

Memories of Brother Sebastian Swift C.Ss.R

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Published: 26 May 2014

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Brother Sebastian Swift who died in Hawkstone in 1984.

Brother Sebastian came from a farming family in Lancashire. He joined us in the mid '20s professed in 1925 and about a year later oh, he was sent to Bishop Eton and he was in the community of Bishop Eton, and about a year later make a little bit more he was asked to go on supply to Hawkstone which we had recently acquired just to help sort out the garden and he was expected to be there for a couple of months two or three months and then return to Bishop Eton. In practise that temporary appointment lasted until his death in 1984. It must be an all-time record for the congregation throughout the world for a temporary appointment.

He spent all those years looking after not just the garden but the farm at Hawkstone. In those early days he had used horses to plough, no tractors in those days. He kept cattle, he kept pigs, and he kept hens as well as growing food for the community and food/nourishment for the animals he kept.

Brother Sebastian used to keep an eye on all the public clocks in Hawkstone. The main clock was in the church steeple which showed the time and also struck the hour. There were clocks in different places throughout the house which he used to wind and he was responsible for ensuring they all showed the correct time.

To go back to the farm – he kept chickens as I said and we also had a large supply of fresh eggs at Hawkstone, so much so that Sebastian would keep the hens laying till they had laid their last possible egg, and only then would he wring their necks and give them to the cook to cook for the community. I remember one of the cooks Brother Louis telling me that they were always so old and full of muscle, sinews that he used to have to boil them for hours before putting them in the oven to fry and get some colour to them before serving them in the refectory.