

Memories of Fr. John Slattery C.Ss.R

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Fr. John Slattery who died in Clapham in 1956.

He wore the biggest biretta that any of us had ever seen.

He was a big man, a big head and a great mop of thick white hair on top of this was a tremendous biretta and he wore it on every possible occasion.

Whether he wore it in bed or not, we don't know.

But one day he came into dinner, and he took his biretta off whilst the Gospel was being read, then he put the biretta back on as the reader went on to read the appointed book.

And he was beginning his soup, the reader came out with the name Jesus, so he dropped his soup spoon raised his biretta, put it back on, picked up his soup spoon and had it.

The same happened again very quickly.

This was too much for the reader.

So the reader started making up the text after that and every time that he was going to lift his soup spoon he mentioned the name Jesus until eventually the reader won... John Slattery took his biretta off and flung it on the floor behind him and got on with his dinner.

Another story about Fr. Slattery, Fr. John Slattery rather, told by Fr. John Howard who was giving a mission in Ireland in the little town / village in which Fr. Slattery had been born.

And he met his brother there ...a brother who was a little bit mentally retarded, not very much, but just sufficient to stand out slightly.

And in talking to him, John Howard said "Oh...Your brother is my Rector".

And this man looked at Fr. Howard and said: "Rector?...he told me he was Lord High Abbot but I know he thinks he's God Almighty."