loch". Nothing would satisfy him but that we should give an aquatic exhibition in this lake.

It was a very good lake, as lakes go. One of those highland types that are apparently bottomless, but how were we to know that? You stand on the side and debate whether it is deep enough to dive. Deciding that it would be safer to enter rather more slowly, you step off from the side as gingerly as a stout lady embarks on an escalator. When you've expelled the water from your mouth, you attempt to stand up, and find that if there is a bottom it must be engaged elsewhere. And, of course, all Scottish lakes are delightfully cool — especially those over 2,000 feet up.

But Bingo and I had our revenge. To those of you who are acquainted with Austin Sevens of the 1927 vintage, it will be no startling news to hear that the back springs were lamentably weak. Apparently the Austin people considered that, like the dachshund, it was sufficient to look after the front end and the back end would take care of itself.

So we banished Bill to the back seat, where he crouched amid the cooking gear, Primus stoves, and similar chattels. Then, quite by accident, Bingo, who was driving, found an outstanding series of pot-holes. We felt quite sorry for Bill, because every pot-hole caused the differential case on the back axle to connect violently with the underside of the back seat, and we gathered that the upper side of the seat persisted in connecting almost as violently with that part of Bill which was resting on it. I never did think much of these pneumatic cushions anyway.

Happy memories. And that is why, when once again we return to our native land, some week-end I shall dust the cobwebs from the old rucksack, disinter the Primus from the tool shed, and set out anew to explore the hills and valleys of England.

And when I awake in the morning to hear rain machine-gunning the tent, there will be no-one to shout "Aufstehen".

News from Home

U. K.

Billy Bennett and Stanley Lupino, two of our most popular comedians died during the summer of 1942. This great loss to the stage will be fully appreciated by everyone who has seen or heard these two old favourites.

★

The B.B.C. now has three resident dance-bands in its employ, Jack Payne, Geraldo, and Billy Ternent.

★

Jack Hylton, although having a band of his own, is going great guns as a theatrical impresario, having a terrific array of stars working for him, including Max Miller, Arthur Askey, and Elsie Carlisle.

★

A new show entitled "Best Bib and Tucker" opened at the London Palladium on November 7 with Tommy Trinder and Emundo Ros and his Cuban Orchestra (incidentally, Cuban music is all the rage in London at present).

★

The pit orchestra at the Palladium is under the direction of Debroy Somers.

★

One of the up and coming bands in the West End is Johnny Claes and his Clay Pigeons.

★

Harry Roy is leaving the Embassy Club early in the New Year to go on a long stage tour.

★

The London Casino is now a boxing club for the Forces, under the management of John Harding, of N.S. C. fame.

★

In the first International match of the season, when England and Scotland played a goal-less draw, Merseyside had five players in the English side — Lawton, Britton, Busby, Mercer and Liddell.

★

Syd Wooderson, running the mile at Manchester Athletic Ground, finished 100 yards ahead of the field. His lack of a pacemaker showed in his time, which was 13 seconds outside his record.

★

The Manchester November Handicap was won by Golden Boy.

AUSTRALIA

Mr. W. M. Hughes celebrated his 78th birthday on September 26, when he received congratulations in the House of Commons from Mr. Curtin, the Prime Minister, supported by Mr. Fadden, the Leader of the Opposition.

★

The Attorney General, Mr. Evatt, has announced that the Government will introduce a Bill to adopt Sections Two to Six of the Statute of Westminster, 1930. If the Bill passes, this will mean that the Statute will be fully applicable to Australia. The other Sections are merely machinery. [An article dealing more fully with this Statute will be published in a later issue.—Ed.]

★

Mr. Forgan Smith has resigned his office, as Premier of Queensland, relinquishing at the same time leadership of the Queensland Labour Party. He is succeeded by Mr. F. A. Cooper.

★

The Federal Cabinet is reported to be considering a £1,000,000 scheme to subsidise University study, under which a student is likely to be paid for the study of medicine, dentistry, science and engineering. The scheme provides for the admission of promising students only to University free courses, and payment will be enough to cover living expenses and text books.

★

John Woolcott-Forbes, whom the police have been chasing since 1939 in connection with fraud charges, is reported to have been located in Mexico City. The N.S.W. Premier, Mr. J. W. McKell, has announced that whatever action is necessary to bring Forbes to justice will be taken.

★

Barmaids are now employed in hotels in Adelaide, a ban which has been in force in South Australia for many years having been lifted to release man power. They will be paid at the same rate as the men.

★

Caulfield Cup result: Tranquil Star (15s.), Hearts Desire, El Golea. The Melbourne Cup was postponed until November 21 and the result is not yet to hand.

NEW ZEALAND.

The Holmes property in the Banks Peninsula has been sold after being in the same family for 80 years.

★

A fire at Westfield Freezing Works, in the skin drying plant, caused damage to the extent of about £10,000. The outbreak was due to a fault in the electric installation.

★

Legislation providing for the control of the advertising of patent medicines was passed unopposed, and the Minister of Health has indicated that a Board will be established to exercise control. If the claims of an advertiser were unsubstantiated the proprietors would be told to restrict their advertising. The Bill was designed to do the same thing for human beings as other legislation had done for animals.

★

Col. J. Cowie Nichols, of Oamaru, has made a gift of £2,000 to Christ's College in memory of his three sons who were all killed in the last war.

★

Mr. H. N. Hogben, late of Auckland Grammar and Palmerston North and Dānebirke High Schools, has been appointed Headmaster of Wellington College. He succeeds Mr. W. A. Armour.

★

Women from 25 to 60 have been given the right by legislation to act as jurors. The Act operates on the voluntary principle and women wishing to serve have to register.

★

The Cornwall Park Trustees refused to accede to a petition signed by 9,000 citizens asking that a portion of the Park occupied by the Maungakiekie Golf Club be reserved for the Club. The decision throws open the golf club area to the general public.

★

The Armed Forces Appeal Court in Christchurch heard the appeal of Mrs. Morgan who has six sons and one daughter—all Grade 1—all of whom are in the Forces. The Committee decided to release one son and congratulated Mrs. Morgan on her illustrious family.

Two big races in Australia were recently won by horses of New Zealand blood. The Metropolitan Handicap was won by Grand Pills, by Beau Pere from the Westmere stud mare, Timid, who was imported by J. B. Donald, and the Toorak Handicap at Melbourne by Crojick, bred by F. J. Nathan, of Palmerston North.

★

In England the boys are holding their own in sporting circles. R. N. Z. A. F. beat Guy's Hospital by 11 points to nil in a hard rugby game. Our lads had a big advantage in weight and speed. In a boxing match George Muir beat Jim Wilde of Wales. It was a hectic 8-round contest, Muir being 35 lbs lighter than Wilde.

★

The Waldorf, Wellington, has been re-opened as a cabaret and grill room for the men of the Forces only.

We are all Agog

for News from Home. In your letters are sporting, social and general news items to interest all readers of *The Clarion*. With your co-operation these titbits will become a regular feature.

The news we have printed in the preceding two pages is all we have been able to garner for this issue. The Lager had to supply the necessary this time but now *The Clarion* is out we have great hopes you will all scratch round and send something to make these pages bright and informative. Twenty-five thousand may not be the world's largest circulation but it will be the largest reporting staff that ever was!

Any such items and contributions should be handed to the N.C.O. in charge of your party, who may send them with the weekly mail to the Lager. They should be collected and addressed, under one cover to: "The Editor, *The Clarion*, Stalag VIII B."

Men in the Lager may hand extracts from letters and likewise contributions to Compound Commanders, from whom they will be collected.

Tell us — we will tell the others!

"What's the difference between roast beef and pea soup?"

"You can roast beef."

Australian Affairs

By Sgt. BILL BEE.

FOR the benefit of Australian personnel, especially those on Working Parties, I will endeavour to sketch a rough survey of the attempts made by their representatives here in Stalag to obtain for them any benefits accruing, or any benefits to which they are justifiably entitled, per medium of the Australian Comforts Fund or the A. R. C. S.

As early as January 1942, individual letters from R. S. M.'s Sherriff and Roberts were despatched to Australia House, London, requesting information as to what action was being contemplated by the Australian authorities to supply comforts to their men now P's. O. W. in Germany. In a circular, February 19, 1942, the B. R. C. S. intimated that the Australian authorities had undertaken the preparation and despatch of the first next-of-kin parcel, immediately following notification of a man's capture. But, apparently, a mistake had been made, for with the non-arrival of these parcels further enquiries revealed that such was not the case. Then came the news back, in the event of any man requiring further supplies of cigarettes, an allotment form to the Paymaster, authorising the deduction of the cost from his credits, would end his troubles. Protest was made, it being pointed out that the Australian Comforts Fund was a distinct body from the A. R. C. S. and we were of the opinion that that body should be able to assist.

As the weeks sped by, bringing but spasmodic and very small consignments of mail and parcels, further letters were despatched, requesting an early solution of our mail troubles. I might state that in replying, the authorities at Australia House were really perturbed at our predicament and made earnest endeavours to solve our problem. Eventually, the seat of the trouble was found and the mail came through. In the course of a letter, Australia House stated that the delay was not caused in the Commonwealth, but somewhere overseas. Later and private news proved that the delay was in America.

In September last, a general meeting of Australians in Stalag was held, under the chairmanship of R. S. M. Sherriff, to discuss and deal with any general complaints. At this meeting it was unanimously decided to form a committee of two, further to deal with Australian

problems in connection with their own home affairs. R. S. M. Roberts, being the senior Australian W. O., automatically sat on this committee, myself being the other member elected. The objects of this committee are to further the general interests of Australians, deal with mail and parcel problems, to correlate promotions on the field, trade pay, etc., lost pay books, and bring records up to date; to endeavour to point out to home authorities various matters affecting our welfare and also to alleviate any undue financial or other strain on our people's resources, and to assist and advise Australian P's. O. W. in general. Through having complete records we hope to assist men who, in the future, may require witnesses for pension claims, etc. To complete these records, all ranks are asked to co-operate by giving full particulars when requested. But more of records later.

A further matter dealt with at the meeting was mail. It was pointed out that needless delay was occurring in Melbourne, the time elapsing between date of writing and date of postage varying from two to six weeks. Wrongly-addressed envelopes, letters intended for air-mail arriving per medium of surface mail, wrongful information being given to our relatives as to number of letters permitted, despatch of permit parcels, etc., and contents of clothing parcels despatched by the Red Cross (a very delicate subject) were dealt with under this head.

After a somewhat lengthy and vigorous discussion, it was decided to appeal to the R. S. S. I. League of Australia, requesting their assistance and co-operation in these matters. Whilst we appreciated the initial difficulties and obstacles to be overcome, we were of the opinion that a little more could have been done for us, and, in comparison, quoted the New Zealand Patriotic Fund's effort, which we more or less glorified (to which in my opinion it is justifiably entitled). This letter was despatched on October 1, and, while this appeal should now be in their hands, it is far too early to expect a reply. Personally, however, I have great faith in the R. S. L. A copy of this letter was also despatched to Australia House.

Owing to space restriction this article will be concluded in the next issue.

Crossword

By H. CHARLES

ACROSS

1. Notorious food. (6)
5. To be banged or boiled. (6)
9. Sporting and unsporting events are held in this. (5)
10. Dominion military motto. (6)
11. Knightly adjective. (6)
12. A girl often does. (5)
14. Priest or father in France. (4)
17. Decay. (3)
18. Often a valuable kind of Loom. (4)
20. A chemist does what cricketers have. (5)
22. Short. (5)
23. He runs but not in 20 across. (7)
24. Telegraphed. (5)
26. Taken down. (5)
29. Back or bring up. (4)
30. A notable wriggler. (3)
32. Suggests parents with an only child. (4)
33. Are you 'one? (5)
35. London's Tiber. (6)
36. Tells stories. (6)
37. Pull or push it to start. (5)
38. Happenings. (6)
39. Unclean. (6)

DOWN

1. Quick. (6)
2. High edifices. (6)
3. From the tongue bitter. (4)
4. Method. (5)
5. Made obeisance. (5)
6. A dog's are unsightly in a book. (4)
7. Merchant. (6)

8. Complete. (6)
13. Vehicles. (7)
15. Enough to make your flesh creep. (5)
16. Volatile fluid. (5)
18. Biblically notorious King. (5)
19. Small island. (5)
21. Sorrowful. (3)
22. Important Continental number. (3)
24. Squirm. (6)
25. Sack. (6)
27. In the right direction. (6)
28. A way of hanging. (6)
33. Dissolve. (4)
34. Fiddler. (4)

Solution on Page 11.

BRIDGE PROBLEM

North
S.—J, 6, 5.
H.—4, 3.
D.—None.
C.—Q, J, 10.

West
S.—Q.
H.—10.
D.—K, 9, 8.
C.—K, 9, 8.

East
S.—10, 9.
H.—Q.
D.—6, 5, 4.
C.—7, 6.

South
S.—A, 8.
H.—None.
D.—Q, J, 10.
C.—A, 5, 4.

Problem.—Spades are trumps. South has the lead. N.-S. have to make all of the eight tricks against any possible defence.

This is a good one. Get the cards out and try it before looking at the solution on p. 11.

CHESS

Owing to lack of space the Chess Problem for this issue had to be held over. Players are invited to submit problems for publication and are requested to append the solution.

The School

THE latest asset in Stalag VIIIB is the birth of the Stalag's own magazine. The Editor very kindly invited me to be "amongst those present" at the opening and I am taking advantage of his offer to write a few words to you on that important matter—Education.

Some of you may remember my articles in "The Camp" newspaper, entitled "The Aftermath", when I told you I was endeavouring to bring the advantages of the Stalag School to working parties. The system employed was to have copies taken of the lectures given in the school, these being duplicated by "The Camp". The scheme was well started when a fire in the Stalag destroyed the copies and consequently delayed further distribution. Fresh copies, however, have been prepared and these are now being duplicated in Berlin and should shortly be ready for distribution. However, another delay was caused by men writing to Berlin direct whereas they should write to "The Betreuer, Dept. C.2, Stalag VIIIB."

We realise that many of you are disappointed that we can only give you the choice of four subjects but an enormous amount of paper is required and this is difficult to obtain. We are hoping that before long a new scheme will come into operation whereby you will be able to have more subjects, but remember it is, as yet, a hope.

Will N.C.O's in charge of working parties, where study classes are already in progress, help by sending direct to

By the Principal, C. Q. M. S. LAWRIE.

me the following information:—

1. What Subjects are studied.
2. How many men on the party.
3. What literature is available.
4. What hours you have available for study.

The Editor has offered me a page of *The Clarion* for educational work, and I propose to give you lectures on English and Geography. These will be as follows: with this copy a lecture on English, and thereafter English and Geography. The latter will consist of both Economic and Physical Geography and will be suitable for students taking the Cambridge Local and the London Matriculation examinations.

You will, no doubt, be pleased to know that we have held quite a few examinations in the school and from the results received, from England it is gratifying to note that of the total number of students who have sat there has only been one failure.

Before closing, let me say a few words about the blue and green forms upon which you order books and courses. When sending these in care should be taken to see that *all* particulars are correctly filled in otherwise we are compelled to return them to the party concerned. Further, do not write on letter cards to the British Red Cross or daily newspapers. Applications for books or courses must be made on the prescribed forms whilst letters to the Press are forbidden.

And now good luck to *The Clarion*, its contributors and all its readers.

ENGLISH LECTURE No. 1

The explorer who writes a book narrating his journeys on the edge of the world, and the scientist who lectures to a distinguished audience on the unravelling of the secrets of the universe, all use language to express their thoughts for the benefit of humanity.

Thought is the parent of speech and writing. If the mind works sluggishly the tongue halts and the pen moves not.

Hard thinking must become a habit. But this hard thinking fails in its object if the thinker cannot express his thoughts in language. We should all be able to express our thoughts in our native tongue.

The language with which we are concerned is English and in many ways we are fortunate that this is so. Because of its wealth of words and expressions, its music and beauty, and its magnificent

literature it stands high among the languages of mankind.

It is obvious that, in whatever occupation he may be, a man needs to be able to do two things:—

- (a) To express his thoughts in such a way that his fellow men understand them:
- (b) To understand the thoughts and ideas of his fellow men when they are expressed in speech or writing.

If the man be connected with science then he must be able to do more than this. He must be able to express himself with exactness.

How is a student to acquire this art?

Reading of the works of great writers will give us knowledge BUT you might read all the books in the British Museum and remain an utterly illiterate, uneducated person: but if you read ten pages of a good book with real accuracy you are for evermore, in some measure, an educated person.

The English language is a tool the use of which must be mastered and practised. The student must remember that he is in the position of an apprentice in the craft of self expression. He must set himself to study and understand the works of master craftsmen in English.

It is by your choice and use of words that the standard of your English, both spoken and written, will be judged. A person's vocabulary is an indication of the level of his intelligence and education. It should be the ambition of everyone to acquire a large and varied vocabulary. It is not enough for you to know a large number of words or to recognise them vaguely when you see them in print. You must know the exact meanings of the words and the way in which they are used. There are two ways in which this can be achieved:—

- (a) By reading widely, especially the works of great authors:
- (b) By using a dictionary freely.

When asked to define a net do not say, "A net is a number of holes tied together with string," or, "Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections." The first definition fails because it says too little, the second because the meaning is obscured by a cloud of classical words. When you are asked to define a word try to avoid both

of these faults. Say all that is required and no more and always write definitions in the form of a sentence, e.g., "A magnet is a piece of metal which has the property of attracting iron."

Sounds and Symbols

All words as spoken are built up from different SOUNDS. In writing, these sounds are represented by various symbols called LETTERS. Thus, in pronouncing the word "pat" we have in succession the sound common to "pen", "pot" and "put", the sound common to "have", "bad", "lamb", and the sound common to "ten", "at", "tree". In writing the word "pat" we use the symbols or letters called "pe", "eh", "tee". These last three are only the names and not the sounds of p, a, and t; the sounds are heard if we begin to pronounce the three words "pen", "an", "tan" and go no further than the first sound in each word.

Sounds are divided into two main classes—vowels and consonants.

Consonants are sounds formed by stopping or squeezing the breath in some part of the mouth or throat. Thus in forming the sound of b we stop the breath at the lips and release it with sudden explosion, while in forming the sound of v we narrow the passage of the mouth breath to one between the lips and the teeth.

Vowels are sounds formed without any stopping or squeezing of the breath. The vowel sounds are represented by the letters a, e, i, o and u, and sometimes by the letters y and w. All other English letters represent consonantal sounds and w and y may do so. W and Y are sometimes called semi-vowels because of the vocalic nature; thus if oo-it and ee-et are pronounced rapidly the sounds are approximately those of words w-it and y-et.

Besides the simple vowels there are common *Diphthongs* (i.e., a combination of two vowels sounded in rapid succession). e.g., found, foist.

SYMBOLS. Many symbols have more than one sound: thus C represents a different sound in "cat" from that which it does in "city", and A in "at" from that which it does in "master." Many simple sounds are represented by double symbols, called *Digraphs*: thus, the sound represented by sh in "shut" is simple.

Church News

WHAT we are writing here is chiefly for the benefit of those on working parties. Those in the Stalag have the opportunities to attend the services of their Church regularly, and other things were arranged for them at Christmas. A recital of carols was given by the Stalag Choir — and a Nativity Play was also produced. At the actual time of writing this, these have not yet been given — the "copy" must be in the Editor's hands before Christmas. But much hard work has been done in practices and rehearsals — especially by the choir under its enthusiastic conductor, Robert Tullett — and we feel confident that their efforts will be well received and appreciated. We are only sorry that a greater number of people cannot be catered for.

The Chaplains in the Stalag frequently have requests from working parties for one of them to visit the Commando at week-ends to take services for the men. They, the Chaplains, do want all to know that everything humanly possible is done in this direction. One Padre is away every week-end and usually manages visits to three — sometimes four — parties in the course of his trip. But you can see that at this rate it would take months — even years — to cover all the ground. So if you have asked for a visit and have not yet had one, please don't be impatient — and please do not make any hasty judgments of others. A Padre will visit you if he can, and as soon as he can.

Much the same applies to requests for Bibles. Many more are asked for than can be given. Bibles and New Testaments are sent out as speedily as they arrive, but we have never had unlimited resources. Why not, by the way, ask your own folk at home to send you the Bible or Prayer Book you want in a book parcel?

In the matter of services, do you, or can you, have a service of your own in your working party? There are commandos we know where services are held regularly every Sunday without any Chaplain being there. One of your own number can lead the prayers and read a lesson. Or perhaps two or three fellows might be found who would take turns

in this way. Perhaps one of your number can remember the words of some well-known hymns. Then you can write them out and use them. Sermons, we realise, would present difficulties, but they can be dispensed with if no-one feels sufficiently confident.

And here are two prayers which you can preserve and use.

For our folk at home: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we pray Thee to bless those whom we love from whom we are separated. Do Thou, O God, watch over them and preserve them from all evil to soul or body. Grant them Thy grace that they may face the tasks and demands of life with courage and joy. Hasten, we pray Thee, the time of our reunion with them and grant that when that time shall come, we and they may live our lives in true fellowship, understanding and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For ourselves: Forgive, we pray Thee, O God, all our sins and all our neglect of Thee and Thy laws; And do Thou dispose our hearts towards the attainment of everlasting salvation, and grant that among the many changes of this mortal life, we may ever be defended by Thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LONG ARM

Coincidence has a proverbially long arm, but seldom does it stretch to the point it did when a recent batch of prisoners arrived in the Camp from Dieppe.

As soon as these reached the barrack-room to which they had been allotted, one of them enquired of the compound clerk whether he knew a Dvr. Bernard Colligan.

"Yes. At the other end of this barrack," was the reply.

Without waiting a second the new arrival bounded away.

That was how Gnr. John Colligan, from Dieppe, met his brother who was captured in France 1940, in Germany 1942.